

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

*Captivating stories full of Yiras Shamayim taken from Shmuessin that
Reb Kalman Krohn z'tl gave in Adelphia Yeshiva*

Reb Avrohom With One Eye Part 1

When the queen took to her sickbed, the entire country was heartbroken. She was not the stereotypical queen, high and removed from the ails of her people. Queen Maria possessed an extraordinary heart and utilized her position as the wife of the highest ruler in the land to do good for her subjects.

Her husband, King Peter, was equally goodhearted, and together, the two of them established countless institutions to benefit the sick and poor. They organized charity societies to ensure that all their citizens had what to eat and where to sleep. They opened hospitals around the country, bringing quality medical care to even the remotest locations in their land.

The queen herself was personally involved in the case of every widow in the country. She was aware of the circumstances of each widow and was well acquainted with many of these

unfortunate women. She would raise money for these families to live on and find employment and apprenticeships for the teenage orphans.

When the news of Queen Maria's illness reached the Jewish community, a sense of foreboding settled in the air. That Shabbos, the rav spoke in shul, explaining how lucky they were to live in a country that treated them kindly, a rarity in the anti-Semitic climate that prevailed at that time. The Jews all prayed for the queen's recovery and also beseeched Hashem for mercy. No one could predict what the future held.

Alas, the queen grew sicker and sicker, passing away in her sleep one night. The country was plunged into mourning. Her monumental funeral drew crowds of thousands who desired to pay their final respects to this dignified and worthy woman.

Dignitaries representing all factions of the kingdom's citizens addressed the assemblage at the funeral, and the chief rabbi, too was given a chance to speak. With tears streaming down his face, the rav spoke of Queen Maria's unmatched kindness, a trait that the Jews have inherited from our forefather, Avraham, and he also described how beloved the queen was to her Jewish subjects. The rav concluded his tear-jerking address with a prayer for the king's success in continuing his wife's noble and goodhearted ways.

For thirty days, King Peter mourned the loss of his beloved wife. For thirty days, nobles and kings from around the world visited to try to comfort him and wish him well. When a full month had passed since the queen's passing, however, the king knew it was time to move on.

For Jews in a country that undergoes a transfer of power, this unstable period brings additional uncertainty. Will the new ruler be benevolent to his Jewish subjects? Will he continue or revoke existing laws, to the benefit or detriment of the Jews?

Centuries ago, banishment of Jews from a country or province at the whim of its ruler was common practice. Jews felt unsafe and unsettled in their villages of residence, aware that expulsion from their hometowns was very real possibility.

With the stability of the entire country hinging on the king's personal stability, finding a new wife for King Peter became his advisors' top priority. They would bring him portraits of princesses from neighboring lands along with reports of each young lady's finesse and beauty, more often accompanied by sizable future inheritances. The king, however, could not bring himself to muster interest in a single prospect. He still grieved for his beloved Maria.

A few months passed in this manner, and the king's advisors continued to apply pressure on him. Knowing that he would have to remarry eventually, the king tried to find interest in their suggestions, but his heart was not in it.

One day, his advisor brought him a portrait of the beautiful Princess Irena of a neighboring kingdom. Her father was a brilliant ruler whom King Peter greatly admired, and for the first time, he found himself interested in hearing more about her. He listened to the descriptions of her wisdom and her beauty, and soon, he gave his consent to a meeting.

The king and the young princess met a few times and found that they had lots in common. For the first time in months, King Peter found himself being lifted out of a perpetual state of melancholy. He greatly enjoyed his discussions with the princess and could already picture her as his queen.

Princess Irena, too, enjoyed their discussions, but there was something bothering her. Something about King Peter's attitude toward his subjects needed to be clarified before she would agree to become his wife.

"You know," she began as they strolled through the magnificent palace gardens. "In my father's land, there is no such a thing as a Jew. All the

Jews were banished from our country decades ago. I can't understand how you tolerate and respect these despicable people. I don't think I'll be able to live in a place where there are Jews."

King Peter was taken aback by her comment. "What do you mean?" he asked, furrowing his eyebrows. "I pride myself in being a fair and kindhearted ruler. The late Queen Maria was the epitome of a good heart. How can you ask of me to change into a cruel despot?"

"Not cruel, certainly not," Princess Irena hurried to amend. "There's nothing cruel about banishing the Jews. They are not people; they are two-legged animals. We're not talking about good, law-abiding gentiles but the scum of the earth, filthy animals who manage to steal all the money from the rest of us."

The king looked at her silently. "In my land, the Jews are good, law-abiding citizens," he tried.

She shook her head. "It would be a great honor for me to become your wife, but I refuse to live in a land that is populated by members of that accursed race."

King Peter's eyes took on a distressed look. He wanted to marry the princess; he was sure she was the one for him. But how could he banish the Jews?

"Why don't you think about it?" she suggested. "I'll return to my father's palace, and when you make the decision to banish the Jews, you can let me know."

The king returned to his private quarters after that meeting, troubled and distraught. He really liked Irena and had been looking forward to spending the rest of his life with her. She hadn't had any personal encounters with Jews, since they had been expelled from her native land, but he sure had. The king valued and respected his Jewish subjects, and he didn't want to force them to resettle elsewhere.

He consulted with his advisors, and all of them were in a favor of him marrying Princess Irena, even if it meant expelling the Jews.

“Your Majesty’s happiness is paramount,” one of his advisors explained. “The princess refuses to consider the match without the banishment of the Jews. It’s only Jews! Why should His Majesty compromise his personal happiness to satisfy some lowly Jews?”

