



A Fishy Business Deal

Selling fish was Moshe Dovid's¹ trade, but it was his financial situation that stunk; in regards to real sea creatures, he didn't even have a penny for a piece of old herring. He was out of business.

Luckily for him, he resided in a town where Chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek also lived and they suggested that he travel to their Rebbe for a bracha. The depth of his dire situation was such that even this simple journey was more than he could afford. Determined to help him, the Chassidim collected some money and paid for Moshe Dovid's trip, all the while convincing and encouraging this not-yet Chossid that he would be helped.

Upon entering the Tzemach Tzedek's room, Moshe Dovid poured out his heart and explained how his fish business had

collapsed leaving him destitute.

"Travel to Berlin," answered the Rebbe, "Hashem will help you!"

Somewhat surprised at this seemingly random piece of advice, Moshe Dovid travelled back home without any intention of actually carrying out the Rebbe's words. "What purpose at all is there in traveling to Berlin?" he thought to himself.

When he arrived, the Chassidim eagerly gathered around him, sure they would be hearing a miraculous story.

"To Berlin?!" they echoed after hearing what had transpired. "So why are you here? If the Rebbe told you to go to Berlin then that is where your salvation will come from."

Knowing full well that he couldn't afford the trip, they again quickly raised



BERLIN, GERMANY IN THE LATE 1800S.

some funds and sent him on his way.

"Now what?" Moshe Dovid asked himself upon arriving in Berlin. For the next seven days he roamed the streets aimlessly with no inkling at all as to what he was to do next.

One morning, as he strolled around Berlin with absolutely no plan, he found himself in the marketplace, standing right next to a large fish store.

After milling around that area for a long while, the owner of the store asked Moshe Dovid what he was looking for. "I want to buy 100 barrels of that fish," he replied, pointing to a certain species of fish and offered a ridiculously low price for the purchase. The German fishmonger was taken aback by the audacity of such a low offer but after a few minutes of negotiations, Moshe Dovid convinced the

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 לכ"ק אדמו"ר
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 נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל
 וזוגתו מרת אסתר מרים
 ומשפחתם שיחיו
 ליפשיץ



man to make the sale. The fishmonger jotted down the address of where Moshe Dovid was staying and ordered his employees to prepare the order.

Chuckling to himself at the absurdity of what he had just done, Moshe Dovid returned to his hotel with no plans at all to make good on the order he had placed.

The next day the price of this particular fish had gone up tremendously.

Word had it that this German fishmonger had many barrels of this fish and hungry merchants clambered to his store to buy them. They offered him tremendous amounts of money, many times more than the going market price, but to no avail. "I can't sell them to you," he explained. "They were already purchased by someone else and I am just waiting for him to pick them up."

"Who do they belong to?" they pressed.

The fishmonger gave them the address to where Moshe Dovid was staying.

They knocked on his door and immediately got down to business by offering to buy the fish for a steep price, much more than the going rate, and many times more than the amount he had committed to pay. Without much hesitation, Moshe Dovid

agreed to the deal. He then went to the fishmonger and paid up his bill, and returning home with the profit, a considerable sum of money. From that day on, he once again succeeded greatly in his business. ¹

*(Adapted from
 Otzar Sippurei Chabad
 vol. 17, p. 28)*

1. The name does not appear in the original but was added here for the sake of clarity.