



The Shepherd in the Pit

Reb Dov was a dedicated Chossid who lived in Romania and from time to time would make the journey to Lubavitch to be with his Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek.

On his way home from one such journey, he passed through a large city in which the rav was a celebrated Chossid who had merited to be with the Mittler Rebbe and Alter Rebbe, in addition to being a great *talmid chacham* and *gaon*.

Reb Dov really wanted to meet this rav, but the rav was very weak and wouldn't see people on a regular basis. After sharing his desire with some others, it was recommended to him that he attend the *seuda shlishis* where the rav would say Chassidus or relate some stories.

By the time Reb Dov arrived, the room was already very full and he

couldn't get a good place, and because the rav spoke in a low tone, Reb Dov stood there unable to hear a word. One thing he did notice was that as the rav was relating a story, tears were pouring down his face and those who could hear listened intently with great emotion.

On Motzaei Shabbos, Reb Dov managed to get in and see the rav, and they struck up a conversation. He told the rav that he lived in Romania and had been traveling to Lubavitch. The rav was very excited about this and took an immediate liking to this younger Chossid.

What impressed him so much, as well as many other great people of that time, was the devotion and commitment of these Chassidim to their Rebbe who lived far away, yet with self-sacrifice would make

the long, arduous, and often dangerous trip.

Reb Dov decided that here was a chance to hear something directly from the rav, so he mentioned that he was a bit upset that he had missed the story that was related earlier that day, and he would really like to hear it.

Out of his fondness for Reb Dov, the rav repeated the entire story again in all its detail.

The scene was typical; a group of Chassidim sitting together farbrenging and discussing the *maamar* they had recently heard from the Tzemach Tzedek.

The animated conversation was briefly interrupted by the appearance of the Rebbe's *gabbai*. Without making much of a commotion he whispered some words into the ears of one of the Chassidim, who then

quickly got up and followed him out the room.

Over the next few days this Chossid was nowhere to be seen, so when he reappeared, his fellow Chassidim realized he had been sent on a holy mission and they wanted to hear the details.

Heeding their request, he agreed to share with them the amazing events that had transpired. And so he began his tale:

When I went into the Tzemach Tzedek's room he instructed me to travel to a certain town that was controlled by a notoriously evil and Jew hating *poritz*. He told me to give this *poritz* a message directly, "Tell him that the Rebbe said it is time to do *teshuva*," and then leave immediately.

I was very shaken when I heard the details of my mission, and I said to the

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' שניאור זלמן גאנזבורג
והכלה המהוללה מרת ליבא רחל שפאלטר
לרגל חתונתם בשענטומ"צ
יו"ד חשוון ה'תשע"ז
נדפס ע"י הוריהם
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק וזוגתו מרת ביילא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
גאנזבורג



THE ANIMATED CONVERSATION WAS BRIEFLY INTERRUPTED BY THE APPEARANCE OF THE REBBE'S GABBAI

Rebbe, “It’s a tremendous *mesiras nefesh* to go into his mansion; he has armed guards and vicious dogs all over. No Jew has ever stepped foot in there. Even if the guards don’t instantly kill me, the *poritz* will end my life for the audacity of stepping foot in his home and lecturing him!”

In response to my concerns, the Rebbe pronounced a holy name and said that I should think about this with great concentration and this, he assured me, would bless me with a safe return.

I followed the directions exactly and delivered the message directly to the *poritz* without being stopped or questioned by a single guard.

I gave over my short but powerful message and waited to see what would happen next.

The *poritz* stirred as if waking up from a deep sleep and nodded his head as if saying, “Yes, yes I heard what you said.”

I immediately made my way out of his estate and realized the miracle that not a hair on my body had been harmed. As I left the area I also forgot the holy name that had been taught to me.

Just a few days later, the *poritz* was reported missing from his estate. His family and friends searched fruitlessly for him, and the Jews sighed a deep breath of relief as their years of suffering under his harsh hand came to a sudden end.

With this the Chossid concluded the amazing mission he had been sent on by the Tzemach Tzedek.

But the story didn’t end there.

A short while later, a strange looking man made his appearance in Lubavitch. His clothes were torn and disheveled, his hair long and wild, and he didn’t utter an intelligible word to anyone. He sat day and night learning and davening, usually in the

midst of fasting, completely devoted to his own *avoda*.

Most didn’t know who he was or where he came from, but some had an idea. “This is the evil *poritz*,” was the rumor that began making its way from ear to ear.

Those individuals who knew the full story and were amazed to hear about the miracles that their Rebbe had orchestrated had a burning question on their mind. After mustering the courage they approached the Tzemach Tzedek and asked:

“If you have the power to take a complete *rasha* and transform him with full *teshuva*, why do we have to constantly struggle and fight to improve ourselves daily?”

The Tzemach Tzedek answered them with an analogy:

A shepherd of a large flock will take his sheep to graze, and because the landscape is so large the different sheep spread out over the vast area—some up

the mountain, some attempt the deep slopes, and some feed near the water. When it is time to bring them back, the shepherd can’t possibly run after each and every one—he would tire himself out very quickly. To gather them he will blow a horn or throw something in their direction and each one will make its way over to him.

However, the sheep that fall into ditches and are stuck require the shepherd to personally go inside the pit and carry them out on his shoulder.

The explanation of this is clearly understood... **T**

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