“Surely once she gets to know some Jews she will change her mind,” the king suggested. “She doesn’t even know any Jews! How can she have any opinion about them at all?”

“We’ve been corresponding with her father, king of the neighboring land, and they will not compromise on this principle,” his advisors told him. “She’s waiting for a signed letter from you promising to banish all Jews from your territories within the next year.”

It took many weeks for King Peter to come to a decision, but eventually, he came to the understanding that his advisors were correct. He would expel the Jews, marry Irena, and be freed from the pain and loneliness caused by Queen Maria’s death.

He summoned a scribe and began dictating a letter to the princess, pledging to banish the Jews within a year’s time and asking her to be his wife. To show her how seriously he was taking his pledge, he asked her to let him know the route she would be taking to get to his palace. He would ensure that all the cities along the route would be free of Jews immediately, so that she would not have to ride through streets populated by Jews.

Within days, town criers were announcing the new decree in the city squares. The Jews had one year to pack up and find themselves a new country to live in. And if that wasn’t bad enough, there was a list of cities whose Jews had scarcely a month before they would be kicked out of their homes.

When the Jews heard the new decree, they were dumbstruck. No one had anticipated things changing over so quickly. The decree was a terrible one, promising tremendous suffering for the Jews. Besides being forced to move and settle in a foreign country, none of them would be able to sell their property or furniture. Whatever they could not carry with them would be lost, causing terrible financial ruin.

Those who lived in the cities along Princess Irena’s route were to suffer exponentially, however. Not only could they not take their wealth with them, they also did not have sufficient time to find a new place to settle before they left. They would be refugees on the run for the foreseeable future.

The Jews flocked to the shuls, fasting and praying for salvation, but time was running out. The thirty-day deadline was quickly approaching, and the women began packing up their belongings. The streets and highways were full of horses and carts as the Jews fled the cities ahead of the soldiers who were coming to carry out the eviction orders.

The refugees found haven in the outlying Jewish communities, which still had eleven months until they would have to leave. The threat, however, was still hanging over their heads. Where would they go? Which country would take them in?

Princess Irena, her royal parents, and the many members of their entourage made their way to the capital city, where the wedding was scheduled to take place. An air of festivity settled over the country as the people celebrated their king’s imminent marriage. Only the Jews were shrouded in gloom and despair.

Every day, they would gather in shul to recite tehillim and beseech Hashem to rescue them from the vicious decree of expulsion. Mondays and Thursdays became regular fast days, when the Jews refrained from food and drink in an effort to repent for their sins to become worthy of Hashem’s salvation.

In one city lived an unassuming, elderly man named Reb Avrohom. He was a fixture at the back of the shul and could always be spotted with a siddur. He was a simpleton, and it didn't appear that he knew much else other than how to daven. Of course, Reb Avrohom would join the rest of the congregants in reciting Tehillim. He would cry bitter tears as he pleaded with Hashem to overturn the harsh decree.

Two weeks before the grand wedding of King Peter and Princess Irena, Reb Avrohom rose from his seat at the back of the shul. His back curved from age, he approached the rav of the shul. "I would like to speak to the rav about something."

"How can I help you?" the rav asked. His brow was furrowed, his forehead creased. The worried expression hadn't left his face since the day the town crier had announced the eviction decree.

"I think I can take away the decree," Reb Avrohom said quietly. "But to do so, I will need a big wad of cash."

The rav looked at him sadly. "Reb Avrohom, this is a very grave decree. The greatest gedolim of our generation are davening on our behalf. Why don't you do the same? Daven, say Tehillim, and Hashem should have rachmanus on us! I can't give you any money."

Reb Avrohom was silent for a moment. Unbeknownst to anyone in the city, he was a lamed-vavnik, one of the thirty-six hidden tzaddikim. It was forbidden for him to reveal his identity, and he knew that he would die as soon as he was exposed. "Please, I really might be able to get the decree annulled," he tried again. "If I had some money, I would be able to do it."

The rav lifted his hand helplessly. "I don't see how money can help us now, Reb Avrohom," he said tiredly. "Don't you think we've already tried bribing the king to allow us to stay?"

By that point, there was a huddle of people listening in to their conversation curiously.

Reb Avrohom stood his ground. He really did have a way to save the Jews, and he knew he had to keep trying until he got the rav's agreement. "I wouldn't ask you for money if I wasn't confident I had a way to use it to bring about our salvation," he said pleadingly.

"Reb Avrohom, please go back home," the rav responded. "If you need food, something to eat, I'll gladly give it to you. I don't have the headspace right now for this back and forth."

"Honored rav," someone spoke up. "Perhaps we should listen to Reb Avrohom's proposal. No one else has any ideas."

"True," the rav agreed. "What is your plan, Reb Avrohom?"

"I would like to go the king's wedding," Reb Avrohom admitted.

"Go to his wedding?!" the people were aghast.

"You'll be killed on the spot," someone warned.

"It's our only chance," a third man joined in. "If he has a plan and is willing to go, let's go for it."

Listening to the entire exchange was a man of medium build, with dark hair and sharp eyes. He was Reb Yerucham, one of the city's leading askanim. Hearing Reb Avrohom's entreaty, he called the rav over to the side and spoke with him quietly.

"I have a good feeling about sending Reb Avrohom," he told the rav. "I'm willing to finance his trip and provide him with the money he's requesting. We have little to lose and perhaps he might succeed. What's money at a time like this?"

