

PART 3

WONDERFUL STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Wonderful stories of *tzaddikim* of yesteryear, likened to angels, permeated with G-d's fear. The benefit derived from reading stories of the holy men of yore, is already recorded in books of rabbinic lore. It fires the heart with the flames of G-d's love, to hope and trust in the One up above. To yearn for and cleave to the Lord of all that is and is to be, to the Most Holy One, blessed be He.

I will cite here the words of the great Gaon, R' Shalom Mordechai Shwadron o.b.m, known as Maharsham, which he wrote in his approbation to the book entitled, *Esser Kedushos*, an anthology of stories of *tzaddikim*: "*If I give an approbation to this book to attest to the benefit it affords to arouse the hearts, my words are superfluous, for anyone who has an iota of truth in his heart, thirsts to see and hear the words of the living G-d, as well as stories of talmidei chachomim which require study. I have no doubt that every Jew will hasten to assist the author in his endeavor, and to participate in the dissemination of Torah and the fear of heaven, so that the public will take heed and learn to fear the Almighty.*"

May the merit of all *tzaddikim* mentioned herein together with all other *tzaddikim* and holy men, stand us in good stead, so that the holy Torah does not forsake us, and that fear of the Lord be imbued in us, in order that we and our posterity, may serve Him with all our heart until the advent of the redeemer speedily in our days, Amen.

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PART 3

WONDERFUL STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

**Wonderful Stories of Tzaddikim and Holy Men,
Luminaries of our People, in Matters of the Festival of
Passover**

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A Little Anger is Prohibited by the Torah

The Lubliner Rebbe o.b.m. was wont to take three matzos for the Seder, that were watched very closely from reaping until baking in the best possible manner. Once, while the Rebbe was reciting the *maariv* prayer on the first evening of Pesach, a poor man came to the door and complained to the rebbetzin that he had no matzos for the Seder. The rebbetzin took pity on him and handed him three matzos, not knowing that these were the very matzos the Rebbe had set aside for his own Seder. When the *Chozeh*, as the Rebbe was known, finished his prayers, he went to take out his three matzos, but did not find them. The rebbetzin realized immediately that she had inadvertently given away the Rebbe's special matzos. Hesitatingly, she related this incident to him. Without a word, he took three regular matzos and conducted the Seder, saying, True, a little *chometz* is prohibited by the Rabbis, but a little anger is prohibited by the Torah (*From a letter from R'Avraham Mordechai of Ger*).

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“With Great Fear”—This Refers to the Revelation of the Shechinah

The sainted R' Shlomo Radomsker o.b.m. told that once the *Yid Hakadosh* sat at the Seder table of his sainted rebbe in

Lublin. When he reached the part of the Haggada, “*And with great fear—this refers to the revelation of the Shechinah*”, his rebbe opened his tallith in which his head was enwrapped, and stared at him. Immediately, the *Yid Hakadosh* commenced to quake until two of his teeth fell out. (*Ohel Shlomo* 2:17).

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A Story of One of the Thirty-Six Hidden Tzaddikim

The Sainted R' Sholom Belzer o.b.m. sent his son, R' Moshe, the rav of Korov, o.b.m. (the son-in-law of the sainted R' Yosef of Ostola o.b.m.) to participate in the wedding of one of the grandchildren of R' Mordechai of Nishchiz o.b.m., which took place in Russia. Since R' Sholom knew that the sainted R' Mordechai of Tchernobel o.b.m. would be present at the wedding, he sent with his son a *kvittel* with a sum of money. When R' Moshe gave R' Mordechai the *kvittel*, he took it and rolled it around his finger. He took the money and put it under his *gartel*.

When he returned to Belz, his father asked him what R' Mordechai did with the *kvittel* and the money. When he related to him the entire incident, R' Sholom spoke up and said, “Of course! When he has my *Kvittel* on his finger, it is easier for him to effect salvations. But do you know why he keeps the money under his *gartel*? I will tell you. The *Chozeh* of Lublin is wont to classify the matzos he bakes on Erev Pesach into three groups. The ones that have no questions at all, he calls *tzaddikim*, righteous men; the next quality *beinonim*, average people; the third quality *resho'im*, wicked men. The ones called *tzaddikim*, he himself would eat all through Pesach; the ones called *beinonim* he would give to the members of his household to eat. Once it occurred on Erev Pesach, that there were no matzos good enough to be called *tzaddikim*. This caused the *Chozeh* much sorrow. Just then, a messenger came with matzos from R' Mordechai Tchernobeler.” R' Shalom continued, “Do

you know how far Tchernobel is from Lublin? For Jews who travel such a distance in such a short time, R' Mordechai needs the money he put under his *gartel*." (*Sefer Hachasidus mitoras Belz*).

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The Practices of R' Mordechai Bennet o.b.m.

Listen to the practices of the renowned saint and sage, R' Mordechai Bennet o.b.m., who, although secluded from the world and most of his life not seen in the street, always staying in his *beis midrash* or in the place where he prayed, except to go to the synagogue on *Shabbos* before the Reading of the Torah, and on *Yom Kippur*, or to serve as *sandek* at a *bris* or the like, would, nevertheless, go to the matzah bakery with his pupils, even if it belonged to a member of his own household. He personally supervised and worked at the making of his own matzos.

