

From: <http://www.ascentofsafed.com> **Story #1232** (5781-44) 10 Menachem-Av 5781 (July 19, 2021)
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Clearly a Pre-Destined Match

The Baal Shem Tov had a chasid who was a wealthy lumber merchant. The chasid would buy lumber and transport it to the bottom of the mountain where the river would carry it to the lumberyard to be sold.

This lumber merchant had a son for whom numerous matches had been proposed. But a strange thing happened -- the moment the boy would see the girl, he would faint.

After a while, the matchmakers all gave up. They considered him a hopeless case. The chasid went to ask the Baal Shem Tov, what to do. The *Besht* responded simply, "For the right one, he will not faint."

One winter there was a terrible freeze. Conditions became so bad that all the chasid's lumber was lost in the rushing semi-frozen river. So again the chasid went to the Baal Shem Tov to ask for advice, just as he always did. This time, the *Besht* advised him to become a wandering beggar!

Being a faithful chasid, he accepted his rebbe's instruction and began to travel all over Poland. Whenever he had some time, he would sit in a study hall and learn Torah.

One day, while he was sitting in the study hall in a certain town, a resident of the town came up to him and asked, "How much do you earn in a day?"

"A ruble and a half."

The resident then said, "I'm impressed with your dedication. I will pay you two and a half rubles every day if you will study Torah in my house instead."

The chasid readily agreed – how could he pass up such a generous offer!

A few weeks later he heard the husband and his wife crying in the middle of the night. The next day, wanting to help, he asked if there was any way he could repay them for their kindness.

After some hesitation they told him that they had a beautiful and kind daughter, but every time she was introduced to a man she fainted, they explained tearfully. They had summoned all the best doctors, but alas, none could help their daughter.

The chasid replied, "Maybe my Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov, can help. Come," he said, "let us travel together to Mezibush, and we will see what develops."

The desperate couple did as he suggested and within two weeks they stood before the holy Baal Shem Tov. Before the *Besht* spoke to the husband and wife, he turned to the chasid and asked him to bring his wife and son and wait with them in the next room.

The Baal Shem then listened to the story of the husband and wife and asked, “Can you provide a good dowry for your daughter?”

“We certainly will provide a proper dowry,” they answered. They told the Baal Shem how four years earlier, during a bitter frost, they awakened one morning and found hundreds and hundreds of pieces of lumber in their yard. Try as they might, they could not find the owner of the lumber. So, they sold it to the lumberyard and had made a fortune.

The Baal Shem then asked the chasid to come in with his wife and son. They entered the room.

The son looked at the daughter.

The daughter looked at the son.

Neither fainted!

“You see”, said the Baal Shem Tov with a beaming smile, “The money this girl’s parents received from selling the lumber actually belongs to this poor chasid, the father of this boy. And all of these events occurred only so that this girl and this boy should meet. MAZEL TOV!”

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*Source:* Adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the rendition in a Chabad women’s seasonal publication that is no longer available, called “Permeations” (Vol. 3 No. 3 - Sivan 5765 / Spring 2005), based on the version on //rebshlomo.com.

*Connection:* This Shabbat is also a Jewish holiday: the ‘Fifteenth of Av’ – “Matchmaking Day”!

*Biographical note:*

**Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer** [of blessed memory: 18 Elul 5458- 6 Sivan 5520 (Aug. 1698 - May 1760 C.E.)], the **Baal Shem Tov** [“Master of the Good Name”—often referred to as “the *Besht*” for short], a unique and seminal figure in Jewish history, revealed his identity as an exceptionally holy person, on his 36th birthday, 18 Elul 5494 (1734 C.E.), and made the until-then underground Chasidic movement public. He wrote no books, although many works claim to contain his teachings. One available in English is the excellent annotated translation of *Tzava’at Harivash*, published by Kehos.