"Alright, if that is what you think," the rav consented. "Reb Avrohom might be a simple man, but his intentions are definitely pure. Perhaps he will be the right messenger to bring about Hashem's salvation.

Together, they approached the hidden tzaddik.

Reb Yerucham spoke first. "I'm willing to give you the money you asked for," he said. "Come to my house tonight, and I will give it to you. I wish you much hatzlachah in this difficult mission you've accepted upon yourself."

"May Hashem be with you," the rav added. "May you be successful in your mission."

"Amen," Reb Avrohom responded. "And thank you. I will also need a smart, brave, and quick-thinking young man to join me in my mission. Can you find someone like that for me?"

"A smart, brave, and quick-thinking young man can be found easily," the rav said. "But I'm not sure how many smart and brave men would be ready to join you at the royal wedding."

"I understand," Reb Avrohom replied. "But please remember that a terrible decree hangs in the balance. Please, can you find someone that meets my criteria and would be willing to accompany me?"

"What about Yehuda, the butcher's son?" Reb Yerucham suggested. "He's smart, quick, talented, brave, and daring. He might be willing to join you. I can go speak to him now, if you wish."

"Please," Reb Avrohom said.

A few minutes later, the askan returned with a tall, strong young man in tow. Reb Avrohom shook Yehuda's hand. "Would you like a part in the salvation of klal Yisroel?" he asked him.

"I would be honored," Yehuda replied. "What do you need me to do?"

"I need you to pledge to obey me unquestioningly as we proceed on this mission together. Are you willing to do that?"

Yehuda hesitated. "But what kinds of things will you ask me to do?"

"All kinds of things," Reb Avrohom said vaguely.

"Are you in?"

"Do you mind if I ask the rav?" Yehuda asked, a tad apologetic. "I don't want to commit blindly to something that might be wrong."

"Go ahead, ask him," Reb Avrohom agreed.

"Yehuda, I sense that the Shechinah is with Reb Avrohom," the rav said. "You may do whatever he says. Go with him, and we will all be fasting and praying for the success of your mission."

Together, the old man and the young man went with Reb Yerucham to his house to pick up the requested money. Then the two of them were off to try to save their brethren.

The rav gathered the community and they all undertook to fast and daven. So much was at stake. Would the old Reb Avrohom be successful?

To be continued...

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!
This story is taken from tape # A444

TORAS REB KALMAN HOTLINE

Vaadin & Shmussen given by **Reb Kalman Krohn zt"l**
are now available by phone.

USA **732.913.5616** or **718.557.7711**
E.Y. **02.313.6038**

Option 1: Vaadin given in BMG
Option 2: Shmussen given in Adelpia
Option 3: Captivating stories taken from shiurim

To receive Vaadin by email or for questions and suggestions
call/text 609.807.1783 or email torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Toras Reb Kalman
Lakewood New Jersey
609.807.1783
torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Sponsored by:
Eli & Malky Friedman
Chatz & Leahle Schwab

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

*Captivating stories full of Yiras Shamayim taken from Shmuessin that
Reb Kalman Krohn z'tl gave in Adelpia Yeshiva*

Reb Avrohom With One Eye Part II

RECAP: King Peter pledged to banish all the Jews from his lands within the year so that Princess Irena, a rabid anti-Semite, would consent to marry him. Reb Avrohom, an old, quiet man who was a hidden tzaddik, volunteered to attend the king's wedding and try to overturn the decree. Though the community was skeptical of his chances, they provided him with funds and an assistant, undertaking to fast for the success of his mission.

Reb Avrohom shifted the money bag to his other hand as he walked with his assistant to the wagon depot. The bag, filled with gold coins, was very heavy.

Yehuda, young and strong, felt bad for the frail and stooped elderly man. "I can hold it," he volunteered.

"Thank you; that would be a big help," Reb Avrohom said gratefully, handing over the money bag. "Guard over it carefully. We'll need the money if we want to be successful."

"What is the plan?" Yehuda asked curiously. Ever since the rav of the city had tapped him for this seemingly impossible mission, he had been wondering what the quiet old man had up his sleeve. He would have never thought that Reb Avrohom would be daring enough to try to rush headlong into the lion's den in an attempt to save his brethren.

"You'll see soon," Reb Avrohom responded. "For now, we need to rent a horse and wagon."

Yehuda nodded, swallowing his curiosity. "Alright," he said. "I'll go hire us a wagon."

A half hour later, the two of them were sitting comfortably in the wooden carriage, Yehuda holding the reins. "Where to?"

Reb Avrohom named the city and the horses began moving. They were off.

They traveled in silence through the night, stopping only for a short respite. Reb Avrohom was immersed in his own thoughts while Yehuda concentrated on the road ahead, trying to take his mind off the danger they would soon be in.

"Turn here," Reb Avrohom suddenly said, startling Yehuda out of his reverie. "This road leads directly into the city we need. There's an inn about half a kilometer down the road. That's where I want you to stop."

"Sure," Yehuda agreed, tugging on one of the reins. The horses made the right turn and continued clip-clopping down the narrower road. Up ahead, the travelers could make out the outlines of a city.

“Here’s the inn, coming up on the left,” Reb Avrohom pointed out. “Let’s settle the horses and rent a room.”

Yehuda jumped off the wagon and began the process of unlatching the horses from the wagon. Reb Avrohom, holding the money bag and walking carefully, took a little more time to disembark. They brought the horses to the stables, accepted the deposit ticket from the stableman, and went to rent a room.