How admirable is the custom of baking matzos in Nicholsburg! They are very strict so that the matzos should be kosher without a doubt. The proprietors of the bakeries, even those who are learned men, are not believed concerning their own matzos, but are required to hire a G-d fearing scholar known as *ober mashgiach*, top supervisor. This *mashgiach* has another *mashgiach* under him together with whom he checks all details to make sure that there is no danger of *chometz*. He has to be knowledgeable in all laws of *kashering* the oven and baking the matzos. Every new *mashgiach* has to apply to the rabbi of the city, who in turn, sends him to one of the *dayanim*, to be examined concerning these laws. If he passes the test, he receives permission to become a *mashgiach*. Other communities should emulate them and adopt the same system. Everyone who has the power to implement this practice, can prevent many people from committing one of the most severe transgressions. By doing this, he will lead the public to righteousness, and no sin will come about through him.

I am very surprised at many very strictly observant, G-d fearing Jews, who are watchful to set in order in their cities whatever needs to be set in order as regards the service of the Creator. They enact safeguards and organize groups for every communal necessity, may Hashem give them their just reward! But why do they neglect to make certain that the poor do not eat *chometz*? This is a communal need of high urgency, to prevent them from transgressing a stringent negative commandment and to enable them to fulfill a positive commandment according to the law. We witness with our own eyes that the poor do not eat a mixture of *chometz*, but *chometz* itself! They are not at fault, because—as it is well-known—even if the poor man wished to pay the helpers, they refuse to help him. What more can he do? Sometimes he goes through the streets crying, “Why don’t you pay attention to the fact that I am forced to eat *chometz*?” Now judge for yourselves, whether you G-d fearing people are to blame. It is, therefore, proper to do what I saw one Jew doing. He was running from house to house, collecting voluntary contributions to hire extra help to assist in the baking of the matzos for the poor. Some even contributed their work to this project. They literally restored the poor man’s soul. For many weeks he toiled in preparation for Passover. Many weeks he worried about obtaining wheat for matzos, all for the sake of heaven. Now that he has the wheat, should he eat it as *chometz*? For this reason, he is very sad and grief-stricken. Therefore, anyone who is able to help and does not, is destined to account for his neglect.

Mention should be made here of a man who was literally a disciple of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, a real lover of his people Israel, Rabbi Aaron Halevi, rabbi of Shirado, o.b.m. He had another admirable trait. He would perform kind deeds for the poor even though it involved much self-sacrifice. I know of many such instances. Especially when the holidays drew near, he did many things that were below his dignity in honor of our Father in Heaven and His poor children, to enable them to have

kosher matzos. May this merit stand him in good stead to enable him to see the splendor of the Most High (*Tehillim Mishpat Tzedek, Shoshannei Leket*).

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Wandering Atones for Chometz on Passover

An unfortunate incident occurred to a Jew who had business relations with wealthy landowners. It happened that during *Chol Hamoed Pesach*, he met with one of his business associates. While they were sitting and talking, the latter offered him a glass of beer. Forgetting at the moment that it was Passover, he drank the beer. He presently reminded himself of his sin and went to R'Yosef Shaul Nathanson o.b.m. to ask for a way to atone for his sin. Rabbi Nathanson sent him to Rabbi Yehoshua of Belz and ordered him to report what the Belzer Rebbe would instruct him to do. When the man told the Belzer Rebbe what he had done and requested a method of repentance to rectify this sin, he instructed him to leave his home and to travel to Eretz Yisrael. When Rabbi Nathanson heard this, he wanted to know the source of this decision. The Belzer Rebbe answered that the source is found in *Midrash Eichah*. On the verse, Judea was exiled because of poverty, the Midrash comments: Because they ate *chometz* on Pesach. Thus it is clear that the penalty for eating *chometz* on Pesach is exile. Now if one must wander away from his home, it is better that he goes to the Holy Land than anyplace else. R'Yosef Shaul was astounded and remarked, "See how the *tzaddikim* have open eyes that shed light on the Torah! The accent mark on the word *venichresah*, and shall be cut off (Ex. 12:19), is *gershaim*, meaning to be chased away. This is found only in the section dealing with *chometz* on Pesach, not in any other section where this word occurs. This indicates that one can rectify the sin of eating *chometz* on Pesach by exile (*Haggadah shel Pesach Imrei Kodesh*).

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*An Important Story for Rabbis Who Decide Matters of Law,
Concerning Garlic Found in Wheat to Be Used for Passover
Matzos*

This occurred in 5636. I was accustomed to baking *shemurah* matzos every year to sell. When I would buy wheat, I was always careful not to buy any in which garlic seeds were found, since we were instructed by our rabbi, R' Chaim Halberstam of Sanz, o.b.m. not to use such wheat for *shemurah* matzos. He had heard from dealers that such wheat absorbs the sharp taste of the garlic and becomes *chometz* easily. On that year there was no satisfactory wheat, because many of the grains had sprouted. We heard reports, however, that in Hungary there was a good harvest, and there surely was good wheat. I took leave of the Rav and traveled to Hungary. I came to the city of Uhel where I found a dealer who had eight meters of very beautiful wheat, fit for *shemurah*, without even one sprouted kernel. We looked for garlic and could not find even one. Moreover, the dealer assumed the responsibility for garlic. I bought new barrels for a high price and filled them with wheat. I sent them by rail to Uhlach, since there was the no railroad to Sanz. I sent wagons to Uhlach to pick up the wheat from the station and to bring it to Sanz. All this cost me a pretty penny. To make a long story short, I finally had the wheat transported to Sanz. My father in law, R' Elya, dayan of Sanz o.b.m., would also bake a small quantity of *shemurah* matzos to sell.

