



לזכות

הילדה בצבאות ה' חי' מושקא תחי'  
בקשר עם הולדתה למז"ט  
ביום ט"ו שבט ה'תשע"ו, שנת הקהל  
נדפס ע"י ולזכות הורי'  
הרה"ת ר' יששכר  
ומרת שרה רבקה שיחיו אייזנברג  
ושיזכו לגדלה לתורה חופה ולמעש"ט  
כרצון וברכת כ"ק אדמו"ר

# Lost and Found

## JOURNEY OF A SPECIAL NESHAMAH

In the city of Pinsk there once lived a Yid by the name Reb Yaakov the Shamesh. Reb Yaakov was a Chossid of the Baal Shem Tov and a hidden *tzadik*. He got the appointment and the title “*shamesh*” because of the following story:

For many years, Reb Yaakov and his wife were sadly not blessed with children. Reb Yaakov’s wife traveled to the Baal Shem Tov to request a *bracha*. With tears in her eyes she asked that she be blessed with a son.

The Baal Shem Tov gave her a *bracha*, and assured her that she would indeed merit to have a son. She traveled home with a happy heart, and joyously told her husband about the *bracha* that she had received from the Baal Shem Tov.

Sure enough, one year later Reb Yaakov and his wife had a beautiful baby boy. They were overjoyed; after so many years of childlessness, their son was their pride and joy.

When the child turned two they brought him to the Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov held the young child, kissed him, and then instructed the parents to return home. As soon as they returned home the child suddenly passed away.

Reb Yaakov and his wife were shattered. After so many painful years without children they were finally blessed with a child, and here he had been taken from them so soon. Their grief was too much to bear.

As soon as the *shivah* was over, they traveled to the Baal Shem Tov to pour out their sorrow.

The Baal Shem Tov consoled them with the following story:

There was once a powerful king who was extremely wealthy and lacked no physical possession. However, that meant nothing to him, for one thing denied him happiness; he had no children. He was extremely pained that he would leave this world with no one to inherit his kingdom.

The king came with his issue to his closest, most trusted advisor. The advisor told the king, “There is none who can help you except for the Jews, only their prayers will grant you a child.” The advisor therefore suggested that the king make a decree, stating that unless a son is born to the king within the year, all the Jews would be expelled from his kingdom.

The king followed the suggestion of his advisor, and made the decree, threatening the expulsion of all the Jews in his kingdom.

The Yidden in the kingdom were greatly worried by this decree, and immediately gathered in the shuls to daven that the *gezeira* be nullified. They fasted, said Tehillim, and poured out their hearts to Hashem.

Their heartfelt *tefillos* broke through all the gates of *shamayim*, and reached *Gan Eden*. There was one *neshamah* in *Gan Eden* that could not bear to see the Yidden suffering so greatly. This *neshamah* came before

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the *Kisei Hakavod* and said, “Master of the World, please send me down to the physical world. I will be born as the son of the king, just so long as it saves the Yidden from this terrible decree.”

It was agreed in *Beis Din Shel Maalah* that this holy *neshamah* would be sent down as it had requested. Sure enough, before the year was over, a son was born to the king.

The king was very proud of his son, and derived much joy and pleasure from seeing him grow. As soon as he was old enough to learn, the king hired the wisest professors to be his teachers. The young prince proved to be extremely bright and quickly progressed in every area of his studies. He soon outgrew his teachers, and was no longer satisfied with the subjects he was taught.

The prince complained to his father, and expressed to him his lack of satisfaction with his studies. The king looked for the wisest and most advanced scholar to teach his son. Finally, he decided to send the young prince to study with the pope, and receive private instruction from him. The pope agreed to serve as a teacher and mentor to the young prince, but with one condition. For two hours every day the prince would not be allowed to enter the pope’s study. During that time, the pope said, he would lock himself in the room and ascend to heaven. The king agreed to this condition, and the prince traveled to begin his studies with the pope.

The young prince however could not contain his curiosity. It bugged him to know what exactly the pope was doing during his time alone. One day the prince obtained a copy of the key to the pope’s private study and during the pope’s private time he suddenly entered the room.

The prince was surprised to find the pope wrapped in tallis and tefillin, swaying back and forth deeply involved in studying Torah!

The pope was frightened; his long kept secret identity as a Jew had been discovered. The prince calmed him, and explained that for a very long time he had been attracted to Judaism. “Now that I know you are a Jew, please show

me the way to learn about Judaism, so that one day I can convert, and join your faith.”

The pope agreed, and soon after, the prince traveled home. He did not mention anything of what had transpired to the king. After making his preparations, the prince left the palace, never to return. He dressed in the clothes of a poor farmer, and made his way to the border, eventually settling in a different country. There, he went through the process of conversion, and lived out the rest of his days as a Jew.

When his *neshamah* came once more before *Beis Din Shel Maalah*, none of the *malachim* dared to prosecute. This holy *neshamah* who had displayed such self sacrifice for the Jewish nation was held in the highest merit. However, there was one *malach* who came forward with a charge, how could this *neshamah* return to Gan Eden when for two years he had been taught by a non-jew? Therefore the decision was made in *Shamayim*, that for two years the *neshamah* would be sent down to be cared for by Yidden.

