


Orphan, Author, Dancer: *Beloved* BUBBY MIMI

RISHE DEITSCH

My mother was a strong believer in the Aibershter. She would talk to Him, both in her *davening*—word for word, sounding like an *eltere chossid*—and in her daily life. Sometimes as she said *Tehillim* she would sit there deep in thought, just trying to figure out what He had in mind with the things that He allowed to happen.



Miriam Paltiel
Nevel at her
daughter Etty's
wedding to Yossele
Gurevitch in 1991.



WHY I DIDN'T CRY WHEN COMRADE STALIN DIED

MIRIAM PALTIEL NEVEL

The cover of Miriam Paltiel Nevel's second and final book, showing the author in her teens. This book was published shortly after her passing in 2023. Available on Amazon.

MY MOTHER'S SUCCESSES

my mother, Miriam Gordon, passed away on the second day of Chanukah 5783.

My mother wrote in a unique voice. Even as an older woman, well into her 80s, she wrote in the voice of that little child whose mother had disappeared without a word.

In the last decade or so of her life, my mother was published under her pen name, Miriam Paltiel Nevel, in *Hamodia*; in the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter*; in *Ami*; and on chabad.org. But the achievement that brought her the greatest satisfaction was the publication of her first book in 2021 by BSD Publishers, called *Zaide: Memories of Reb Yisroel Neveler and My Childhood*. Her second book, *Why I Didn't Cry When Comrade Stalin Died*, was published soon after her passing.

Her second book is particularly valuable to people who have lost a parent during childhood, or those who want to understand them.

It is also very valuable because, surprisingly, many (even *frum* people) feel that communism has its good side—you're not free, but you're safe. Under communism (they believe), a so-called classless society, everyone is given a home and food and clothing, so it's less scary and requires less talent and initiative than living in freedom under capitalism. But communism forbids any expression of religion. Communism forbids any free enterprise whatsoever. Communism silences free speech and relies on brute force and terror. The worldview that it has its good side and some like it (do you really expect people currently living in China and North Korea to say the truth?—we Americans may not be able to believe it, but that could cost them their lives) is dangerously mistaken and this book illustrates that from the author's first-hand experience.

I would like to acknowledge two of my mother's grandchildren who went the extra mile to get both of my mother's books out. Eliezer Posner and Musia Kaplan, *yasher koach!*

There are two gifts my mother gave me that nobody else could or did give me.

The first was that all my life, whenever I was faced with something that felt impossibly difficult to do, and I found myself doubting whether I could do it, I would remind myself: *Your mother did hard things; you can too* (even though or perhaps especially since my challenges were never as difficult as hers).

The second was that my mother convinced me when I was a little girl that I was funny and talented. She absolutely convinced me beyond a shadow of a doubt of these “facts.” In Bais Rivkah High School on Church Avenue in the 1970s, there was a piano in the lunchroom. I played it whenever I could, performing merrily for whoever was there. My mother said I played beautifully, didn’t she? Years later

I realized that many other girls played much more beautifully than I did—they just didn’t think they did.

My mother was a strong believer in the Aibershter. She would talk to Him, both in her *davening*—word for word, sounding like an *eltere chossid*—and in her daily life. Sometimes as she said *Tehillim* she would sit there deep in thought, just trying to figure out what He had in mind with the things that He allowed to happen.

After her passing, we were going through the house, the *sefarim*, the drawers. We found countless letters to the Rebbe. She would begin many of them with the Yiddish words,

“*Tyere Tatte.*” Her closeness with the Rebbe was strong and clear, it was *Emes*, and all her descendants knew it.

When things went wrong my mother would say, “*Zol zein a kaparah.*” May this annoying leak in your ceiling be instead of something really harsh. She taught us to think that way. When my mother saw us doing something good that was also difficult to do, she would assure us: “*Der Aibershter bleibt nisht kein baal choiv!*” Hashem does not remain in debt.

The Rebbe once said to my mother, “*Kol mah d’avid Rachmana l’tav avid,*” in Aramaic. My mother looked puzzled, so the Rebbe repeated it, this time in Yiddish: “*Altz voss der Aibershter tut lozt zich ois tzum gutens*—all that Hashem does ends in goodness.” My mother replied, “*Ver zogt doss?* Who says so? I don’t see it...?” To this, the Rebbe smiled and replied gently, “*Ich zog.* I say so.” My mother kept these words from the Rebbe on a piece of paper in her pocket for the rest of her life.