*He bought one barrel of wheat from me for this purpose. When his barrel was opened, grain dealers came to see the wheat he had bought. They were astounded to see the high quality of the wheat. They searched for kernels that had sprouted, but could find none. They searched for garlic as well, but likewise could find none. I sold also to the neighboring towns. In Sanz, adjacent to the beis midrash, we had a room where was a handmill for grinding the wheat for *shemurah* was*

kept. I took one barrel of wheat into that room to grind. I hired non Jews to grind, and appointed Jewish youths to supervise. Approximately one-half the contents of the barrel had been ground when one of the youths looked into the hopper and discovered a garlic seed. At first, they hesitated to tell me, because I would suffer a great loss, But, when a close friend of mine learned of this, he insisted that I be notified, since I would surely not want to distribute *chometz* dig matzos for Pesach. Thereupon, he came to me and informed me that garlic had been found in the wheat. We knew that if even one garlic seed were found in the wheat, there was no use to tell the Rav, because it was definitely *chometz*. I, therefore, closed the wheat barrel and discontinued grinding. Afterwards, I began to look for other wheat. Since I was not baking matzos, I had more time on my hands, so that I was able to visit the Rav in the morning before prayers. R' Moshe Yehoshua, the *gabbai*, asked me, "Raphael, how do you have time to be here now? Aren't you grinding and selling wheat today? How come you have spare time to be here now?" I replied that we found garlic in my wheat, and that I had, therefore, discontinued the grinding. I had sent to Limanov, a town near Sanz for more wheat. Even though many had sprouted, the rabbis approved it. R' Moshe Yehoshua asked me whether I had, at least, told the Rav. I replied that there was no use to tell him, since we know that he is very strict about not using such wheat on Passover. The Rav, who was sitting in the next room, heard that we were conversing and questioned us about our conversation. R' Moshe Yehoshua entered the inner chamber and told the Rav "Raphael is here. He found garlic in his wheat and has stopped grinding." He told him too that I was reluctant to report it to the Rav. The Rav called me into his room and said, "So what if they found garlic in the wheat? You should call wheat dealers who have a thorough knowledge of wheat and let them search through it thoroughly." When I heard this, I was astonished, for I had never expected it. While I was standing there, the Rav said to me, "Raphael, Go to the *beis din* for them to permit you to search through the wheat." As I started to walk

out, he called after me, "Raphael, tell the *bei din* that the *Chasam Sofer* and the *Levushei Serad* permit it." I went to the *beis din* and told them that the Rav had sent me to them to permit me to search through the wheat. They replied that they have specific instructions from the Rav never to permit wheat in which as much as one garlic seed has been found, because of its sharpness. I went back to the *gabbai* and reported that the *beis din* refused to permit me to use the wheat. He began to yell, "When the Rav sends to them to permit the use of the wheat, they refuse to do so?" I went again to the *beis din*, but this time I was accompanied by the *gabbai* R' Moshe Yehoshua, and I asked them what I could tell the Rav. They told me that only if I would tell the Rav exactly what they would tell me, would they tell me what to tell him. I answered that I would give over faithfully whatever they would tell me. They instructed me to report to the Rav as follows: The *beis din* has instructions from the Rav that if they find garlic in the wheat, it is not to be used for Passover. However, if the Rav wishes to rule leniently this year, they agree."

After *Minchah*, I entered the Rav's chamber, where he was sitting at the table accompanied by many *rabbonim*. I told the Rav what the *beis din* had said. The Rav said to the *rabbonim*, "There are many *responsa* that permit it." Then he told me to hire wheat dealers to sort the wheat thoroughly. By this time many inquiries had come from other towns about the garlic found in the wheat. He instructed to answer that because good wheat was very scarce, he was ruling leniently this year in regard to garlic seeds. At that time, in Sanz, there were grain dealers from other towns. I paid them to sort the wheat. They sorted it three times carefully; i.e., first one took a small amount of wheat and sorted it, then the second one sorted the same wheat, and then the third. I then commenced again to grind the wheat. Later that day and on Friday, wheat was brought from Limanov, which did not have any garlic mixed in it, but there were kernels that had sprouted. This wheat, too, was repeatedly sorted and most of it was found usable. On Friday night at the table, the Rav

asked me what I did with the wheat. I replied that on that very day I received wheat from Limanov, and that I had, therefore, discontinued grinding the wheat I had brought from Hungary. He said to me, "Raphael, if you listen to me, you would take both kinds of wheat and make challoos out of it." I was astonished at this latest statement, but I decided not to let it disturb me, since the day was Shabbos. Why should I worry? So I won't be a matzah dealer this year. Immediately after Shabbos, I closed up the mill with the wheat and stopped dealing with wheat for *shemurah*. Sunday morning before prayers, I entered the Rav's room as usual but did not mention the wheat. He asked me, "Did you get dealers to sort the wheat?" I stood there dumbfounded, not knowing what to answer. I then replied that I had gotten dealers who know how to sort wheat. He queried, "If so, why are you idle? Go and have the wheat sorted." I returned to the mill and opened it. I called the dealers to sort the wheat, and I resumed grinding it. On the third day, despite the very careful sorting, garlic again was found in the mill. I closed the mill again and resolved not to deal with *shemurah* that year. My father-in-law asked me, "Have you been to see the Rav?" I replied that I did not wish to consult him anymore about the wheat. My father-in-law replied that it is not proper to refrain from reporting to the Rav. I replied that he, as a *dayan*, should report it. He asked me to go along with him. We both went after *Minchah*. The Rav asked my father-in-law "Nu, Reb Elya, what's new?" He told him that more garlic had been found in the mill after the sorting, and that I wished to know what to do, since I had no intention of grinding anymore. The Rav replied to my father-in-law, "You know that the *Levushei Serad* permits it even if three or four garlic seeds are found in a quart." Thereupon, I reopened the mill and completed the grinding. This was the end of the story. Years later, I visited the Rav's grandson, the sainted Rabbi of Bardiov o.b.m. He requested that I relate to him the story of the garlic. After I concluded my narration, he said, "Now I understand what was always beyond my comprehension. In *Responsa Diurei Chaim* (vol. 2, *Orach Chaim*, ch. 39), the Rav is relatively lenient

