

SALUTE

The Beis Moshiah Supplement for Soldiers in Tzivos Hashem

**DID YOU KNOW
THAT TZIVOS
HASHEM REALLY
STARTED ON
PESACH?**

מחשה עד מחשה
לא קם כמשה

**ALL ABOUT THE
RAMBAM**

**HOW THE REBBE
SAVED THE
GRANDSON OF
THE HOLY MISER**



יחי אדוננו מורנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד



משה עד משה

How old was the Rambam when he was orphaned from his mother? How did the Rambam learn the science of medicine? Why did he flee to Morocco, and when did he publish his first sefer? Why were his sefarim burned? A fascinating journey following the life story of Rambam

By Rabbi M.M. Doron



A POSTAGE STAMP WITH
THE RAMBAM'S IMAGE

Have you heard of Rabbi Moshe ibn Abdallah? Have you ever studied from the sefarim he wrote, or read stories about him? Most likely you won't be able to guess, but you know this person well, and most of you even regularly study the important sefarim he wrote...

We're talking about none other than the Rambam, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon. His family name was "ibn Abdallah," named after his great-great-great-grandfather, Rabbi Ovadia Dayan, the head of the respected family line of dayananim, who served with distinction in the rabbinate of Cordoba. Rabbi Ovadia (meaning 'servant of Hashem' and in Arabic translation - Abdallah) was a scholar and tremendous genius, and he also had a distinguished lineage: he was among the descendants of Rabi Yehuda HaNasi who compiled the Mishna, and was a direct descendant of Dovid HaMelech.

Because of his many special qualities, he was appointed as the Dayan Roshi (chief judge) of the Jewish community in Cordoba,



THE RAMBAM'S SHUL IN CAIRO'S JEWISH QUARTER

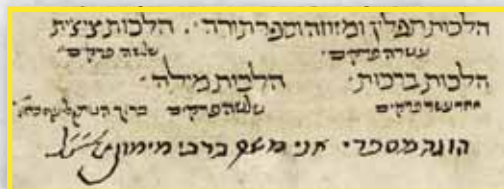
What Mazal...

Do you know what the acronym "Rambam" stands for? That's right, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon. And what is the meaning of the word "Maimon"? We'll spare you a course in Arabic, get to the point, and reveal to you that the meaning of the word "Maimon" is "mazal" (luck, fortune).

Spain, and served in this position until he passed away. Rabbi Ovadia was blessed with descendants who were talmidei chachamim, and after his death, they were appointed to continue his path, adding to the family chain for seven generations.

On Seder night in the year 4895 (approximately 880 years ago), great joy erupted in the home of the Dayan, Rabbi Maimon. In the midst of the final preparations for the Seder night, his firstborn son was born! You can imagine how much the community members rejoiced during Pesach, and picture how the seuda of the bris mila looked in the middle of the Yom Tov, when the baby received his name that would become famous throughout all sectors of Klal Yisrael: Moshe. But the joy did not last long. In his early childhood, the Rambam's mother passed away, and he remained an orphan from his mother.

Despite his being an orphan, he continued to devote all his time



A COPY OF SEFER AHAVA OF THE MISHNEH TORAH THAT WAS COPIED FROM THE RAMBAM'S ORIGINAL TO WHICH HE AFFIXED HIS HOLY SIGNATURE

to study, with awe-inspiring hasmada (diligence), and at the same time studied Torah with his father the Dayan, and general education in philosophy, mathematics, science, and medicine - through private tutors. When he had no one to study with, little 'Moshe' sat with thick books



Learning Rambam

On 11 Nisan 5744, the Rebbe requested that everyone establish for themselves a daily study of Rambam, so that one could fulfill the halacha that states that everyone should learn the entire Torah, because Rambam's Mishneh Torah includes all the mitzvos of the Torah in a clear and organized way. According to the Rebbe's instructions, those who find it difficult to complete all 14 books in one year can study just one chapter a day and complete it within three years, or study the Sefer HaMitzvos. Do you have a fixed schedule of studying Rambam? If not, now is the time to start...

In the Lifetime of Rabbeinu Moshe

Did you know?

Besides his role as leader of the Jewish community in Egypt, the Rambam kept in regular contact with the Jewish community in Yemen, which suffered from severe persecutions. The community in Yemen esteemed the Rambam in an exceptional way and sent many donations and funds to support his yeshiva, and some even added to the Kaddish text the words: "In your lifetime and in your days, and in the lifetime of Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon"!



and eagerly absorbed as much as he could.

When he was about 10 years old, wild and cruel bands of Almohad Muslims invaded Spain and stormed city after city, tormented helpless Jews and forced them to convert to Islam or murdered them. In light of the terrible situation, Rabbi Maimon decided to flee with his family far from the area of fighting and riots. They wandered for ten years, and meanwhile, during the wanderings, the Rambam continued to study Torah. At age 17, he wrote his first sefer Milos Higayon (Explanation of Logical Terms) in Arabic.

His second work was his famous commentary on the Mishna. He worked on it for seven years while wandering, from the city of Fez in Morocco, where they stayed for five years, to the port of Acco, and only five months later to Alexandria in Egypt, and from there to the capital city of Cairo. In Cairo, the Rambam married the daughter of one of the city's Chachamim, Rabbi Mishael.

In Egypt, the Rambam completed writing his commentary on the Mishna and began to become famous in the



THE DOME OVER THE RAMBAM'S TZIYUN



THE TZIYUN HARAMBAM AT HIS HOLY TZIYUN

Jewish world. He was crowned as the head of the Jewish community of Egypt, served as its leader, and along with his occupations found time to respond to thousands of questions in emuna and halacha that were sent to him from all over the world!

At age 30, the Rambam began writing the sefer Mishneh Torah - Yad HaChazaka, and completed it with amazing speed - in less than ten years! Throughout all those years, he refused to earn a living from public funds and entered into partnership with his younger brother Dovid in his diamond business. The Rambam's life was full of troubles: his brother Dovid drowned during a voyage for business purposes, his wife, father, and two of his children died in an epidemic, and he was forced to go out to work in order not to benefit from the money of others.

Within a short time, the Rambam became known as one of the best physicians in Cairo, and soon was requested to serve as a physician to the Sultan in the royal palace, a position he used to have a positive influence on the attitude of the palace occupants toward the Jews.



