

## **Chassidic Leader**

Rabbi Yisachar Dov Ber of Radoshitz

Born: Poland 1765

Died: Poland, 1843

Rabbi Yisachar Dov Ber of Radoshitz was a disciple of Rabbi Yaacov Yitzchak, the Chozeh (seer) of Lublin, and later on the disciple of Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak of Pshis'cha, also called "the Holy Jew".

The story is told of Rabbi Yisachar, who said to his teacher, the Chozeh (Seer) of Lublin, "Show me one general way to the service of God."

His teacher replied, "it is impossible to tell people what way they should take. For one way to serve God is through learning, another through prayer, another through fasting, and still another through eating. Everyone should carefully observe what way his heart draws him, and then choose this way with all his strength."

### Counting the Minutes

Rabbi Yisachar Dov Ber of Radoshitz, was traveling across the Polish countryside. Night fell, the roads would soon be unsafe, and so he directed his wagon driver to stop at the first Jewish inn that they could find. In a short while, they had pulled up in front of a small Jewish tavern. The owner welcomed them in warmly, and prepared for Rabbi Yisachar a special room reserved for traveling rabbis and noblemen. After praying the evening prayer, Rabbi Yisachar retired to his chambers and to bed, tired after the long day's journey.

Soon the house was quiet, the fields outside still. Only the occasional barking of a lone farm dog broke the silence of the night. And yet . . . the clock on the wall -- it was ticking in the most amazing way; it wouldn't let Rabbi Yisachar sleep. He tossed and turned in his bed. He got up and started pacing the room. Verses from the Books of the Prophets flooded his mind, songs of deliverance and hope. He tried to lie down again, but the clock kept

ticking, until he was forced to rise from bed once more. Thus he spent the night, pacing the room in anxious anticipation. In the morning, the tired but exhilarated rabbi approached the innkeeper. "Where did you get that clock in the room?" he asked. "That clock? Well, several years ago another rabbi stayed in the room, Reb Yosef of Turchin, the son of that tzaddik, the Chozeh of Lublin. He came for only one night, but the weather turned bad and he was forced to stay for several days. In the end, he found that he did not have enough money to pay the bill, so he covered the difference by giving me that clock. He said that he had inherited it from his father." "Now I understand why I couldn't sleep," said Rabbi Yisachar. "Most clocks in the world only cause depression, for they count the hours that have passed -- another day lost, another opportunity gone by. But the clock of the holy Chozeh (Seer) of Lublin counts the time that is coming - - another minute closer to the final redemption, another second nearer the age of universal peace."

### A Holy Argument Between In-Laws

One of the sons of the Holy Rabbi Yisachar Dov Ber of Radoshitz, was getting married. The bridal canopy was all set up, and everyone was ready to go there, when the rabbi realized that he and his in-law -- another holy rabbi -- had not yet "fulfilled" the saying of the talmudic sages that there is no marriage agreement without an argument! (Indeed, it is commonly believed that such an argument actually has a mystic potency to aid the new couple's success!) So the rabbi began an argument with his holy in-law. But the holy rabbi didn't argue like most people, to lift himself up to the skies and to humiliate and lower the other person to the dirt. Instead, he argued the opposite way. He said to his future in-law: "How did a righteous person like yourself, who knows the Torah backwards and forwards, get the idea to arrange a marriage with a lowly ignoramus like me?!" And he continued to say many insulting things about himself-- so that the person who recorded this story said they are not proper to put in print.

Now when his in-law heard these degrading and humiliating things said by Rabbi Yisachar, and saw how he lowered himself to the ground, the other rabbi, the in-law, began to argue back. He said: "How can you say such things about yourself? Aren't you a truthful person?! Actually, all these humiliating things and faults you're mentioning about yourself are true of me! I'm so much lower than you that it is shameful!". Now this went on for a while, until they had both lowered themselves to the dirt. Finally, Rabbi Ber stopped and said, "Now we can go to the bridal canopy."

### The Shepherd's blessing

"Rebbe," said the chassid, who was a rabbi himself, to Reb Yisachar, "you know that my wife and I have been childless for many years. I have come to you for your blessing. I will not move from here until you promise to help me."

I am not the one to help you," the rebbe replied, "but in your very village there is someone who can, Chananele the shepherd. Go to him, ask for his blessing, If he puts you off with excuses, tell him that I sent you to him and that he must help you."

The rabbi returned home, confident in the rebbe's ultimate salvation through the shepherd. To his dismay, however, he found Chananele drunk, weaving crazily down the streets while the village boys threw stones and dirt at him.

He finally collapsed in some doorway to sleep off his drink.

"This happens every time," someone explained to the rabbi who stood by, waiting for the shepherd to recover from his drunken bout. "Whenever he gets paid, he spends his money on drink, ending up in a sodden stupor in some street corner as you see him now."

The rabbi had full faith in R' Yisachar and kept his vigil. Some time later the shepherd picked up his head and looked about. "Why are you standing there, watching me?" he asked the Rabbi.

"I want you to bless me. I am childless."

The shepherd burst into guffaws of laughter. "What! The rabbi wants the drunken shepherd to bless him? Is that not a reversal? Who sent you to me?" he asked.

"The Radoshitzer Rebbe sent me to you for your blessing," the rabbi replied candidly. At these words the shepherd grew serious.

"Very well, I will bless you on the condition that you keep this a deep secret." The Rabbi nodded.

"Furthermore, you are to maintain your silence whenever you see the village youths throwing dirt and stones at me or insulting me. Do not come to my defense in any manner." He nodded once more.

The shepherd blessed him, and after a year the rabbi's wife gave birth to a male child. When this child grew up and went to school, he joined the village boys who threw stones at the shepherd. When his father the rabbi heard of this, he was deeply troubled, but he couldn't scold him because his promise to the shepherd. When this shepherd later known by the name Rabbi Elchanan died, Rabbi Yisachar made a great eulogy for him, and revealed to the people of the village his exceptional deeds which he did far from the eyes of the people, and the fact that he was a great tzaddik nistar (hidden righteous man).

#### Stops along the way

The Saba Kadisha of Radoshitz took along his sons-in-law to Mezibuz to the Ohev Yisrael, so that they might benefit from a visit to the tzaddik as well as from the many stops he himself made along the way. At these stops Reb Yisachar would seek out some recluse whom even the townspeople did not know and spend some time with him in seclusion.

The trip stretched out to several wearing weeks. One time, the young sons-in-law declined from accompanying Reb Yisachar on one of his visits. When he returned he said to them, "What a pity it is that you did not accompany me this time. The person I visited just now has the power to atone for all your childhood sins, even your sins from previous transmigrations."

"Why didn't you tell us?" they cried, jumping up to stop the coach. "Let us return."

"I am sorry but it is too late. If you were not with me then, you cannot visit him now."

May the merit of the Tzaddik Rabbi Yisachar Dov Ber of Radoshitz, protect us all, Amen.

<http://rabbishimon.com/tzadikim/showz.php?p=yisacharber.htm>