with garlic seeds and sprouted grains, yet it has been handed down to us from him that he was very strict about garlic. Now I understand it. Indeed, he was very strict concerning garlic, except that in a year of unavailability of other wheat he wished to be lenient concerning garlic seeds (*Kol Hakasuv Lechaim*).

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To Forgo Performing a Mitzvah in the Best Manner in Order to Save A Widow from Anguish

The Gaon, R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin o.b.m., Brisker Rav, practiced many strict practices in conjunction with Pesach. The wheat that was reaped in one of the farm settlements in the Holy Land was put into a special sack that was transported to Jerusalem by the trusted members of the Rav's household. R' Eliezer Dan Ralbag o.b.m. whom the Rav trusted implicitly, was entrusted to guard the sack. He would hang it in his house in a high place where it could not possibly come into contact with *chometz*.

When R' Eliezer passed away, it was the month of Tammuz. The wheat was already in his house. The Rav requested his disciple, the *tzaddik*, R' Hersh Michel o.b.m. to take the sack of wheat from the Ralbag family and to watch it. He feared that the widow would not be able to watch it properly for such a long time, until the next Passover.

Reb Hersh Michel thought a few seconds and replied to his mentor with humility, "Indeed, we can fulfill the mitzvah properly even if a woman watched the wheat, except that the Rav wishes to fulfill it in the best possible manner. I fear that when I come to request the sack of wheat from the widow she may think of her departed husband at that moment and shed a tear. Perhaps, it is more proper to forego fulfilling the mitzvah par excellence, as long as we do not cause the widow any anguish."

The Rav replied, "You are right, you are right!"

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Tefillin Crossing the Red Sea

The Gaon, R' Yehoshua Leib Diskin, Brisker Rav, o.b.m., stated that when the Israelites finished eating the Passover sacrifice and matzos in Egypt, they engaged in making Tefillin, as Moses had commanded them. Then, when they crossed the Red Sea, they took their Tefillin along with them. It is possible to explain the Hoshana prayer, *Your glory they took across with them*, to mean that they took the tefillin along with them. We find in *Megillah* that the Rabbis interpret the word "glory" as referring to tefillin. Perhaps the intention of the paytan, "*When you saved those sinking in the depths, Your glory they took across with them;*" was that when the Holy One, Blessed be He, saved the Israelites who would have sunk and drowned in the Red Sea, the tefillin they had just made they took across with them.

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Tzaddikim Eat of the Passover Sacrifice Even in Our Times

Once after eating the *afikoman*, the Sanzer Rav related in these words: "In the *Sefer Asarah Maamaros*, the following is stated: The mishnah tells us that there were never fewer than six examined lambs in the Temple. Now where are these six lambs now? Where were they taken when the Temple was destroyed? The answer is that they were taken out to the wilderness. Elijah the prophet purchases female sheep on the market day, and they reproduce. From there, Elijah offers up two sacrifices daily, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The Rav of Uhel prayed to see it with his eyes of flesh, and the Holy One, blessed be he, showed him how Elijah stands and offers up the sacrifices. Elijah is an ordinary *kohen*, and Michael is a *kohen gadol*. Similarly, every Passover, Elijah offers up a Passover sacrifice and brings a portion to every *tzaddik* of the generation (since they are counted on the sacrifice). Even though we are not in Eretz Yisrael nor in Jerusalem, Elijah brings air of Eretz Yisrael and air

of Jerusalem, and we are sitting in Eretz Yisrael and eating of the Passover sacrifice. Those who are not worthy of receiving a portion of the sacrifice, but are affiliated with the *tzaddikim* of their generation, and believe that the *tzaddikim* eat of the sacrifice are regarded as though they had eaten of it. You may think that the *Tzaddikim* eat of the sacrifice in a spiritual sense, but indeed, they eat it physically, yes, they eat a genuine portion of the Passover sacrifice. You may ask how we may eat of the sacrifice when we are all unclean from contact with dead bodies, but that is really no problem, since the whole nation is unclean, and we have a law that *tumah* is superseded when the entire nation is *tomei*. We are in Jerusalem, and we eat. Those who believe, are regarded as though they had eaten (*Haggadah Divre Chaim*).

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To Search the Shtreimel and the Tallith and Tefillin Case for Chometz

The Rebbe R' Eliezer Z'ev o.b.m. narrated that once during his prayers on *Erev Pesach* a thought entered his mind, that since the Tallith and Tefillin case are not watched during the year for crumbs of *chometz*, and such can fall into the case wherein the tallith and tefillin are kept, it should be examined for *chometz* on *Erev Pesach*. Immediately after the services, he cleaned them out and turned them inside out to make sure that they were clean. Afterwards he felt a very great joy, for he had discovered an unknown detail in the laws of Passover, a thing that people never think of.

