

The Ruzhiner explains how conflicting oaths from two spiritual giants were reconciled in Shomayim

The famed Shpoller Zeide had a devoted and loyal chosid who alas had not (yet) been blessed with children. At every visit to the Rebbe, this Yid begged for him to daven that he should merit to see offspring, but each time, the Rebbe deflected the request or gave an oblique, noncommittal reply. The man's desperation grew and grew until he reached the most extreme course of action: during his next trip, he would camp out at the Rebbe's house, vowing not to leave without a firm promise that he would welcome a child into the world in due time. Even though such an adamant stance could be said to smack ofchutzpah, that's what he did. [Acts of desperation such as this were far from unheard of in earlier generations of Chassidim. [DPR]] He laid his kvittel with the usual supplication on to the Rebbe's reception table. His ears burned when he heard the Rebbe's barbed retort: "Stop pestering me already with the same old request. I'm dealing now with an important matter affecting everybody in Klal Yisroel." The chosid was actually happy to hear this, since if the Rebbe was trying to obtain salvation for all Yidden, then he would surely ride on their collective coattails for his salvation. "A rising tide lifts all boats," he thought to himself. He boldly made his move, using his "ultimate weapon": "I will not leave this place until the Rebbe promises firmly that I will have children." He refused to allow the Rebbe to remain immersed in his thoughts, but instead commenced crying bitterly, entreating the Rebbe to pity him and bentsch him with children. This continued until the Rebbe showed his annoyance, even hinting strongly that if the man did not cease his entreaties, things would not go well for him. Yet withal, the man remained stubborn, secure in his view that the Rebbe was a warm-hearted leader who would in no way actually cause harm to a loyal follower, or any other Jew, for that matter. But things took a nasty turn, when the Rebbe turned downright angry, and burst out these terrifying and fiery words: "Since you disturbed my kavvanos (lofty spiritual intentions) which were aimed at helping Klal Yisroel, there's no hope for you. I swear that you will remain childless as long as you live!!" The man's trembling retort: "If that's what I'm hearing from Shpolle, I see it's time for me to find a different Rebbe. Good bye for good, Rabbi." But on the way home, he was beset by gloom, knowing that the Rebbe's words held sway in Shomayim and really meant that he could forget about progeny. Full of despair, he reached his home. Some time later he took a trip to Koretz for a trade fair, hoping to close some favourable business deals. In a local beis midrash, he encountered Reb Pinchas of Koretz, engrossed in learning. At that time he had not yet been revealed as a Holy Tzaddik. But our chosid was deeply impressed by Reb Pinchas's conduct and piety and recognized him as the Holy and G-dly tzaddik which he was. He asked a few local Yidden what Reb Pinchas had in the way of parnossa/livelihood. The reply shook him: Reb Pinchas was a pauper, actually suffering from hunger, who learned Torah continuously amidst great deprivation and hardship. Pesach was fast approaching and Reb Pinchas let out a deep sigh: "Oy, how can I get some funds to make Pesach without slackening up my schedule of learning?" Hearing this plaint, our chosid saw a new opening for him to have his yeshua. He hurried over to Reb Pinchas's house and asked the lady of the house if there

was money to make a proper Pesach. "Not a penny," was the forlorn reply. On the spot, the visitor took out a pouch filled with a large amount of money and gave it to the lady with instructions to buy everything she could possibly need for a beautiful Pesach, *mehadrin min hamehadrin*, "soup to nuts", sparing no expense. He also told her that he personally intended to be at the Pesach Sedarim. His only condition was that she not reveal to Reb Pinchas where the Pesach funding had come from in advance of Pesach night. He also directed her to buy the longest Yomtov candles available -- ones which would burn for the entire Seder, late into the night. His largesse was consummated by gifts of clothing for Reb Pinchas and the entire household. Meanwhile, as Pesach approached nearer and nearer, Reb Pinchas seemed oblivious. He neither seemed concerned about funding for the Yomtov, nor did he get involved in any of the usual preparations. His sole aim was to continue learning unabated.

Layl Pesach, after davening, Reb Pinchas' face shone with the light of holiness and great Simchas Yomtov. He walked home confident of Hashem's help. He came into a brightly-lit home, resplendent and sparkling with all the Pesach appurtenances. When his wife gave him the new clothing that our chosid had provided, and pointed him out, Reb Pinchas merely gave him "sholom aleichem" greetings, and with no further ado, sat right down to the Seder, which he conducted with great exaltation.

During the "Shulchan Aruch" meal, Reb Pinchas sensed that his guest was yearning to lay forth a request. "Is there anything I can do for you?" he asked. The chosid blurted out: "Rebbe, I have not yet been blessed with children. I used to have a bond with the Shpoller Zeide, but that was broken when he swore that I would never have a child as long as I live. I have come to seek your brocho for children." Reb Pinchas Koritzer thought deep and long, and finally said firmly: "If I have any merit in Shomayim, I swear that you will be a father within a year." The chosid returned to his place and after Yomtov went home to his wife. Not ten months later, he made a bris. The oath of Reb Pinchas was fulfilled.

Now this entire story became a *cause célèbre* among the chassidim and remained so for a long time: How could Rav Pinchas have taken an oath in the face of a diametrically opposite one from the Shpoller Zeide? Why did the Koritzer oath supersede the Shpoller oath? The question remained unresolved until the Heiliger Rav Yisroel miRuzhin explained it during a tisch. After Reb Pinchas's oath, a tumult broke out in Shomayim: which oath should prevail -- that of Shpolle or Koritz? [We see from this the potentially cosmic impact of an oath coming from a Yid's mouth, and hence why one should be uttered only as a last resort. [DPR]] The Bais Din paskened that whichever tzaddik had never taken any kind of oath -- even about the truth -- before the events described would have his oath fulfilled. Heavenly records showed that the Shpoller Zeide had in fact, on one previous occasion, taken an oath to help a Yid in a dire situation, whereas Pinchas Koritzer had never done so for any reason. It was his oath that prevailed, and the chosid became the father of a Yiddish yingele, *tzu mazel*.

(ספר שפתי צדיק) **A publication of *Seforim World* **

Our editor and translator, Mr. Rose (תשואת הן הן לו) *is reachable at davidrose10@gmail.com, and is available for Anglo-Judaica editorial assignments. Published by Seforim World* 1000's of seforim: new and old; 4403 16 Ave. Brooklyn N.Y. 11204 U.S.A. 718 438 8414 718 633 5500 -www.seforimworld.com or pardesyehuda1@gmail.com - hours 11-7:30 It is available by email or on Ladaat <http://ladaat.info/gilyonot.aspx> or www.parshasheets.com. Also available for pickup at our store from Thursday.