



Fire!

The Alter Rebbe's home in Vitebsk had a flat roof which he would often use as a quiet place to learn and daven.

On his first trip back home from Mezritch he went up to the roof by himself. No one was concerned about his whereabouts or condition as this was fairly routine.

That suddenly changed when his family members heard a loud thump; it sounded like the Alter Rebbe had fallen down.

His wife, Rebbetzin Sterna, and his brother-in-law, Reb Eliezer, rushed upstairs to see what had happened. Upon reaching

the roof, they found him sprawled out with outstretched hands and feet. It seemed to them that he had fainted and they attempted to wake him up.

"Wait," said Reb Eliezer upon closer examination, "it does not seem like he has fainted. Those are not the symptoms he is showing. I think it's best if we left him be."

After a while, the Alter Rebbe woke up and explained what had taken place.

"While I was in the middle of davening, I saw in heaven a terrible decree against the city of Vitebsk. It was destined to be burnt

to the ground! I quickly started to daven that the city should be spared this tragedy and remain standing and safe. *Baruch Hashem*, I was able to remove the edict. However, from every decree, there remains a small mark. The mark and minute fulfillment of this will be that one house will burn down but it won't be in the Jewish ghetto."

As soon as the Alter Rebbe concluded his story, terrible cries were heard from the streets of Vitebsk. "Fire! Fire! Fire! Quickly gather some precious items and run away. Save yourselves and children!"

Hearing the alarming cries, the members of the Alter Rebbe's household immediately began scrambling around to salvage as many valuables as they could.

Seeing all this, the Alter Rebbe called out, "What are you afraid of?! I already told you that only one house will burn down and it won't affect us."

The commotion dissipated, the fire was put out and indeed it was exactly as the Alter Rebbe had said. **1**

(Reshimos Devorim (new edition), page 74, story 9)