

A Life of Faith

written by Yehudis Golshevsky
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Reb Aharon of Kiblitsh, a Breslover chassid known for his great trust in God, lived a truly meager material existence. His “bad *mazel*” was notorious in his town. Reb Aharon leased the rights to fish along a section of the river in order to provide food for his family and maybe earn some extra cash. People joked, “His *mazel* is so hard, the fish know when he’s coming and get out of his way!” Even after he died, Reb Aharon’s family couldn’t afford the few pennies needed for burial shrouds and had to bury him in homemade shrouds.

Sometimes his wife had a hard time bearing their poverty. She wasn’t worried about her own standard of living; her faith made that acceptable to her. But she was concerned about her daughters. “It seems so unlikely that we will find suitable

matches for our daughters, since we can't afford a dowry. Who will marry girls who come from such a destitute family as ours?"

Reb Aharon would always offer the same enthusiastic encouragement: "What do you mean? Our girls are so special that this won't be a problem at all. I am telling you, the time will come when the matchmakers will ask, 'Aharon, don't you have any other daughters to marry off?'" And that is exactly what happened.

The local Ukrainian nobleman loved Reb Aharon. To show his esteem, he gave him an expensive Italian cow as a gift. The cow produced superior milk and cheese, and Reb Aharon's situation began to improve. But one day, when Reb Aharon came home after a long day spent in prayer and Torah study, his family came out to greet him with tears in their eyes. "The cow got caught in its lead and accidentally strangled itself!"

How did Reb Aharon respond to this devastating news? He jumped into the air! His face shining with joy, he exclaimed, "This is such a kindness from God! Surely a child was supposed to pass away, and God took the cow instead!" He repeated this emphatically several times, his voice ringing with joy. His family was slowly drawn in to his enthusiasm until they felt grateful for their mishap. "Better the cow than a member of our family!"

Based on Siach Sarfey Kodesh IV:342, 344, 346