

THE ULTIMATE PARTNER

*Adapted from the remarks
of Mr. Felix Sater
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MR. FELIX SATER WITH
RABBI SHOLOM MOSHE PALTIEL

I am beyond honored and a bit choked up to be standing up here in front of all of you to speak about a subject that for about a week now, I've been contemplating how to best give over.

There is something that I would like to share with all of you. It is a story that happened with me; I didn't hear it from someone else, and it did not happen too long ago, and I have multiple witnesses who could attest to this incident. I'll attempt to recount it to you to the best of my ability:

There is a man whose picture hangs here at my side – the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Earlier today I was at the Ohel to pray, to thank him, and to ask him for blessings. True, my family and I are not very religious and could be considered rather modern.

While there today, I was startled to meet Rabbi Sholom Moshe Paltiel, the Chabad Rabbi of Port Washington. We were both amidst writing our notes to the Rebbe, when the Rabbi received a

phone call from another Chabad board member, a gentleman by the name of Michael Samuel. I've known Michael for a number of years. For a moment, the Rabbi passed the phone over to me, and Michael said, "So Felix, you've tapped in to my secret!" I was quite familiar with what he meant, and that's what I'd like to share with you. I'd like to tell you all a secret; I want to tell you about your own birthright:

Approximately a month or so ago, I started a business transaction with people who I would consider anti-Semitic - Muslims from Arab countries. It was a real-estate transaction that was taking place in Turkey, and I did not believe that it would go through. One day, I discussed my doubts with Rabbi Paltiel and he said, "You know, you should go visit the Rebbe about this" and I willfully agreed. So we drove over to the Ohel together, and to be honest, I was a bit timid at first; I thought this was more of a religious ritual or something to that

effect, but then the Rabbi corrected my notion and explained: Make this a partnership. The Torah talks about giving a tenth of one's earnings to charity. Promise the Rebbe that you'll give one tenth of the profit that comes in from this transaction to charity, and you can be sure that all will go well.

And so, that's precisely what I did. I wrote a note to the Rebbe, and hoped for the best.

Well, I traveled to Turkey and we did the transaction, but when it was time to get paid there was nothing forthcoming! I got a phone call from a representative of the other side who said "Sorry, there is no money for you. We've already used it for another business deal. Perhaps at a later stage we'll come up with something for you..."

I was devastated! I knew it was all over. When I got home, I called Rabbi Paltiel and explained that things were not going well. Suddenly the Rabbi interrupted me: "Just a second. Wasn't this the same deal



regarding which we visited the Rebbe? You have another partner in this deal. Go over and tell the Rebbe what's happening!"

Initially, I was very reluctant but we drove over, the Rabbi and I, very late that night. When we reached the Ohel, I began to write a note to the Rebbe something to the effect of this: You must help me collect the money! I promised to give a large portion of the profit from this deal to tzeddakah, and I really wish to be able to carry through with it...

We arrived back at my house at 1:30 in the morning. As we sat in my driveway, the Rabbi attempted to enliven my spirit a bit and assure me to have faith that everything would turn out alright. I wasn't convinced. To me, the situation seemed hopeless.

One thing that I can assure you is that there was no way in the world that these people ever intended on paying me. They felt no need to do so. Why pay a Jewish boy from New York for a transaction that took place in Turkey? Especially given the fact that I had already dealt with these same people over a year before, and they had stiffed me on the last deal as well!

When they had called me earlier to tell me that they wouldn't give me the money, I had asked them to at least pay in small installments or even partially, but they wouldn't hear of any of it.

It was a sleepless night for me. When I awoke just a few hours later, at 5:30, I noticed that there was a text message waiting for me on my phone, from the lawyer of the other side. It read: "Don't worry. Tomorrow we're sending you the money." I was not sure what to think. As I mentioned, I had asked them to give me at least something, so I thought that they may have resolved to pay me only symbolically.

When I arrived at work that morning, there was an email awaiting me from the



bank. It was hard to believe, but it was true - not only had they paid me in full for this transaction, but they also paid up for the transaction of over a year ago!

One would have expected that they would call me soon thereafter to request something of me, or at least to allow me to express my appreciation, but they did not!

This is by no means a coincidence. By the laws of nature it was absolutely impossible for this to have happened. I believe from the bottom of my heart, as does my family and everyone else who

knows about this transaction, that this was the work of the Hand of Hashem - through the Rebbe.

I'm not that religious of a person to be standing here and saying this, but it is true!

My friends, if you ever need something; anything, be it success in business, health for a loved one or whatever it may be, I urge you: Go to the Rebbe! Go there and pray, and ask for blessings. If you open your heart and you really want it or you need it - it will happen for you.

I am living proof of it. ■