



The Aguna's Son

This story was transcribed by the Frieddiker Rebbe and first published in the Hatamim Journal:

"...My saintly maternal grandmother - Rebbetzin Rivka - told us that a certain agunah once came to her father-in-law, the saintly Rebbe [the Tzemach Tzedek]. She brought along her son, who was a lad of eleven or twelve. The boy was totally mute, and also hard of hearing.

At that time, agunos were only permitted to enter the outer room of the Yechidus room, while the door [to the Rebbe's room] remained open. The Rebbe would sit inside, and listen to each one's petition and history. Then, he would reply to the attendant Reb Chayim Dov "Tell her to travel to such-and-such place" or "tell her to consult Rabbi so-and-so," etc.

This particular agunah would come to the Rebbe several times a week, bringing her son, and desperately hoped to merit a Yechidus. At the same time, she would bring food for the family of the Rebbe. Several weeks passed, but so many people were waiting, that her turn to enter had not yet arrived.

When she could not bear the wait any longer, she instructed her son to hide under the table in the minyan room where the Rebbe received people for yechidus, cautioning him that when the Rebbe began to receive people, he should rise from his hiding place and hand the Rebbe her petition. The lad followed his mother's instructions, and sat under the table, hidden by the table cloth and unseen by anyone.

The procedure was that one attendant would stand near the table, while the other attendant - Reb Elya Leib - would assign the order in which the chassidim were to

enter. Suddenly, the lad emerged from his hiding place. The attendant became very angry and shouted, "Sheigetz!"

To this, the Rebbe replied, "Simple faith lights up his eyes; greatness is given to certain individuals only for the good of the Jewish people."

He then turned to the boy and uttered the following holy words: "Go and tell your mother that your father is alive. She should travel to Denenburg."

My grandmother concluded:

This agunah had been sitting in my home and weeping about her misfortune. Her husband had been missing for seven years. Several rabbis had given her permission to remarry, on condition that the Rebbe agreed.

Suddenly, her son entered and cried out in a loud voice, "The Rebbe told me to tell Mother that Father is alive, and that she should travel to Denenburg." At this, the agunah fainted.

This double miracle caused a great commotion. But my mother-in-law remarked:

"Just look at what everyone's gotten so excited about! At my father's and my grandfather's court, miracles lay scattered about, and no one bothered to pick them up. Just look what's happening, and what's caused so much excitement!

Grandfather [The Tzemach Tzedek] said that he would prefer it if people understood Chassidus. As for getting excited over miracles, we leave that for the chassidim of Vohlynia!"¹ ■

1. The Rebbe of Volyina was known as someone who did many miracles yet rarely acknowledged them.