

# A Quarter and A Dream

By *B. Paluch*  
for Olomeinu Magazine

Leah carefully took the hot kugel out of the oven and put a bottle of grape juice in the fridge. There was just one more hour until Shabbos; was there anything else that had to be done? At eighteen, she was old enough to take charge.

Leah suddenly realized that she had to empty her pockets of loose change! She hurried to the closet and scooped the coins out of her coat pocket. She would leave them in her room.

As she passed near the dining room, she heard the sound of voices chanting. No matter that Shabbos was so early this week; her father, Rabbi Yehoshua Silbermintz, the well-known and beloved rebbi, head counselor, and director of Pirchei, still found time to learn mishnayos with her brother.

"Why do we bother to learn for only twelve minutes?" asked her brother, as he closed his sefer (book).

"Ah bissel, ah bissel, macht ah fille shissel (an old Yiddish saying: Little by little, the bowl gets filled)," replied her father. "A mishna today, a mishna tomorrow - and before you know it, you'll be making a siyum (celebration upon completion of learning a tractate)!"

Leah chuckled. How many times had she heard those words?

And then she was struck with an idea. If little by little could fill a bowl, it could also fill a piggy bank! Perhaps she could collect her quarters one by one . . . Perhaps one day she would do something special with the money that she collected . . . something that would make her father especially proud. . .

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It was the week before Leah's wedding, and her friend was helping her set up her apartment. One by one, they unpacked boxes of dishes and towels and put everything in its place.

"What's this?" asked Naomi, pulling a hard object out of a box.

"Oh, that's my piggy bank," Leah answered.

"Your piggy bank?! Don't you think you're too old for a piggy bank?"

Leah bent down and slowly lifted the heavy plastic bank.

"No, Naomi. I've been saving this money for a long time now. One day, I'm going to use it for something special."

"You could use it for your wedding," Naomi said. "I can't think of anything more special than that.

"Maybe," said Leah thoughtfully. But she knew she wouldn't. She didn't care if her wedding was a bit simpler. She'd save this money for something else ...

Naomi shrugged. "Don't blame me if your husband laughs at you. I still think you should take this back home."

But Leah's husband didn't laugh. He loved the excitement, the mystery, the idea of working towards a valuable goal.

"There's only one thing wrong with this," he said.

Wrong? Was there something he needed, or something he wanted to do with the money?

"This money belongs in a bank. It will be safer there, and it will also earn interest."

So the newly-married Mr. and Mrs. Yunger transferred their collection of quarters to a brand-new bank account.

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"Mommy, when can we go to the bank already?" begged Leah's son.

Leah looked up at the shelf. The pussycat bank that her mother had bought her as a Chanukah gift was full, and the coin-sorter her old neighbors had bought her as a goodbye gift was also out of room. She checked the few other assorted coin holders that family and friends had given her over the years. Full, full, full.

Had she really not been to the bank in such a long time? Or was the money that her kids happily collected, causing the quarters pile up much more quickly? All the Yungers knew never to spend a quarter. It was better to use a dollar, and hopefully... the change would include even more quarters!

Out came the purple Crown Royal bag that served as the family money bag. Together, they emptied all the coins into it. Mr. Yunger carried the bag to the car.

Later in the day, Mrs. Yunger drove to the bank, but when she tried to take out the bag, she found she couldn't lift it. It was simply too heavy! Thankfully, a kind security-guard noticed her predicament and came to the rescue. Grunting and snorting, he helped carry the latest deposit to the bank.

Over time, the money amassed into a considerable sum. Ten thousand dollars... then fifteen thousand... Now and then, the Yungers were almost tempted to use it for this or that. But each time, Mrs. Yunger said, "Not yet. This money must be used for something special."

One day, sixteen years after the first quarter had dropped into the original piggy bank, Mrs. Yunger's father became ill. Her beloved father, from whom she had learned so much and whom she so admired, was sick.

"Now," said Mrs. Yunger. "Now we are going to bring out the quarters."

The next time she visited her ailing father, she told him about her plan.

"We're going to write a sefer Torah (Torah scroll) as a zechus (merit) for your complete recovery, with Hashem's help," she said.

Rabbi Silbermintz was delighted. He was thrilled that his daughter had thought of it. He could think of nothing he would love more than this.

A sofer (scribe) was hired, and the race to raise the full amount of money was on. Time was short. The quarters were rolling in, but would they roll in fast enough to effect a refuah sheleimah (speedy recovery)?

\* \* \* \*

*Ding-dong!*

Mr. Yunger opened the door. There stood a young man who had borrowed four hundred dollars from him a few months ago. He looked uncomfortable.

"Mr. Yunger, here's the money I owe you. But...you know about my business - I sell soda cans and snacks in vending machines. So I have the four hundred dollars. . . but it's all in quarters."

That night, Mr. Yunger presented his wife with a most incredible surprise - *1,600 quarters!*

The Yungers felt that Hashem was blessing their efforts.

Sadly, Rabbi Silbermintz passed away before the sefer Torah was completed, but the project continued. On Lag B'Omer 1997/ תשנ"ז, eighteen years after the dream was born, the vision was fulfilled. Thirty thousand dollars in quarters achieved a remarkable and enviable goal: A holy sefer Torah was dedicated. And it is in the memory of a remarkable man whose love for Torah was enviable.

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Postscript: Some habits are hard to break. The Yungers (who live in Toronto, Canada) are still bringing their quarters to the bank each Friday to deposit them into a special account! And they now have a new family tradition: Each child, on his eighteenth birthday, receives a special gift - a silver pushka to be used for starting

a quarter collection. It's fun to dream, and exciting to get closer and closer to a far-off vision. And when the goal is reached...! Try it and see for yourself. "Ah bissel, ah bissel, macht ah fille shissel. .!"

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