

# “Zusha! Meilech! How Could You?”

In the waiting room next to the maternity ward of many a hospital in Eretz Yisrael, you may find many copies of one particular sefer. Nurses will tell you about the *segulah* to place a copy beneath the laboring mother's head, for an easy delivery. This sefer is none other than the *Noam Elimelech* of the Rebbe Reb Meilech of Lizhensk. What makes it so powerful?

by Tal Zwecker

In the waiting room next to the maternity ward of many a hospital in Eretz Yisrael, you may find many copies of one particular sefer. Nurses will tell you about the *segulah* to place a copy beneath the laboring mother's head, for an easy delivery. (See inset for other *segulos*.) This sefer is none other than the *Noam Elimelech* of the Rebbe Reb Meilech of Lizhensk. What makes this sefer so powerful?

The author of the sefer *Noam Elimelech* was the holy Rebbe, Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk. A third-generation *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, the Rebbe Reb Meilech was, in turn, rebbe and mentor to many other famous rebbes as well as to countless chassidim.

He was first initiated into Chassidus by his famous older brother, the Rebbe Reb Zusha of Hanipoli, who had made his way to the Baal Shem Tov's successor the great Maggid of Mezritch. There the Rebbe Reb Meilech, his brother Reb Zusha, and many other famous rebbes such as Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, Rebbe Shmelke of Nikolsberg, Rebbe Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi (author of the *Tanya* and founder of Chabad), and many others, all drank together from the wellsprings of Chassidus, as they learned from the Maggid how to serve Hashem.

Among the most famous of the Rebbe Reb Meilech's *talmidim* are: the Ohev Yisrael Rav of Apta, Reb Mendel Rimonov, the Chozeh of Lublin, the Kozhnutzer Maggid, Rebbe Naf-tali Ropshitzer, and Rebbe Kalonymus Kalman Epstein. After the Maggid's passing, the mantle of leadership in Galicia passed on to Rebbe Elimelech and most of the Maggid's students made their way to his doorstep.<sup>1</sup>

**A few stories about the Rebbe Reb Elimelech may afford us the merest glimpse of his greatness.**

His student, Rebbe Mendel of Rimonov, used to say that only on *erev Shabbos*, after having immersed in the waters of the *mikvah*, could he understand even a small section of *Noam Elimelech*.<sup>2</sup> The Rebbe Eliezer of Dzikhov once dreamt that he saw a house full of sefarim. One volume was shining particularly brightly. He went to take the sefer to see why it was so shiny. He dreamt that he was told that it was the sefer *Noam Elimelech* and that all the books that he saw in the house are all its commentaries.<sup>3</sup>

The holy brothers used to travel together in self-imposed exile. When the Rebbe Reb Zusha and the Rebbe Reb Meilech saw the mark of a sin on someone, they would begin to berate each other as if they had committed the transgression themselves.

They would yell at each other, "Zusha! Meilech! How could you do such a thing?" With heartrending moans, they would exclaim, "'What will you answer to your Creator on the Day of Judgment?" They would cry over the gravity of the offense and how much they must repent. The person would then say to himself, sadly, "I also have sinned in this manner, and what will I say?" And so he would repent.<sup>4</sup>

## Three Stories that are a Segulah for Parnassah for Pesach

1.) A certain Jew was selling brandy before Pesach, to provide for the upcoming holiday expenses. He went from country to country, but at one border, the guards seized his barrel, since he lacked the proper licenses. The Jew quickly traveled to the Rebbe Reb Meilech and poured out his heart. The Rebbe Reb Meilech told him to tell the guards to taste the contents of the barrel; it was only water. The Jew did as the Rebbe had told him. They were surprised to find that the Jew was telling the truth! They returned the barrel to him, but then he went back to the Rebbe, crying: "Now how can I provide for my family for the holiday? The barrel of brandy was my only way of earning a livelihood and now it's full of water!" The Rebbe Reb Meilech told him to taste the contents of the barrel. To his delight, it was full of brandy once again!

2.) A king lost his ring. He proclaimed that he would pay a handsome salary to everyone who searched for it. There was a poor Jew who had no money for Pesach. His wife advised him to take up the king's offer. So he joined in the search, and with the money he earned, he bought all the necessities for Pesach. This Jew was also a generous fellow; he invited many guests for the seder that year.

Among the king's advisors was a wicked anti-Semite. On the seder night he went to the Jew's home and peeked in through the window. When he saw the Jew eating and drinking and not searching for the king's ring, he saw his chance. He quickly went back to the palace. "Your Majesty," he said. "You've been fooled. I'll show you!" The king followed his advisor to the house of the poor Jew, and peered in the window. There was the Jew at a table full of guests, eating and drinking like a king! Still, the king was loath to think ill of his Jewish subject. He told the advisor, "This Jew is probably interrogating these men to see if they know the ring's whereabouts."

This Jew's custom was that at "Dayenu," he would recite each verse and all the guests would respond, "Dayenu." It so happened that the advisor's name was none other than Dayenu. Just then, they all answered in chorus "Dayenu!" The king's advisor paled. >>>

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The king understood this to mean that his trusted advisor had in fact stolen the ring. He commanded his royal guards to seize the advisor and jail him, and he confessed to the crime.

