



The Saintly Lawyer

Once, many of the various factions of the Zionist movement called a meeting in Versailles, a suburb of Paris, France. The main topic on the agenda was what should be done with the son of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, i.e. how to stop the Frierdiker Rebbe, the only son of the Rebbe Rashab from meddling into 'their' affairs, and if necessary how should they retaliate against him.

The Rebbe Rashab and his son were in Paris at that time. [I don't know whether they traveled specifically in connection with this meeting or if they were there for other reasons as well.] After hearing from some of the participants what was being discussed, they soon realized that the situation was extremely critical and that the Frierdiker Rebbe definitely needed someone to speak at that meeting in his defense.

Originally, they decided to hire a lawyer who would explain and defend the Frierdiker Rebbe's actions and soothe their anger. However, after giving the matter additional thought, they concluded that no lawyer, as good as he may be would be able to sway them from their sworn anger against the Frierdiker Rebbe. If he would convince them that the Frierdiker Rebbe had the right to act as he did, this might infuriate the Zionists even more, through his actions, he was continuously preventing them from achieving

their goals of infiltrating into his Yeshiva, etc. Their frustration had reached the boiling point and they were planning to retaliate against him personally Chas V'shalom. The only solution, as dangerous as it may be, was for the Frierdiker Rebbe himself to enter the 'lion's den'. Only he himself would be able to successfully and persuasively answer them on their numerous complaints and thereby mollifying them. It was therefore decided that the Frierdiker Rebbe would come to the meeting, masquerading as a lawyer who wished to speak in the defense of the accused.

The Frierdiker Rebbe attended the gather wearing a toupee as part of his disguise. The Zionists proceeded to voice their accusations against him, describing his ongoing war against them and the many plans he had successfully thwarted. There is no choice, they concluded but to take the most extreme measures to stop his activities.

When they concluded enumerating their charges, the 'lawyer' stood up and replied, 'All your accusations against the son of the Lubavitcher Rebbe are based on the premise that he hates you personally. That is absolutely false! He does not hate you nor is he fighting against you personally. Rather, being that he is a religious Jew, he is doing his utmost to protect Judaism from the changes the Zionists are trying to implement. He has

nothing personal against you.'

In reply to this defense, they asked, 'Surely his father the Lubavitcher Rebbe is extremely religious as well, following every commandment of the Torah down to the minutest detail. Yet, he isn't fighting us. The only one opposing us with such vigor, is his son. It is his son's vendetta against us and it is not the outcome of a religious obligation as you state.'

To this he replied, 'As you all know his father is overly occupied with many important issues concerning the Jewish people. If he would be occupied with this issue, much of the communal work for the welfare of all our brethren, religious and non-religious alike would suffer. Therefore, his son has accepted this battle upon himself, allowing his father to remain focused on those issues. All of their communal work is part of their religious obligation and commitment to the Jewish nation. If you would not attempt to uproot Jewish tradition etc., rather just focus on settling Jews in Zion, he definitely would make peace with you.'

The Frierdiker Rebbe continued to speak as his own defense lawyer for almost an hour and a half. He finally succeeded to convince them to drop their evil intentions of harming him.

As he was concluding his presentation, the Frierdiker Rebbe [who had an extremely



He said to himself, "I need to rest for a few moments and recoup my strength. If they are indeed chasing me, I will definitely hear the crunching of the snow and the snapping of the twigs early enough to give me time to escape."

But the mental exhaustion of the past few hours, together with the physical exertion of running such a long distance took more strength than he anticipated. Shortly after sitting down he fell into a deep sleep.

Meanwhile, the Rebbe Rashab was waiting anxiously for his son to return, but the Frierdiker Rebbe was still nowhere to be seen. The Rebbe Rashab summoned his attendant Tzemach and said to him, "I am fearful that something has happened to my son. Take the horse and the sled and go through the forest to the city. Take along strong vodka and a change of warm clothing as well, just in case you find him asleep and frozen from the cold. If this is indeed the case, wash his hands and chest with the vodka and cover him with the warm clothing."

Following the Rebbe's instructions, Tzemach immediately began his search and after a short amount of time indeed found the Frierdiker Rebbe on the side of the road, asleep and frozen in the snow. He revived him with the vodka and clothing and brought him back safely to his lodgings.

[I heard this story from Tzemach himself, when I was in Rostov for the Yomim Noraim. (Printed in Oros B'afeila pg. 126-7)]



As told by HaRav HaChossid Reb Meir a"h Avtzon in his sefer O'rois B'afeilah and translated by his son Rabbi Sholom Avtzon.

keen sense of hearing] overheard one of the assembled whispering to his friend, "That was an amazing defense, but I have reason to believe that this defense lawyer is none other than the Lubavitcher Rebbe's son himself!"

"I have had the opportunity to hear the Frierdiker Rebbe speak on numerous occasions and this 'lawyer's' voice is strikingly similar. In a few moments, after he sits down, I will go over to congratulate him and 'accidentally' push his head, and we will see if his hair is natural or if he is wearing a toupee masquerading as a lawyer."

Hearing these ominous words, instead of sitting down at the conclusion of his oration,

he quietly slipped out of the room. Thankfully, no one took immediate notice or paid any attention to his 'temporary' departure. However, he was fearful that his disappearance would soon be noticed and it might create mayhem. So as soon as he left the building and turned the corner, he began running with all his strength.

Seeing a forest nearby, the Frierdiker Rebbe decided to take cover there. However, as he was still too close to them for comfort, he continued to run deeper into the woods. Eventually, the exertion coupled with the bitter cold forced him to stop for a much needed rest.

**hearing these ominous
words, he quietly
slipped out of the room**