After they checked in and were alone in their room, Reb Avrohom sat down at the table and indicated to the youth to sit across from him. “Are you ready for instructions for the first step of our mission?”

“I’m listening,” Yehuda replied.

“I would like you to go to the market and purchase some clothing for me, the clothing of a clergyman,” Reb Avrohom began. He nodded to acknowledge his assistant’s surprise. “Yes, the clothing of a priest. And not just any priest, but of a high-ranking cardinal.”

“You intend to…” Yehuda trailed off, having a difficult time picturing the stooped elderly man in a priest’s attire.

“Yes,” Reb Avrohom said firmly. “And you will be my personal valet, so purchase some clothing for yourself, too.”

“But… but…” A thousand question marks raced through Yehuda’s mind.

“Listen closely; we don’t have much time,” Reb Avrohom said. “I need you to carry out all my instructions before the market closes for the day. I will also require a carriage, but not the rickety wooden carriage we rode on to get here. I need a beautiful carriage, with gleaming metal finishes and red velvet seats, as befits my high position as a cardinal.” He winked.

Yehuda’s head jerked in acknowledgement. “Sure. A cardinal’s clothing, his valet’s clothing, a gleaming carriage worthy of His Holiness. Anything else?”

“Just six white horses,” Reb Avrohom continued. “That should be all.”

Yehuda jumped to his feet. “Alright then, I’ll get going.” It wouldn’t be easy to find the things Reb Avrohom needed, but his assistant was clever and resourceful. He’d figure it out.

After Yehuda left, Reb Avrohom locked the door and removed his shoes. He lay down on the floor, spreading his hands and feet, and began crying bitterly. “Hashem, please help me! Please help me!”

As the tears streamed from his eyes and began to form small puddles on the floor, he would dip his hands into the tears and wipe them on his forehead. For the next two hours, while Yehuda was still out, he continued crying, davening, and wiping his forehead with his tears.

Yehuda, on his end, went to the marketplace to procure the items Reb Avrohom had requested.

“Sorry, we don’t sell white horses,” came the response of the first horse dealer he tried.

“White horses? Try Aristocratic Horses,” the second horse dealer suggested. “They cater to the noblemen.”

“Sorry, sir, no white horses available to rent,” the stableman at Aristocratic Horses said apologetically. “You can try Barns and Nobles, back up the road.”

Yehuda sighed as he trudged to the fourth livery. It was going to be a long day.

As the sun began to set, he finally returned to the hotel. Dressed in the fine clothing of the high-ranking cardinal’s personal valet and driving a stately carriage pulled by six magnificent horses,

he knew that no one would recognize him as the Jewish teen who had arrived earlier that morning together with the elderly man.

After depositing his horses and carriage with the stableman, he gathered up his packages and the precious money bag, which was now significantly lighter, and knocked purposefully on the door of the room he and Reb Avrohom were sharing.

Reb Avrohom opened the door after a moment and stared at him. A smile stole across his face. “Good job, Yehuda,” he said admiringly. “You look exactly the way I imagined my valet should.”

“I’m glad you like it,” Yehuda said, gratified. He shrugged out of the stiff jacket and began unloading his packages onto the table. “Don’t ask me how I got these; I’m not in the mood of getting arrested. Not that I stole it, chas v’shalom, but let’s just say that these are not the kind of items you can just buy in any store, you understand. But the seller promised me that these were the real deal.”

He spread out his finds. There was a black, hooded robe made of fine silk, pants, shoes, and a diamond encrusted necklace displaying the symbol of the non-Jewish faith. Both men looked at the clothing of their enemy with revulsion.

“It gets me nauseous,” Yehuda admitted. “Are you sure this is the only way?”

“Trust me,” Reb Avrohom said. “I don’t like these clothes any more than you do, but while they usually reek with the odor of impurity, right now, they are emitting the sweet scent of the tremendous mitzvah we will use them for. Let’s go to sleep now, and we’ll continue our journey tomorrow morning, when we are rested.”

The next morning, after davening, both men changed into their new attire. Reb Avrohom removed his Jewish clothing, besides his tzitzes, and donned the clerical robes and necklace. When Yehuda caught sight of him, the young man was astounded at the transformation. In the place of

the hunched and frail Jew was a tall, straight-backed clergyman.

Yehuda was shocked. How could some clothing take the curve out of an elderly man’s spine? Could it be that Reb Avrohom’s posture had never been stopped to begin with? Who was the elderly man really?

“Here’s the plan,” Reb Avrohom said, and his voice suddenly sounded assured and polished, exactly like the persona he was attempting to play. “Let me introduce myself. I am His Holiness, Father Johann, cardinal from a distant land halfway across the world. I have traveled all the way across the world to honor the king and his new queen with my presence at their marriage celebration.”

“Pleased to meet you,” Yehuda responded, tipping his hat. “And I am honored to be your personal valet.”

Reb Avrohom frowned slightly. “Do you know any languages, other than the Jewish dialect and the local language of this country?”

Yehuda shook his head. “Unfortunately, not.”

“Well, we’ll leave all the talking to me, then,” Reb Avrohom said briskly, surprising his assistant with his newest revelation. “I speak many languages fluently. If you need to speak, you’ll do so in the local language, but fake a slight accent and speak somewhat brokenly so that we look authentic.”

“Me definitely be doing this,” Yehuda agreed. “I speech is wonderful in this language. Me announces to all, ‘All peoples move to the narrow of road! Big cardinal approach in shortly minutes!’”

“Good, good,” Reb Avrohom said, chuckling. “You’ll do fine, Yehuda. All I need you to do is stick by me and act in ways that will authenticate my position. I’ll take care of everything else.”

