

# A Chassidische Maaseh #2

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*Shivchei HaBaal Shem Tov #60*

Reb Yosef the Melamed (*cheder*\* teacher) once visited Linitz and told the following story.

Reb Yosef was a trustworthy individual and held money in escrow for many people. During a certain period, he had many people's money in his care. One of those people was the *rebbe*tzin\*\* of his town, Mezritch. The government canceled the local currency. This led to a dispute between the *rebbe*tzin and Reb Yosef. Reb Yosef suggested that they go to the Magid of Mezritch, Reb Dov Ber, the Baal Shem Tov's successor, to mediate. They did and he did.

The *rebbe*tzin was pregnant. After she left, the Magid of Mezritch turned to Reb Yosef and said, "That woman is beyond hope. She doesn't have much time left."

The next day, the *rebbe*tzin began to have contractions. She soon realized that the birthing process was not going as it should, and that her life was in danger. She sent for Reb Yosef who came right away. "Please. Forgo your honor. Go to the Magid on my behalf and ask him to make a *pidyon*\*\*\* for me!"

Reb Yosef recalled what the Magid had told him the day before.

He knew there was only one possibility of saving her. "If you give me the key to your money drawer and allow me to give the Magid as much as I think is appropriate, I'll do it. If not—I won't go." The rebbetzin gave him the key and a kerchief to hold the money. Reb Yosef took 160 gold coins and went straight to the Magid.

"Why did you bother coming?" asked the Magid. "I told you yesterday what her situation is."

Reb Yosef answered, "*She* gave me the key and permission to take all her money!" Immediately the Magid sent for two other disciples, Reb Michel and Reb Leib Cohen. At that time, the Magid of Mezritch was still able to walk, but was unable to go to the mikveh. He told the three men to go directly to the mikveh and immerse.

While the three disciples immersed, the Magid stood near-by meditating to save the *rebbetzin*. When the disciples lifted their heads out of the water, the Magid yelled, "You haven't succeeded yet!" They immersed again and again and again. Reb Yosef later commented that the Magid wanted to teach him how to meditate in such situations. "But I declined. I prefer to do things in my down-home way." Reb Yosef, who was an older person, was becoming quite weak. He said a silent prayer, "Master of the Universe! For my sake, please save the *rebbetzin*! If not, I might die!"

Finally, the Magid of Metzritch told them they could come out. "You've succeeded. She's going to have triplets, all boys." He also told them how many sons and daughters she would have in the future.

Before they had left his home, the Magid had ordered a spicy meal prepared for Reb Yosef, Reb Michel and Reb Leib Cohen to warm them up when they came back. After the men ate, the Magid told them that he was going to take a short vacation until the excitement of the *rebbetzin's* miracle passed. He then went to

his room and closed the door, refusing to receive visitors until the *rebbetzin* gave birth and recovered.

{May the merit of the tzaddikim protect us and all of Israel. Amen.}\*\*\*\*

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\**cheder* – literally, room; Torah day school for young Jewish boys

\*\**rebbetzin* – wife of a rabbi

\*\*\**pidyon* – literally, redemption; to “make a pidyon” means to give a gift (usually money) to a tzaddik to pray on one’s behalf, so that one be saved or spared from difficulty. It is devoutly hoped that the combined power of the gift (as *tzedakah*/charity), and the tzaddik’s prayer will be effective.

\*\*\*\*The customary way of ending a chassidic story.