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Saved By the Dog

By Aharon Spetner



Illustrated by Miri Weinreb

Thursday afternoon

Shimmy headed out on his bike to deliver a stack of Toras Avigdor booklets to Congregation Anshei Maaseh. Suddenly, out of nowhere, an ugly man jumped out and yelled “give me your bike!” Panicking, Shimmy pedaled as fast as he could, but the man grabbed the bike and shoved Shimmy aside before riding off.

“Help! Help!” cried Shimmy. “That man stole my bike and my stack of Toras Avigdor booklets!”

Just then a huge dog bolted out of the house of the Risnik family, Shimmy’s next-door neighbors.

“Stop, Timothy Steve!” Mr. Risnik called, running out of his house after his dog. “Come back!”

But the dog instead leaped through the air and clamped his jaws down on the ganev’s leg, causing him to fall to the ground, howling in pain.

“Get off of him!” yelled Mr. Risnik and his son Stevey. “Bad dog!”

A Police Car Pulls Up

Moments later a police car pulled up and stopped next to the scene. “Officer,” said Shimmy to one of the policemen, his face streaked with tears. “That man stole my bike and my Toras Avigdor booklets!”

“Why, if it isn’t Terrible Terrell Jackson,” said the policeman, lifting the ganev to his feet and slapping handcuffs on him. “They should never have let you out of jail.”

“Is this your dog?” the other officer asked Mr. Risnik. “He just helped us catch a dangerous criminal.”

“He did?” Mr. Risnik said. “Good dog, Timothy Steve. Good dog!”

“And young man,” the officer said to Shimmy with a smile, picking the bike up off the ground. “I believe this is yours.”

“Thank you so much, officer,” Shimmy said. “I really appreciate it.”

“It is our pleasure. Now hurry off and deliver those Toras Avigdor booklets.”

“You know about Toras Avigdor?” Shimmy asked in wonder.

Rabbi Miller was a Big Supporter of the Police

“Of course, I do. Rabbi Miller was a big supporter of the police going after criminals. When I was a new police officer he used to always say good morning to me when I would pass him on his way to the synagogue.”

“Thanks again officer,” Shimmy said gratefully. “Have a great day!”
Friday morning

Shimmy knocked on the door of the Risnik home. Immediately he heard a loud barking inside.

A moment later, Stevey opened the door. “Down, Timothy Steve!” he said, as the dog tried to jump up on Shimmy and lick his face.

“Hi Shimmy. How are you?”

“Boruch Hashem, I’m doing great,” Shimmy replied.

“Who is that present for?” asked Stevey, noticing that Shimmy was holding a box wrapped in a bow.

“It’s actually for your dog,” Shimmy said.

“You got a present for Timothy Steve?”

“Yes. He saved my bike and the Toras Avigdor booklets from the ganev yesterday. I wanted to say thank you.”

“But Timothy Steve didn’t know he was a thief,” Stevey said, taking the box and unwrapping it to find a package of doggy treats inside. “The police told us that they discovered that Terrible Terrel had a package of beef jerky in his pocket. It seems that Timothy Steve was just trying to eat the meat. It wasn’t like he was actually trying to help you.”

The Dogs of Mitzraim (Egypt)

“Stevey,” Shimmy said, as the dog started sniffing the treats. “Do you know about the dogs in Mitzrayim?”

“There was a plague of dogs?” asked Stevey.

“No, but Mitzrayim had vicious dogs guarding the land, making sure no slaves escaped. And when Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim, he made a miracle and not a single dog even barked when we left.”

“Cool, I never knew that,” Stevey said.

“What’s more, in Parshas Mishpatim the Torah tells us that if we come across treif meat, we are not allowed to eat it and instead it should be given to the dogs. And the reason for that is it’s a reward for the dogs not barking when we left Mitzrayim.”

“But the dogs didn’t decide to do that - Hashem made them keep their mouths shut.”

“Exactly. Yet we see we have to be thankful to something which helps us, even if they didn’t try to.”

Appreciating Your Mother for Serving You Supper

“Hmmm,” Stevey said thoughtfully. “That means when my mother serves me supper I should definitely thank her for it, because she is knowingly doing something for me.”

“Of course, you should thank her!” said Shimmy. “And can you think of who you need to thank even more than your parents?”