THE MENORAH IN THE RAMBAM'S HOLY HANDWRITING



THE RAMBAM'S KEVER IN TEVARYA

The Burning of the Rambam's Sefarim

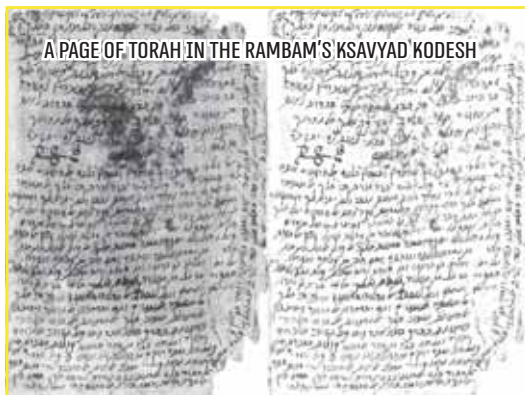
Troubles continued to pursue Rambam even after he passed away... About thirty years after he passed away, several great talmidei chachamim who disagreed with the Rambam's method of paskening and his use of secular wisdom in his Torah sefarim arose and asked the Gedolei Yisrael of France to ban his books. The severe controversy became known to the Inquisition, who decided to judge the Rambam's books as books of 'heresy' and burned them in the streets of the city. The burning shocked many of the Rambam's opponents, and they retracted their harsh words against him. The controversy continued in various forms for about 70 years afterward, but ultimately the Rambam was accepted in all Jewish communities, and almost every Jewish home prides itself on having at least one set of the Rambam's sefarim.



THE RAMBAM LIBRARY IN TEL AVIV

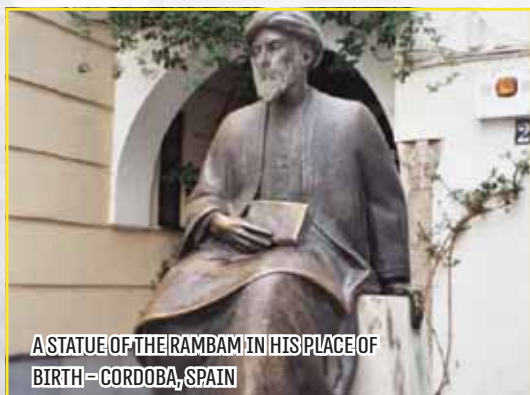
Did You Know?

Most of the laws in the Shulchan Aruch are based on the Rambam's psak halacha in Mishneh Torah, and in most places they even appear in exactly the same words.



philosopher and physician, and his name was spoken with admiration by Jews and gentiles alike.

Many places around the world commemorate the Rambam's name: shuls, squares, streets, settlements, stamps, medical centers, libraries, and museums, but the main legacy he left us are his wonderful sefarim, chief among them: Mishneh Torah-Yad HaChazaka, Moreh Nevochim, Sefer HaMitzvos, and Peirush HaMishna.



A STATUE OF THE RAMBAM IN HIS PLACE OF BIRTH – CORDOBA, SPAIN

From then on, the Rambam reached tranquility and stability, and until he passed away at about age 70 he dedicated his life to studying Torah and ruling on halacha, writing sefarim, helping the sick, and assisting his fellow Jews everywhere.

Rabbeinu Moshe passed away in Cairo on 20 Teves 4965, 820 years ago. During his lifetime, he managed to write close to forty books and sefarim, eleven of which deal with medical matters.

Despite his many troubles, he became a symbol of hasmada and shekida (persistence) in Torah study, a renowned



ISRAELI BILLS AND COINS CARRYING THE RAMBAM'S IMAGE. THESE BILLS WERE OFTEN GIVEN BY THE REBBE TO PEOPLE FROM ERETZ YISRAEL AS SHLICHUS MITZVA AT YECHIDUS

Identity Card

First name: Rabbi Moshe

Title: Rambam

Parents: Rabbi Maimon the Dayan and "the daughter of the shochet"

Date of birth: 14th of Nisan 4895

Date of passing: 20th of Tevet 4965



Place of birth: Cordoba, Spain

Place of residence: Fustat (Cairo), Egypt

Place of burial: Teverya, Israel

Main occupation: Halachic Posek

Profession: Physician in the royal palace

Spouse: Daughter of Rabbi Misha'el HaLevi ben Rabbi Yeshaya HaChassid Halevi Altaka

Children:

First name: Avrohom

Titles: Raavam, the Chassid, and the Nagid

Date of birth: 28 Sivan 4946

Date of passing: 18 Kislev 4998

Positions: Succeeded his father in leading the Jews of Egypt, physician to the Sultan, and writing Torah sefarim.

Children: Rabbi Dovid Maimoni the Nagid, and Rabbi Ovadia Maimoni.

מֵאֵץ בְּרַבִּי מִיִּמּוֹן שֵׁטֶל

9 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE RAMBAM

1

Family Name: Ibn Abdallah

The formal name of the Rambam and his father, Rabbi Maimon, was Ibn Abdallah, Arabic for Ben Ovadia. The name comes from the great-great-great-grandfather of Rabbi Maimon Dayan, Rabbi Ovadia Dayan (all the grandfathers in between were also dayanim). In most European languages today, the Rambam is commonly referred to as Maimonides for his father, Rabbi Maimon.

2

Yemen Connection

The community most identified with the Rambam (aside from the kehilla of those who study Rambam because of the Rebbe's takana, of course) is that of Yemenite Jewry. They warmly adopted the Rambam's halachic psakim. The Rambam was not born in Yemen, and was never there, but he kept a close, ongoing connection with the Jews of Yemen. He wrote letters to them to strengthen and encourage them, including an important, famous letter known as "Igeres Teiman."

3

Ten-Year Lockdown

The Rambam wrote his famous Mishneh Torah over ten years during which time he stayed in his room and didn't leave until he completed it. The night he finally finished the work, his father came to him in a dream along with a majestic looking man. His father told him this was Moshe Rabbeinu who came to see the Rambam's composition and indeed, he looked through the writings and said, "Yashar Koach" to the Rambam.

4

The Sefarim That Were Not Published

Aside from the Rambam's famous sefarim, which everyone learns till today, there are many things that the Rambam wrote but did not complete and some were lost. These include, "Peirush Halachos Kashos Sheb'chol ha'Talmud," "Hilchos HaYerushalmi," "Maamar Halbbur," and others.

5

Hidden Mekubal

According to the tradition that we received from our Rebbeim, the Rambam was a great mekubal (kabbalist) but in those days it was dangerous to be involved with Kabbala and so, he did not reveal his kabbalistic knowledge even in a hint. Still, after the revelation of the Sefer HaZohar, it became apparent that the Rambam learned it, knew it, and even quoted from it in his Mishneh Torah (Hadran on Rambam 5748, footnote 36)

6

Hebrew or Arabic?

Nearly all of the Rambam's writing was done in Arabic, the spoken language among Jews in his area. However, his Mishneh Torah was written in Lashon Kodesh and he did not want to translate it into Arabic. The Rebbe explained that Mishneh Torah was written as a 'mishneh - secondary' to the Written Torah and the Torah is written in Lashon HaKodesh, of course. (Shabbos Parshas Shemos 5748, footnote 43)

7

Is The Picture Real?

