



DRAFT OF A HILARIOUS ADDRESS

to be given by C.K.Bliss* at the Wedding Feast on Sunday
the 19th December 1971 when the son of my cousin Paula
Mr. Robert Beck will wed a beautiful girl Naomi Engلمان.

This will be a joyous Jewish wedding, similar to that which you may have seen in "Fiddler on the Roof" with the difference that the extreme poverty of Eastern Europe is changed to affluence of Australia, and with the more important difference that in this country there is no virulent and violent Anti-semitism.

I hail from Eastern Europe, and every time I went to see again and again "Fiddler on the Roof" my heart cried out in remembrance of my own youth and my own parents and grandparents. At every Jewish wedding there is a professional merry-maker who with his bawdy ballads makes everyone laugh and forget for a few hours his own misery. The amazing fact that the Jewish people have survived all persecution of thousands of years is due to the bond by the Bible, but also because the Jews have a very strong sense of humour, and are able to laugh about their own weaknesses, and even about their own leaders, the sometimes all too pompous rabbis. When the wedding of Robert and Naomi came along I decided to be such a merry-maker, and herebelow is the draft of the speech which I prepared.

However, my actual speech will be a hilarious mixture of Hebrew, Jiddish, German, and English. This will be impossible to put down on paper, and therefore this draft is written mostly in English to be enjoyed by those who were not present at the wedding. Only a few words in Hebrew or Jiddish will be said, and their translation and explanation be given.

The Master of Ceremonies will announce:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

"Mr. C.K.Bliss, the granduncle of Robert will give us now his address."

Bliss: "My dear Friends,

I am sure that the moment I arrived at the microphone you all have sent off a silent prayer to the Lord, begging him to let me make my address short, very short. My Friends, as I have a direct hot line to the Lord, I am glad to tell you that he ordered me to tell you that your prayers have been answered. He told me to give the shortest possible address ever given by any speaker to any audience.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My address is 2 Vicar Street, Coogee (sits down amidst grateful applause)

Bliss: "You shouldn't have applauded. This was a great mistake. Don't you know what an applause means to a would-be amateur entertainer like me? It means that you are abouting for an encore. Well, you will get it. How else can I resist your demand. However, I shall not bore you. On the contrary, I shall improve your health within the next few minutes. In doing so, I shall only follow my dear late father, who himself was a follower and admirer of Scholem Aleichim the Jiddish writer who wrote the original "Fiddler on the Roof" story. And this is what Scholem Aleichim said:

"Lachen is gesind.
Doktoirim heissen Lachen."

"Laughter is good for health.
Doctors prescribe Laughter."

But as it is with us Jews, we laugh and cry often at the same time. And my good father laughed and cried and so did my good mother when I reached the age of 13 and we celebrated my Bar Mizwah (Communion) in the synagogue. This was more than 61 years ago. And my grandfather Wolf Seidmann, who was your greatgrandfather dear Robert, he rose and gave a speech. He was a great scholar and even a great medical man, and he proved from the Bible that thousands of years ago the Hebrew doctors knew what our own doctors have only discovered a few decades ago, namely that blood transfusion between two different species, as for instance a human being and a lamb is impossible, because the blood of different species is incompatible.

My Friends, mark this word "incompatible" because it has an important bearing on why we are here assembled at this joyous wedding. This I shall explain later.

Now, my dear Naomi and my dear Robert. I am now in my 75th year, and I simply cannot wait until your first boy will have his Bar Mizwah - unless you speed up the matter CONSIDERABLY. So, let me give now my address in the vein of my good

grandfather and on the same theme: Jiddisher Sechel - Jewish Wisdom.

And what I have to say will interest you dear Naomi. You are a good Jiddish daughter, and you obey all the ritual laws, and you know exactly with all the foodstuff when a food is fleischig (meaty) and when it is milichig (milky) and you know very well that never the twain shall mix. But situations may come about when you might not be sure whether something is kusher (in accordance with the ritual law) or may be it is treife (not in accordance with the law).

Now suppose you want to prepare a nice meat dish for Robert. You will take a fleischigen Pot and you will put the meat into it, and then some catastrophe may occur. A milichiker spoon will fall into that fleischigen Pot. Is it still kusher, or it is perhaps treife already? This is a most difficult rabbinical problem, but I am glad to inform you that the rabbi of our community has solved the problem once and for all, and as I was a witness I can tell you the full story. (now I tell the story in pure Jiddish).

A poor Jewish woman has bought a small piece of meat for father to be eaten on Sabbath Eve. And the catastrophe happened. A milichiker spoon falls into her fleischigen Pot. "Oi weih geschrien" she cried "it's treife and I have no money to buy another piece of meat! There is only one thing to do. She runs to the rabbi and asks him whether it is kusher and can be eaten, or whether it is treife.

"Oi Rebbeleben, please help. I have taken a fleischiger Pot and a milichiker spoon is fallen into. What shall I do, what shall I do?"