They stepped out of the room together, Yehuda clutching the money bag and the parcel containing their Jewish clothes. “Make way, make way,” he called as Reb Avrohom walked stately behind him. “Big cardinal approach shortly minutes! Make way!”

With his cavernous black robe rippling as he walked, the ‘cardinal’ showered blessings on those he passed on his way out of the inn. People kneeled respectfully when they saw him.

Yehuda retrieved the beautiful white stallions and the princely carriage from the stables and opened the door for his boss. Reb Avrohom ascended into the carriage with measured steps.

Once they were safely on the road, Reb Avrohom pulled off the offending necklace and threw it to the floor in disgust. “No need to wear that while we travel,” he said, giving it a little kick. They traveled the entire day until they reached the capital city.

The festivities were evident from the moment they entered the beautiful capital. The city squares were festooned with colorful ribbons and posters.

“Stop here,” Reb Avrohom told his assistant. “I need to find out which priest will be conducting the ceremony.”

Yehuda stopped the wagon and Reb Avrohom got off. He conversed with a few people, all of whom regarded him with great awe and respect as they took in his sumptuous garb and stately wagon. Minutes later, he boarded the carriage again, armed with a name and an address.

The archbishop who would be conducting the ceremony lived in a gorgeous mansion not far from the king’s palace. His security detail stopped Reb Avrohom’s carriage to determine his identification before allowing him onto the priest’s property. There were far too many people who were jealous of the archbishop’s power and influence over the king.

“Don’t you know who this is?” Yehuda asked them in Hebrew. “This is the great priest, Cardinal Johann, who has traveled hundreds of miles to celebrate with the king. How can you not allow him entry?”

The guards, who did not speak the language that Yehuda was speaking, pulled open the doors of the chariot to examine the passengers themselves. When they saw Reb Avrohom, with his long white beard and regal bearing, they immediately understood what the driver had been trying to tell them.

Immediately the guards bowed low. “Holy Father!” they exclaimed, waving the wagon through.

One of the guards hurried to inform the archbishop’s chief of staff of the distinguished guest that had arrived. Reb Avrohom and his valet were invited into the mansion to meet the archbishop.

The archbishop strolled into the room and shook Reb Avrohom’s hand. “Welcome to my home.”

“It is my honor to be here,” Reb Avrohom replied. “I am Father Johann, cardinal in a faraway land. I traveled many months to participate in the wedding of the great King Peter and to bless him on this auspicious occasion.”

The archbishop began to look slightly uncomfortable. “That’s nice,” he said hesitantly. “The truth is that the king has already asked me to conduct the ceremony at his wedding...”

Father Johann gave a carefree laugh. “Oh, I didn’t come to take that away from you,” he hurried to assure his host. “As the highest-ranking religious leader in this country, that is an honor only a man like you is worthy of. All I wanted was to bless him.”

The archbishop visibly relaxed. “Certainly, certainly,” he agreed. “Tell me, how are things doing in your country in the religious arena?”

Reb Avrohom stifled a small yawn. “Now I’m on vacation,” he declared. “Until I get back, I’m on vacation from all work-related matters. To be honest, I’m knowledgeable in many areas, not just religion. Let’s talk about something else.”

The archbishop’s curiosity was piqued. “What kind of knowledge do you have?”

“Try,” Reb Avrohom offered. “I am well acquainted with a vast array of sciences, from astronomy to mathematics to psychology and a thousand other things besides.”

They got into a deep discussion, and after talking for two hours, the archbishop suddenly realized that the cardinal sitting opposite him knew significantly more than him. He was amazed by the breadth of Father Johann’s knowledge.

“It will be a great honor for the king and queen, and also for the entire kingdom, if a man such as yourself gives a blessing at the wedding,” the archbishop commented. “I have never met anyone as knowledgeable as you. Can I offer you something to eat?”

“No, no, I couldn’t eat now, not with the king’s wedding in just a few hours,” Reb Avrohom replied.

“As you wish.” The archbishop stood up. “I have to go now. The king requested for me to be at the palace in a half hour. You may remain here until you leave for the wedding. Where are you staying? Would you like to be my guest for the night?”

“That is so kind of you, Father, but I plan on beginning my return journey immediately following the wedding,” Reb Avrohom explained. “I’ve been away from home for long enough and cannot delay any longer than necessary.”

“Alright, then, I’ll see you later,” the archbishop said, leaving the room.

When they were alone again, Reb Avrohom explained the next step of the plan to his assistant. “We’ll wait until after the ceremony is over and the crowd returns to the ballroom for the wedding feast. We will arrive at the wedding while they are eating.”

“And then what?” Yehuda asked. “What will we do once we get here?”

“You will do the same as you’ve been doing until now,” Reb Avrohom said. “You are my valet, and you don’t speak the language.”

“And you?”

Reb Avrohom lifted his eyes heavenward. “As for me, Hashem will help us.”

And he refused to say another word.

To be continued...

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!
This story is taken from tape # A444

TORAS REB KALMAN HOTLINE

Vaadin & Shmussen given by **Reb Kalman Krohn zt"l**
are now available by phone.