The picture commonly assumed to be of the Rambam was found about 540 years after he passed away and raised many doubts about its authenticity. For example, in the original picture, the Rambam looks like he cut his peyos in a way that is against halacha. The Rebbe said that despite the doubts, the (corrected) picture should be used because in practice it brings a positive and desirable spiritual awakening, "and especially since it is possible that this is a true depiction of Rambam." (11 Nissan 5745)

8

How Did the Rambam Takana Begin?

For 11 Nissan 5744, the talmidim-shluchim to the Chabad geshiva in Morocco decided to give a birthday present to the Rebbe by dividing all 14 sections of Mishneh Torah among themselves for the purpose of finishing it by 11 Nissan. At a farbrengen afterward, on Acharon shel Pesach, the Rebbe said he waited a number of years for an initiative like this and he announced a new learning program in which Mishneh Torah would be completed every year.

9

The Only Posek

The Rambam is the only halachic posek who stated how to identify Moshiach. Even the poskim who generally disagree with Rambam, do not say anything different than him on this subject which means they agree with him. In our generation, a psak din was signed by hundreds of rabbanim, dayanim and admorim which says that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is, in our time, the one who matches all of the identifying signs of the Rambam.

AN ARMY WITH A HISTORY...

Did You Know That Tzivos Hashem Really Started on Pesach?

In order to understand what's special about Tzivos Hashem, we need to turn into historians for a while... and learn the ancient story of Tzivos Hashem. Then we can understand what's special about Tzivos Hashem today.

Tzivos Hashem is the oldest army in the world! When the Jewish people left Mitzrayim, the Torah says, "And it was in the middle of that day that all the Tzivos Hashem left the land of Mitzrayim." Back then already, the entire Jewish nation was called Tzivos Hashem.

Wait, there's something I don't understand - the pasuk says that all the Jewish people were called Tzivos Hashem. Does Tzivos Hashem include adults or is it just for boys and girls?

In order to answer this question, which has to do with leaving Mitzrayim, we need to learn about entering Mitzrayim.

THE YOUNG ARE EQUAL TO THE OLD!

Before the Jewish people went down to Mitzrayim, they were not yet a nation; they were just Bnei Yisrael, the children of Yisrael who is Yaakov Avinu.

After Yosef revealed himself to his brothers, Yaakov and his family went down to Mitzrayim. The Torah says they were 70 people even though, if we count them, we will find only 69. So, why does it say 70?

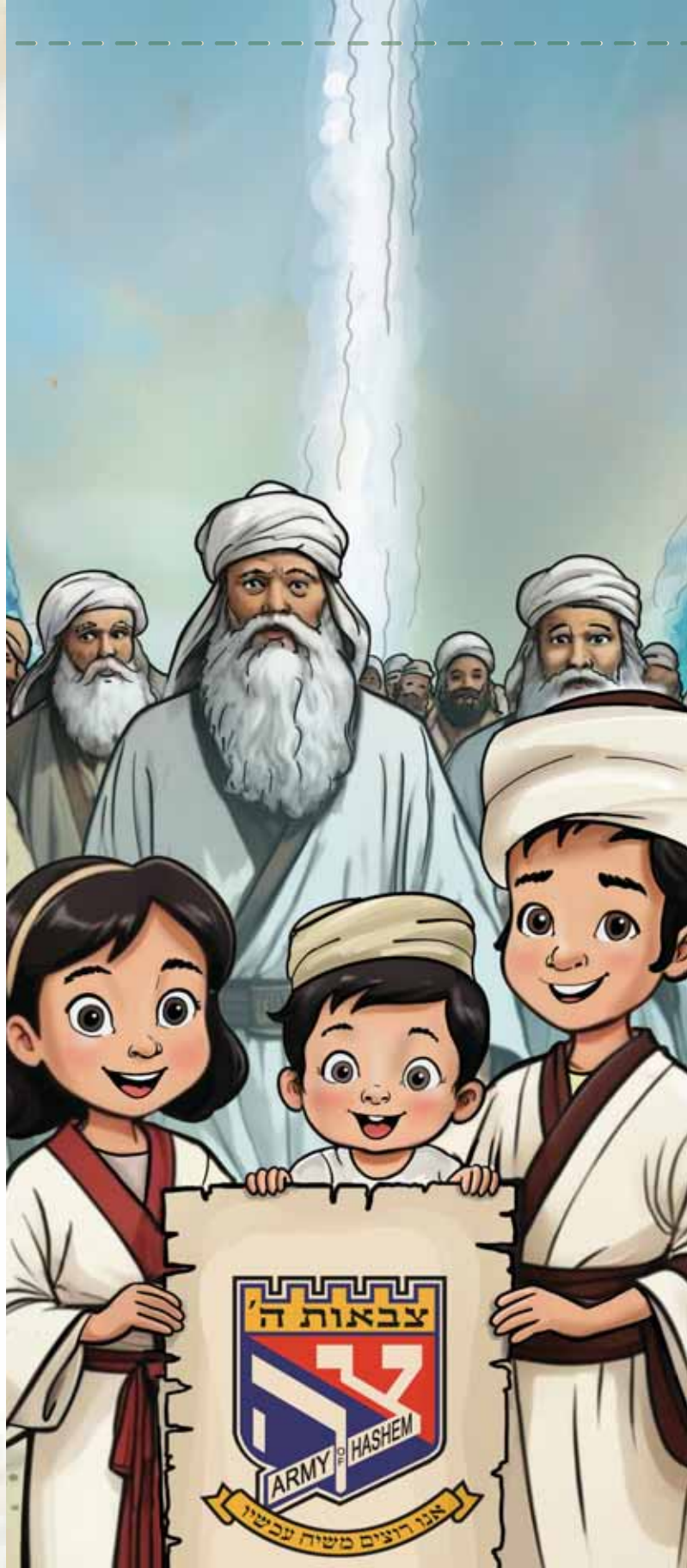
Yocheved, daughter of Levi, who later became the mother of Moshe, was born

between the walls just as they entered Mitzrayim. Already at that time, she was in inseparable part of Tzivos Hashem, as a newborn baby!

The Rebbe learns from this that the importance of Yocheved is equal to the importance of Yaakov! Even though he was much older than her and spiritually, the greatest, both were part of Tzivos Hashem. And this is the first thing we learn from the story of Yaakov and his family going down to Mitzrayim, that even the smallest child is very important, and without him or her we cannot manage in the battle against "Mitzrayim," which is anything that interferes with kedusha.

THE CHILDREN ARE THE MAIN PART OF THE ARMY

For the hundreds of years that the Jewish people were in Mitzrayim, the wicked Pharaoh knew good



and well that the secret lies in the future generations of the Jewish people. This is why he ordered that all newborn baby boys be thrown into the Nile. But the righteous mothers continued to give birth to children outside the city, in the fields, and they left the babies there with faith that Hashem would take care of them.