He told a similar story that in his youth, when he occupied the rabbinate in Nadburna, it entered his mind that since the *shtreimel* sometimes lies on the table on *Shabbos* either at home or in the *beis midrash*, where there may be crumbs from the remnants of a meal, and they may fall into the *shtreimel*, and, G-d forbid remain there on *Pesach*, the *shtreimel* must be

searched through before Pesach. As soon as he thought of this, he enthusiastically took off his *shtreimel* and examined it on all sides even under the points of the tails, until it was kosher for Passover. He continued, "See what a mitzvah does. This *shtreimel*, at that time was old and worn, yet on the night of Passover, my intimates approached me and blessed me with the blessing of *Tischadesh* for the new *shtreimel* that I had bought." He explained that since he engaged in a mitzvah with the *shtreimel*, a new light shone upon it, and it became just like new.

The present Rebbe, Reb Tvi Hirsch Rosenbaum *shlita* stated in the name of his uncle R' Yosef of Niritihaz the son of Maharam of Nadburna o.b.m., that if we beware of putting *sefarim* on the table we eat from, we fulfill the mitzvah of remembering the day of "your departure from Egypt all the days of your life." (Sefer Raza D'uvda, Shaar Haosios, os zayin)

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A Jew is Saved through Joy

The *Tzaddik*, R'Avraham Yaakov of Sadigura was wont to relate this story on the night of *bedikas chometz*.

In a village near Kolbesov, there lived a Jew who rented a tavern from the poritz, the feudal lord of the village. Unfortunately, business was bad, and the Jew was unable to pay his rent when it was due. The landlord sent for the money several times, but the Jewish tenant did not have it. He threatened him with ominous threats, but to no avail.

On *Shabbos Hagadol*, the landlord sent his Cossacks to the Jew's house to wreak havoc, in order to punish him. The Cossaks entered the house and left it a shambles. They spilt waste water all over the floor; they took the *cholent* out of the oven and threw it out; they overturned the tables and the benches and broke them. Everything they found in the house they overturned, and trampled everything in their way.

After the Cossacks had left, the Jew and his family sat dejected and depressed from the unimaginable distress that had befallen them. He decided to walk to the city to hear the rabbi's sermon, perhaps that would allow him to forget his troubles.

The rabbi of Kolbesov at that time was the saintly Gaon, R' Avraham Yehoshua Heshil, later known as the *Tzaddik* of Apta, the author of *Ohev Yisrael*. When the villager entered the synagogue, he found the rabbi already speaking from the pulpit. All the people were standing crowded together, listening eagerly to the sermon. The villager pushed his way into a corner near the door and prepared to listen as well.

In the middle of the sermon, he heard the rabbi say:

.... There are two blessings, Ga-al Yisrael, *Who has redeemed Israel*, recited in the past tense (one of the last blessings of *Sh'ma* and the blessing following the narration of the Exodus) and Go-el Yisrael, *Who redeems Israel, in the present tense* (in *Sh'moneh Esreh*). The former means that G-d redeemed us from the Egyptian exile. The latter means that the Almighty redeems us always, every single day. Even if somewhere in a village there is a Jew who cannot pay his rent, and the landlord sends his Cossacks to wreak havoc in his house, and they come and destroy everything they get their hands upon, even such a Jew Hashem redeems from his troubles.

When the villager heard these words, he was overjoyed. He walked home, constantly singing:

—The Rebbe said, “Go-el Yisrael!” The Rebbe said, “Go-el Yisrael!”

Again the *poritz* sent his men to the Jew's house, this time to see what he was doing after his misfortune. When they came, they saw the Jew dancing joyously and singing. They were astonished at this spectacle, and went back to report to the *poritz*. They told him that the Jew had probably gone out of his mind, for he was singing and dancing.

In the evening, the *poritz* summoned the Jew. The latter imagined that the *poritz* would undoubtedly inflict all kinds of punishments upon him, but he remembered the *Rav's derashah* about Go-el Yisrael, and showed no fear. On the contrary, he went joyfully.

When he came to the *poritz* the latter started to castigate him saying. "Moshke, why are you such a good-for-nothing? You yourself are poor, and I can't get my rent money from you."

The Jew replied, "My lord, what can I do?"

"Listen here, Moshke," continued the *poritz*, "I will give you a letter to the local whiskey distillery, and they will give you a certain amount of credit. You will sell the whiskey and earn something for yourself. After you do this a few times, you will have enough money to pay your debt, as well as for your household expenses."

And so he did. During the few days between *Shabbos Hagadol* and Erev Pesach, he was able to purchase whiskey a few times and to earn a tidy sum. He paid his rent, bought an ample supply of necessaries for the festival. On Erev Pesach, he tied up a sum of money and went to the *Rav* in Kolbesov, presented it to him and said,

"I have brought the *Rebbe Go-el Yisrael* money."

-12-

Reb Tzvi Hirsch of Liska Reconciles Inconsistency in Rambam

The *Tzaddik* Reb Tzvi Hirsch of Liska was accustomed to say:

The rabbis make it a practice of going to all lengths to reconcile the Rambam's decisions, that they should not contradict each other. I reconcile the Rambam's decisions with my hands: The Rambam quotes the law that one is required to eat matzos on the night of Passover. He also quotes the law that we may not steal. For the poor, these two laws are sometimes contradictory....but

if a poor man comes to me, I reconcile these two laws quoted by Rambam.... This is my sermon for **Shabbos Hagadol**.