USA **732.913.5616** or **718.557.7711**
E.Y. **02.313.6038**

Option 1: Vaadin given in BMG
Option 2: Shmussen given in Adelpia
Option 3: Captivating stories taken from shiurim

To receive Vaadin by email or for questions and suggestions
call/text 609.807.1783 or email torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Toras Reb Kalman
Lakewood New Jersey
609.807.1783
torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Sponsored by:
Eli & Malky Friedman
Chatz & Leahle Schwab

TORAS REB KALMAN



סיפורי צדיקים

Captivating stories full of Yiras Shamayim taken from Shmuessin that Reb Kalman Krohn z'tl gave in Adelpia Yeshiva

Reb Avrohom With One Eye Part III

RECAP: Dressed as 'Father Johann', Reb Avrohom traveled to the capital city and visited the home of the archbishop, whom he quickly impressed with this knowledge.

Two hundred musicians stood atop an enormous bandstand decorated with colorful flowers. With a flourish of the conductor's baton, the ballroom was swept away by the stunning compositions of the royal band.

Uniformed waiters circulated amongst the guests, palm to shoulder, carrying trays of dainty little petit fours, liqueur, and exotic fruits. A huge carving station took up the entire back wall, where thousands of pounds of meat from various animals in tens of flavors were being served.

In the center of the room stood the banquet tables, each graced by a magnificent floral arrangement beset by candles. With the ceremony over, the guests streamed in to take their places before each luxurious place setting.

King Peter and Queen Irena, followed by a long precession of dignitaries, took their seats at the dais. The archbishop, as befit his position as the highest religious leader in the land, was seated at the king's left. The wedding feast began.

The archbishop was in middle of enjoying his appetizer when his fork suddenly froze midair. Father Johann! he suddenly remembered. I left him waiting in my parlor!

The archbishop lowered his fork and cleared his throat. "Your Majesty?"

"Yes, Father?" The king's smile was broad and his tone was jovial. He was bathed in glow of happiness which had been so notably absent from his countenance since the death of the late Queen Maria.

"There is a cardinal from a distant country who has traveled many weeks to bless His Majesty on his wedding day," the archbishop said.

The king looked pleased at this news. "Is he here in the ballroom?"

"I don't believe he is," the archbishop said. "He was waiting in my home until His Majesty gave his permission—."

"What a question," the king chided, a small smile playing on his lips. "Of course I permit it. It would be an honor for myself, the queen, and the entire kingdom. Send for him with my chariot."

The archbishop turned to his valet, who was positioned behind his chair and nodded. No words were necessary; the valet understood exactly what his master needed him to do.

Reb Avrohom and Yehuda were silently mouthing the words of *tehillim* in the archbishop's parlor when a servant hurried in and asked them to follow him outside. To their shock, they found the royal chariot standing outside, along with an entourage of guards and servants.

"Father," the lead guard greeted him, bowing low. "The king has sent for you and is waiting for your participation at his wedding." He gestured at the opulent carriage and offered his arm to help Reb Avrohom up.

The elderly man shook his head. He didn't want the impurity of the king's carriage to negatively affect his mission. "I am not worthy of riding in the king's carriage," he told the guards. "Let the royal chariot ride first, and my servant and I will follow in my own carriage."

The guard shrugged. "Whatever the holy Father desires."

The king's luxurious carriage, pulled by twelve white mares, started up the road back to the palace. It was followed by Reb Avrohom's six white horses pulling his rented carriage, Yehuda at the reins.

When Reb Avrohom entered the ballroom, all heads turned. With his long, snow-white beard, shining eyes, and flowing robes, it was clear that he was a holy person. Instinctively, the crowd rose from their seats in respect. The king, too, rose, his arms outstretched in welcome.

Reb Avrohom made way to the dais with dignified, measured steps. The king took his hand and kissed it, a sign of great honor and respect. "I thank you for coming, Father," King Peter said warmly.

Reb Avrohom bowed. "Your Majesty is renowned throughout the world," he murmured. "It is my privilege to participate in this honored wedding. With Your Majesty's permission, I would like to give a blessing."

"Go ahead," the king said.

A hush fell over the ballroom as Reb Avrohom began to speak in the king's language, the words rolling off his tongue without trace of an accent.

"His Majesty, Her Majesty," he began, nodding at the royal couple. "Ladies and gentlemen, citizens of this wonderful land. We are all gathered here tonight to honor the exalted king and his new queen. May the One Above bless them with everything their hearts desire."

Then he began to speak of nature, of the majesty and beauty inherent in the world around them. He spoke of the miracles of creation, of the wonders of growth and regrowth, and the blessing that nature brings with it. "May all the blessings and bounty of nature shine themselves upon the royal house and our most exalted king and queen," he concluded.

A thunderous applause broke out.

The king nodded his thanks. "I appreciate your beautiful words, Father," he added. "The queen, however, is not yet fluent in the language of this land. Would you be able to repeat your blessing so that an interpreter may translate for her?"

"Your Majesty, I would be honored to repeat it for her in the language Her Majesty understands," Reb Avrohom countered. "There is no need for an interpreter."

"How do you know which language she speaks?" the king challenged. "Maybe she speaks Greek, or Chinese, or Korean!"

"I would be happy to bless her in those languages, then, or in any other tongue she understands," Reb Avrohom replied evenly.

King Peter's eyebrows rose. "It seems you are a man of many talents, Father." He told him the language of Queen Irena's birthplace, and Reb Avrohom translated his entire speech about

nature, speaking as smoothly as he had the first time.

The king and queen exchanged appreciative glances, suitably impressed.

“And now,” Reb Avrohom continued, once he finished the blessing in the second language, “As is the custom, I would like to present Your Majesties with a gift upon this joyous occasion.” He translated the sentence for the queen’s benefit and waited a beat to let suspense build. The crowd waited.