Indeed, Hashem took care of all the babies' needs. Hashem sent them special food and drink and when these children grew up, they returned to their parents' homes in the city.

Later on, when the Jewish people left Mitzrayim and arrived at the Yam Suf, the Egyptians chased after them. Hashem told Moshe to raise his staff over the sea and it would split in two. The sea split and the entire Jewish people stood together with Moshe to sing and say thank you to Hashem, "Az yashir Moshe u'Vnei Yisrael es ha'shira ha'zos l'Hashem vayomru leimor."

The children stood in the front row. These were the babies who had been born during Pharaoh's decree. They had already seen Hashem when he helped them in Mitzrayim and fed them when their mothers returned home. They saw Hashem again at the sea, when it split. They sang the words, "Zeh Keili v'anveihu," i.e. We already saw Hashem and now we are seeing Him again! They were the first to recognize Him.

Another important thing occurred at the Splitting of the Sea. Even unborn babies said shira to Hashem for the great miracle of the Splitting of the Sea! From this we

learn that a Jewish child belongs to Tzivos Hashem even before he is born. Also, when he is a newborn and cannot speak but just cry, he is part of Tzivos Hashem and without him, we cannot win the great war.

So true, in principle, every single Jew belongs to the King, Hashem's army. Going out of Mitzrayim was "al tzivosam" - all the Jews left to freedom, no matter their age. But who was the most important and who recognized Hashem? The Jewish children. Therefore, children are the main Tzivos Hashem.

NOT MERELY AN EXPRESSION

In the middle of Elul 5740, the Rebbe said to arrange three rallies for boys and girls: before Rosh Hashana, during Aseres Yemei Teshuva, and on Chol HaMoed Sukkos. The Rebbe sent a letter to Jewish children for Sukkos and emphasized Hakhel, since 5741 was a Shnas Hakhel.

What was unique about this letter? At the end of the letter, the Rebbe used an expression that wasn't common yet. The Rebbe added some lines, "It is fitting to unite all those who able to gather frequently in the framework of a 'kahal,' a group of Tzivos Hashem, which every Jew belongs to from his childhood."

Did you notice? After writing about "hakhel" gatherings, the Rebbe used the term, "a group of Tzivos Hashem, which every Jew belongs to from his childhood." At

first, these words seemed an ordinary part of the letter, like any other expression the Rebbe used in his letters. However, on the third day of Chol HaMoed Sukkos, during the rally with the Rebbe in 770, it became clear that the term didn't just happen to be in the letter; rather, something new had begun.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

During the rally, the Rebbe said three sichos. In the first sicha, the Rebbe spoke about the connection between Shnas Hakhel and children, based on the pasuk, "gather the nation, men, women and children." The Rebbe referred to the line he had written in the letter and announced the founding of the army of Hashem, "Tzivos Hashem" for Jewish boys and girls, whose purpose is to fight the yetzer hara.

The Rebbe said the organization would be international and all children the world over would unite under the name, Tzivos Hashem, based on the expression used in the Torah about yetzias Mitzrayim. The goal of this army would be similar to that army: to leave Mitzrayim in the spiritual sense to the true and complete Geula by fighting the yetzer hara.

The Rebbe asked that each soldier enlist other soldiers into Tzivos Hashem and in the next two sichos explained the structure of the organization and how it should run. This was the founding rally of the Rebbe's global youth movement, Tzivos Hashem.

CONTINUING OUR MAGNIFICENT HISTORY

About a year and a half later, in 5742, the Rebbe explained why it's specifically the children who merit this special treatment, that the Rebbe founded an organization for them, "The special emphasis on children below bar and bas mitzva is because with them there needs to be the matter of chinuch with greater measure and greater force, being that this is the start and foundation of chinuch, which is why they need to be educated in the appropriate way."

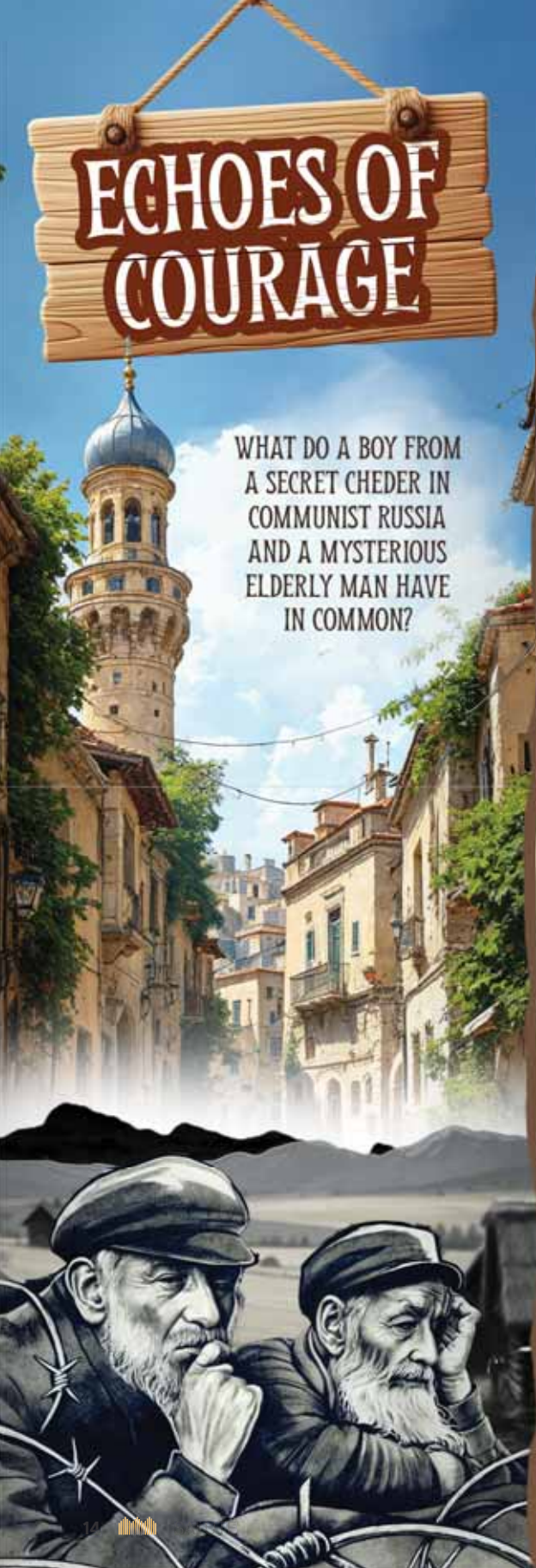
Did you understand that? It's because at this age children are starting to be educated that it's important to invest in their chinuch. This is very much connected with the first reason, Tzivos Hashem upon leaving Mitzrayim:

Chinuch to Torah and mitzvos is so that a Jewish child feels Hashem's presence every moment of his life. Then, when Moshiach comes, he will be like the children who recognized Hashem at yetzias Mitzrayim.

