

A Chassidic Story (#20)

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One Shabbos morning the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Baal HaTanya, came home to find some chassidim waiting for him. He asked them if they wanted him to teach them a chassidic lesson or tell them a chassidic story. Here's what they chose to hear.

At the time the Baal HaTanya was a young disciple of the Magid of Mezritch, the holy brothers, the Rebbe Reb Shmelka of Nikolsburg and Reb Pinchas (the Baal Haflaah) were due for a visit. Prior to their arrival, the Magid made extensive preparations, including cleaning and painting the house, as one would do before Pesach. "When they arrived," said the Baal HaTanya, "I made sure that I would be in the Magid's room when they went in to greet him."

The holy brothers asked the Magid a question about a Rambam that found perplexing. The Magid demurred. "I've been very weak lately and can't answer you. Forgive me, but pose your question to one of my disciples, Reb Zushia. He will certainly be able to resolve it."

"When I heard this," said the Baal HaTanya, "I immediately ran to where the Rebbe Reb Zushia was staying. When they got there, the Rebbe Reb Zushia was deep in thought and didn't

notice that they had entered. I had to nudge his hand to bring him out of his reverie.

“After telling the Rebbe Reb Zushia that the Magid had sent them, the Rebbe Reb Shmelka and Reb Pinchas asked their question. After a few moments the Rebbe Reb Zushia answered, ‘It seems that you weren’t studying the Rambam in order. Had you done so, you would have realized that what he writes in the previous section precludes your question.’ They thought about it and realized that he was right.

“I was amazed by what I had witnessed,” said the Baal HaTanya. “Shortly afterward I returned to the Magid’s home. He asked me if the holy brothers had been to the Rebbe Reb Zushia. I told him they had and what the Rebbe Reb Zushia had answered.”

“Did it take Reb Zushia long to answer?” asked the Magid.

The Baal HaTanya replied, “He waited a few minutes smoking his pipe.”

“It seems,” said the Magid, “that Reb Zushia is not in the best of health. May God heal him.”

May the merit of the tzaddikim protect us and all Yisrael.
Amen.

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