



How to Live Forever

Request Unanswered

The deep love that the Baal Shem Tov had for simple, G-d fearing Jews, who served Hashem wholeheartedly, is well known.

One such Yid was a young businessman named Reb Moshe Shlomo, who was a devoted Chossid of the Baal Shem Tov. Reb Moshe Shlomo made a good living, and would give generously of his earnings to the Baal Shem Tov. The Baal Shem Tov would use the funds to support hidden *tzadikim*, and to perform the mitzvah of *pidyon shvuyim*—redeeming Jews who were imprisoned by their landlords because they lacked the money needed to pay their rent.

The Baal Shem Tov blessed Reb Moshe Shlomo and he became very wealthy. As his wealth grew his tzedakah grew as well, and he continued to give larger and larger donations to the Baal Shem Tov.

His wife Rivkah was a good hearted and G-d fearing woman, who also gave generously to tzedakah and opened her home to many guests.

Sadly, however, fifteen years after their wedding Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife were still not blessed with children. He asked the Baal Shem Tov to bless him with

children, but the Baal Shem Tov blessed him instead with further success and prosperity. His request for a *bracha* for children remained unanswered.

The Talmidim of the Baal Shem Tov were very fond of Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife, knowing well of their honesty, *yiras shamayim*, generosity and good heartedness. They too petitioned the Baal Shem Tov to awaken the mercy of heaven on behalf of Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife, and bless them that they finally have children.

However, all of the requests of Reb Moshe Shlomo and the *talmidim* went unanswered by the Baal Shem Tov. Ten more years passed, and Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife still had no children. This pained Reb Moshe Shlomo and Rivkah deeply, and they became very sad and downhearted.

One summer day the Baal Shem Tov summoned Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife, and asked them, “Why do you look so downhearted and depressed? Hashem has blessed you with great wealth and good hearts, enabling you to give generously to so many people!”

Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife both burst into tears and replied, “How can we be happy when we have no children!?”

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' אברהם אבא הלוי שיחי'
רייטישק
והכלה המהוללה מרת רבקה שתחי'
הרטמן
לרגל חתונתם בשעטומ"צ
ביום ד' אלול ה'תשע"ו - שנת הקהל
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' יעקב יוחנן הלוי
וזוגתו מרת ברכה רבקה שיחיו
רייטישק



“What is the pain in that?” asked the Baal Shem Tov. They answered, “What is all this wealth worth if we have no children? After we pass away there will be no-one to carry on our memory.”

The Baal Shem Tov told them, “Tomorrow I will be departing on a journey with my *talmidim*, prepare yourselves for you will be joining us on this journey.”

Identically Named

The next day the Baal Shem Tov selected ten of his *talmidim* to join him. Reb Moshe Shlomo paid for wagons to carry them all; the Baal Shem Tov led the procession in his private wagon followed by the wagons of his *talmidim* and the wagon of Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife.

They traveled for six days, passing through many towns and villages. They stopped in a small town to spend Shabbos which was their fourth day on the road. In each village that they passed, Reb Moshe Shlomo would seek out the poor Yidden and distribute tzedakah generously.

Finally on Monday, they reached their destination—a small city near Brody. The Baal Shem Tov stopped at the home of a certain Yid, and entered the house followed by Reb Moshe Shlomo, his wife, and all the *talmidim*. The host greeted them and gave them a large room to rest in, and showed the Baal Shem Tov to his private room.

After resting for a while from their long journey, the Baal Shem Tov came out and said that they will all go out to see the city.

The Baal Shem Tov, Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife, and the *talmidim* left the house and began walking down the main avenue. They soon came across a group of young children playing in the sand. The Baal Shem Tov approached the children and asked them their names.

The first child answered, “My name is Baruch Moshe.” The second said, “My name is Baruch Moshe also.” The third and fourth answered that their names too were Baruch Moshe. The fifth child was named Moshe

Mordechai, and the sixth Baruch Eliyahu. There was a young girl there as well who was named Bracha Leah.

Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife were surprised at this, as were the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov, but no one dared ask what this was about.

The Baal Shem Tov just smiled and the group continued on.

They encountered a young girl, and the Baal Shem Tov asked her what her name was, to which she replied, “Bracha Leah.” The same occurred when they met a larger group of girls—all were named Bracha Leah.