In order for the special quality of children to stand out in the Geula, we need to invest now in "they recognized Him first," to continue the magnificent history of the Jewish nation and be victorious in the war at the end of which the "final redeemer" will come, the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation, and lead us to the true and complete Geula.



ECHOES OF COURAGE



WHAT DO A BOY FROM
A SECRET CHEDER IN
COMMUNIST RUSSIA
AND A MYSTERIOUS
ELDERLY MAN HAVE
IN COMMON?

Russia, 5684

The train barreled along, full steam ahead. Avremel woke up and washed his hands. He thought of how he could put on tefillin without being caught. He didn't even want to attract any looks from the goyim with him in the train car. He looked toward his neighbor's bed and saw it was empty. Great, this was the opportunity he was waiting for. He made sure all the passengers were asleep and took out his tefillin from their hiding place.

The train traveled among snowy mountains and forests but he noticed nothing; he was immersed in tefilla.

He finished davening, folded up his tefillin, and sat on his bed. Suddenly, he felt something strange under the pillow. He lifted the pillow and saw a siddur. A genuine siddur was under the pillow! One minute, maybe it was some kind of trap? He looked around and then opened the siddur cautiously. Leaving the siddur like this isn't safe, he thought, and he decided to hide it.

Strange! How did a siddur get here? I'll check this out later but now I must hide it immediately.

He stood on the table and carefully removed some boards

from the ceiling and found an empty space where he put the siddur, tefillin and bag of panim which he had hidden in his neighbor's suitcase. He put the boards back and got down from the table. Just then, three soldiers with weapons walked in. Right behind them was the coarse Russian who pointed at Avremel and said, "That's the Jewish man who prayed using their book!"

The soldiers had Avremel sit down on the side and began searching the train compartment. They looked everywhere but did not find the siddur.

"Look under his pillow," said the man and that's when Avremel realized the man was a KGB agent.

The soldiers lifted the pillow and found nothing. They were angry at the man who made them crazy for nothing, and they left.

After they left, the agent came over to Avremel, grabbed him by the collar and asked him threateningly, "Tell the truth. Where did you put the book?"

Yerushalayim 5785

Moishy read the note again and again and couldn't believe it. Who was threatening him? Who could it be? But there were no clues in the note. It just said, "Beware." He turned the paper over and saw that a few more words were written there with a red pen, in very small letters. "I recommend that you stop defending thieves," it said.

Moishy was annoyed and nearly tore up the note but on second thought he decided to keep it. He figured he would need it.

In the afternoon, he called Zalmy and Mendy and asked them to come to his house. A few minutes later, they arrived.

Moishy poured water for them and said, "You won't believe what happened to me today."

"Don't tell me you found a note stuck to your briefcase," snickered Mendy.

"Hey, really?" exclaimed Zalmy. "I found a note in my briefcase today!"

"That's just what I was going to tell you," said Moishy. "Someone gave each of us a note. He's trying to scare us off, but why?"

"Simple," declared Mendy. "I think I know who it is. It's..."

"Stop," Moishy interrupted. "You are doing exactly what they're doing. You're being choshed b'kesheirim."

"I'm not sure that the name I want to say is someone who's all that kosher," said Mendy thoughtfully, but Moishy insisted.

"They are also not sure that Tzvi is kosher. Suspecting innocent people is a serious aveira and we can't do it."

"Then, what should we do?" asked Zalmy. "How can we know who wrote these notes?"

"I know," said Moishy. "Let's compare handwritings."

The next day in school, when everyone went outside for recess, the three used that time to look into all the open notebooks left on desks.

"Pssst," called Zalmy to Moishy quietly. Moishy came over and looked into the open notebook in front of him. The handwriting was exactly the same as in the note. He opened the notebook to the first page to see who it belonged to, but there was no name written there.

"Let's wait and see who takes this notebook," he suggested.

Mendy changed the topic by asking, "What do you think of our going this afternoon to visit Zaida Yitzchok? We have something important to look for in the center's archives."

After school, the three friends went over to Tzvi and asked him, "Are you going to visit your grandfather today?"

"Yes, I am. How did you know?"

"Great, hashgacha pratis," smiled Moishy. "We have some important things to discuss with Zaida Yitzchok."

"I see that you're excited about him," said Tzvi. "Poor man. You deserve lots of credit that you visit him."

As they approached the senior center, Zalmy suddenly exclaimed, "Oy! We forgot to check whose notebook it was with the same handwriting as in the notes!"

"It's okay," said Moishy. "We'll do that tomorrow."

"Hello, Tzvi's grandfather," said Mendy to the man in the wheelchair who waited in the entrance.

"Hello, Tzvi, my grandson, and hello to his friends! I see you decided to come here regularly."

The three boys smiled politely but were impatient to see the archives and read information on Zaida Yitzchok. They had to help him!

Tzvi wheeled his grandfather to the yard and the three boys walked to the manager's office.

