



The Obedient Peasant

Reb Zev Kitzes was once traveling with his Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov. Their journey took them to Berditchev, where they arrived on a Friday afternoon with a few hours to spare before Shabbos.

They made their way to the house of Reb Lieber, the local rav. When they arrived they discovered that he wasn't home, so they asked his wife where he could be found.

"He is currently in the marketplace where they sell animal fodder," she replied.

They made their way to the market to meet him. When they arrived, they noticed that he was standing deep in thought. They approached him to introduce themselves and said, "Today is Erev Shabbos." Their words jolted Reb Lieber back to reality and, seeing his honorable guests, he greeted them warmly and invited the pair to follow him home.

When they arrived, he offered them a dish of roasted meat, which was customarily eaten on Erev Shabbos. After concluding the snack, he asked them if they would like to join him in the bathhouse. Agreeing to accompany their host, they made their way to the bathhouse to wash up in honor of Shabbos.

Reb Lieber had a weekly practice that when he exited the bathhouse he would go into a nearby store and buy a glass of beer.

This week was no exception.

He entered the store accompanied by his guests and requested beer for himself and for his guests. He told the owner not to worry if they didn't pay, because he would take care of it.

Instead of serving his customer, the store owner began to cry bitterly. "Woe is to me," he lamented. "Earlier today a Russian

peasant came into my store, drank more than he could handle, and then collapsed onto the floor and died! What should I do? I am terribly afraid that I will be accused of murdering him.

"Please help me," he concluded bitterly.

Reb Lieber, however, simply repeated his request for a drink for him and his guests.

The shopkeeper realized that he wouldn't receive any answer or advice until he brought the beer, so he hurried to do so.

After they finished drinking, Reb Lieber asked the frightened man what had happened. Once again he repeated the story.

"Where is the man now?"

The shopkeeper led him into the room where he had hidden the body and dragged the corpse out from under the bed.

Reb Lieber turned to the Baal Shem Tov,

who had been standing there throughout the entire exchange, and said, "Show your supernatural strengths!"

"I am not a resident of this town," replied the Baal Shem Tov. "I can't do anything without your explicit permission."

Reb Lieber, the rav of the city, immediately gave the Baal Shem Tov full authority to do as he pleased.

The Baal Shem Tov lifted up one of the dead man's legs and told him in Russian, "Here is not your place to die."

The dead peasant quickly got up and walked out of the shop. He continued some distance down the road and laid down on the ground for good, this time in a place where he wouldn't be a potential liability for any Yidden. **T**

(*Otzar Sippurei Chabad vol. 14, p. 135.*)