

****** Reb Meir'l Premishlaner's prophetic vision unchains an agunah ******

People used to flock to Reb Meir Premishlaner זי"ע with urgent requests for salvation from their life's problems, but not always did he turn an attentive ear to them, particularly when he detected that they were placing their trust in him personally, as a Rebbe, while forgetting the ultimate source of blessing and salvation, the Creator of the World. He had little patience with such souls and made them aware of it by expelling them from his presence. There was once exactly such a case when a young woman entered, wailing and shrieking that her husband had disappeared, and beseeching the Rebbe, with his far-seeing eyes, to reveal the fugitive's location. The Rebbe rebuked her: "Leave my room immediately! Am I in place of the Eibershter, whom you have apparently forgotten?"

When by herself, the woman, now much subdued, realized that the Rebbe had been right on target. She knew that sincere teshuva, especially at a tzaddik's behest, was always in order. The next day, she returned to the Rebbe's chamber and spoke like a different person. She affirmed that only Hashem was capable of helping her, and begged the Rebbe to be no more than a loyal, "well-connected" shaliach, a messenger, to locate her husband. This time, Reb Meir'l (he is usually referred to by this affectionate diminutive) perceived that the woman was sincere in her anguish, with her eyes and heart turned toward Shomayim, and he bid her reveal what was weighing down her heart. She replied simply that her husband absconded, without a trace, and she hadn't the slightest clue as to his whereabouts. Reb Meir'l stood by the window, scanning the horizon left and right repeatedly until his gaze became fixed in one direction. He then pronounced thus amazingly clear course of action: "Travel to Zlotschov right away and head for the largest kretschma (country inn) in town. You will see an assemblage of wagons and drivers parked in the courtyard of the inn. Stand in the gate and count out *dafka* the twentieth wagon from the right. Hire the driver to bring you back here to Premishlan, to my house, and that after I see you back here, you will pay him handsomely." The woman believed with all her might that the tzaddik's words were the pure truth, but she failed to see any connection to her errant husband. Nevertheless, Reb Meir'l told her to hurry to Zlotschov and not let the golden opportunity slip by. This she did and found the situation exactly as the Rebbe had seen with his holy eyes. There were the wagons, each with its coarse and uncouth Polish teamster. What's more, as soon as she stood by the gate to catch her breath, the gate opened and the group of wagons began exiting, one after the other. The timing was exquisitely precise! Another five minutes, and she would have missed the entire caravan! She knew what to do: when the twentieth wagon passed through the gate, she engaged the driver to drive her to Premishlan. It was not an easy sell, since the driver had other plans for the day, but the promise of a generous payment convinced him to take the job. When they rolled into town, the driver asked for directions. The woman guided him straight past the Rebbe's house, and told him to wait for her

while she went inside for a brief time. The driver was annoyed by the delay, and of course was in no way privy to the events unfolding, but agreed to give her five minutes to alight and then resume travel to her destination. She reconfirmed the juicy fare that awaited him at journey's end. The woman told the gabbai inside the house to tell the Rebbe that she and her wagon had arrived. The Rebbe in turn instructed the gabbai to call the driver into his room for a chat. This angered the man to no end. He bristled arrogantly and exclaimed: "Baloney! What do I have to do with this so-called Rebbe? I'm not the type of man who's afraid of Jewish rebbes, and I surely don't have to do what he says. Let's finish up with this nuisance ride already. I have to hit the road." Meanwhile, Reb Meir'l had been standing at his window the whole time, eyeing the proceedings at his doorstep. When he saw the recalcitrant driver's defiance, he opened the window and called out the driver's proper Yiddish name! The man began to tremble uncontrollably from terror, knowing that he had been unmasked. The Rebbe summoned him inside and told him that only if he obeyed would the shaking depart from him. He fell at the Rebbe's feet and asked what the Rebbe demanded of him. "Look here, you rogue. I know full well that when all is said and done, you are a Yid and always have been!" "Rabbi, understand that I had many trials and tribulations. They sorely tested my faith. I fell lower and lower until I left Yiddishkeit and went to the "cloister." (רח"ל). That's where I'm staying. But please, Rabbi, make me stop trembling, I beg you." Reb Meir'l rebuffed him, saying, "I see that you're set in your evil ways and have no thoughts of repentance or return to the right path. But why should your poor wife suffer because of you? She is an agunah and cannot marry because you cruelly abandoned her, you scoundrel!" The man softened. "All right, Rabbi, let's talk. Where is the woman now?" "Standing right behind you, in this room, by the door." "That's impossible. But then ... wait a minute." He approached the wife, stared at her and a glimmer of recognition spread across his face, although utterly without joy. The same happened with the woman. "I don't see how the two of us rode in a wagon for a long trip, with neither recognizing the other. We had been so-called married, after all." The Rebbe explained: "The entire encounter was all orchestrated in Shomayim, with no mutual recognition, so that you would show up here in my presence unimpeded. And now, if there is a drop of decency left in you, go with my gabbai and your wife to the Beis Din and write a kosher *get*, so that she can resume a normal Yiddish life." And that is what happened. The man freed the wife from the chains of being an agunah. She remembered to pay him for the wagon ride, and the Rebbe supplemented the fare in light of the renegade's cooperation. Man and woman parted and went their separate ways. Their score had been settled by Reb Meir Premishlaner's supernatural perspicacity זי"ע.

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לנישואיו יום ד' ר"ח אדר"א אולם וויזניץ מאנסי נ"י בשעה טובה ומוצלחת

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