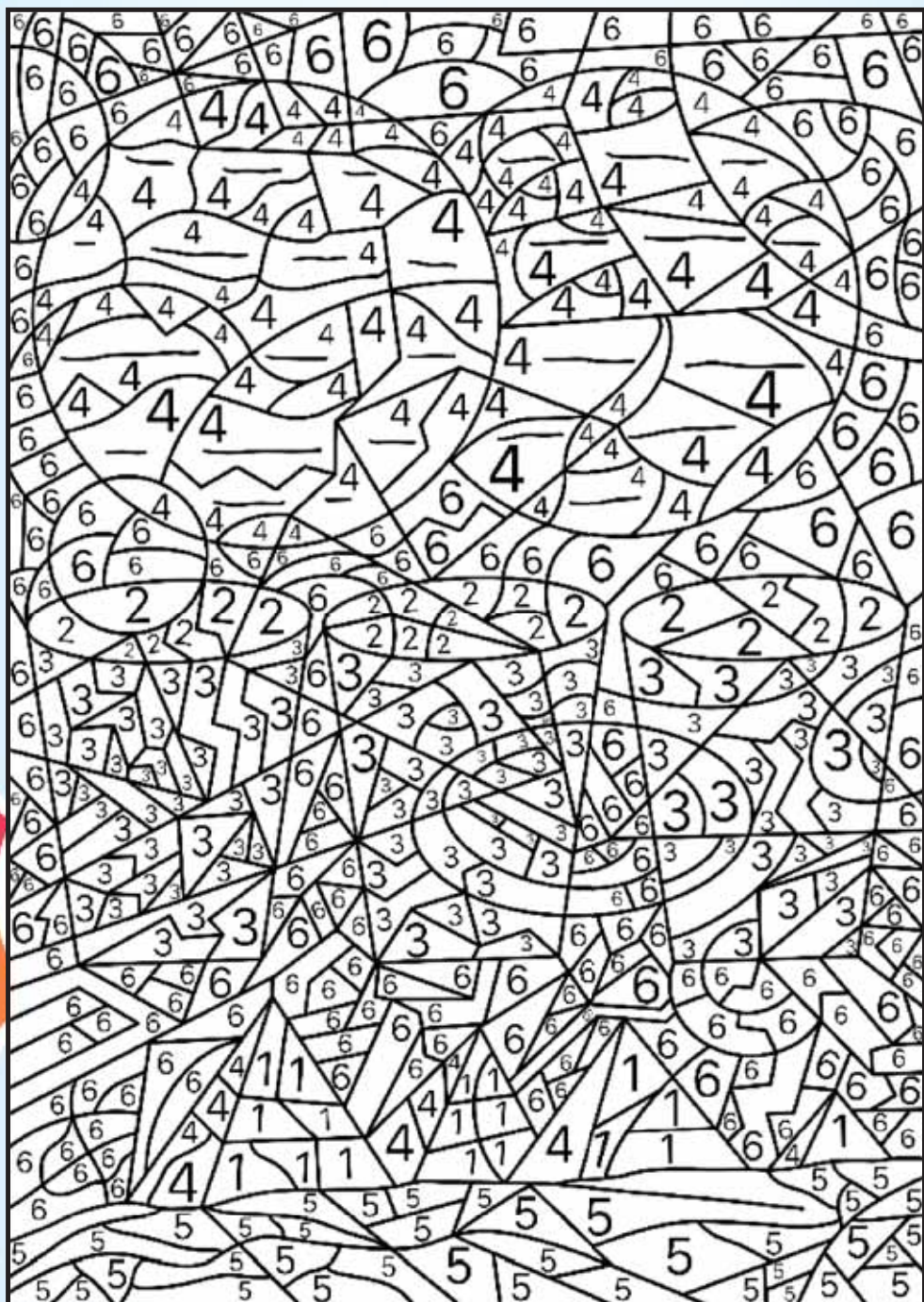
"What if they don't allow us to go in?" worried Mendy.

"Don't worry," Moishy said reassuringly. "Anyway, even if they don't let, I'm not planning on going there without permission."

They followed the signs to the manager's office but then Mendy said, "Wait a minute for me here." He disappeared for a minute and then came back. Moishy and Zalmy didn't ask him anything; they figured he had gone to the bathroom.

They continued on their way but then stopped abruptly. On the manager's office door was a small note with a familiar handwriting in red. "Beware!"

– To be continued –



Follow The Color Code To Discover the Picture Hiding Here!





BY SHAINA GLICK ,FROM THE TZADDIKSTORY.ORG COLLECTION

HOW THE REBBE SAVED THE GRANDSON OF THE HOLY MISER

Hi, my name is Rabbi Dovid Schochet, and I want to share an amazing story that taught me that Hashem plans everything, even when we don't realize it.

I was born in Switzerland and grew up in Europe after World War II. When I got older, I traveled to New York to study at the Lubavitch yeshiva in Crown Heights. At first, I wasn't planning to become a rabbi. My original goal was to go into business, but Hashem had something else in mind for me.

In 5717 (1957), when I was just 25 years old, the Lubavitcher Rebbe sent me to Toronto, Canada, as his Shliach. I was so confused. I'd planned to be an electrical engineer. I wasn't looking for this kind of job! But the Rebbe gave me this mission, and I took it very seriously. Toronto's Jewish community was small but growing, and my job was to help connect them to Yiddishkeit and Torah.

One day, after I had been in Toronto for some time, I got a phone call from Rabbi Mordechai Zajac, the Rebbe's Shliach in Buffalo, New York.

Life in 1960s America felt very different from today. People were focused on their families

and communities. Neighbors knew each other well, and everyone looked out for one another. At the same time, it was also a time of change.

Many young people were starting to question the world around them. They wanted to understand big ideas, like peace, justice, and how to make the world a better place for everyone in it. College campuses were full of energy, with students talking about their hopes for the future and searching for meaning in their lives.

It was in this atmosphere that Rabbi Mordechai Zajac called me with a special request to speak to university students in Buffalo, New York.

"Rabbi Schochet," he said, "I'd like to invite you to Buffalo to talk to the university students here."

"University students?" I asked. "Are they Jewish?"

"Well," Rabbi Zajac said slowly, "there will be some Jewish students, but most of the audience will be non-Jewish. And there will also be speakers from other religions as well."

I paused for a moment, unsure of how to respond.

"That doesn't sound like the kind of event I'd normally attend," I said honestly. "I'm used to speaking to Jewish groups, not mixed audiences. And besides, I'm very busy here in Toronto. I'm sure you can find someone better. You don't need me."

Rabbi Zajac didn't push me. "I understand," he said. "But maybe you should ask the Rebbe what to do. It could be an important opportunity."

He was right. I didn't want to say no without asking the Rebbe first. So, I contacted Rabbi Chodakov, the Rebbe's secretary - who also happened to be my uncle! Great connections, huh?

I sent a message to the Rebbe's office, explaining the situation and asking if I should go.

Not long after, I got the Rebbe's answer. The Rebbe said it was worthwhile to reach non-Jews in a positive way, especially about the mitzva of Tzedaka - giving charity which is one of the mitzvos that even goyim should do.

Why Tzedaka, of all things? I didn't know, but if the Rebbe had said so, that's what I would do.

Around that time, an idea came to me... I wanted to share a specific story - one connected to the importance of Tzedaka. It was about Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller, also known as the Tosfos Yom Tov. I don't remember if it was the Rebbe's idea or mine, but it felt like the perfect way to explain the power and importance of giving.

"Looks like I'm going to Buffalo," I said to myself with a smile.

I called Rabbi Zajac back. "I've decided to come," I told him.

"That's wonderful!" he said, excited. "The students are going to learn so much from you."

With the Rebbe's encouragement, I felt ready for the challenge. I began preparing my speech, focusing on how to explain the beauty of Tzedaka in a way everyone could relate to. I also spent time researching the story of the Tosfos Yom Tov.



I showed up as expected at the college campus in Buffalo. Let me tell you - it was a strange place in those days.

The students looked so different from what I was used to. Some had long hair, wild clothes, and big beads around their necks. Others were wearing jeans and T-shirts with slogans I didn't understand. They were sitting in groups on the grass, laughing, talking, or even playing guitars.

I was a Chassid, but having grown up in Switzerland, I had a worldly side to me. People liked that I could talk to all kinds of people - even though I had grown up in yeshiva and now worked as a Rabbi in Toronto.