Reb Dovber Paltiel tried his best to raise his three children alone in communist Russia, under Stalin, after the passing of his wife, Risha. L-R: Eliezer, Reb Dovber, Abba, and Miriam.

Her second book is particularly valuable to people who have lost a parent during childhood, or those who want to understand them.

MY MOTHER'S PAIN

As a child, my mother was terrified and traumatized by the evil Stalin and his henchmen, the NKVD, may their names and memories be erased.

She knew that at any moment, anyone she knew and loved and needed could be marched out of the house in the middle of the night never to be seen again for such “crimes” as teaching children Torah; *davening*; having a *mezuzah* on the door; having a *chuppah* or a *bris milah*; not working on Shabbos.

She knew hunger. In fact, my mother and her brothers, Reb Eliezer and *ybl”ch* Reb Abba Paltiel, used to have a food fantasy. Their food fantasy wasn’t ice cream with sprinkles and chocolate chips. It was one room filled to the ceiling with bread, and another room filled with apples.

And one day, they dreamed, they would eat their way through both rooms, eating as much bread and as many apples as they wanted, until they were FULL—a feeling they didn’t get during their childhoods. (Nowadays, if bread and apples are all there are in the house, the kids—and I—will wail, “*There’s nothing to eat in this house!*”)

But the fear and the hunger were not her worst problems. Her worst problem was that her mother Risha died when she was four years old. Under communism in the 1930s, one didn’t talk. Talking would only get you into trouble. Silence reigned. And so, nobody told her that her mother had died. For the longest time she kept hoping her mother would return. Meanwhile, she took over the housework and cooking for the family from a very young age.

I only began to understand a fraction of what this means when I first met my mother-in-law, Mrs. Mirel Deitsch, *a”h*, 45 years ago, and she described to me what my mother’s European childhood had looked like. “We young women were at the river doing our laundry together, while our children played not far away. And there was one child doing laundry with us, little Miriam Paltiel. Why didn’t we send her to play? We could have done her laundry for her.”

Miriam’s brother and sister-in-law, *ybl”ch*, Rabbi Abba and Mrs. Rechy Paltiel, the best brother and sister-in-law in the world!



IN THE WORDS OF HER DESCENDANTS

After my mother, known to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren as Bubby Mimi, passed away, many of her descendants wrote about her to their communities (kind of like I'm doing now). Here are a few excerpts from their writings.

Bubby, the interesting thing about me being your favorite grandchild is that apparently my sisters and brothers also think they were the favorite. We would call and simply say, "Hi Bubby, it's your favorite grandchild!" and then you would start to guess who was on the line.

We spoke often on the phone, but if I had to hang up abruptly because one of the kids had slipped in the bath, you always understood: "Go *mamalleh*, the

children need you." And you raised those Russian eyebrows each time I told you that I was pregnant: "Darling, don't you have a nursing baby?" and then lovingly, "Your husband is good to you, isn't he?"

You always smelled of Oil of Olay and even though you were a young grandmother when I was born, your arms were soft and wrinkly from as far back as I can remember and I loved to touch them and be hugged by you.

This probably began when I was a thin and sickly child, and you came to New York, packed up a little suitcase with some of my things and brought me to your home in Worcester, Mass., where you had me sleep right next to you, crib touching bed; bathing me, frequently, in your kitchen sink; feeding me rice and other simple and nutritious meals (with my then-teenage aunt Etty for company); and then delivered me back to my mother a few weeks later a pudgy and healthy child.

For the next 40 years, you loved reminiscing about this time. You laughed when you recalled either the splashing I did, or the speaking up for myself (I was a very petite child but had much to say), but my mother didn't laugh. She would say very seriously, "Ma, you saved my baby's life."

We had a song we would sing to you; the words were, "Walkable walkable Bubby," because you walked those streets of Crown Heights, with your *vegeleh*, day or night, not afraid of anyone or anything.

You were particular with your writing, and as I type this, I can hear you over my shoulder telling me to edit this or to word that differently. The short school essays were no less important to you than your published articles in fancy magazines, because whatever you did (*davening*, writing, catching up on the phone), wherever you were (a lunch date, a wedding, shopping, at our Shabbos table), you did it *fully*. I want to be like you, Bubby. Believing and trusting in Hashem and living each day to its fullest.

What's remarkable to me is that as a child Bubby Mimi suffered from deprivation of the most basic needs—food, clothing, shelter, and love—and yet as my grandmother she

**My mother
didn't laugh.
She would say
very seriously,
"Ma, you
saved my
baby's life."**

had the ability to give these things freely.

