



The Trial that Never Began

In the times when our story takes place, the Russian government would appoint an individual to be in charge of certain legal issues of the Jewish community in each city. This person was called the “burgermeister.”

One of the responsibilities of the burgermeister was to be in charge of all legal records; this included the filing of birth certificates, marriage certificates and death certificates.

Reb Aryeh was a Chosid of the Alter Rebbe, and upon his advice he became the burgermeister for his city.

Being Jewish was certainly not easy, and converting to Judaism during that era was a punishable crime.

There was once a convert in the Jewish community, and Reb Aryeh was

approached for help with a daring plan.

During the same period of time when the conversion was taking place, an individual of similar age had passed away. The community leaders asked Reb Aryeh not to file this person’s death so the new *ger tzedek* could assume his identity.

At great personal risk, Reb Aryeh went along with it.

A short while later, to his great dismay, someone informed on him to the government and he was caught. The government officials scheduled a court case where he would be sentenced to a harsh punishment.

Realizing the great danger he was in, he did what every Chosid does when he needs help, and turned to the Alter Rebbe for guidance.

Reb Aryeh made the journey to the Rebbe and informed him of what was going on.

“When is the court case scheduled?” asked the Alter Rebbe. After hearing the Chosid’s response, he continued, “See what you can do to push it off.”

Reb Aryeh followed this advice and successfully postponed the trial.

This repeated itself a number of times until eventually Reb Aryeh told the Alter Rebbe that he could no longer delay it.

The Alter Rebbe then said, “In the near future I will be celebrating the *chasuna* of my granddaughter, who will be marrying the grandson of Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev. I think you should show up and make an effort to speak with him; I am sure he can help you.”

Reb Aryeh made his way to Zhlobin, the city where

the *chasuna* was scheduled to take place, and he began figuring out a way to meet Reb Levi Yitzchok. This was indeed a difficult feat, as thousands upon thousands of people were also waiting for their chance to speak with the *tzaddik*.

After some deliberation, he came up with a plan. “I will come to the house at midnight,” he said to himself, “And this way I will be first in line in the morning.”

Standing outside the home in which the Berditchever was staying gave him the opportunity to witness an incredible sight.

Looking inside, he saw how Reb Levi Yitzchok was lying in a bed with two attendants standing on either side. One was holding a Mishnayos and the other a Zohar, and they were both reading from their *sefer* simultaneously as the Rebbe appeared to be sleeping.

לזכות יום הולדתם
של ילדינו שי' בחודש אדר
הת' מנחם מענדל בן שרה כ"ו אדר
הת' מאיר בן שרה כ"א אדר שני
חיענא בת שרה כ"א אדר שני
לשנת הצלחה בלימודם
ובדרכי החסידות ולנח"ר נשיא דורנו
נדפס ע"י הוריהם שיחיו



At some point one of them made a mistake and Reb Levi Yitzchak turned to him and said, “Nu! Nu!”

This incredible scene went on for about one hour, after which he got up from his so-called “sleep” and signaled to the attendants that Reb Aryeh could now enter.

“Who sent you here?” asked Reb Levi Yitzchok.

“My Rebbe,” replied Reb Aryeh.

“Who is that?”

“[The Alter Rebbe.]”

“Ah, he is your Rebbe; he is my *mechutan*. He is a holy man; a *tzaddik*.” On and on Reb Levi Yitzchok extolled the praises of the Alter Rebbe.

This conversation repeated itself a number of times, and throughout it all he had a warm and friendly expression on his face.

Finally, he asked Reb Aryeh why had come to him, and he explained his role as burgermeister as well as the whole chain of events that led up to his indictment and pending trial. He also

made sure to mention that he had only taken this job upon the instruction of the Alter Rebbe.

Reb Levi Yitzchok sent him off with strong words of encouragement and told him that if his *mechutan*—and once again he went on with lavish praise for the Alter Rebbe—directed him in this way, everything would be well.

When Reb Aryeh went to the Alter Rebbe and related all the details of what happened with Reb Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe exclaimed to him twice, “Nu! So did I give you good advice?” And then he repeated again, “It was good advice that I gave you, no?”

The day of the court case was rapidly approaching, and then, lo and behold, the night before it was supposed to begin, a terrible fire broke out in the courthouse and along with all the burned documents was the incriminating file against Reb Aryeh. With all the evidence against him burned to a crisp, he was now a free man. **T**

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