Reb Avrohom reached into the folds of his robes and pulled out a faded velvet bag. It was his *tallis* bag, old and worn. He lifted the *tallis* bag to his mouth and kissed it. Then he covered his mouth and murmured something before kissing the bag again.

The royal couple, along with all the wedding guests, watched in entrancement. It appeared that the cardinal was doing some holy, spooky things. His eyes were rolling upward and downward, he was mumbling to himself and kissing the worn velvet bag in his hands.

Reb Avrohom placed the *tallis* bag onto the table before the king and queen and gave a slight bow. “My gift to you.”

The crowd roared. No one had ever heard of such a thing! How did the cardinal dare to present such a decrepit looking gift to the king and queen?!

Reb Avrohom, understanding the reason for their indignation, turned to the king. “His Majesty understands that a man such as myself would never degrade the honor of the king with a gift that is substandard. This appears to be an ordinary bag, albeit somewhat worn, but it is anything but.”

He turned to the queen. “Please, Your Majesty, place your hand into this sack,” he asked.

The queen hesitated, unsure of what she’d find, but she stuck her hand inside. With a shriek of terror, she immediately pulled it back out. Snakes, scorpions, poisonous spiders, furry mice and hairy centipedes began racing out of the *tallis* bag. Within seconds, they were covering the entire table and crawling up the arms off the queen, king, and priests on the dais.

The queen shrieked. The priests roared. The king turned white, recognizing the deadly nature of the insects and snakes. From behind him, he could feel his body guards tense. They were supposed to guard his life, but the deadly insects had gotten to them as well, rendering them just as incapacitated as he was.

“Get them off before they bite me!” the queen screeched hysterically. A deadly looking scorpion, dripping with venom, began crawling up her face, shocking her instantly into a terrified silence.

“Don’t worry,” Reb Avrohom called out. “No spider, scorpion, snake, or mouse will bite anyone without my permission. You have my word that I will not permit any of them to bite until I finish what I have to say.”

The royal couple, struggling to maintain their composure despite the terrifying insects and rodents creeping up their arms, waited.

Reb Avrohom opened the clasps of his black clerical robe and showed the king and queen his *tzitzes*. “I am not really Father Johann,” he admitted. “I am Avrohom, a Jewish rabbi!”

The queen’s eyes rounded in protest, but she felt helpless to do anything about it.

Reb Avrohom continued. “For hundreds of years, my nation has been living on this earth, hounded and persecuted by the nations around us as we struggle to achieve perfection in the service of Hashem. We keep to ourselves and don’t bother

anyone, yet the nations hate us, robbing us of our money, possessions, and home, time and again.

“With great kindness, His Majesty has allowed my brethren to reside in his land. As a nation of kindness, we understand and appreciate *chesed*, and we did not take His Majesty’s kindness for granted. We contributed toward the wellbeing of the economy and were excellent citizens.

“In fact, as far as I understand, our exalted King Peter would have allowed us to continue living here quietly just as we have until now if not for the demands of Her Majesty, the new queen. However, I am not prepared to surrender without battle.”

The queen looked ready to faint. A mixture of anger, anxiety, and amusement crossed the king’s face.

Reb Avrohom forged on. “I don’t want a battle,” he said quietly. “I prefer for things to go back to the peaceful way they were, with no harm done on either side. But it appears that Her Majesty is not giving us a choice.”

“What do you need me to do?” the queen asked, lips white.

“I need you to sign this document right now, committing to annul the decree of expulsion,” Reb Avrohom said, pulling out the document and placing it on the table before her. “The king should sign underneath your signature.”

“But!” the queen sputtered.

“Otherwise, there will be a battle,” Reb Avrohom gently reminded her. “I will give permission to the insects and snakes to do their job, and the death toll will be very high.”

With a small exhale, the fight left her, and the queen said in a small voice, “I’m afraid to move my hand to sign the document.”

“You won’t be harmed unless I give the go ahead,” Reb Avrohom reassured her. “Please sign it.”

The queen glanced at her husband, who nodded. “You must sign, Irena,” said the king. “Really, the Father—er, the Rabbi, is right. We are a kingdom of kindness, and there’s no reason that should change. In any case, all our lives are at stake here.”

Her hands trembling, the queen stamped the document with her brand-new signet ring, which had been presented to her by the king just an hour earlier during their wedding ceremony. Then she passed the page to her new husband, who stamped his own signature beneath hers.

Reb Avrohom took the document and pocketed it. Then he closed his eyes, covered his mouth, and began murmuring *sheimos* of Hashem. As soon as he recited the *shem*, the scorpions and spiders released their grip on the terrified monarchs and clergymen and began making their way back into the *tallis* bag, the mice and snakes hot on their heels.

The crowd let out a collective sigh of relief as Reb Avrohom picked up the faded bag, the dangerous insects and rodents gone. “And now,” announced Reb Avrohom. “I have a gift for Her Majesty.” He presented her with the very same worn velvet bag with a flourish. “Stick your hand inside.”

Queen Irena shuddered visibly. “I can’t,” she said, her voice shaking.

Reb Avrohom smiled reassuringly. “Her Majesty doesn’t have to be afraid. In here is a genuine gift, something that will bring you success during all your years on the throne.”

“I can’t,” the queen insisted, shaking her head. “I just can’t. I’m afraid of what’s inside.”