But college campuses in the 1960s? That wasn't a place rabbis like me usually visited. It felt like I'd stepped onto a different planet. It was almost like a Rabbi walking on Mars!

As soon as I walked in, I felt all eyes on me. People started looking at my clothes and whispering to each other.

"Who's that guy?" I overheard one student ask his friend.

"I think he's a rabbi," the other said, tilting his head in curiosity.

Some were Jewish, but most weren't. It was a big room, with a lot of people talking to one another. And then I saw it - a huge table, set up with microphones for priests, ministers, and people from all kinds of religions.

"Is this really where I'm supposed to speak?" I thought to myself, looking around nervously.

But I knew why I was there. I was a Chassid, and I had my marching orders. The Rebbe had told me exactly what to talk about: Tzedaka.

I stood off to the side, listening as the other speakers talked about their religions. A priest spoke about kindness, a minister talked about helping others. They all seemed so comfortable in front of the crowd.

Then it hit me: This is it. I'm here to represent Yiddishkeit. I'm the one who's going to show

these people what the Torah says about helping others.

I straightened my hat and took a deep breath. "Let's do this," I thought, stepping toward the podium.

As I walked up, the room quieted down. All those people - Jewish and non-Jewish - were waiting to hear what I had to say.

A long time ago, in the 1600s, in the busy city of Kraków, Poland, there lived a man named Yisroel. He was very rich, but everyone in town said he wasn't the type to share. They called him "Yisroel Goy" because he didn't seem to act as a Jew should.

"Don't bother knocking on Yisroel's door," people whispered. "He won't give you a single penny for Tzedaka!"

Children would sing as he walked by: **"There goes Yisroel Goy, so rich and mean, He won't give a crumb, not even a bean!"**

Yisroel heard the kids singing and the people talking, but he never said a word. He just kept walking, his face serious. He hardly ever talked to anyone, and his door stayed locked all the time.

Years went by, and Yisroel grew old and weak. Before he died, he made a strange request: "When I pass away, please inscribe on my tombstone the name everyone calls me: 'Yisroel Goy'."

The Chevra Kadisha was shocked. Why would anyone want such a shameful name on their tombstone? But they had to respect his final wish, and to be honest, they didn't really mind. He was such a mean person...

When Yisroel passed away, the people of the town were still angry about his seemingly selfish ways. The Chevra Kadisha felt he was unworthy of being buried next to respectable members of the community. Instead, they buried him in an area of the cemetery called Hekdesh, which was reserved for society's outcasts and the destitute. They wrote on his tombstone exactly what he had requested: "Yisroel Goy."

A few days after the funeral, something strange happened in Kraków. The town's butcher and baker, two prominent members of the community who had always been extremely charitable, suddenly stopped giving money to the poor.

The poor people who had relied on them were desperate.

"Rabbi, please help us!" a woman cried to Rabbi Yom Tov Lipmann Heller, also known as the Tosfos Yom Tov. "The butcher and baker no longer give us Tzedaka for food. How will we feed our families? Are our children going to go hungry?"

The Rabbi was surprised. These two businessmen had always been known for their generosity. He called them to his study to ask why they had stopped their charitable giving.

They looked at each other nervously before answering.

"Rabbi," the butcher said quietly, "the truth is, we were never the ones giving the Tzedaka."

"What do you mean?" the Rabbi asked, confused.

The baker explained, "It was Yisroel—the man everyone called a miser. For years, he would give us large sums of money every week and make us promise to distribute it to the poor. But he made us swear never to tell anyone where the money came from. He wanted to give Tzedaka in secret, without anyone knowing."

"He warned us never to reveal his identity," the butcher added. "He said the greatest mitzva is to give charity without seeking honor or recognition. Now that he has passed away, we no longer have funds to distribute."

The Rabbi sat in stunned silence. All this time, the man everyone had thought was stingy and selfish had actually been supporting the entire community's poor! And he had chosen to accept the town's scorn rather than reveal his good deeds.

Tears filled the Rabbi's eyes. "All this time, he hid his kindness. He didn't want honor or recognition. He only wanted to fulfill the mitzva of Tzedaka in secret. What a holy man he was."



From that day forward, Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman could not rest. He davened for hours every day, begging Hashem for forgiveness - for himself and for the community - for the way they had treated Yisroel.

The Rabbi stood in the synagogue that Shabbos and addressed the community.

"My friends," he began, his voice steady but filled with emotion, "we owe Yisroel an apology. We thought he was selfish, but he was a Tzaddik, who gave Tzedaka quietly, so no one would feel embarrassed. We must honor his memory."

The Rabbi then asked that they add the word "Kadosh" (holy) to Yisroel's tombstone. This changed the inscription to read "Yisroel Goy Kadosh," which forms the words of a passuk meaning "Israel is a holy nation." What had once been an insult was now transformed into words of honor and holiness.

Years later, as the Rabbi neared the end of his life, he made a special request. "When my time comes," he told the Chevra Kadisha, "bury me near Yisroel. He was truly a Tzaddik. I want to rest near someone so holy."

So Rabbi Yom Tov Lipman Heller was buried beside Yisroel the Holy Miser in the Hekdesh section of the Rema Cemetery in Kraków, Poland. To this day, their graves lie side by side, teaching us all never to judge others too quickly and to value their hidden acts of kindness.

All this time, I'd been standing on stage, telling the story of Yisroel the Holy Miser, sharing every detail. When I finished, I gave a speech about the importance of giving charity, whether in public or in private. I explained how it helps people and brings kindness into the world.

When I finished speaking, the audience clapped loudly. I nodded, thanked them, and stepped off the stage.

As I reached the bottom of the stairs, I noticed a young priest from another religion running toward me.

"Rabbi! Rabbi!" he called, a little out of breath. "Please, can you tell me that story again?"

I was surprised. "Tell you the story again?" I asked. "Well, my English isn't going to get any better than it was on stage. Are you sure hearing it again will help?"

"Yes, please," the priest said eagerly, nodding. "I just need to hear it again. It's such an amazing story!"

I studied him for a moment. What could he possibly want? I thought to myself. Maybe he had questions about Judaism, or maybe about his own religion. Whatever it was, it seemed like it could take a while. And honestly, I wasn't too thrilled about being seen in public, having a conversation with a priest.

"Well," I said, trying to sound polite but firm, "I've had a long day of traveling, and I'm pretty tired. But if you really want to talk, you can come to my hotel later tonight. I'll have more time then, and I'd be happy to discuss it."

The priest nodded again. "Thank you, Rabbi. I'll see you later."

As I walked away, I thought to myself, "He probably won't come. People say these things all the time, but they don't follow through."

But little did I know, this was just the beginning of something much bigger.

I wasn't sure if the 'galach' would actually show up, but sure enough, that evening, there was a knock at my hotel room door. When I opened it, there he stood, looking a little nervous.

