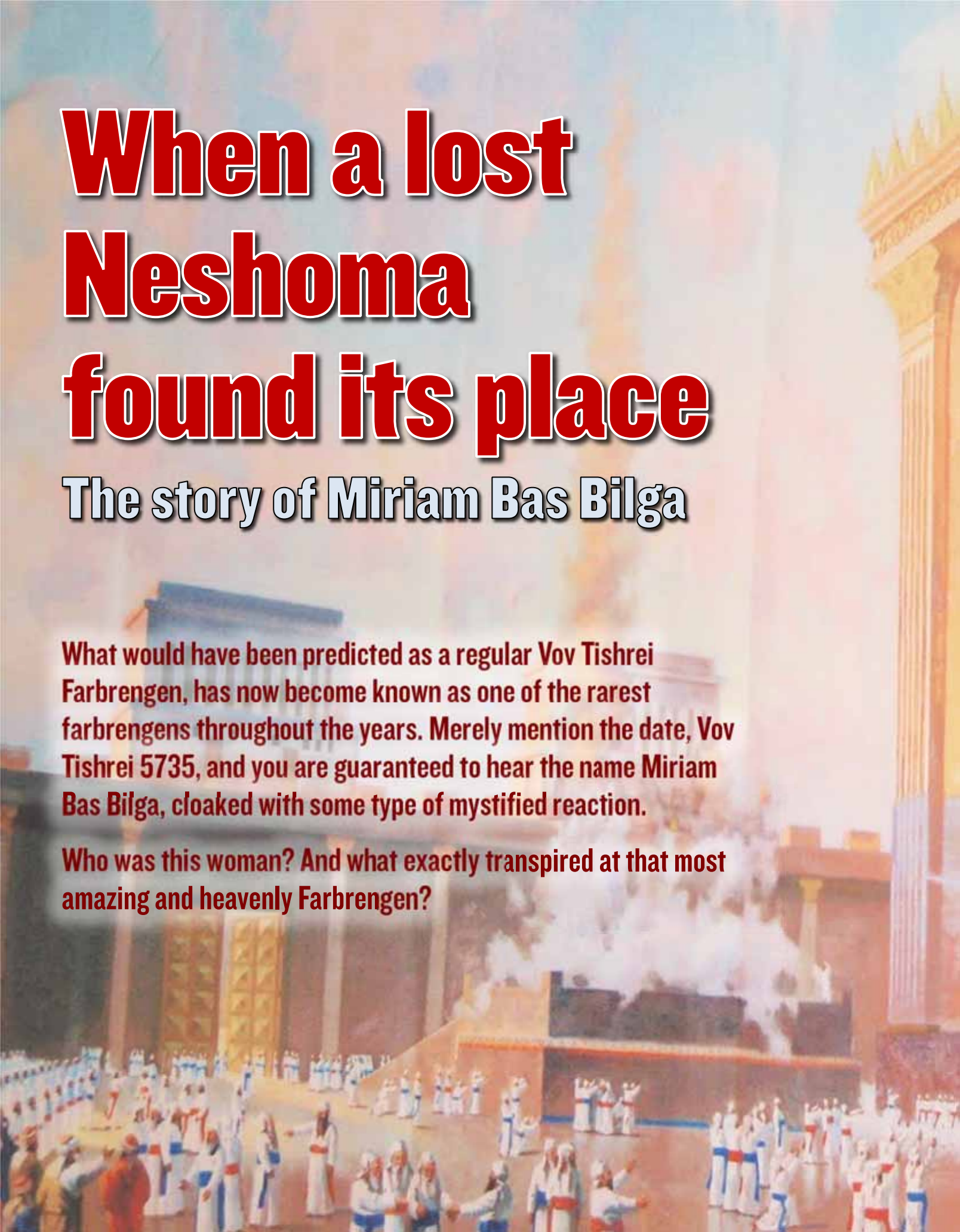


# **When a lost Neshoma found its place**

**The story of Miriam Bas Bilga**

What would have been predicted as a regular Vov Tishrei Farbrengen, has now become known as one of the rarest farbrengens throughout the years. Merely mention the date, Vov Tishrei 5735, and you are guaranteed to hear the name Miriam Bas Bilga, cloaked with some type of mystified reaction.

Who was this woman? And what exactly transpired at that most amazing and heavenly Farbrengen?





**Sunday,** Vov Tishrei 5735 marked Rebbetzin Channa's tenth Yortzeit.

As every year for the previous ten years, there was an official Farbrengen Lekovod the Yortzeit, and as always the Rebbe made a Siyum on a Masechta. But from the moment the Rebbe walked in, it was anything but usual. This year there was something new. Very uncommon for a weekday Farbrengen, (especially as it was not Motzei Shabbos), the Rebbe washed for bread, and at its conclusion gave out Kos Shel Brocho.