The Baal Shem Tov then told Reb Yaakov and his wife that this *neshamah* was born to them as their son. He explained to them that for two years they had been given the *zechus* to care for this holy *neshamah*, thus rectifying its one and only fault.

When Reb Yaakov and his wife heard this amazing story about their son’s *neshamah* and the incredible *mesirus nefesh*, they burst into tears. They explained to the Baal Shem Tov, that they had no idea of the holiness of their child. They asked for a *tikkun*, for maybe they had not treated the *neshamah* with the purity that it deserved.

The Baal Shem Tov thought deeply for a moment, and then said: “Reb Yaakov, you should become the *shamesh* in a shul. Pay close attention to the young children that come to shul but don’t yet know how to daven. Gather them in one place, and while the *minyan* davens, teach them to answer “Amen,” “*Yehei shmei rabbah*,” “*Borchu*,” and *Kedusha*. When the *sefer Torah* is carried to the *bimah* and then back to the *aron kodesh*, pick up the young children so that they can kiss the *sefer Torah*.”

To Reb Yaakov's wife the Baal Shem Tov said, "You should become a midwife, and take care of the newborns of the poor. When boys are born, be very careful that until the *bris*, *Krias Shema* be recited in the presence of the child. Distribute sweets so that children say *brachos* in front of the newborns. From the *bris* and onwards the boys should wear a *yarmulke*, and the parents should wash the baby's hands *negel vasser*, when they wake up.

The Baal Shem Tov then blessed them that Hashem bring them comfort, and heal their broken hearts.

Reb Yaakov and his wife returned home, and did as the Baal Shem Tov had instructed them. Reb Yaakov immediately became the *shamesh* in a very large but poor shul in Pinsk. His wife became a midwife. They both followed the Baal Shem Tov's instructions very carefully.

Reb Yaakov would gather the small children who came to shul, and during davening he would teach them to say "Amen," "*Yehei shmei rabbah*," "*Borchu*," and *Kedusha*. He would lift the children to kiss the *sefer Torah*, and to kiss the mezuzah when leaving the shul.

His wife became a midwife, and took special care of the infants of the poor. She would have the children who came to visit read *Krias Shema* with the infant, and would give them sweets in order that they say *brachos*. She made sure that after the *bris* the boys wore a *yarmulke*, even when they slept, and washed *negel vasser* when the woke up.

Two years passed, and Hashem finally blessed Reb Yaakov and his wife with a son, whom they named Aharon. This child would grow to become the great and famous *tzadik*, Reb Aharon of Karlin.

The Alter Rebbe repeated this story, and said, that there are seven lessons that can be learned:

1. We can see from here the incredible *mesirus nefesh* of the Baal Shem Tov. For it is known amongst *tzadikim* who have *ruach hakodesh* and *gilui Eliyahu*, that revealing secrets regarding *gilgulim* of *neshamos* is worthy of punishment. Nevertheless the Baal Shem Tov had *mesirus nefesh* to reveal the

story of the *neshamah* to Reb Yaakov and his wife in order to comfort them from their pain.

2. One must understand a hint, even from a single word. (For the Baal Shem Tov never told them, yet they understood that his directions were in order that they merit a second child. -Ed.)
3. When someone needs a *bracha*, the way to awaken Hashem's mercy is through practical *avodah*.
4. When a couple needs a *bracha*, although they are one unit, they each must do their own practical *avodah* to merit Hashem's mercy.
5. The great *zechus* of answering "Amen," "*Yehei shmei Rabbah*," "*Borchu*," and *Kedusha*, especially by young children.
6. The importance of Yiddische *minhagim*; specifically, kissing the *sefer Torah* when it is removed from, and returned to the *aron kodesh*, and kissing the mezuzah.
7. The great *zechus* of *chinuch* of young children, starting when they are newborns, for *chinuch* is a vessel for *Emunah*.<sup>1</sup>



The Frierdiker Rebbe once said<sup>2</sup>:

The Father of Reb Aharon Karliner was Reb Yaakov Shammes, one of the hidden *tzaddikim*, and a Chossid of the Baal Shem Tov. He would visit the houses of the poor women who had recently given birth and light the stove to feed their children.

That which is stated in Torah Ohr<sup>3</sup>, "Aharon shares the same letters as *nireh* (seen)", is a quote from the Baal Shem Tov regarding Reb Yaakov the Shamesh. The Baal Shem Tov said that Reb Yaakov sees *Elokus bemuchash*—perceptible G-dliness—and from that level of seeing will grow Aharon. The Baal Shem Tov said this a long time before Reb Aharon was born. **T**

1. This story was told by the Frierdiker Rebbe to Reb Avrohom Paris A"H in order that it be publicized. Printed in *Sefer HaToldos Rebbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov* p. 419.

2. *Sefer Hasichos* 5701 Page 152

3. *Parshas Tetzaveh* 82, B1

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