The rabbi now assumes the pose of a deep thinker. He strokes his beard and begins the problem to quote and to quote in a kind of sing song which is very funny, as it resembles the sing song in the synagogue. The real joke is in this sing song, and whenever I told this story, my listeners were rolling in the aisles. The trouble with those Jiddish scholars is that when they start on their sing song, and repeat the problem again and again, somehow the wording of the problem is mixed up and the rabbi has forgotten how the problem itself was stated in the beginning.

Now the rabbi begins to sing: "When one takes a fleischiger Pot bom bom bom, a fleischiger Pot bom bom bom (now he repeats rapidly) a fleischiger Pot, a fleischiger Pot and a fleischiger Spoon, a fleischiger Pot and a fleischiger Spoon... A FLEISCHIGER POT AND A FLEISCHIGER SPOON??? What do you want? It's kusher!!!"

"No, rebbeleben," cries the woman, "it is not so. It's different. I have taken a milichiker spoon and it is fallen into a fleischiger Pot."

The rabbi (indignant) "Ah soil! This is a different problem altogether." And he begins again his sing song, and again he states the problem rapidly until he has mixed up the meanings again. (I am sorry that the joke will fall flat when told on paper. I must do all the singing, and all the stroking of my beard, etc. etc.)

Rabbi: "When one takes a milickiker spoon bom bom bom, a milichiker spoon, bom bom bom (rapidly) a milicker spoon, a milichiker spoon and a milickiker pot, a milichiker spoon and a milichiker pot... A MILICHIKER SPOON AND A MILICHIKER POT?? Why, it's kusher!!!"

The woman (desperate) "No rebbeleben, it is not so. I have taken a fleischiken pot and it is fallen into it a milichiker spoon."

The rabbi at last has grasped the enormity of the problem, and he now repeats slowly: "A milichiker spoon is fallen into a fleischiker pot.....I am sorry, I am very busy, I have no time today for this problem."

Yes my Friends, our rabbis in Eastern Europe, they were great scholars, yes they were. They knew even all about Australia, and here again I was a witness when we youngsters came to our rabbi and asked him "Rebbeleben, what is this a Kukkaburra?"

The rabbi has never heard the word kukkaburra, but a great rabbi is supposed to know all the answers. And so he begins too to stroke his beard and falls into his sing song: "A kukkaburra bom bom bom, a kukkaburra bom bom bom...a Kukkaburra is a meschigener fisch - a mad fish."

"A mad fish, a fish?" we cried "but Rebbeleben here in this book it says that in Australia, the kukkaburra flies among the trees. How can a fish fly among the trees???"

"How can a fish fly among the trees?" said the rabbi indignantly "I told you he is meschigge. He is mad. Only a mad fish will fly among the trees."

We know here in Australia that the aborigine elders can make rain. But the wonder rabbi of Sadagora near my hometown Czernowitz, he could make rain any time. And here again I was a witness. There was a terrible draught. It hadn't rained for months. The harvest was in danger, and the peasants have prayed in the church for rain, but the Christian God has not provided rain. Said the Christian manager of an estate:

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"We have only one last hope. I will go to the Wonder Rabbi of Sadagora. He will make rain." And so he sets out for Sadagora and when he faces the rabbi, he says deferentially in German: "Herr Rabbi, ich bitte Sie, machen Sie Regen, oder wir stehen vor dem Ruin." (Mr. Rabbi, I beg you make rain, or we are facing ruin!)

The rabbi looks out into the sky and he sees a small cloud coming up the horizon and so he says in perfect German:

"O totototo hebt sich anzufragen zu beginnen zu geben a schitt herab a regen herunter!"

This is a hilarious joke for anyone who knows the German spoken in Czernowitz and who knows too how the Jews who can speak only Jiddish are trying to speak German words in a horrendous grammar with synonyms tumbling all over. I shall try a translation into English. And the rabbi said - in perfect English:

"O o o o any instant now, it is commencing to start to begin to give out a shower to shower downstairs a rain to below."

And indeed, when the manager came home to his village it started to rain and the peasants were jubilant. "The great Wonder Rabbi of Sadagora has made rain" they cried in gratitude. And it rained one day, and the second day, and the third, and the whole week and the second week and the third week...all fields were under water already, and the harvest totally ruined.

Suddenly a telegram arrived from the Rabbi of Sadagora. The manager opened it and read the message of the Rabbi:

I am waiting for your telegram when I shall stop the rain Rabbi Sadagora

See, the stupid goi has given the rabbi incomplete information. He could have stated "please make rain for 7 days only." But as he did not tell the rabbi for how long he wanted it to rain, no blame could fall on the rabbi. He is still the great Wonder Rabbi of Sadagora.

Now the true stories I have told you now may have made you believe that only rabbis are great Chochems (wise men). My next and last story will tell you that even the poorest of the poorest Jews who have no rabbinical and talmudic training are nevertheless able to interpret the most difficult passage of the Bible. And here again I was a witness.

