



בס"ד. חדר מנחם לאס אנדזשעלעס. סיפור לשבת פרשת צו, שבת הגדול, ה' ניסן ה'תשע"ב

חסידים הראשונים

Stories of the Early Chassidim

The Rebbe's father, Reb Levi Yitzchok

The Rebbe said this story at the Tzivos Hashem rally on Nisan 18, 5743:

The city where my father was the Chief Rabbi was surrounded by fields of wheat which supplied flour to many parts of Russia. My father, who was among the great Rabbonim of Russia, gave a Hechsher on the flour that was sent to all parts of the country for baking Matza. My father supervised the grinding of the flour, sending mashgichim to watch how the flour was ground and to make sure that it was kosher for Pesach.

At that time, the communist government took over all the stores and the country. The mills for grinding flour and the bakeries came under government control. The officials of the communist party knew that the Jews relied on my father's Hechsher to buy the Kosher l'Pesach flour and that they would not buy the flour without his hechsher.

So the officials called my father and ordered him to give a Hechsher on the flour that year as well. They warned him that if he ruled that any part of the flour was unfit for Pesach use and this would cause the government a loss of money, he would be punished.

My father told them, "If you will give me a free hand in supervising the grinding of the wheat and you will allow me to choose mashgichim who will obey my instructions, to make sure everything is kosher according to Jewish law, I will give a Hechsher this year again.

"But if you do not allow me to appoint my own mashgichim, or you will not permit them to carry out my instructions, I cannot give a Hechsher on the flour. Not only that, but I will let everyone know that I am not responsible for the flour this year."

The officials of the government warned him again that he must give a Hechsher on the flour without any conditions at all. He must stamp everything "kosher." They again threatened him that if he prevented even a small amount of flour from being sold, he would be punished for fighting the government.

My father was not at all frightened by these threats. He answered them firmly that he would not do anything against the Torah. My father added that he was ready to travel to Moscow to speak to the head of the government, President Kalinin, to explain to him that it is impossible to give a Hechsher on food that is not kosher. Such a thing would be against the Torah and against Hashem.

When the officials saw that they could not sway my father, they gave the matter over to higher government officials. Then, an amazing thing happened. The orders came down from the higher officials to grant all of my father's demands and to promise him that all the flour would be under his supervision.

Though the government tried to find all sorts of heterim and compromises with kashrus, my father won out in the end. By standing strong, he made sure that all the matzos baked that year in the government bakeries were from the flour with his Hechsher.

The Rebbe learns the lesson from this story:

When a Jew stands up with true courage and declares that he must do the mitzvos of Hashem, the Creator of the World, and will do nothing against His will, he is sure to succeed. In the end, even an oppressive government will allow him to do what he must do.

True, not everyone has my father's strength. On the other hand, not everyone has to stand up against a powerful state, ruling over two hundred million people. All that is asked of a Jewish child is to stand up against the Yetzer Hara.

When the Yetzer Hara tries to convince him that non-Jews will not let a Jewish child live according to Torah and Mitzvos, he must answer the Yetzer Hara:

"It is a lie! Since Hashem is 'standing over him' and watching if he serves Hashem as he should, Hashem will certainly help him overcome all difficulties."

The Jewish child must resist the Yetzer Hara with all his strength, not with strength that comes from pride and arrogance, but from the knowledge that Hashem is watching over him. He will then do all he can to carry out Hashem's shlichus and will not be frightened by any obstacles.