When I picture my Bubby Mimi, it's with an open-mouthed loud and hearty laugh. She always found me funny. And smart. And beautiful. And the best gymnast and actress! She told me I would be the absolute best actress on Broadway.

In her mixed Russian-French accent she would sing me songs and hold me on her lap. She held me on her lap on long flights. She held me on her lap all the years of my childhood and even during my engagement. I still remember my then-future-father-in-law's shocked expression when he walked into our house unexpectedly and saw the sight. She held me on her lap all the way up to a few weeks ago even on her frail, weak body. She gave me So. Much. Love.

When she would come visit from Worcester, she would walk me to Kingston Avenue with some of my siblings and buy me a giant cookie and then we would walk the long way home and run up and down every building's ramp singing and dancing. If there were mountains of snow we would climb to the tops and jump off.

Believe it or not, this same woman who went through

so much hardship in her life also was constantly singing and dancing. Yes, both! She had pain in her heart but she also sang and danced. I would follow her step by step: clap in front, clap behind the back, then faster, and that was just the warm-up. Then hands out in proper ballet position and turn in circles at the speed of light across the room.

How did a woman who was lacking so much love as a child give over so much love to her grandchild? I will never know. But I definitely loved her back. Oh, don't get me wrong—if I misbehaved she would let me know. But then she would end off her rebuking email with LOL (and she would explain that it stands for Lots Of Love). And I knew that even if I was being told off it was coming from that same place of love.

Two weeks ago, I spent one morning at her bedside in the hospital and I keep thinking about the last few words she said to me. Even through her oxygen mask, and through her obvious suffering, she managed to mouth three words: "How are you?" She was thinking about me.

Bubby Mimi, you only just passed away, and I am missing you already. That's the truth. I want to squeeze your hand again. I want to sit on your lap one last time. I want to sing and dance and harmonize with you

**But then
she would
end off her
rebuking
email with
LOL (and
she would
explain that
it stands
for Lots
Of Love).**

and I want to hear you tell me one last time how much you believe in me and love me. But I can still hear you saying it in my mind and I know you're watching over us from on high.

Through my tears I know you are reunited with your mother who you haven't seen in over eight decades and I just know you're smiling and laughing your hearty laugh. And so I will smile too.

She was the hurt orphan. She was the tiger mother.

She was the lost immigrant. She was the insightful truth-seeker.

She was a G-d-fearing *chassidiste*. She was a rebel and a nonconformist.

She was demanding and outspoken. She was deep and compassionate and her touch could heal.

She was robbed of a childhood. She was an eager young dreamer at every age.

She didn't give me a break. I am lost without her.

I did my share for her. I see so many missed opportunities.

No worlds, no space, not even heaven and earth can divide us.



1. Bubby Mimi dancing at her first grandchild's wedding (Shula Deitsch to Chaim Bryski).
2. With grandson Mendel Gordon.
3. With grandchildren Risha and Berel Groner, named after both her parents.
4. With her daughter Rivkah Lieba Groner of Melbourne, Australia.
5. Standing, L-R: Rivkah L. Groner (daughter), Zeesy Posner (daughter), Rochel Gordon (daughter-in-law), Etty Gurevitch (daughter). Seated, L-R: Risha Deitsch (daughter), Bubby Mimi.
6. L-R: With grandchildren Shaina Gordon and Rechel Groner and great-granddaughter Rivka Levitin.
7. Holding her newborn great-granddaughter Luba Lipskier just hours after she was born. Nobody could swaddle and hold a newborn like Bubby Mimi!





You're never too old to sit on Bubby Mimi's lap!

THE TRUST OF A CHILD

Two sample chapters from *Why I Didn't Cry When Comrade Stalin Died* by Miriam Paltiel Nevel

These are my memories from November 1939. I am four years old. Mama is sick. I am used to waiting when she is busy and so now that she is sick, I sit under her sewing machine on the treadle and I wait. Then I get up and walk over to the table that's like a gray weeping willow tree, and I sit there together with my little doll that Mama gave me for my birthday. Sometimes I change places and go to sit under the big table in the center of our room. Still waiting for her to get better, I crawl out from under the big table. She is lying in her bed with her eyes closed. She must be sleeping, she is not paying attention to me. I open the door of the room and then the front door of the apartment. I go down the dark staircase step by step while holding onto the banister so as not to fall, like Mama taught me to do. The staircase is long and dark. It has many flights of steps and landings. Finally, I reach the bottom floor. I open the front door and suddenly a wave of sunlight splashes in my face. I squint as my eyes adjust to the bright light.