“You, because you brought treats for my dog?”

“Well sure, but I was talking about Hashem.”

“Hashem?” Stevey asked, confused.

“Of course! You’re breathing the air that He provides. You eat the food that He makes grow, and you drink the water which He created! Every second of your life Hashem is doing countless things for you, Stevey.”

“Incredible!” Stevey said. “I never thought about that before. Thank you, Shimmy!”

Takeaway:

We learn from our Parshah to be grateful even to dogs who do not intend to do us favors, how much more to people who do intend to do good for us!

Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5784 email of Toras Avigdor Junior adapted from the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l.

The Bread of Life

One day (Sefer Oros Mordechai says that it was on an erev Shabbos), a non-Jew came to Rav Yitzchok’s home and asked for a piece of bread. The Rebbitzen had just baked fresh challos and was reluctant to cut open a whole loaf just to give one piece to this gentile.

However, Rav Yitzchok told her, “If you cut the bread, Jewish blood will not be spilled.” The Rebbitzen did as he said and she gave the non-Jew enough bread to sate his hunger.

Captured by a Ruthless Gang of Thieves

Shortly thereafter, Rav Yitzchok traveled to Hungary. His journey took him through the Carpathian Mountains, where gangs of highwaymen who would rob and travelers, and occasionally kill them, were common on the roads. Rav Yitzchok was captured by thieves, who took all the money he had with him. They then brought him to their leader to ask what they should do with him. Should they kill him to ensure he doesn’t inform on them to the authorities, or should they let him go?

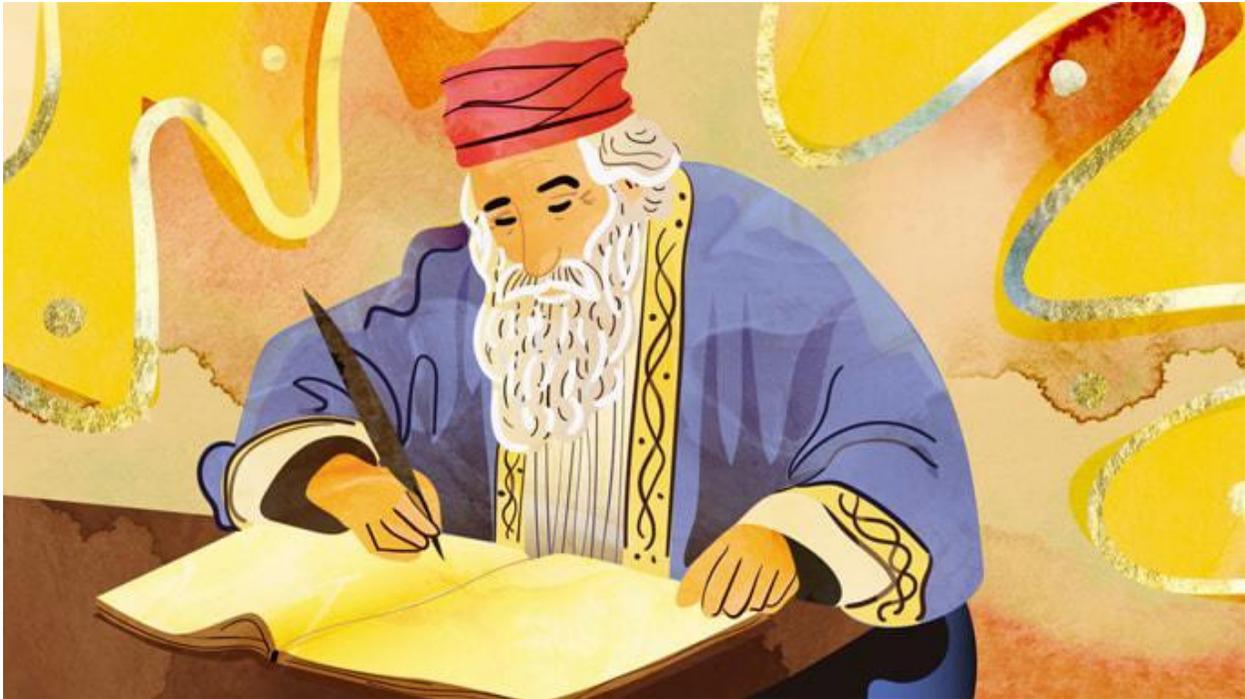
The leader of the highwaymen immediately recognized Rav Yitzchok as the man who had been kind to him and had told his wife to give him bread. He said, “This Jew saved my life when I was starving. Let him go and give him back his money.”

