



A Matter of Little Money

Reb Tzvi Gurary was one day a successful businessman with a booming company and the next a criminal facing charges of tax evasion and cheating the government. This was life in Russia in those days, smoldering debris ready to burst into flames at any given moment. And now Reb Tzvi's business and life appeared to be disintegrating into ashes like the very tobacco he sold.

Police officers raided his company and after conducting a thorough search, seized all his accounting books and shut down the factory.

At first, Reb Tzvi was not that concerned, figuring that things would clear up quickly. With

time, however, he realized that the government was taking the accusations very seriously and was in the midst of preparing a strong case against him.

During this nerve-racking time, a member of his family was by the Rebbe Rashab and used the opportunity to share with the Rebbe all that was going on with Reb Tzvi. The Rebbe replied, "It is a shame on the few rubles..!"

This was understood to mean that all would work out but it would cost him a small sum of money.

Following this, Reb Tzvi himself went to Lubavitch.

The Rebbe Rashab urged him strongly to keep the matter out of the courts because if it ended up there it could cost him a considerable fortune and

turn into something much bigger than necessary.

"Do your best to reach a settlement," he explained, "as would two litigants."

Reb Tzvi explained to the Rebbe that he was hesitant about taking this approach, because just a year prior, a similar incident had taken place in Petersburg and things did not turn out well for the tobacco merchant. That particular merchant was Turkish and so a Turkish minister had come down to plead to the Russian government on behalf of his fellow citizen, but his request for a settlement was rejected. The Russian official explained that the government had no authority to take money from him without a court case. If the judge found him guilty he would pay;

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בת ר' עזריאל ע"ה
שיימאן
נלב"ע כ"ז אייר ה'תשע"ג
תנ"צ'ב'ה'
נדפס ע"י
משפחתה שיחיו



if he was innocent then no money would have to be given.

As soon as Reb Tzvi finished raising his concern, the Rebbe waved it away and said, "This is of no relevance to you. Take the path I have laid out for you, and with Hashem's help we will see what comes from this!"

In need of an accomplished defense attorney, Reb Tzvi traveled to Petersburg and retained the services of a well-known lawyer.

Over the next period of time, he communicated back and forth with the Rebbe. In the letters and telegrams, the Rebbe made it clear that Reb Tzvi himself should appear before the minister and negotiate a settlement.

The lawyer was infuriated with this very notion, knowing full well that Reb Tzvi Gurary was an observant Jew. "Does your Rebbe think that over there in the capital it is like a yeshiva?! If this is the way things will proceed then I will have to remove myself from this case entirely."

Miraculously, a direct meeting was set up between Reb Tzvi and the minister.

Upon his arrival at the appointed date and time, the minister's deputy received him and it was understood that they would move along with a settlement agreement. The minister instructed Reb Tzvi to take the signed document to the minister of his province, Poltava. The minister would then form a commission to look into

the matter and reach an agreement.

Following the initial negotiations and discussions, they let Reb Tzvi know that for a significant sum of money the matter would be closed and not be handed over to the courts.


Without hesitation and finally seeing the light at the end of the dark and painful tunnel, he immediately agreed.

When the Rebbe Rashab heard of this latest development, he instructed Reb Tzvi to go back and let them know that he was not able to pay that amount of money. "When they ask you why you initially agreed," continued the Rebbe, "tell them you only agreed because you had been threatened that if not

they would confiscate the tobacco factory from you."

A short while later, he was notified that nothing more could be done on his behalf because the decision had already been sent to the collection agency. However, the message concluded, the sum was not that great and they would look into it.

In the end, the fine was lowered considerably and with a payment of five-six thousand rubles the matter was closed.

The Rebbe's words rang loud and clear, "It will end with only a small loss of money..." 

*(Adapted from
Likkutei Sippurim Perlow,
p. 253)*