The first thing I see is women in dark, coarse blouses and pants with shovels in their hands digging ditches. I hear two women talking. They are talking about "the enemy." One woman says, "The enemy will never get to Moscow. Comrade Stalin will see to that for us." "But we have to be prepared," another woman says as she pushes her shovel with her leg into the dark earth. "Come what may," a third woman shakes her head ominously.

Children are playing jumprope nearby. Two big girls are holding the rope and the others are taking turns jumping and twisting and turning in the air. Flat-footed me, I am a poor jumper and a poor runner. I tend to fall a lot. But I do get into line to try to jump rope. I do a bad job and the other children, who are mostly older than I am, tell me to leave the game. I leave and begin to wander around the yard. I go to the sandbox. This is a good place for me to play, as not all the children playing in the sandbox are older. Some are about my age, and no

skill is necessary to just turn over the sand in your hand. But even at that I am not very good. All I can do is build a pile of sand, which could be called a mountain. Other children have all kinds of molds, and they make beautiful flowers using the molds, and they can make a tunnel too. All I can do is make a mountain. My eyes wander away from the sand. I look up and see a white ambulance driving into our yard. It stops at the front door of our building. Men in blue uniforms run out of the ambulance, go into the front door, and disappear inside the darkness of the building. After a short while the same men come back out carrying a stretcher. Women and children are standing around the ambulance. I walk over there too, and a stranger tells me, "That's your mother there on the stretcher. Your mother is going to the hospital." A kind woman, with a dark babushka tied under her chin, is looking at me sorrowfully and saying, "Hopefully, in the hospital the doctor will get your mother all better."



1934: Miriam Paltiel Nevel (R) as a little girl, secure in the love of her mother, Risha (C). At left is Miriam's older brother, Eliezer (Lazer) Paltiel.

Mama has been sick for several days now, and it's a good thing that she is going to the hospital, I think. I am sure that nice Dr. Fedorova will take good care of my mother in the hospital. She will make Mama all better and as good as new. Dr. Fedorova might even give my Mama a piece of sugar for being good, like she gave me. Now the men in blue have slammed the doors of the ambulance shut, and the siren is screaming as they drive out of the yard. I feel important. It isn't every day that an ambulance comes into our yard. I must be somebody special if my mama gets to ride in an ambulance. Maybe now the boys and girls in our yard will let me jump rope and play with their sand molds. I am in the midst of my fantasizing, when suddenly I feel a pang inside my chest. I miss my Mama. I resolve to be especially good for her, so that when she will come home from the hospital, she will be very pleased with me, for I love her more than anyone in the whole world. I wonder why Mama didn't wave at me or give me a little wink before she went off in the ambulance. Now I climb up the black staircase to our apartment, but I am not afraid. I am never afraid of the dark. I ring the bell to our floor. Anna Gregorievna opens the door, and I go into our room and sit down under the round coffee table. I am the trunk, the knitted flaps of the cloth around me are the willow branches. I know this because Mama showed me a picture of a weeping willow once in a book. So I wait. And I wait and I wait until Papa comes home from work, gives me something to eat—I don't remember what it was—and tells me to go lie down in my bed and go to sleep. I worry that perhaps I have done something to upset Papa. I want so much to do what is good and obey him in every way. So when he tells me to sit still, I sit sometimes for a long time, and when he tells me to go to bed, I go to bed in silence which matches his.

One morning shortly after Mama was taken away in the ambulance, as soon as I open my eyes, I hear my father telling me something. At first I cannot understand his words. Then I make out: "Aunt Nina." I had never met Papa's cousin, Aunt Nina, before this day. As quickly as I can, I stumble out of bed. I go into the bathroom and splash water on my face. I remember how Mama would make the beds first thing in the morning. So I try to smooth my blanket and put the bedspread on top of it like Mama would have done. Aunt Nina is there and quickly taking my hand. I clutch my doll in my arms. Aunt Nina

seems to be in a great rush. I do my best to keep pace with her as we climb down the dark stairs, walk down our street, then turn a corner, and then come to her home. I play with my doll all that morning and part of the afternoon. Then I sit in a cozy little place next to the window and watch the world go by. The sun has clouded over, and there is a hint of a start of rain. There are few people walking in the street. A single automobile lumbers down the street.