-13-

Widow is Helped through Divine Inspiration of Reb Mordechai of Nadburna

The saintly Rebbe of Liska once told:

“Once the saintly Rebbe, Reb Mordechai of Nadburna stayed in a certain city for *Shabbos*. From that city, a man came to me for *Shabbos*. The Nadburner rabbi had sent regards to me and ordered him to tell me a novel interpretation of Torah, as follows: The *Shulchan Aruch* states (ch. 429): We ask and expound on the laws of the Passover thirty days before Passover. Ramo comments, “And it is customary to buy wheat to distribute to the poor for the necessities of Passover.” Now what connection does one law have with the other? Ramo never adds something completely unrelated to the topic mentioned before it. Surely here, where he writes, “And it is customary,” it must be related. This is what Ramo meant: What difference does it make to me whether you expound or you don’t expound? The main thing is that you should buy wheat to distribute to the poor....

“Immediately,” continued the Lisker Rav, “when the chasid told me the words of the Nadburner Rav, I discerned that he was endowed with Divine inspiration, for every *Shabbos Hagadol* I was troubled by this difficulty in the gloss of Ramo, and now he came and sent me the solution. Before *Shabbos Hagadol* of that year, a woman came to me, weeping and wailing, that she has no matzos for Pesach. I reminded myself immediately of the words of the Nadburner Rav. Since everybody was occupied with Pesach work, I sent my sons-in-law and my daughters, and I went along with them to bake matzos for the woman. Now, which of the citizenry saw us and did not accompany us? Immediately, they all left over their work and joined us. In a half hour, the matzos were baked, and I was very happy about it.

-14-

*Through His Outstanding Righteousness, the Shpolier Zeide
Saves City from Hunger*

Once the Shpolier Zeidi traveled to all the towns near Shpoli, and purchased a large amount of wheat for Pesach. Then, he ground all the wheat and prepared flour in abundance. This greatly surprised the onlookers. They did not understand his deeds. For whom does he need so much flour on Pesach?

Three days before Passover, a city near Shpoli burnt down, and all its inhabitants were left destitute. They had nothing for Pesach. The Shpolier Zeide went then to that town with all his Pesach flour and baked matzos for the entire city.

Then everyone saw that the *tzaddik* had prepared the remedy before the malady.

-15-

Love of Mitzvos

When the Gaon, the author of *Meir Nesivim*, a disciple of the *Baal Shem Tov*, was rabbi in Ostraha and its environs, he went one year on the thirteenth of Nissan toward evening, pitcher in hand, to draw water for *matzos mitzvah*. On his way, he met the *tzaddik*, Reb Yeivi, the preacher of Ostraha, riding in a wagon, also with pitcher in hand, to draw water for the matzos as well. Reb Yeive exclaimed, "Rabbi of the entire region, why are you going by foot through the mud instead of riding in a wagon?" He replied, "Such a great mitzvah, that comes but once a year, is very dear to me, and I don't want to give it to the horses." When Rav Yeivi heard these words, he immediately jumped off the wagon, and they both walked together.

-16-

*The Holy Rav of Apta Effects Reconciliation in Marital Dispute
by Eating Ordinary Matzos*

It once occurred that the local charity collectors came to the Apter Rav's house on Erev Pesach to solicit matzos for the

needy. Since the *Rebbetzin* was occupied with the preparations for the holiday, the members of the household went to give the matzos to the collectors. Because they were preoccupied with Passover preparations, they inadvertently took the *shemura* matzos baked on Erev Pesach for the Rav, which were wrapped in a special napkin, and gave them to the collectors, who took them and left. When the *Rebbetzin* came later into the room and noticed that the *shemurah* matzos were not there, she investigated and discovered that they had been given to the collectors. Not knowing what to do, the *Rebbetzin* became very upset, and her heart began to palpitate, for she was afraid to reveal this to her husband. She thought it over and decided to take ordinary matzos, which she substituted for the *shmurah* matzos in the napkin, and pretended to be unaware of all that had transpired. Consequently, the saintly rabbi conducted the Seder with ordinary matzos.

After the festival of Passover a couple came before the Rav to request a divorce. The Rav asked the husband, "Why do you want to divorce your wife?"

The husband answered that his wife did not want to cook for him on Passover in special pots which matzah had not been cooked. (There are pious Jews who are careful not to eat soaked matzah (matzah *sheruyah*) on Passover, and are careful not to cook matzah in water.

Then the Rav summoned the *Rebbetzin* and said to her, "Tell me the truth. Which matzos did they put before me for the Seder?"

The *Rebbetzin* kept quiet, because she was afraid to tell him. He asked her again, "Please tell me, don't be afraid."

The *Rebbetzin* answered, "Ordinary matzos...", and she related the entire episode.

Then the Rav said to the husband, "Look now, my good man. I ate ordinary matzos on the first night of Pesach, and I pretended not to be aware of it, in order not to become angry or come to a quarrel, and you want to divorce your wife because of *sheruyah*?"

-17-

Everyone, According to His Level, Must Add Caution on Passover

The saintly Rabbi, Reb Yechezkel of Kozmir was extraordinarily strict on Passover, and adopted many stringent practices. Before the festival, he would prepare water for the entire festival in large barrels. They would bring the water from a spring outside the city. He personally would ride in a coach behind the wagons to supervise the drawing of the water. He did not allow anything that was to be used on Passover to stand on the floor. If a bottle of wine was placed on the floor, he would not drink from it, even though he was careful to clean all the cracks between all the floorboards with a feather duster. Once on Yom Kippur, he was offered a chair to sit on, when he was wearing his *kittel*. He examined it for crumbs of *chometz*, because he would wear that *kittel* at the Seder on the night of Passover.