Another unusual thing the Rebbe did was that he sung two Niggunim by himself with Chasidim repeating the chorus. One was a more common song, Tzomoh Lecha Nafshi, but the other was highly unusual: Becho Botchu Avoseinu. (So far I have found only twice the Rebbe singing Becho Botchu like that: Yud Beis Tamuz 5730 and Vov Tishrei 5735.

The Rebbe began the first Sicha, by explaining why he chose to make a Siyum on Maseches Sukka.

"Seemingly," said the Rebbe, "it would make more sense to make a siyum on Maseches Yuma which speaks about Yom Kippur which is in close proximity. However, being that Yom Kippur is higher than eating and drinking and we are in middle of Seuda we will make the siyum on Maseches Sukka."

The Rebbe also mentioned that the end of Sukka, the Gemora brings a story of a young girl which has a connection to the new Mivtza that had recently been started.

[Mere days prior to this Farbrengen, on 24 Elul, the Rebbe had launched Mivtza Neshek.]

In the second and third Sichos, the Rebbe answered different questions people had about Mivtza Neshek and in general emphasized the importance of this Mivtza.

To mention just a few:

Someone had been questioning why there was a need to encourage young girls to light, when in reality they only become obligated in this Mitzva once they are married and have a home of their own. There had also been a commotion surrounding the young girl's recital of a Brocha, "Was this really allowed and necessary?" people were saying. The Rebbe responded very strongly, explaining how critical this was.

In the fourth Sicha, the Rebbe returned to the end of Maseches Sukka.

Quoting the final Mishna of the Masechta that the Shecting ring and window of the Mishmor of Bilga was locked, the Gemora brings a story to explain.

Miriam Bas Bilga was a young girl who had unfortunately veered from the path of Torah, so much so that she married a Greek officer, the one that conquered Yerusholayim and offered an impure animal<sup>1</sup> on the Mizbeiach. When her



“husband” went to overtake the Beis Hamikdosh she went along with him.

Entering the Azorah, she climbed onto the Mizbeiach, took off her slipper and smacked the Mizbeiach and in a loud voice she cried out, “Lukas, Lukas! (Fox, fox! - referring to the Mizbeiach) for how long will you eat the money of the Yidden and not protect them?!”

The Gemora asks why the whole Mishmor was punished because of the actions of one girl, and concludes that she must have heard such words at home and “woe to a Rosh and woe to his neighbor”. Hence the entire Mishmor was punished.

The Masechta ends off on a positive note by teaching that if such is the effects of a bad neighbor then how much more so will the righteousness of a Tzaddik effect his surrounding; “*Tov latzadik tov Lishcheino.*”

After going through the details of the story, the Rebbe began analyzing the details. It was a time full of persecution and corruption yet there was only one girl who abandoned Yiddishkeit. She converted and married a goy. Yet for which one of her actions was a punishment incurred? Not her “conversion” and not her marriage to a goy, but rather her actions and outburst on the Mizbeiach!

At this point in the Farbrengen the Rebbe was extremely emotional, as he went on to find merit in Miriam’s actions. A girl in such a state was still bothered why Hashem does not help the Yidden! As the Rebbe quoted her words “Lukas, Lukas” he cried bitterly. This is teaching a most powerful lesson, explained the Rebbe, despite what she appeared to be on the outside, the lowest of the low, her inner “Yid” was still very much alive. So much so, that it bothered her why the Yidden were not being protected! And this is the positive thing we need to learn from this story, otherwise why would the Gemora discuss it?

The Chassidim present and those listening to the broadcast, knew they were witnessing something beyond their comprehension. They could only watch in silence as the Rebbe accomplished great things in heaven. “Something Himeldig just happened”, was the feeling going round. But of course nobody had any idea what it was.

A short while later, on Simchas Torah day, the Rebbe mentioned, that he was asked why is he being Melamed Zchus on Miriam Bas Bilgoh?

The Rebbe replied with a number of explanations. First of all, there is a Mishna instructing one to be Melamed Zchus on everyone, and this has to be brought

out in speech (not just to think about a Zchus, but to say it!)

Secondly, there is a story about the Alter Rebbe which expresses the greatness of being Melamed Zchus.

Someone came to the Alter Rebbe saying that a Ruach (today we call it a Dibuk) had entered into him. Hearing this, the Alter began to be Melamed Zchus on those who killed Zecharya Hanaavi. After this the Ruach left, and he explained that the Neshomos of those people had entered into this man and by being Melamed Zchus he elevated them and they left.

The Rebbe did not dwell on what we learn out from the story, but just continued explaining the Siyum, as his participation in the Kinus Torah which was being held the next day (as always on Isru Chag).

However, Chasidim understood, that probably what the Rebbe had done on Vov Tishrei, was that he rectified or elevated the Neshomo of Miriam Bas Bilga!

Imagine! So many years had passed since the story of Miriam Bas Bilga, it was about 2 hundred years before the Churban of the second Beis Hamikdosh, and this Neshomo had to wait about 2000 years, till 5735 to be rectified at the Rebbe’s Farbrengen in 770! ■

1. Known as a “Dovor Acheir”

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