Rav Yitzchok walked out in peace. When he got home, he told his Rebbitzen, “Didn’t I tell you that if you cut the bread, blood would not be spilled. In the merit of that bread, my life was spared.” (Ohr Hameir Premishlan)

Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5784 edition of The Way of Emunah from Rabbi Meir Isamar Rosenbaum.

The Life and Times of Rabbeinu Nissim of Gerona

By Yaakov Landman



Art by Sefira Lightstone

The Iberian Peninsula (present-day Spain and Portugal) of the 14th century was a tumultuous place. Even before the harsh decrees of the Spanish Inquisition—which began in the following century—Christian persecution was rampant. The fate of the Jewish community hung by a thread; the whim of the king or a false accusation could (and did) shatter any short-lived period of peace.

Throughout these trying times, Rabbeinu Nissim of Gerona (c 1290 - 1376) deftly navigated the various challenges that the Jewish community faced. Although he did not serve as community rabbi in an official capacity, by virtue of his reputation he was the de facto leader of Spanish Jewry in his time. His prominence was such that he attended the court of Peter IV of Aragon and served as one of his attending physicians.

His accomplishments, however, extended beyond the communal sphere. His extensive written corpus spans the gamut of Jewish learning, covering Jewish law,

Talmudic and Biblical commentary, responsa and theology. Indeed, his writings are studied by yeshiva students as part of their Talmudic curriculum to this day.

Early Influences

Rabbeinu Nissim—known simply by the acronym “Ran”—was born close to the turn of the 14th century in the Kingdom of Aragon, one of several countries that made up the Spanish territory during the Middle Ages. (It wasn't until the reign of the infamous Ferdinand and Isabella that Spain became a unified country under one monarch.) This period marked the conclusion of what is now known as the Golden Age of Spanish Jewry, when Judaism and Torah scholarship flourished in the land of Sepharad.

Although we don't know for certain who his primary teachers were, it is clear from his own output that he drank from the waters of the great Sephardic authorities who preceded him, including Nachmanides (Rabbi Moses ben Nachman, 1194–1270), the Rashba (Rabbi Shlomo ibn Aderet, 1235-1310), and the Ra'ah (Rabbi Aharon ben Joseph haLevi, 1235 – 1290).

It is clear that his father, Reuven ben Nissim, was one of his primary teachers, quoted several times in his writings as “my father, my teacher.” It has been suggested that one of the Ran's teachers was his contemporary, Rabbinu Peretz HaKohen, since he refers to him with certain honorifics. However, there is insufficient evidence to confirm that he was, in fact, one of his primary teachers.

Renowned Halachic Authority

For most of his life, the Ran lived in Barcelona, one of the major centers of Spanish Jewry and a city that had been home to many distinguished rabbis, including the Rashba. Although it is unclear if he was born there or perhaps in the city of Gerona—from where his father hailed—he certainly headed a yeshiva and served as a judge at the rabbinical court of Barcelona for much of his life. Although he did not accept an official position as a rabbi in the city, he was the leading authority and any matter of weight landed on his desk. He was deeply involved in communal affairs and received *halachic* queries from well beyond the borders of Aragon.

In the Royal Court

Following the path set forth by the great Sephardic scholars such as Maimonides, Nachmanides, and the Rashba, the Ran did not wish to support himself by utilizing his Torah knowledge. As such, he studied medicine and became a renowned physician. In this capacity, and as an adviser to the king on various matters, he attended the court of Peter IV of Aragon. Records of a number of interactions between the Ran and members of the royal court still exist.

One particular episode describes how the king wished to understand why Jews could not drink wine touched by a non-Jew. The king's Jewish physician—a possible reference to the Ran — called for water to be fetched, which was then used to rinse the king's feet. The physician took a sip from the water, demonstrating that the issue with the wine was not due to some perceived impurity. Rather, it was strictly a concern that the wine may have been used for idol worship.

The Black Death

In the spring of 1348, the “Black Death,” also known as the bubonic plague, reached Catalonia. Over the next few years, it would wreak havoc across Europe, killing approximately 50% of its inhabitants. Predictably, Jews were wrongfully blamed, with widespread rumors accusing them of poisoning the water wells.

