

It Once Happened...

Beyond Expectations

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The police did not give explanations. They just ordered the daughter, a young and innocent girl to accompany them. The desperate cries of the family made no difference. The police officers took the daughter and left.

The house of the girl's family was situated at the edge of the town of Vitebsk. The girl's father was a simple Jew, a blacksmith by profession. He always got up early in the morning, and joined a regular group of men for the saying of Tehillim (psalms). Between Mincha (the afternoon prayer) and Maariv (the evening prayer) he would attend a lecture in the book "Eyin Ya'akov" [a collection of all the non-legal sections of the Talmud]. From the morning till the evening he stood in the smithy, working hard for his meager earnings to support his large family.

They were all in shock. The girl's parents tried to find out at the local police station what was behind the arrest of their daughter, but to no avail. Only after much effort, involving the town's influential citizens, was the situation clarified.

It turned out that a few gentiles claimed that, in her father's smithy, they overheard the girl say that she was willing to abandon Judaism and convert to Christianity. This was an absurd falsehood, since the girl was innocent and G-d fearing. Perhaps the non-Jews had misunderstood a remark she made, or maybe they decided to invent an incident that never took place.

These men went to the town Slovda, a Christian settlement close to Vitebsk, and told the priest there that the daughter of the blacksmith wants to convert but her family is preventing her. They argued that since the girl was already eighteen years old, she wasn't subject to her parents' authority anymore and she should be allowed to do as she chooses. The priest used his connections in the police department, and officers were sent to take the girl.

Now all efforts were concentrated on trying to find out where the girl was kept. It was discovered that she was in the house of the priest in Slovda, crying constantly and begging to be allowed to go home to her family. The priest tried hard to tempt her, but she did not waver from her position.

This information relieved the parents somewhat, but soon they received a

worrying message. The priest had despaired of succeeding in convincing her and so it was decided to transfer her to an unknown location in the city of Orsha. Only one option to save her remained, to pay 500 rubles to a certain person.

The blacksmith immediately sold all the valuables he had in his house and managed to raise 250 rubles. He had no choice but to turn to his neighbors and ask for their help. They immediately undertook to assist him and went all out to find the rest of the money. By the end of the day they had collected a similar sum from generous, good hearted Jews.

At nightfall they were still 70 rubles short. The story became known in the Chabad shul (synagogue) in town. Quickly another 25 rubles were collected. Then the Chassid Chaim Moshe stood up and promised to pledge another 45 rubles from the money he would earn from commissions in the coming weeks.

Chaim Moshe Alexander was a well-known figure in Vitebsk. He was a simple Jew. Poverty reigned in his house. He was in debt over his head. The Rebbe Rayatz (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn), the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, from whom the story is known, said that as a child he once visited Chaim Moshe at home. He lived in a dilapidated house, more like a ruin, in a side street near the river. Shocking destitution was lurking in each corner.

Chaim Moshe earned his living from brokerage businesses between dealers in cotton and the owners of the produce of the forests. This is how he lived for about twenty-two years.

Despite his own precarious situation, he was an extremely generous man and gave a lot of charity. Even when he did not have a penny in his pocket, he would dedicate a great deal of his time taking care of the sick and poor, negotiating between the rich and the poor, who, because of his assistance, received help and support.

Everybody was astounded at the enormous amount he pledged to pay for the release of the girl. Thanks to him the whole sum was now available. The next day the good news became known, the daughter of the blacksmith was freed!

Some time after this, a respectable merchant from the town of Smolensk came to the Rebbe Rashab (Rabbi Shalom Dovber) the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. The merchant was in urgent need of advice concerning his forests

that were mortgaged to the bank. The Rebbe looked at him and said "My advice is that you go to the main directors of the bank, in Petersburg, and take Chaim Moshe of Vitebsk with you. He should speak to the bank managers for you."

The merchant didn't hesitate. He traveled to Vitebsk and gave Chaim Moshe the message of the Rebbe. The Chassid gladly agreed and together they set out for Petersburg.

The bank manager was charmed by the personality of Chaim Moshe. He generously agreed to the deal Chaim Moshe suggested. The merchant couldn't believe his ears. He never dreamed of such an agreement. He gave Chaim Moshe a generous brokerage commission of 2500 ruble!

But this was not the end of the story.

The bank manager invited Chaim Moshe and proposed to him to become his secretary and deputy. He promised him a high salary and that the bank would arrange for him a permit of residence in Petersburg.


There and then Chaim Moshe received 5000 ruble moving expenses to Petersburg and to buy any furniture he might need. This is how Chaim Moshe the pauper became the vice president of the most respected bank in Petersburg.

In his luxurious apartment in Petersburg many charity gatherings were held, and Chaim Moshe was always the first donor. Every time he would point out that he knew the taste of poverty, penury and lack.


Also, each year, on the anniversary of the day that he signed the contract with the bank, he would gather his relatives and friends and start his story with the announcement: "I used to be poor..." At the same opportunity he would give much charity openly and secretly.