Now which are the poorest of the poor among the Jews. Well, from "Fiddler on the roof" we have learned that Tevje the milkman was a poor man indeed who only thought of "If I were a rich man oi doodledoodledoodle do!" But the Balegules are even poorer. A Balegule is a cab driver, not of course of an automobile. In my time there were no Jews who had an automobile. My balegule was a driver of a horse carriage. And the horse and the carriage didn't belong to him.

Now once upon a time our poor balegule was hired by a great rabbi to drive his (the Rabbi's) carriage with 2 horses. The rabbi was making a tour of all the Jewish communities in the Bukowina and Galicia (mine and my father's home countries of Austria). And in every village and town there was a great commotion when the great rabbi arrived. He was received by the whole Jewish community, was led into the finest house and was given the finest food to eat and the finest wine to drink. The poor balegule could only look on in envy, and he was always hungry. The poor food he was given was usually not enough.

And so when they were again on their way, the balegule turned to the rabbi who was sitting in state in the droschke (carriage) and said: "Oi Rabbi, how wonderful to be a rabbi. When we arrive in a village, the whole community is there and they bow deep and thank you for the great honour and they give you the finest food and the finest wine to drink...Oi one day I want to be a rabbi, just one day only, just one day!"

Said the rabbi "Don't think that a rabbi's life is all roses. It's a difficult life I tell you." But the balegule said "No, rabbi for me the highest attainment would be to be a rabbi just for one day." "Alright," said the rabbi, "I am going to teach you a lesson. Come down from your cab, here put on my silken kaftan, and here is my stramel (the rabbinical hat) and here are my glasses. Now you sit down here in the carriage and we shall ride in state into the next town, and I shall drive the horses...and hey away they went.

When they arrived in the town all the Jewish men, women and children came out and there was great rejoicing and they led the rabbi into the finest house and they gave him the finest food and the finest wine, and he ate, and ate, and ate as if he hadn't eaten well for days - which was true because it was the balegule who posed as a rabbi, and indeed never in his whole life had he eaten so well and so much, and indeed he just couldn't stop. But then tragedy struck.

The elders approached him with deep bows and said: "O great rabbi, we want your final judgement on a question on which we have been divided for the last year. It's about the correct interpretation of this passage in the Bible. There are two schools of thought among the learned ones in our community. One school thinks that they have the true interpretation. But the other school of thought denies it, and there was great disputes and haggling allround - until we decided that the final judgement should be given by you, and we waited one full year for you to come and tell us your opinion and your interpretation of this important passage.

Our poor balegule was abit taken aback, as he never had been trained in the interpretation of the Hebrew words of the Bible - but he was a Jew, wasn't he, albeit a poor and ignorant Jew, but he had that inborn sechel (natural wisdom) and indeed it didn't fail him to meet this great challenge.

He took the Bible, adjusted the spectacles of the rabbi on the tip of his nose, and looked at the Hebrew words and mumbled in the singsong he knew so well, without however pronouncing a single word, because his Hebrew reading was very poor, to tell you the truth. But then he turned in amazement to the elders and said in a reproaching tone:

"And you the great elders of this great community, you the great chochems and the great learned ones, you want to tell me that you cannot interpret this passage correctly??? Shame upon you! I am going to show you that even my poor balegule can interpret this passage. And he raised his voice and called out to the balegule (who was the rabbi as we all know)

"Moische come here. You show them!"

And so dear Friends there is a moral to this story. The poor Jews have always found a way to overcome the greatest difficulties, and they were happy and contented when a few times in the year a great chasene (wedding) came around when they could be happy and when they could fill their stomach with good food - as we are doing now at this joyous wedding feast of Naomi and Robert.

Now as you will remember, I told you in the beginning the story of my grandfather who spoke about the incompatibility of blood from different species. And I asked you to keep this word "incompatible" well in your mind because it has a direct bearing on this joyous wedding tonight.

I am sure you all are thinking and praying that the marriage between Robert and Naomi should be a happy and successful one. But as you know, modern scientists don't pray to the Lord. They don't need to pray, they say, because they have now the "scientific method." And according to the scientific method the prediction for a happy and successful marriage is fairly simple.

The scientists say that when the character traits of husband and wife are compatible, it will be a happy and successful marriage. But if the character traits of both are incompatible then it will not be a successful marriage.

Now my Friends, those who know me, know that I am a university man who is in open opposition and open rebellion about the orthodox professors and scientists. When they say "Yes" I say "No." And when they say "No" I say "Yes."

And being a research chemist, and knowing a bit of biochemistry and psychology and the interactions between a husband and a wife

I predict that the marriage between Robert and Naomi will be a happy and successful marriage, though their traits are wholly and totally

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which means that Robert has income and Naomi is patable.

And so my Friends let me shout a shout of joy and prayer, a shout which has been shouted on all Jewish chasenes throughout the centuries and throughout the ages, a shout of prayer in our good old Hebrew language:

"Masel in Bruche
Le Chusen, le Kale
In Kol Meshpuche!"

"Lack and Blessings
To the Bridegroom and the Bride
And to the whole Family!"

C.K.Bliss