While the authorities (including Pope Clement VI) attempted to quell these false reports, their efforts were largely unsuccessful. On the 17th of May, 1348, a mob attacked the Jewish quarter of Barcelona. They ransacked the synagogue and murdered some 20 people.

After the communal leaders—including the Ran—petitioned the king, he dispatched soldiers to protect the Jews of Barcelona, and in 1349 he absolved them of any debt incurred as a result of the pogrom.⁷

The Ran Is Framed

In 1367, under uncertain circumstances, the Ran and a group of prominent community leaders—including Rabbi Chasdai ben Abraham Crescas, Rabbi Yitzchak bar Sheshet, and his brother Yehuda—were arrested and imprisoned. It seems that they were the target of trumped-up charges pushed by a group of disgruntled community members. Notwithstanding the fact that the Ran had been in good standing with the Royal Court, they languished in jail for some five months. Eventually, the charges were dropped and they were set free.

This incident is recorded by the Ran's student, Rabbi Yitzchak bar Sheshet (the Rivash):

And this that you mentioned that I should have completed my vows without delay to answer in writing ... I will answer that you sit securely in your tent, with your work done by others without fear, while I have (the responsibility of) the way of the land on me. In addition to this, about five months ago evil people arose from our midst and slandered Rabbeinu Nissim and six distinguished men of the community, among them Don Chisdai, myself, and my brother, and delivered us to the hand of the king ... ”

His Work

The Ran's literary output is astonishing, particularly when considering that significant portions of his writings have not survived. For example, while

approximately 70 of his responsa—published as *Sheilot Uteshuvot Haran*—are extant today, it seems likely that he penned close to 1,000 in his lifetime. The scant collection that survives serves as a bedrock for the decisions of later rabbis.

The Ran's magnum opus, and arguably his most studied work today, is his *Commentary to the Sefer Halachot* of the Rif (Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi 1013–1103). The Rif's *Halachot* was the first attempt to extract *halacha* from the Talmud in an organized way. It comprises almost solely the *halachic* sections of the Talmud, leaving out the debates and non-legalistic parts. The Rif's work came to be known as the Talmud Katan ("Miniature Talmud") and was often studied independently of the Talmud itself.

An Integral Part of Yeshiva Curriculum Today

Indeed, precisely because of its popularity, the Ran deemed it to be the perfect backdrop for his own work. While a commentary on the Rif, the Ran will often expand on what the Rif has cited and quote others who disagree with the Rif's position. The Rif and Ran are an integral element of the curriculum in yeshivot today, and are studied widely as Talmudic commentaries.

The Ran also penned a commentary on the Talmud, *Chiddushim al Hashas*. It seems likely that he wrote commentary on the entire Talmud, or a very significant portion of it, however only about 10 have survived. (There is some discussion regarding the authorship of novellae on a number of tractates that may have erroneously been printed in his name.) His commentary on Nedarim is considered the most popular and authoritative commentary to the tractate. In current editions of the Talmud Nedarim, this commentary appears opposite "Rashi's," where the Tosafot—which is relegated to the margin—would normally be.

In addition to his extensive corpus of *halachic* and Talmudic commentary, the Ran also composed a highly influential work on Jewish belief and ethics, *Drashot Haran*. This work comprises 13 lengthy sermons or homilies which articulate some of the basic tenets of Judaism.

Lastly, he began a *Commentary on the Torah* but did not complete it, likely because he started toward the end of his life. This work has been published from a number of surviving manuscripts and covers the first five portions of the Torah, from Bereshit until Chayei Sarah.

Students and Passing

Aside from his writings, Rabbeinu Nissim gifted the Jewish world with many students who continued to spread his teachings, among them: his children Don Chisdai and Don Reuven; the Rivash who we quoted before; the Rivash's brother, R' Yehuda ben Sheshet; and other prominent scholars such as Rav Chisdai Crescas

(1340-1410), who authored the book *Ohr Hashem*; and Rabbeinu Yosef ibn Chaviv, author of the *Nimukei Yosef*.