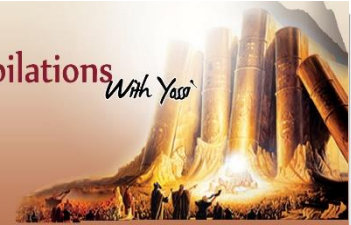
The Rebbe Rayatz ended the story, "From this previously poor person one can learn a lot, but we can learn from how he was as a rich person even more."

Reprinted from an email from KabbalaOnline.org.



Shabbat Times - Parshat Metzora

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
 Jerusalem	6:28	7:41	8:21
Tel Aviv	6:43	7:43	
Haifa	6:35	7:44	
Be'er Sheva	6:45	7:43	



The Baal Shem Tov and the Empty Glass

By Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson

Every year, in honor of Passover, members of the Baal Shem Tov's household purchased a large quantity of new glasses to be used for the duration of the holiday.

Of course, following Jewish law, the glasses that were to be used would first be immersed in a mikvah.

The glasses came in a variety of shapes and sizes. Now, in Jewish literature there is a system for measuring liquids, with specific names for the various amounts. In the Baal Shem Tov's home, the glasses were referred to by the Jewish name for the amount of liquid they were able to contain. Thus, a glass that contained three ounces or so was called a *revi'it* glass, etc.

Before Passover, the Baal Shem Tov would look through the glasses and instruct which cups could be set upon the table and which should be set aside. He provided no reasons for his directives, but everyone knew that surely his reasoning was sound. Thus passed the first seven days of Passover.

Now, the final meal on Passover, known as Moshiach's meal, was special. It was open to the

public; everyone who passed through the Sage's door was free to enter and partake of the festivities. Before the meal began, the Baal Shem Tov instructed that a certain cup be removed from the table because it had not been immersed.

During the meal, a newcomer entered and asked for some wine. "Sorry," he was told, "but there are no more clean cups."

"What do you mean?" he asked with surprise, pointing to the cup that had been set aside, "I see a clean cup right over here that no one is using!"

"Oh," he was told, "that cup has not been immersed in the mikvah and must not be used."

"It doesn't matter," he replied dismissively, reaching for the cup.

At that point, the Baal Shem Tov, who had hitherto been silent during the exchange, spoke with sadness. "He just testified about himself."

The words were mysterious to everyone aside from the man himself. Hearing the Rebbe's gentle words of rebuke, he admitted his shortcoming. It was true. He and his wife were not particular about the laws of family purity.

Inspired, they resolved to mend their ways.

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מצורע - הגדול
 This week is sponsored in honor of the Bar Mitzvah of Yechiel Yakov Krakowski
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The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 11
 MITZVOT ASEH: 11
 MITZVOT LO TAASEH: NONE

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 90
 NUMBER OF WORDS: 1274
 NUMBER OF LETTERS: 4697

This year, (5782 / 2022) Parshat Metzora is a special Shabbat. It is Shabbat HaGadol: (Lit. 'the Great Shabbat');

The Shabbat preceding Pesach is called Shabbat HaGadol because it was the day when the Jews were to take the sheep to be used for the Korban Pesach four days later. (This means that the first Pesach was on a Wednesday).

After nine plagues, the Egyptians were powerless to react to the slaughter of one of their gods. The Bnei Yisrael, of course, didn't know this, and therefore displayed tremendous faith in Hashem prior to Yetziat Mitzrayim. We remember this event with a special Haftarah, Malachi 3:4 - 24, where again great faith and trust in Hashem is emphasized. The Haftarah concludes with the call to remember the teachings of Moshe and informs us that Hashem will send Eliyahu Hanavi to herald the great and awesome day when Bnei Yisrael will again experience redemption. This is yet another possible reason for the name Shabbat HaGadol, - that "great day" mentioned in the Haftarah.

Traditionally on Shabbat HaGadol the Rabbi lectures about the observance and meaning of Pesach to his congregation, teaching the laws of Pesach, so that the families can prepare properly for the Chag. Which leads to another interpretation of Shabbat HaGadol - "the Shabbat of the Leader" or of the Rabbi. A more novel explanation is that the people returning from the synagogue later than usual on this Shabbat because of the unusually long speech that was customary on this day. Thus this Shabbat seemed "great," i.e., longer than the other Shabbatot.

Whatever the reason for the name, it is customary to recite part of the Haggadah on Shabbat HaGadol, from "עבדים היינו - Avadim Hayinu" to "לכפר על כל עוונותינו" - Lechaper Al Kol Avonoteinu."

HAFTORA: Malachi II 3:4-24 (repeating verse 23 at the end).

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 for the year 2022 / 5782
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 And in memory of his close friend and mentor, Mr. Mendy Klein, ר' מנחם משה בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא ז"ל, And Mrs Chani Philipson, דבורה חנה ע"ה בת מנחם מענדל שליט"א

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