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חסידי הראשונים

Stories of the Early Chassidim

Reb Pesach Malastovker

The famous Chossid, Reb Pesach Malastovker was one of the younger Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. After the passing of the Alter Rebbe, he became Mekushar to his son, the Mittlerer Rebbe, and the Tzemach Tzedek. Reb Pesach used to think deeply into Chassidus. The Tzemach Tzedek used to send him Chassidim that he should teach them. He used to review Maamorim of the Rabbeim and give long explanations on them.

Reb Pesach was also a wonderful Baal Menagen. Every year before Shavuot he would compose a new Niggun. We have a Niggun today known as Reb Pesach Malastovker's Niggun.

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Reb Pesach used to daven Baarichus (at length, spending a long time on his davening). When he was older, and no longer had the strength to daven at length, he would travel around in a wagon from one Shul to another to hear Kedusha and Borchu from many different Minyanim. He used to say, "This is a very great thing" to answer Kedusha and Borchu.

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Reb Pesach Malastovker had a son whose name was Reb Berel. He lived in a village not far from the village that his father lived in. Between the two villages there was a thick forest. There was a group of bandits who roamed that forest, and everyone was scared of them. So people would try to avoid going through the forest. If they had to go through it, they would go with a group of people so the bandits would be scared to start up with them.

Reb Berel, however, was a very strong man, and he was not afraid of these bandits. He would walk through the forest alone when he went to visit his father.

Reb Berel used to eat the Seudas Purim with his father every year. He would leave his house on Purim afternoon, walk through the forest by himself, and arrive at his father's house on time for the Seudah.

One Purim, Reb Pesach was sitting by his Seudah, and waiting for his son. But his son did not arrive yet, so Reb Pesach said "I am waiting to see Reb Berel". He waited for a long time, but still his son did not come, so he said "I want to see Reb Berel." Some more time passed, and again Reb Pesach called out "I really want to see Reb Berel".

After a short while passed, Reb Berel walked into the house. He washed and sat down to join them for the Seudah. Then he told them what happened and why he was so late.

He said, "A big *nes* happened to me today on my way here. Like usual, I went by myself in the forest. But suddenly a huge bandit attacked me and wanted to kill me. I fought him with all my strength, but I felt that he was stronger than me. I started losing my strength, and I was worried that he will overpower me, when suddenly I felt new strength coming to me. After a while, I again felt that I was getting stronger. After a bit more time had passed, I felt that I was double as strong as before, and then I was able to get the bandit off me and I hurried here for the Seudah.

When they thought about it, they realized that each time Reb Pesach said "I want to see Reb Berel", he was actually giving more strength to his son.

[As told by Reb Mendel Futerfas. Printed in the book "Reb Mendel", and "Chassidim Horishonim".]