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חסידי הראשונים

Stories of the Early Chassidim

This year's Stories for Shabbos will be focusing on stories of the early Chassidim, from which we can learn a lot about the ways of Chassidus and how a Yid and Chossid should act

Reb Pinchas Reizes

This week's story is about Reb Pinchas Reizes. Reb Pinchas was one of the biggest Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe and the Mitteler Rebbe. He was a big Talmid Chochom (he was the son of Reb Chanoch Henich Shick, the Rav of Shklov) and also very rich. He used to write over the Maamorim of the Alter Rebbe and there is a sefer printed with the Maamorim of the Alter Rebbe that he wrote. The Rebbeim loved him very much and told him a lot of secrets. The Mitteler Rebbe referred to him as "The General of the Chassidim". He did not have any children and before he passed away, he left 90,000 rubles to Tzedaka.

Reb Pinchas used to go to the Alter Rebbe for the months of Nissan, Sivan, Elul and Tishrei. One year Reb Pinchas was not feeling well, and could not travel to the Rebbe for Elul. Then to his great distress, due to an early and bitter winter, he could not go for Tishrei either.

On Shemini Atzeres, while he was sitting in the sukkah and eating the Yom Tov meal, Reb Pinchas suddenly cried out, "Oy Rebbe!" To everyone's amazement, Reb Pinchas told them, "The Rebbe is thinking of me right now."

Indeed, at that very moment, the Alter Rebbe was also in his sukkah and *farbrenging*. Suddenly he said, "Pinchas Reizes needs a physical healing. What I am unable to give him, I don't give. However a *brocha* for physical health I can give him."

Amongst those who were present with the Alter Rebbe were Chassidim from Shklov. They were very intrigued that the Alter Rebbe mentioned Reb Pinchas in middle of the meal.

After the Yom Tov ended, the Chassidim all began their journeys home. On their way, they stopped at Reb Pinchas' house, and asked him to honor them with a *I'chaim*. To the delight of Reb Pinchas and the other Chassidim who had been unable to be by the Rebbe, they repeated some of the teachings they had heard from the Rebbe during Yom Tov. During the friendly conversation that followed, they mentioned that the Rebbe had spoken about Reb Pinchas at A *farbrengen* on Shemini Atzeres.

To their astonishment, some of the Chassidim who had been in Shklov remarked, "We know, since at that moment Reb Pinchas cried out, 'Oy, Rebbe!'"

[Since Reb Pinchas was very connected to the Rebbe, he was able to feel when the Rebbe spoke about him, even though they were in two different cities.]

[Sefer HaSichos, 5705, pages 54-55. For more stories about him, see the book called Reb Pinchas Reizes.]

Once, when Reb Pinchas was walking with the Alter Rebbe, a poor person approached him and asked for tzedakah. Reb Pinchas apologized saying, "I'm sorry, but at this moment, I don't have any money with me."

The Alter Rebbe told Reb Pinchas, "It is not proper for a person to walk outside without any money. As you see right now," the Alter Rebbe continued, "Had you had money with you, you certainly would have generously helped him. Because of your negligence, that poor man received nothing and is still in dire need."

Reb Pinchas took the Rebbe's admonishment to heart. From that time on, he was always sure to carry money with him to be able to give Tzedaka.

[Likkutei Sippurim, HoRav Perlow]