



Who will be the tenth?

LOOKING AROUND THE ROOM THEY ALL NOTICED THAT INDEED THEY WERE SHORT; THERE WERE ONLY NINE MEN WHICH MEANS THEY WERE MISSING JUST ONE.

With an excited smile painted across his face, Asher¹ ran outside to greet the holy Baal Shem Tov. “Finally,” he said to himself, “there may be hope for me!”

Asher had long prayed for salvation; not a financial one but one that runs at the core of every human. He had been married for many years now and had still not been blessed with an offspring; he was childless.

The Baal Shem Tov asked Asher if it would be okay if he stayed over in his home for Shabbos.

“Possible? I humbly request that you do.”

“Will you have a *minyán*?” asked the Baal Shem Tov.

After a quick count they realized that they were only nine men, and so Asher replied that he wasn’t sure, but the Baal Shem Tov said confidently, “There will be a *minyán*!”

Still sitting in the wagon, he ordered the driver to keep driving right into the entrance-room of the house. As the servant reached the doorway, he realized that the door frame was quite short and the wagon would not fit through, so he pulled the reins and the horses came to a complete stop.

The Baal Shem Tov immediately asked him, “Why did you stop?”

Without any further deliberations, the servant guided the horses through the doorway and lo and behold the entire lintel and building raised up allowing them to go on smoothly.

This incredible miracle was visible to all and to Asher this was yet another indication that a miracle was on its way, “I will surely be helped,” he said to himself once again.

As midday arrived, the handful of men gathered to daven *mincha* with the

Baal Shem Tov, as was his custom to daven *mincha* as close as possible to midday on Erev Shabbos.

The Baal Shem Tov then proclaimed, “I knew there would be a *minyán*.” This statement stirred up a small commotion as everyone began whispering and murmuring. Looking around the room they all noticed that indeed they were short; there were only nine men which means they were missing just one.

At that point, a wild thought entered Asher’s mind and he spoke up. “Across the river there is a small village where there is a Jew who has been sick for ten years. He is completely handicapped and cannot move his hands and feet. His tongue has no strength and his food is poured directly down his throat. Could this possibly be the person the Baal Shem Tov has in mind?”

COULD THIS POSSIBLY BE THE PERSON THE BAAL SHEM TOV HAS IN MIND?

The Baal Shem Tov told him to go and fetch the sickly man and he gave his walking stick to assist. A short while later, Asher returned empty handed. The man didn't move or budge.

The Baal Shem Tov then removed his hat from his head and handed it to Asher. "Take my hat and put it on his head," he said, "and give him my stick as well."

Sure enough, a few minutes passed by, and what an incredible sight it was; a man who was bedridden for

ten years was now walking on his own two feet. With the *minyán* now complete, they were able to daven *mincha*, while everyone pondered over the two incredible miracles they had just witnessed.²

These incidents didn't pass over Asher and he felt that this was a momentous occasion to ask the *tzaddik* for his own personal *bracha*. When they sat down to eat, he said to the Baal Shem Tov, "I am already a middle aged man and have still not merited to have children, I

will soon grow old and not be able to have a family. What will my purpose be?"

The Baal Shem Tov then told him the words he so desperately wanted to hear, "You will have children!"

He lived day by day waiting for these words to be fulfilled.

He didn't merit having children with his first wife, and when he turned sixty years old she tragically passed away. But Asher remarried and ultimately had two children with his second wife, bringing

the *tzaddik's* *bracha* to fruition.³ **T**

(*Shivchei HaBaal Shem Tov*)

1. The name doesn't appear in the original and was added here for the sake of clarity.

2. The man lived on in good health for another ten years. People went back to the scene of the doorway that lifted up and they said that even twenty years later, it never went back to its original position. It remained in its miraculous, elevated lopsided position from then on.

3. The person who related the story concludes that he isn't sure if they had one set of twins or the two children were born separately.