"Rabbi," he said quickly, "can you tell me the story again?"

I raised an eyebrow. "The same story? You already heard it. Are you sure you need to hear it again?"

"Yes, please," he said, his hands fidgeting. "I just need to hear it again."

So I repeated the story, step by step. As I spoke, I noticed that the galach looked even

more nervous. He kept looking back and forth, like he was checking if anyone else was watching.

When I finished, I leaned back, thinking that would be the end of it. But then he said, "Can you... can you tell it to me, just one more time?"

"One more time?" I said, trying to hide my frustration. "Look, this story isn't short. It's got a lot of details, and I've already told you twice!"

The galach nodded quickly, "Please, Rabbi. It's important. I need to hear it again."

So, I told the story for the third time. By now, I was really wondering what was going on.

When I finished, he looked at me nervously and said, "One more time?"

Now, I was annoyed. "Listen," I said, "as much as I enjoy telling stories, this is getting ridiculous. This isn't a two-minute tale. Why do you keep asking me to repeat it? What's going on here?"

He stammered, "I just... I just want to make sure I understand everything."

I sighed and shook my head. "By now, you should know it by heart! You're not a fool - you seem like a smart person. So why do you need

me to say it again and again? Just tell me - what do you want with this story?"

The galach looked at me, his face pale, but he didn't say anything right away. I sat there, staring at him, waiting for an answer. Whatever he was hiding, it was clear this wasn't just about the story.

Eventually, the galach looked at me and said softly, "I think the man you're talking about - the guy who didn't give money, the miser in the story - was my grandfather. Well, maybe my great-great-great-grandfather, way back up the family tree, but... still a family member."

"Your grandfather?!" I asked, raising an eyebrow. "But this story happened hundreds of years ago, and all the people in the story were Jewish."

He paused and looked around the room nervously, even though it was completely empty - like he wanted to make sure no one was listening.

"The thing is," he said slowly, "I heard this same story from my mother, when she was passing away. She told me that we're that man's family - the miser.





“At the time, I thought she was just making up some crazy story. She was really sick, and I didn’t know how to check if it was true or even who I could ask. And, well, me being a priest and all... you can imagine how strange it felt.”

I pointed to the cross around his neck. “You’re sitting here, as a priest, telling me this is your family? How could this possibly connect back to you?”

The galach took a deep breath and finally said quietly, “...I’m secretly Jewish. My father met my mother after World War II. She was a Jewish refugee. My father was an officer in the army, and they met while he was stationed in Europe. They became friends, and he wanted to marry her.

“When he brought her back to the United States, there was one condition: she had to promise never to tell anyone she was Jewish. Not his family, not the neighbors - no one.”

“In the South, where my father was from, Jews weren’t accepted, and my father didn’t want anyone to know. Maybe he was scared

for her, maybe it was for himself, but whatever it was, my mother agreed to the promise and kept it her whole life. She never told anyone - not my father’s family, not our neighbors. She raised me as a non-Jew. I went to church, and later, I became a priest. That’s what my father wanted for me.”

He paused, his face heavy with emotion. “But my mother passed away recently,” he continued. “Just a few weeks before she died, she called me to her side. She told me the truth: You are a Jew, she said. I kept it hidden, but it’s who you are. And that story of the miser, Yisroel... he was your great-grandfather.”

“At the time,” the galach said, “I just thought my mother had lost her mind. It didn’t make sense to me. But now, you’re repeating the story exactly the way she told it to me. And now I remember her last words: she told me that she was Jewish... which means that I am Jewish.”

As you can imagine, I was completely shocked. I stood up, walked over to him, and gave him a big hug.

"If what your mother said is true," I told him, "then you are 100 percent Jewish! You should get in touch with a local Chabad Shliach in your city. He'll help you figure out the next steps."

I got him the Shliach's number, and he thanked me, looking like a weight had been lifted off his shoulders.

When I left Buffalo, I couldn't stop thinking about what had happened. Meeting this galach, who turned out to be a Jew, was incredible. I felt in my heart that this was the reason the Rebbe had sent me to Buffalo to speak. And not just to speak - but to share the story of Yisroel the Holy Miser, and the power of Tzedaka.

Years later, I was traveling to Eretz Yisrael, and I visited the Kosel. As I stood there, taking in the holy sight, I suddenly heard someone call out, "Shalom Aleichem, Rabbi Schochet!"

I turned around, surprised. "Shalom Aleichem," I replied. "Do I know you?"

The man smiled at me. I looked him up and down, trying to figure out who he was, but I didn't recognize him.

"I know you from one day in Buffalo," he said, "but you know the old me. I am the galach - the priest - related to the Jewish miser from Kraków."

Then it clicked. I remembered who he was! But he looked completely different now. He wasn't dressed like a galach anymore. He looked like a fully frum Yid - a Chassid, in fact.

"Now do you recognize me?" he asked with a wide smile on his face. "I took your advice and called a Rabbi in my city. That phone call changed my life. I decided to start over and become a Jew. I even moved to Eretz Yisrael!"

He continued, "My rabbi suggested I go through something called a giyur l'chumra. That's a special conversion some people do when there's doubt about their family history, just to make everything clear according to halacha. I wanted to make sure there was no question about my Jewishness. And now, Baruch Hashem, I'm fully

Torah-keeping, and I've even become a Breslover Chossid! It's so nice to see you again, Rabbi!"

I stood there amazed, smiling back at him. The priest I met in Buffalo, who had come from the family of the miser who didn't give Tzedaka, was now a pious Chassid, standing at the Kosel! Wow! Just Wow!

I was amazed at how this man had turned his life around, all from the one meeting we had in Buffalo. That's when I knew for sure that he was the reason the Rebbe had sent me there that day.

There are no coincidences. Hashem had drawn him to my lecture that day, just as Hashem sent me to speak in Buffalo. Each of us has a journey, and Hashem is the One guiding us along the way. Every journey is part of Hashem's special plan. How amazing it is when we get to see that plan unfold, right before our eyes!

But wait - if you thought that was an amazing story, I have one more detail to share.

Just a few years ago, I learned something incredible: I am a descendant of the Tosfos Yom Tov - the famous rabbi in the story!

Think about it. Hashem had planned for a descendant of Yisroel, the man who secretly gave so much Tzedaka, and a descendant of the Tosfos Yom Tov, the Rabbi who was connected to the story, to meet hundreds of years later... in Buffalo, New York, of all places! And what for? So the Rabbi could help save this precious Neshama and bring him back to Yiddishkeit.

You never know. You just never know.

This inspiring story was told by Rabbi Dovid Schochet, of blessed memory, who passed away on January 28, 2024 (18 Shevat 5784). May his memory be a blessing.

BEDI KAS CHAMETZ

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