3.) There was a certain Jew who worked hard for his landlord, the *poritz*. One day, the *poritz* said, "It's lucky for you that I support you. Otherwise, you would starve!" In his simple faith, the Jew answered, "What are you saying? There's a G-d in Heaven and He provides for all His creatures. If the *poritz* won't serve as G-d's agent, G-d will find me another." The *poritz* angrily banished the Jew from his property.

This occurred right before Pesach. This poor Jew now had no money to buy the necessary provisions.

The *poritz* had a huge treasury where he kept all his gold. He would go in from time to time to count and polish his coins. He would spit on each coin and then polish it till it shone. The *poritz*' pet monkey would go with the *poritz* into the treasury and watch him. He saw his master put the coins close to his mouth; he thought that the *poritz* was eating the coins! Monkey see, monkey do. The monkey copied his master. It stole alone into the treasury and feasted on the gold coins. The monkey ate so many coins that it died.

When the *poritz* came into his treasury and saw the dead monkey, he didn't realize the cause of its death. His anger had not abated, and he commanded his servant to throw the monkey into the Jew's house, to teach him a lesson. "If I don't provide for him, no one will!" The servant threw the monkey in through the window. When it landed, its stomach burst and all the gold coins came pouring out. Then the Jew was able to buy an abundance of provisions for Pesach.

On the seder night, the *poritz* sent his servant to see how the Jew was suffering without food. But the servant reported that the Jew's house was full of food and drink. The *poritz* later sent for the Jew and asked him from where he'd had money. The Jew told the *poritz* how someone had thrown a dead monkey into his house and that hundreds of gold

coins had burst from it. The *poritz* then admitted, "Now I truly see that it's Hashem Who provides for us all."

## Tzaddikim are Even Greater in Death than in Life.

The Koznitzer Maggid taught, "My righteous rebbe, the Rebbe Elimelech, said that all his life he yearned and desired to depart from this physical world and to stand in the source of holiness, without the gross material garb [of this world]."<sup>5</sup>

The holy Rebbe Meir of Premishlan used to say, "Whosoever wishes to really, truly attain fear of Heaven should go to the *tzion*, the gravesite, of the Rebbe Reb Meilech in Lyzhansk and pray there; then his words will bear fruit."<sup>6</sup>

It is a tradition passed down that the holy Rebbe Reb Elimelech promised that anyone who visited his gravesite would be delivered and attain salvation just as when the rebbe was alive. Further, that that person would not die without having repented. This is why so many people travel to his gravesite every year, on the day of his *yahrtzeit*, the 21st of Adar.<sup>7</sup> ■

### Sources:

1. *Ohel Elimelech* #192
2. *Ohel Elimelech* #193
3. *Ohel Elimelech* #1
4. *Ohel Elimelech* #137
5. Koznitzer Maggid, in his sefer *Avodas Yisrael. Parshas Chayei Sarah*
6. *Eser Ataros* 5:60, in the name of the sefer *Divrei Yitzchak*
7. *Eser Tzachtzachos R' Elimelech* 1:78, *Ohel Elimelech* #261
8. *Eser Tzachtzachos* #11
9. *Ohel Elimelech* #57, in the name of the sefer *Divrei Yitzchak*
10. *Ohel Elimelech* #70, in the name of *Rachmei haAv* #57
11. *Ohel Elimelech* #104
12. *Ohel Elimelech* #289
13. Title Page to the pamphlet *Yehi Ratzon HaAmiti*

## Seven Segulos from the Rebbe Reb Meilech

- In the name of Rebbe Mendel of Raminov: It's a *segulah* to awaken a desire for repentance to visit the gravesite of Rebbe Elimelech of Lzhensk.<sup>8</sup>

- In the name of Rebbe Elimelech: It's a *segulah* for an easy childbirth to eat something every *motzai Shabbos*, in honor of the Melaveh Malkah. And they should say that in honor of the mitzvah of Melave Malka, G-d willing, they will give birth without difficulty.<sup>9</sup>

- It is a tradition and *segulah* from the Rebbe Elimelech that one who says the entire sefer *Tehillim* three times in one day is reckoned as if he fasted the entire week from Shabbos to Shabbos.<sup>10</sup>

- Two pages of Talmud, studied with the commentary of the Rosh, is more beneficial than fasting.<sup>11</sup>

- There are *tzaddikim* who hold the opinion that the first edition of the sefer *Noam Elimelech*, which was printed in the year *Tav Kuf Mem Ches*, is a *segulah* for a woman having difficulty in childbirth. She should place it in the bed, and she'll have an easy delivery.<sup>12</sup>

- There is a *segulah* from the Kozhnitzer Maggid to recite three well-known stories (reproduced above) related to Pesach, on the Shabbos when we bless the new month of Nissan. The *segulah* is that the stories will bless the Jewish people with an abundance of provisions and necessities for the upcoming Pesach.

- The Rebbe Elimelech composed a prayer to say before praying. It is a *segulah* for those who say it with intense concentration daily, to be aided and helped from Heaven in all areas and needs.<sup>13</sup>