Reb Avrohom turned to the king. “Your Majesty, ruler of the land,” he said. “You are familiar with the Jewish people, and you know that as a rabbi, I would never harm anyone. Before, I was forced to demonstrate my strength to save my people, but now that I have your signature overturning the decree, I can assure you that I will not harm your most honored bride. Please tell the queen to put in her hand and retrieve the gift.”

“Rabbi, after the spectacle that took place here just a few minutes ago, you will understand why I am hesitant,” the king said. “Is this something fearsome or dangerous?”

“Absolutely not,” Reb Avrohom promised. “This is a gift that is completely pleasant. Please, Your Majesty, stick your hand into the bag.”

The queen glanced at her husband. At the king’s nod, she reluctantly put her quivering hand into the faded bag. Her fingers closed around a hard, narrow cylinder which she carefully pulled out of the bag. In her hand was a gold stick, significantly longer than the size of the bag.

She looked at the stick, wondering how it had fit into the small bag. The king leaned over for a better look. The rabbi’s gift was made out of solid gold, and there were beautifully intricate carvings of various dangerous animals etched on it. There were lions and tigers, scorpions and snakes carved into the gleaming gold.

“Your Majesty, this is a gift from the Jewish people. Take it, and keep it in the royal dining room. It will bring success upon your governance and upon the entire kingdom,” Reb Avrohom explained. “Each time you gaze upon this gift, please remember the power of the Jews. We may be weak, unable to fight with our muscles, but our power lies in our prayers.”

The queen, worn out from the entire experience, began to weep. “Rabbi, forgive me,” she cried. “I didn’t know, I didn’t know! Forgive me for my evil intentions.”

“Of course you are forgiven,” Reb Avrohom said magnanimously. “May the Creator of the world bless you and your royal husband with many years of happiness.”

The king and the archbishop stood up to escort Reb Avrohom out. “Pray for our success,” the king requested of Reb Avrohom in parting.

“Certainly,” Reb Avrohom agreed.

As soon as they were away from the curious eyes of the royal family and the wedding guests, Reb Avrohom whisked off the clerical garments and handed them to Yehuda, who was still slightly dazed and trying to process the incredible events of the evening.

“Yehuda, please get rid of these completely,” he requested. “Now that they are no longer necessary, there is no need for us to be in the company of such offensive articles of clothing.”

Yehuda accepted the package and quickly got rid of the clothing, burning them to a cinder in a small bonfire. “Are you ready to head back home?” he asked.

“Yes, we must hurry back at all possible speed,” Reb Avrohom said. “We must let the people know that the decree has been annulled! Every moment we tarry; we lengthen the anxiety of thousands of Jews.”

They rode in the luxurious wagon for the first leg of their journey, until they arrived at the town where they’d rented it and returned it. They retrieved their original, rickety wagon with its staid and simple horses and continued on toward home. With their costumes gone and opulent carriage returned, all that remained as a souvenir from their adventure was Reb Avrohom’s worn *tallis* bag.

The wagon rumbled over hills and dirt paths, closing the distance between their hometown and the capital city. They were almost home when

Reb Avrohom suddenly realized that he had blown his cover as a *lamid-vavnik*. It had been necessary to reveal himself in order to save the Jewish people, and he had no regrets in doing so, but Reb Avrohom knew that now that his identity was known, he would not live much longer.

As the horses sped through the forest, the carriage drove right through an overhanging tree. One sharp branch, jutting out from the tree, poked into Reb Avrohom's eye, instantly blinding him in that eye. The pain was tremendous, and Reb Avrohom began to see how near his end was.

When they finally arrived in town, Yehuda turned the horses in the direction of the *rav's* home. The *rav*, weak from fasting, greeted them warmly, his eyes lighting up at the joyous tidings. He sat them down to hear their story. With a dawning clarity, the *rav* recognized that the simple Reb Avrohom who always sat in the back of the shul was one of the thirty-six hidden *tzaddikim*.

As he sat across from the *rav*, Reb Avrohom suddenly said, "I don't feel so well. I'm really not feeling well."

"Yehuda, please take Reb Avrohom to his house," the *rav* instructed, his heart sinking. He understood just what Reb Avrohom's illness meant.

Reb Avrohom was brought home, where he grew sicker and weaker by the day. Just a few days later, he felt that his end was near and called for the *rav*.

"I don't want any descriptions on my gravestone," he told the *rav*. "The only thing that it should say is *פה נטמן ר' אברהם בעין אחת - Here lies Reb Avrohom with one eye*. Will you be able to ensure that my wish is fulfilled?"

"I will do my best," the *rav* promised. "But Reb Avrohom, don't leave us! Stay with us; we need you!"

"I'm sorry, but I can't," Reb Avrohom said. "The decree in heaven was not overturned. It is either my life, or the lives of *klal* Yisroel, and I am willing to give up my own life so that the rest of you can continue living."

Two days later, Reb Avrohom returned his lofty soul to its Maker, a *korbon tzibbur* sacrificed to save the lives of his brethren.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

This story is taken from tape # A444

TORAS REB KALMAN HOTLINE

Vaadin & Shmussen given by **Reb Kalman Krohn zt"l** are now available by phone.

USA **732.913.5616** or **718.557.7711**
E.Y. **02.313.6038**

Option 1: Vaadin given in BMG
Option 2: Shmussen given in Adelpia
Option 3: Captivating stories taken from shiurim

To receive Vaadin by email or for questions and suggestions call/text 609.807.1783 or email torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Toras Reb Kalman
Lakewood New Jersey
609.807.1783
torasrebkalman@gmail.com

Sponsored by:
Eli & Malky Friedman
Chatz & Leahle Schwab