I stay with Aunt Nina until the next morning. I am sure that going to Aunt Nina's is part of Mama's becoming-all-better plan. I know now what I did not know then, and that is that I went to Aunt Nina for the day and the following night of my mother's funeral. In those days in Russia, they didn't tell a child anything. I didn't know my mother was dead.

In the morning, for breakfast, Aunt Nina gives me a treat, fried potatoes. She smiles when she puts the breakfast in front of me on the table, and tells me that I will be going home soon. I am happy. Now, I think, for sure Dr. Fedorova has done her job at the hospital, and Mama will be at home, waiting for me. Aunt Nina walks solemnly on the Boulevard of Flowers while I skip excitedly as we approach Building Number 27. She leaves me at the door of our building and hurries away, as she is in a rush to get to her job on time. Our neighbor, Anna Gregorievna, opens the apartment front door. The red scar over her lip is very red indeed. My thought is: "Perhaps she is angry at being disturbed by having to open the front door for me. But I know that Mama will talk with her, and then she will stop being angry." I run into our room, full of anticipation, full of expectation, and when I enter, I see that the room is empty. But I don't give up just then. "She must be somewhere nearby," I think. "I'll just sit and wait." So I crawl under her sewing machine, sit down on the treadle, and stay there.

Under the sewing machine everything is silent. The clock on the wall is as silent as Papa, as silent as I, as silent as this somber day in our room. And then, suddenly the clock begins to sing. "Donng, donng, donng." Someone had forgotten to turn off the clock's chimes. Oh the good, kind, wonderful old clock. In its own language, the grandfather clock is singing Mama's favorite lullaby in my ear, "Sleep, my most precious one, sleep." Even though I am hungry, I fall asleep. With comrades like Stalin, you learn to do that.

GRANDFATHER ELIEZER AND THE VILLAGE DUMA

In the early 1900s, Zaide Eliezer and Bubbe Rochel Leah Paltiel, the parents of my father, DovBer, lived with their five children in a village in Belarus called Zhudilovo, which was under the rule of the Russian Czar. The nearby forest was the source of their livelihood, as Zaide Eliezer was a logger. He rented land from the Russian owner, and he and his sons felled trees and floated the logs down the Dnieper River in long barges to the big cities, where they would be used by builders. DovBer always remembered his oldest brother, Yaakov, seating him on the saddle of his horse and giving him rides between the woods and home. Thus, the sound of the saw, the smell of freshly cut wood, and the tall trees of the forest were as natural to little DovBer as the sights, sounds, and smells of his own home.

Since Grandfather Eliezer and his older sons were in the business of cutting trees, and wood was plentifully available to them, they decided to build an addition to their small home. At that time, Yaakov was studying at the yeshiva of the Rebbe Rashab, Rabbi Sholom DovBer of Lubavitch, so Zaide Eliezer sent a message to Yaakov to ask the Rebbe for a blessing to build the addition. Yaakov relayed the Rebbe's answer to his father: Building two additional rooms to his home would be a blessed endeavor, and he should proceed with his plan.

The head of the Duma (village governing council) in my grandparents' village was a wicked man named Ivan Stepanovich. Like the evil Haman, he was always on the lookout for some excuse to harm the Jews, particularly to pin some crime on Zaide Eliezer, whom he considered a "rich Jew." The truth is, besides the little house in which he and his family lived, Zaide had almost no material possessions, so why did Stepanovich resent him? Perhaps because when Stepanovich passed by their small home

on a Friday night, he heard the family singing; when he entered Zaide's home, he saw the family sitting at their festive meal as though they were princes and princesses. In short, the little wooden house was filled with learning and love and joy—the kind of love and joy that no money can buy. When Stepanovich noticed that Eliezer and his sons were building an addition to their house, he devised a plan to endanger them, and perhaps even incite a pogrom! As head of the village governing council, Stepanovich decided to create a new law in the village. Going forward, whoever built a new house, or remodeled his existing house in any way, needed to apply for a permit to do the work. Not surprisingly, the permit was to be granted by none other than "His Excellency," the village Duma head himself.

The new rule was voted on and passed by the village elders, so that now altering one's home without a permit was considered a crime. An official letter was delivered to Eliezer Paltiel from the village of Zhudilovo, ordering him to stop building immediately and to appear in court in the city of Pochep on an appointed day, since he was charged with breaking the permit law.