Rabbeinu Nissim passed away in 1376, during a period of upheaval as rival brothers Henry and Pedro of Castile battled for control of the Spanish lands. Many Jewish communities throughout Spain were plundered and destroyed during these wars. The political situation eventually settled, but it can be argued that the Ran's passing marked the end of the Golden Age of Jewish Spain, with Spanish Jewry beginning a steady state of decline, which culminated in the 1492 expulsion.

The Mystery Torah

The Ran also wrote his own Torah Scroll.

In recent history, some posited that this sefer Torah had survived the upheaval of the Spanish expulsion and eventually made its way to Brazil, where it was presented as a gift to Rabbi Yichye Dahan of Tiberius around 100 years ago.

However, many scholars have concluded that the Torah was not written by the Ran, evidenced by the calligraphy, which is a different style from the lettering used in medieval Spanish Torahs, as well as notable *halachic* issues, such as inscriptions on the outer parchment.

It would thus appear that the whereabouts of the Ran's Torah is unknown.

Legacy of the Ran

Although the Ran lived in an era of Christian persecution, the Torah that he taught survived the animosity and hardships that the Jews of his generation endured, and his commentaries have become classics of the Torah library. In every yeshiva today, the words of Rabbeinu Nissim are studied and analyzed. His homilies continue to inspire Jews to connect with their heritage, serving as proof of the Torah's timeless ability to triumph over every adversity.

*"The righteous are called living, even after death."*¹⁶

Reprinted from the Parshat Bo 5784 website of Chabad.Org

The “Last” Shabbos Meal

By Rabbi Yitzhchok Zilberstein



My aunt told a story that happened in her town, Gaborova, during the Holocaust. One Friday afternoon, the Nazis set fire to the town from all sides, and gathered all of the Jews — men, women, and children — into the shul, which was made of wood. They declared that they were going to torch the shul, and that any Jew found outside the shul would be killed on the spot.

The children, who were hungry and tired, cried continuously. Among the Jews in the shul was R' Yoel the baker, a truly G-d-fearing person. R' Yoel had managed to bake some challoos for Shabbos that morning, but the challoos were still in his bakery. At risk to his own life, he decided to sneak out of the shul to get the challoos and bring them back to the shul so that the people could fulfill the mitzvah of lechem mishneh.

The Jews Washed Their Hands for Their Last Seudah

Several minutes later, he returned to the shul with the challoos and invited the people to partake of a Shabbos seudah. Momentarily dismissing their unfortunate circumstances, the Jews washed their hands and ate the fresh challah. Then, inexplicably, a Nazi commander arrived and informed the soldiers that their regiment had been given a new assignment on the battlefield, and that they were to leave the town immediately.

The evil Nazis guarding the shul requested that they be allowed to set the shul on fire before departing, but the commander insisted that they follow him without delay. The Jews of the town were convinced that this miraculous turn of events, which happened just as they were fulfilling the mitzvah of seudas Shabbos, was due to the mesirus nefesh of R' Yoel the baker. His mesirus nefesh purified the environs to the extent that it banished the Angel of Death, causing the Nazis to abandon their murderous plan.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5784 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table.
Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Aleinu L’Shaneiach”*

The Inner Haven

By Shmuel Botnick



In his sefer, K'Reiach Sadeh, in a piece on Parashas Kedoshim, Rav Nota Greenblatt gives a unique perspective on the definition of “kedoshim, holy ones.” He writes: “While in Altona [a district in Hamburg, West Germany], I was zocheh to daven at the graves of the great leaders of previous generations. Rav Yonasan Eibenschutz’s tombstone describes him as ‘Rabbeinu Hakadosh.’

“I thought about this description for a long time. Then I found that it was documented that, while Rav Yonasan Eibenschutz was embroiled in a years-long controversy (with those who accused him of being a follower of Shabsai Tzvi), he never interrupted his daily schedule of shiurim; his learning continued as if nothing was out of the ordinary.

“Perhaps that is the reason he is referred to as ‘Rabbeinu Hakadosh.’ Even as he endured the most painful persecution, he was able to elevate himself above the chaos and disregard it, as if it did not exist.”

Rav Nota shared this insight on several occasions and many had the impression that the quality he described was one that defined his own essence. Being involved in so many projects, on behalf of so many people, his life had plenty of tumultuous moments. But when the door to his study closed behind him, he firmly barred entry to the turbulence of conflict and confusion.