This went on as the procession continued through the city; they encountered another young boy named Baruch Moshe, and a girl called Bracha Miriam. The group passed a *cheder* where they could hear the sounds of young boys learning Torah. The Baal Shem Tov entered with Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife, and asked the young boys what their names were. Six of them answered that their names were Baruch Moshe. The rest each gave their names in turn—Baruch Avraham, Moshe Yosef, Baruch Shmuel, Baruch David, Baruch Chaim, Baruch Yitzchak, Baruch Shalom, Baruch Tuvia, Moshe Yitzchak, Moshe, Moshe Zecharia, Moshe Yisroel, and Moshe Shlomo.

The *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov, who were waiting outside the *cheder*, began discussing how amazing it was that most of the boys in the city seemed to be named Baruch Moshe (or a variation of it, using either one of the names), and most of the girls were named Bracha Leah (or a variation of sorts). They came to the conclusion that there must have been a great *tzadik* named Baruch Moshe who had once lived in that city, and that his wife must have been a great *tzadeikes* named Bracha Leah. People in the city must have decided to name their children after them, so that they would grow up to follow in the paths of the great *tzadikim*.

Before leaving the *cheder* the Baal Shem Tov asked the teacher how many other *chadarim* there were in the city, and where they were located. The *melamed* answered that

there were fifteen and told the Baal Shem Tov the location of each.

The group visited the other *chadarim* around the city where they again encountered many young boys, all named Baruch Moshe. The scene repeated itself in the yeshiva, where there were students not only from that city, but from the surrounding towns and villages as well.

After leaving the yeshiva late in the afternoon the Baal Shem Tov and the group stopped in a shul to daven *mincha*.

After *mincha* the Baal Shem Tov turned to a Yid who lived in the city and asked him about this fascinating phenomenon. “Why is it that so many of the children from this city and the surrounding area are named Baruch Moshe and Bracha Leah?”

The Yid answered with the following story:

The Story of a Butcher

In this city, there used to live a man by the name of Aizik Shlomo. He was a *talmid chacham* and a G-d fearing man. He made his living as a butcher, and was very well off. He would distribute *tzedakah* generously to the rav of the city and to the many *perushim*, who devoted their days and nights to the study of Torah.

For many years he and his wife had no children, until, fifteen years after their wedding they were finally blessed with a son. They named their son Baruch Moshe. The child brought them much joy, and before long he was grown enough to go to *cheder*. However, young Baruch Moshe was not a very good learner and it was quickly apparent that Baruch Moshe would not succeed in learning Torah.

Reb Aizik Shlomo saw that his son was not advancing in his studies, and soon before his bar mitzvah he took him out of the *cheder* and taught him the craft of being a butcher. Young Baruch Moshe was good with his hands and a quick learner of crafts and very soon he had mastered the art of butchering. He likewise learned from his father to be honest, G-d fearing, and to always give generously to *tzedakah*.

Reb Aizik Shlomo saw that he could rely on Baruch Moshe to run the family business. He slowly stopped working, leaving his affairs in the capable hands of his son,

and instead started spending his days immersed in Torah study.

Ten years passed, and it was time for Baruch Moshe to get married. His father found him a fitting *shidduch* with the daughter of Reb Yaakov Porush, named Bracha Leah. In due time they married, and settled in Reb Aizik Shlomo's home.

Life continued for years this way, Reb Baruch Moshe worked in the meat business, and his father Reb Aizik Shlomo sat and studied Torah. Reb Baruch Moshe saw even greater success in the business than his father, and likewise gave even more *tzedakah* than his father had.

Some years later both Reb Aizik Shlomo, and his wife passed away, as did Reb Yaakov Porush, and Reb Baruch Moshe and Bracha Leah were left alone in the world.

Reb Baruch Moshe had a deep desire to study Mishnayos in memory of his father and mother, but he could not learn on his own, so he hired a tutor to teach him. Despite his desire to learn, however, he found himself unable to understand even the basic meaning of the Mishnayos. His teacher, Reb Shlomo Yitzchak, tried over and over to explain the meaning to him, yet he could not understand.

Nevertheless, Reb Baruch Moshe would attend the Mishnayos *shiur* in shul every day, and try to listen to the words of Reb Sholom Yitzchak.

One day he heard Reb Shlomo Yitzchak teach the Gemara that says, “One who teaches his friend's son Torah it is as if he gave birth to him,” Later while in the midst of davening *maariv*, Reb Baruch Moshe was thinking about those words, and he burst into bitter tears.