The *shemurah* wheat was placed in a sack, which was, in turn, placed in a barrel, and that, in turn, was placed into another sack, which was tied and suspended from the ceiling. It once happened that they wanted to send the sack of wheat to the mill, and it was necessary to cut the rope with which the sack was suspended from the ceiling. Someone took out a knife that had been used for *chometz*. The *tzaddik* became terrified and screamed, "G-d forbid! Take a Passover knife."

One of those present, questioned the validity of these stringent practices and wondered about them. The *tzaddik* said to him, "*Chometz* on *Pesach* is forbidden even if it is a very small amount. The Hebrew word is *mashehu*, which can also mean, *what he is*; i.e., according to his degree of piety, so is he required to practice more stringencies."

His nephew, the *Tzaddik*, R' Yisrael of Modzitz drew the following analogy: "It is similar to the laws of ritual contamination. In ordinary food, the first recipient of contamination can render the food it touches impure; in *terumah*, the second recipient can render what it touches

impure; in hallowed foods, the third recipient can render what it touches impure; and the ashes of the red cow, even the fourth recipient can render what it touches impure.”

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How the Saintly R' Yechezkel of Kosmir o.b.m. Baked Matzos

When the Tzaddik, the saintly R' Yechezkel of Kosmir baked matzos, he was careful not to roll them out until they would become thin. The matzos were so thick that they would not be perforated with the roller known as "reddele", a wheel, but with a pointy stick, and then he would put them immediately into the oven. When someone remarked, "Wouldn't it be better to make thin matzos, so that they would bake through well?" He replied, "King David said, 'Let us rather fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are abundant, but into the hand of man let me not fall.' It is better to hurry and put the matzos into the hand of G-d, for in the oven they bake by themselves, with G-d's supervision, for His mercies are abundant, rather than have people work much with them and touch them with their hands."

-19-

R' Avremele Chechenover o.b.m. Disqualifies His Matzos Because His Attention Was Diverted from Them for a Short Time.

Every year, the saintly Gaon, R' Avraham of Chenenov would go out to witness the wheat harvest, accompanied by his sons, who were rabbis, and retinue of his *chasidim*, to stand over the Jewish reapers, who reaped the grain for the *matzas mitzvah*. When they loaded the sheaves onto the wagon, he would follow, with one hand holding onto the side of the wagon. Once, they came to a puddle that was too deep to cross on foot. The *tzaddik* removed his hand from the wagon and went around the puddle while the wagon went on its way. When they arrived home, he said nothing. The men, therefore, threshed and winnowed and sifted the grain as prescribed for *matzas mitzvah*, and then

stored the wheat in the bins, as they were accustomed to do every year. Shortly before Passover, the *tzaddik* ordered his son, R' Yaakov, the Rebbe of Yezov, to write to an acquaintance in Poltusk to send him wheat for *matzas mitzvah*. "But," protested his son, "don't we have our own wheat that we toiled so hard to watch and prepare?"

The *tzaddik* replied, "The moment I removed my hand from the wagon constituted a diversion of attention. Therefore, this wheat is not for my *matzah shemurah*."

"And how do you know that our friend in Poltusk did not divert his attention for a second, from his *shemurah*?" rebutted his son.

Replied the *tzaddik*, "A Jew who comes and claims that he has *matzah shemurah*, is considered reliable. I may, therefore, assume that it was watched properly. But as far as mine is concerned, I know that I diverted my attention."

-20-

When Catering to Guests, One Must See to Fulfill Obligation to Prevent Mitzvah from "Souring"

Before Passover, the *tzaddik*, R' Dovid Lelover's home was graced by the presence of a guest, but, alas, there was nothing to eat. R' Dovid took the *shemurah* flour he had prepared for Pesach, gave it to his wife to prepare a meal for the guest, and served it to him. R' Dovid rationalized his action in the following manner:

"The main reason the matzos must be watched is so that there should be no possibility of their becoming *chometz*. Our Rabbis expound this to mean, *And you shall watch the mitzvos*, i.e. not to let a mitzvah become sour. Now I have the mitzvah of catering to a guest, and I am fulfilling, *And you shall watch the mitzvos*. For Pesach, Hashem will send me other *shemurah*."

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A Teacher May Not Treat Any Ancient Custom Lightly and Alter It Through His Own Reasoning

It was a custom of yore, that the *melamdim*, when they would teach their pupils the haggadah before Pesach, would teach them a special explanation for each word of the order of "Kaddesh urchatz..." The word *Kaddesh* they would explain thus: When the father returns home from the synagogue on the night of Passover, he must recite the *Kiddush* immediately, so that the children do not fall asleep but remain awake to ask *Mah Nishtannah*. Afterwards, during the conducting of the Seder, the son who would ask the questions, would explain to the assembled the order of *Kaddesh ur'chatz*, each word when that component of the Seder was to be performed.

Once, on the first night of Pesach, when the *Shpolier Zeide* was conducting his Seder, his young son announced, "*Kaddesh*," and explained, "When the father returns home from the synagogue on the night of Passover, he must recite *Kiddush* immediately," and said no more.

His saintly father asked him, "Why don't you say the rest?"

The child replied, "The rebbe didn't teach me anymore."

His father taught him that he must also give the reason: "so that the children do not fall asleep, but remain awake to ask *Mah Nishtannah*."

On the morrow, the first day of Pesach, when the teacher was among those assembled at the *Shpolier Zeide's* table, the *tzaddik* asked him, "Why don't you teach the children the reason for *kaddesh*, as is customary for many years?"