Rav Nota learned for hours on end, the very picture of serenity. He held a level of self-confidence that no one could diminish and, no matter what life sent his way, he was always able to escape to that inner haven.

Reprinted from the Parshas Bo 5784 edition of At the ArtScroll Shabbos Table. Excerpted from the ArtScroll book – “Rav Nota – The Story of Rav Nota Greenblatt.”

How to Fool the Secret Police

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

The year 5687 (1927) marked a stormy period in the fight between communism and Judaism in the USSR. The men of the *Yevisekziya* (Jewish division of the NKVD [1]) were trying desperately to snuff out the flame of *Yiddishkeit*. One of the ways they used to catch their fish was through planting undercover agents everywhere to be informers, bringing terror into the hearts of the people.

In the city of Kuta'isi Georgia, [2] which was then a Soviet republic, there lived a young man who was among the best students in the recently established *Tomchei T'mimim* Chabad yeshiva. He worked as a *chazan* (cantor) in a Sefardic synagogue and was known as a *Chacham* (scholar). After the government closed the yeshiva, he taught children in secret, keenly aware that such behavior would be putting his life in danger.

A Dreaded Invitation to Visit the NKVD

Indeed, it wasn't long until he received the dreaded order to appear at the offices of the NKVD. He was interrogated cruelly but after much useless questioning the interrogator asked him bluntly, "Who pays you for teaching the children?"

Without becoming flustered, he responded, "What children? What pay? Who's interested in having their children taught?"

"If so," retorted the interrogator, "why do you visit specific houses daily" if not to teach children?"

"People call me to remove an *ayin harah* (evil eye)."

The interrogator burst into laughter. "Are you at least successful in this work?"

"You can't know," replied the chasid. "Each case is unique. They pay me, and they ask me to come again. Why should I care if they think it works?"

Having prepared himself for this, he continued playing dumb as well as being very cautious. The interrogators wouldn't relent, and continued barraging him with questions trying to pry out a confession. However, the chasid soon proved too resistant for them, and they commanded him to leave the room while they discuss his case.

Headed Straight for the Exit of the Building

Continuing to play dumb, he headed straight for the exit of the building. The armed guard stepped in and stopped him, asking him where he was going.

"I was told to go," the chasid said simply.

The guard, certain that no one could leave an interrogation without permission, let him go.

Aware that going home was dangerous, as surely a search party would soon be sent for him, he went to a friend's house for a few days, and then traveled to Rostov.

Arriving in Rostov, he found his fellow chasidim in despair.

"The Rebbe Rayatz [of Lubavitch] has been arrested and sentenced to three years exile in Kostroma," [3] he was told.

Without hesitation, he set out immediately for Kostroma. When he arrived where the *Rebbe Rayatz* (the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, **Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn**) was staying, he requested permission to see the Rebbe. The chasidim were reluctant to allow him in "as his presence could endanger the Rebbe" but at last he was granted a *yechidus* (private audience).

The Rebbe's Peculiar Instructions

In *yechidus*, the Rebbe gave him peculiar instructions.

"Travel to Moscow and meet with several chasidim who have legitimate permits allowing them to purchase merchandise. Try to obtain for yourself such documents bearing your name. Once you have them, return to Cuta'isi and present yourself to the NKVD! You should tell them that because during the interrogation they were not happy with your method of income, you therefore chose to go into business, and that's why you left so suddenly -- to immediately buy merchandise."

The Rebbe then gave him a note that contained specific instructions for the elder chasid Reb Boruch-Sholom, [4] who would make the necessary connection with the businessmen for him. He then warned him to ensure the note be destroyed immediately after reading it.

So, after Shabbat, he travelled to Moscow. Arriving there he noticed that the train station was packed with people, many of them secret agents of the NKVD. Much caution was needed to not raise suspicion. He took the first trolley in the direction of the city, taking a seat next to a bearded elderly Jew. After eyeing each other for some time the elder broke the ice.

"From where does this Jew come?" he questioned.

"Kostroma." The chasid replied.

The joy on the other man's face was clear. Realizing that this was his chance, the chasid probed. "Perhaps you know Reb Boruch Sholom?"

"Boruch Sholom?" that's me!" the elderly Jew responded.