After *maariv*, on the way home from shul, Reb Shlomo Yitzchak asked Reb Baruch Moshe why he seemed to be so down and depressed. Reb Baruch Moshe answered, “I heard you say today, that one who teaches his friend's son Torah it is as if he gave birth to him. This upset me because as you know, my wife and I have no children. And if the pain of childlessness is not enough, I cannot seem to understand any Torah that I have learned. So not only don't I have any children, but I cannot even have the merit that comes from teaching Torah to the children of others.

Reb Shlomo Yitzchak understood Reb Baruch Moshe's mistaken understanding of the Gemara. He explained that

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GREW HIS TZEDAKAH GREW AS WELL**

WHO WILL THERE BE TO REMEMBER US, IF WE HAVE NO CHILDREN OF OUR OWN?

the meaning is not that you yourself need to teach Torah, rather one can certainly attain the same merit by facilitating the teaching of Torah. By supporting the Torah learning of other's children, you have the *zechus* as if you gave birth to them.

Reb Baruch Moshe was gladdened and excited by the explanation of Reb Shlomo Yitzchok. He rushed home and repeated it to his wife Bracha Leah. Together they decided that they would donate money to hire teachers that would teach Torah to children. This would give them the merit of having given birth to children. A few days later they began hiring teachers and opening *chadarim*.

Years passed, and Reb Baruch Moshe and his wife still had no children. By this time Reb Baruch Moshe had branched out from butchering and selling meat, to selling cattle on the wholesale market. Reb Baruch Moshe became extremely wealthy, but he continued to live a modest lifestyle, giving most of his earnings to *tzedakah*.

By the time Reb Baruch Moshe and Bracha Leah were in their sixties they were still living in the simple home that had once belonged to his father Reb Aizik Shlomo. They had already hired over thirty teachers to teach the children of the city and the surrounding villages and towns.

One day Bracha Leah turned to Reb Baruch Moshe and asked him, "It is true that one who teaches his friend's child Torah it is as if he gave birth to them, but that is only as long as we are alive. What will happen when we pass on? Who will there be to remember us, if we have no children of our own?"

Reb Baruch Moshe became very angry—a man of sterling *middos*, this was the first time in his life that he lost his temper—and retorted, "what are you saying?! If the Gemara says that *it is as if we gave birth to them* then we must have complete *emunah* that so it is! Every merit and advantage that comes to the birth parents, we have by virtue of us facilitating their Torah study!"

This is the story of the origin of the names Baruch Moshe and Bracha Leah.

The Yid continued to tell the Baal Shem Tov and the group:

"Most of the Yidden in this City and the surrounding towns and villages are students of the teachers hired by Reb

Baruch Moshe and his wife. Myself, my whole family, and even the rav of the city, were all educated in the *chadarim* of Reb Baruch Moshe.

"Fifteen Years ago Reb Baruch Moshe and his wife Bracha Leah passed away at a ripe old age. Their wealth was split by the rav into four portions. One part went to their relatives, one part to poor people, the third part to support the teachers of Torah, and the last part to *gemilus chassadim*.

"Everyone who learned in the *chadarim* that were paid for by Reb Baruch Moshe chose to name their children after him and his wife. Boys are named Baruch Moshe and girls Bracha Leah; and if necessary, then a variation using at least one of their names is used. Doing this has preserved their memory and the memory of their generosity, and kindness.

"Every year, on the *yahrtzeit* of Reb Baruch Moshe and Bracha Leah, everyone gathers together. The rav davens at the *amud*, and we all visit the *kevarim* of Reb Baruch Moshe and Bracha Leah, just as children would do for a parent."

After hearing this story and davening *maariv*, the The Baal Shem Tov, Reb Moshe Shlomo, Rivkah, and the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov returned to their lodgings.

That night the Baal Shem Tov told Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife Rivkah: "It says ונתתי להם בביתי ובחומתי יד ושם, which means: *I will give them in my house—this is the Torah, which is called the house of Hashem—and in my wall—this refers to the Yidden who are a fortified wall for kiddush Hashem—a name and remembrance better than sons and daughters—an everlasting name that will never be forgotten.*"

Hearing this, Reb Moshe Shlomo and his wife were overjoyed and uplifted. Upon returning to their home they added in giving *tzedakah*, and began hiring teachers to teach children Torah. They lived for many long happy years, in great wealth and honor. When they passed away, many of the students began to name their children Moshe Shlomo and Rivkah as an everlasting remembrance. ❶

(Based on the Frierdiker Rebbe's *reshima* from 5652; published in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711 p. 304)