The teacher replied, "I considered it unnecessary to teach the children such a long recitation, especially since it is not an important reason, since this law applies to every Jew, even if he has no little children at home."

The *tzaddik* became very incensed, and loudly berated him, saying, "How do you have the audacity to say that this is not an important reason? Are you smarter than all other teachers? You do not understand at all why our forebears innovated teaching this form to the children, so don't you dare treat an ancient custom lightly and deviate from it because of your own reasoning. The meaning of the matter is as follows: These words, *Kaddesh ur'chatz* are a sort of introduction to the Seder. The *Holy Zohar* Parshas Emor, comments on the verse, *And in the first month*, that Chiyya introduced this verse by expounding: *I am asleep, yet my heart is awake*. The Congregation of Israel said, "I am asleep in exile..." We see, then, that when Israel is in exile, it is regarded as though they are asleep, and their intelligence leaves them, since they are so long in exile, persecuted and oppressed. This is the secret of our forebears' instituting that the children should recite this introduction prior to the Seder, since it is identified with R' Chiyya's introduction in the *Zohar*, as follows: When the father returns home from the synagogue, i.e. when our Heavenly father returns after the evening prayer from the synagogue to the heavenly heights, and has seen that all Jews, albeit exhausted and fatigued from the pressure and toil of pre-Passover preparations, went to the synagogue to recite the evening prayer, and they said Hallel with enthusiasm and with pouring out their soul before the Almighty, each one according to his ability, He must make *Kiddush* immediately, i.e., He must renew our *Kiddushin*, our betrothal, and redeem us from exile, "in order that the children should not fall asleep," for Israel who is like a small child, as the Prophets depict the nation, "for Jacob is small," and "a darling child," should not despair of the redemption, "and they will ask: *Mah Nishtannah*," i.e. so they will be able to ask their Heavenly Father, "Why is this night different from all other nights?"—Why is this exile longer than all past exiles?

When the *Shpolier Zeide* uttered these words, he burst out crying, "O Father, Father in heaven! Redeem us quickly from

exile, as long as we can still be described as, 'I am asleep, yet my heart is awake,' but do not allow us to fall into a deep sleep, G-d forbid.'

All present burst out crying, and meditated in complete repentance. Many *chasidim* even fell on their faces on the floor and cried for a long time, until the *tzaddik* interrupted the crying and announced, "Now we must make our Father happy. We must show our Father that the child can dance in the darkness as well as in the light."

He ordered them to sing a joyful melody, and began to dance in a circle for a long time, as was his wont.

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The Most Helpful Supernatural Assurance for a Rabbi Who Promulgates Decisions Concerning Laws of Chometz on Passover.

Once before Passover, an erudite rabbi came to the Radomsker *tzaddik*, and gave him a *kvittel*, in which he mentioned that he should bless him that he should not err in his decisions concerning *chometz* on Pesach, when his congregants ask him questions. Said the *tzaddik*,

"The surest supernatural assurance that you will not have any questions on Pesach is to learn through the entire section of the *Shulchan Aruch* embodying the laws of Pesach."

The rabbi asked in wonder, "What is the connection?"

The *tzaddik* explained to him as follows:

"You should know that every law in the *Shulchan Aruch* begs in Heaven that someone learn it. One who does not learn the law is forced to learn it by being brought up against questions of its practical application. Accordingly, the best advice is to learn this entire section of the *Shulchan Aruch* before Pesach, and G-d will not bring up any questions in this field.

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The Lubliner Rebbe's Clock Ticks with Joy to Inform Us of the Approaching Advent of the Messiah

After the demise of the *Chozeh* of Lublin, his son, the *tzaddik*, R' Yosef of Turtzen inherited his silk Sabbath attire, a *gartel*, and a clock that always hung in the room where the *Chozeh* sat. On his way home from Lublin, a heavy rain began to fall, and it was impossible to continue his journey. He was compelled to lodge in a village in the house of one of the Jewish inhabitants. The rain persisted for several days. When it ceased, he wished to resume his travels, but the villager demanded payment for the lodging. Said Reb Yosef, "I have no cash, but I have several holy articles. He took everything he had inherited from his father, out of the sack, and offered them to the villager in payment for the lodging. He instructed him to select what he wanted for the amount that was due him. The villager summoned his wife to advise him what to select. She said, "The clothing and the *gartel* are worthless to us, but we can use the clock in order to know when we have to milk the cows every morning." So they did; they accepted the clock in payment for the debt.

Sometime later, the *tzaddik*, Reb Ber from Rudshitz, passed through that same village. Since it was late in the evening, he stopped to spend the night there and happened to lodge in the same house. The villager gave him the room in which the clock was hanging. During the entire night, the Rudshitzer Rebbe did not sleep, but walked back and forth across the room, dancing for joy. The next morning, the villager asked him why he did not sleep, and why he was so happy. The Rebbe replied, "Tell me where you got that clock." The villager told him that he had received it from a Jew who had not money to pay for a few nights' lodging.

Said the Rebbe, "When I heard the sound of the clock ticking, I immediately recognized it as the holy Lubliner's clock. As every clock ticks away, it informs its owner that his death is drawing

nearer. Even though this is important information, it is, nevertheless, sad news, and produces a sad sound. The Lubliner Rebbe's clock, however, ticks with a joyous sound and informs that we are one hour closer to the advent of the Messiah. I, therefore, could not sleep because of great joy; so I danced.