The Rebbe Rayatz

When they arrived inside Reb Boruch Sholom's home, the two hugged and kissed cheeks (as is customary among Russian chasidim). The host inquired about the Rebbe and the reason for the chasid's visit. The latter conveyed regards from the Rebbe and gave Reb Boruch Sholom the note, which, after reading and rereading, they burned.

The chasid was overjoyed at finding Reb Boruch Sholom in such a large city. His joy turned to amazement when hearing from Reb Boruch Sholom that he usually doesn't travel in the morning before *shacharit* (the Morning Prayer), but that particular day he awoke with an urge to go to the train station.

"How wonderful are the ways of *Hashgacha* (Divine Supervision)," cried Reb Boruch Sholom. "When traveling with the Rebbe's power, wonders are no wonders." On the following day there was a *farbrengen* (chasidic gathering) with the elder chasidim of Moscow, where the chasid conveyed regards from the Rebbe to all of them.

Hoping that their Rebbe Would Be Allowed to Leave the USSR

Their happiness was tremendous, as much effort was being put into securing the release of the Rebbe which was expected within the next few days. And after that, chasidim hoped, he would be granted permission to leave the USSR.

Following the exact directives of the Rebbe, he met with the right people acquired the necessary papers, and returned to Cuta'isi. When he arrived, although a wanted man, he informed his family that he had no intention of fleeing or going into hiding and, compounding their fears, he told them his plan to walk directly into the offices of the notorious NKVD voluntarily.

In vain his family pleaded with him to come to his senses, but he remained adamant about following the Rebbe's advice and soon left on his way.

Meets the Same NKVD Guard

The same guard who was on duty when he had left recognized him immediately. Seeing his chance to make up for his embarrassing mistake, the guard led him directly to the interrogator's office, and announced, "You were upset that I let this guy leave? Well, here he is, he returned on his own."

Almost instantly, the interrogator bombarded him with questions, first and foremost being why did he run away and disappear?

"I didn't run away," he answered calmly. "You told me to go so I left. Who can escape you anyway?"

"And where have you been until now?" the interrogator queried.

The chasid then proceeded to tell them exactly what the Rebbe had told him to say, and concluded by presenting the paperwork to validate his tale.

After thoroughly inspecting the papers and finding them to be in order the interrogator told him, "It is a fine choice you made to not be a scholar and rather switch to the path of business. But, take my advice: even better would be to drop the business and become a worker!"

The chasid nodded his agreement and promised to consider his advice.

"It is your good fortune," continued the interrogator, "that you smartly turned yourself in. Were we to have searched and found you, you would have been sentenced to ten years exile in Siberia! Now go home, heed my word and become a worker."

Each year on *Yud Beis and Yud Gimmel* [12-13] of the Jewish month of *Tammuz*, the same dates as the Rebbe's release from exile, this chasid would celebrate his freedom, due to following the Rebbe's inspired advice.

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*Source:* Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from *A Chassidische Derher*, Tammuz 5772, pp.28-29. Based on *Pninei Hakeser* Vol., I p 85.

*Connection:* This Shabbat, the tenth of the Jewish month of Shvat, is the 74<sup>th</sup> yearzeit of **the Rebbe Rayatz** (and the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of his son-in-law officially ascending to the Leadership of Chabad).

*Biographical note:* **Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn** [of blessed memory: 12 Tammuz 5640 - **10 Shvat** 5710 (Jan. 1880-June 1950)], known as the **Rebbe Rayatz**, was the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, from 1920 to 1950. He established a network of Jewish educational institutions and Chassidim that was the single most significant factor for the preservation of Judaism during the dread reign of the communist Soviets. In 1940 he moved to the USA, established Chabad world-wide headquarters in Brooklyn and launched the global campaign to renew and spread Judaism in all languages and in every corner of the world, the campaign continued and expanded so remarkably successfully by his son-in-law and successor, Rabbi Menachem-Mendel Schneerson.

Footnotes:

[1] Forerunner to the KGB

[2] An independent country at the intersection of Europe and Asia, home to Caucasus Mountain villages and Black Sea beaches. (Google)

[3] Kostroma is a city in western Russia, about 200 miles (320 km) northeast of Moscow.

[4] Named for the eldest son of the *Tzemech Tzedek*, the third Rebbe of Chabad.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Bo 5784 email of KabbalaOnline.org, a project of Ascent of Safed.*