



בס"ד. חדר מנחם לאס אנדזשעלעס. סיפור לשבת פרשת וירא, טו מרחשון, ה'תשע"ב

חסידים הראשונים

Stories of the Early Chassidim

Reb Shlomo Der Geller

This week's story is about Reb Shlomo Der Geller. Geller means yellow in Yiddish and Reb Shlomo was nicknamed this because his beard was blonde. He was a Melamed in the town of Nevel and a very Chassidische Yid. He was a Chossid of the Rebbe Rashab. Reb Shlomo had more than his share of personal troubles and hardships, but he was always full of life and cheer, and spent much of his time seeking ways to bring happiness to others.

Every year, Reb Shlomo Der Geller 'the Yellow', the melamed of Nevel, would walk to Lubavitch to spend Simchas Torah with his Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab. Even in his later years when he was not as strong as he used to be, he refused to climb onto a wagon for even a minute; every step of the way was taken on his own two feet.

"In my Lubavitch," Reb Shlomo said, "no horse will have a part."

Once he said: "There will come a time when I shall stand before the heavenly court. What will I have to show for myself? What have I done with the years which have been granted me? We both know that the life of Reb Shlomo the melamed leaves much to be desired.

"But there is one thing that no one can take from me. My Lubavitch. Every year I came to the Rebbe. But imagine that when I present my Lubavitch before the heavenly court, along comes a horse claiming partnership; it was he, after all, who schlepped me to Lubavitch.

The truth is, I can probably win my case against the horse, but I have no desire to have it out with a horse over my trips to the Rebbe. No horse will be involved in my Lubavitch!"

[From the Friediker Rebbe's Sichos and letters]

One Simchas Torah in Lubavitch, the Rebbe Rashab noticed a particularly joyous commotion in one corner of the shul: Reb Shlomo had "lassoed" several children under their arms with his *gartel*, heaved them onto his back, and accompanied by their shouts of glee, was dancing circles around the Torah scrolls.

"Shlomo *der Geller*," said the Rebbe, "is our ultimate response to the Malochim who opposed giving the Torah to man."

[Told by Rabbi Moshe Rubin, printed in the Albany Haggadah]