Zaide Eliezer dispatched an urgent message to the Rebbe Rashab asking how he should proceed, because it was clear to him that the permit issue could turn into a very dangerous situation for his family, as well as for other Jews in the surrounding district. Should he stop building altogether? How should he handle the court date?

Zaide Eliezer beseeched the Rebbe for his advice and blessing. The answer they received astounded the family. The Rebbe simply told Zaide Eliezer and his sons to continue building without fear, as G-d's blessing was with them.

In the meantime, Ivan Stepanovich prepared his case against Zaide Eliezer. Time seems to have a tendency to

fly when you want it to go slowly, and Zaide Eliezer's court date approached rather quickly. On the day before the trial, Stepanovich came to Zaide Eliezer's home, a large sheaf of papers in his hand. "I am in possession of a list of all your crimes, Jew Paltiel," he said, waving the stack of papers in Zaide's face. Then he thrust his package under his arm, puffed out his chest, put his hands on his hips and stood waiting for Zaide's reaction. Zaide Eliezer stood motionless for a moment, facing Stepanovich and considering what to reply to his accuser. It was clear to Zaide that this enemy of the Jews had a pogrom in mind, and would not be satisfied to simply forbid the addition of two rooms to a little wooden house. Soon he replied calmly, "I hope His Excellency knows that the work my sons and I are doing on the house was started before the law was enacted. The law shouldn't apply to renovations that were begun before there was a law. Should men be held responsible for committing crimes that were not crimes when they were done, and only later became illegal?"

While Zaide talked, Ivan Stepanovich's face turned pink, then red, then deep crimson. He pulled himself up to his full five feet, and with his arms bent, hands grasping his waist, he looked as though he were about to dance a kazatzka. "Your end is near, Jew Paltiel!" His Excellency screeched. "I know your Talmud teaches you how to argue, but no argument will help you this time. You will pay! And not only a fine," he wagged his finger ominously at Zaide. "You will lose your house and your business too."

He waved the sheaf of papers tauntingly under Zaide Eliezer's nose. Bubbe Rochel Leah was standing in the kitchen peeling potatoes for soup, listening to the exchange between her husband and the village head, while tears streamed down her face, which was half covered by the kerchief that sat low on her forehead. Her little son DovBer, who was then two years old, was holding on to his mother's skirt, his eyes raised to her tear-stained face. He didn't understand why she was crying, nor did he understand his father's conversation with the man wearing brass buttons on his long fancy coat, whose whiskers pointed to both sides of the village.

DovBer's sister, 11-year-old Mania, had gone with her

friends to the train station to watch the trains come and go. Trains were a new phenomenon then and therefore an interesting spectacle to all the children. With the roar of its engine, its wheels screeching against iron rails, the Pochep-bound train pulled into the station. Ivan Stepanovich stood on the platform, looking forward to Eliezer Paltiel's trial the next day. This time, he felt certain he would be rid of the rich Jew once and for all. Afterward, the Jew's guilt could easily be used to incite a pogrom that would begin first in this village and then spread to the surrounding villages.

Wanting to appear above others, His Excellency did not board the train when the less important passengers did. After the conductor called out, "All aboard, all aboard," Stepanovich stood chatting with the stationmaster. Only when the train began to move, slowly at first, did he jump on the bottom step, expecting to take the successive steps and land neatly in the moving car. But his long coat with the brass buttons got caught in a spoke of an iron wheel that was rolling faster and faster on its rail. Mania ran home out of breath, not knowing if she should feel sad that a fatal accident had occurred, or be glad that this man—this Haman, who she knew wanted to harm her father and all the area's Jews—had been dragged by a moving wheel to his death under the train.

She sprinted into the house screaming as loudly as she could, "*Er iz mer nit doh, er iz mer nit doh!* —He is no more, he is no more!"

At Ivan Stepanovich's funeral, his wife walked behind her husband's coffin, wringing her hands and wailing, "I told you not to start up with the Jews. I told you to leave the Jew alone. You know their G-d is powerful. You fool! You fool! You fool!" The new village head did not follow Stepanovich's example. He was an honest man who conducted himself with proper decorum and common sense, and he never bothered Zaide Eliezer. It was obvious to him that his predecessor had created a new law and then brought charges against Zaide Eliezer for no other reason than his eagerness to harm a Jew. So, with the Rebbe's blessing, Zaide Eliezer and his sons added two rooms to their home, and the evil plot of Stepanovich was foiled. ❀