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From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles <[editor@ascentofsafed.com](mailto:editor@ascentofsafed.com)>

*It is said in the name of the Maggid of Kozhnitz that is of great aid in acquiring the needs of the Pesach Festival to tell these three stories on the day of the yahrzeit of the holy Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhensk. It's already two weeks later but hopefully this will still be useful in these difficult days. Here is the first:*

## ***Providing Passover Expenses***

There was a Jew who made his living by smuggling periodically barrels of hard liquor. Came the day when the border guards caught him at the crossing and confiscated all of his new supply. He came crying to the holy **Rebbe of Lizhensk, the Noam Elimelech**, and related to him his whole sad story.

“The border guards took from me 20 barrels of hard liquor. I was able to purchase them only because several friends lent me the funds, and now I have nothing to repay them with and no way to provide for my family.”

The Rebbe's mercy was aroused. He gazed at the distraught man with gentle eyes and said, “Go back to the guards and tell them that your barrels never had any hard liquor in them; they are filled to the brim with water only.”

This made no sense to the chasid, but he dutifully followed the rebbe's instructions nevertheless. The guards laughed at him and quickly opened spigots of the barrels one after the other, clearly hoping to enjoy a nice intoxicating drink, and tasted the contents. Alas, it was only water, exactly as the man had said. Without hesitation, they returned the barrels to him.

The man returned to the house of the Rebbe Elimelech, again wailing in grief. “Rebbe, you saved me from being arrested, but I'm still in a hopeless situation; the liquor in my barrels all transformed into water.

The Rebbe responded instantly. “Go taste from the barrels, but don't forget to make a blessing with *kavvanah* (focused attention) first.”

The man ran outside to his wagon. When he uncorked the first spigot the escaping strong vapor of alcohol almost caused him to pass out. He drew a little of the contents into a cup and tasted. The quality was excellent, beyond compare to anything within his experience.

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*Source:* See the introduction to the story.

*Connection:* See the introduction to the story.

*Biographical notes* (in order of appearance):

**Rabbi Yisroel Haupstein** [5497 – 14 Tishrei 5575 (1737 – Sept. 1814 C.E.)], the “**Maggid**” (preacher) **of Kozhnitz** was a major disciple of the Rebbe Reb Elimelech of Lizhensk and the author of the chassidic-kabbalistic work, *Avodas Yisrael*, and other books. His miraculous birth to an elderly couple is the subject of a famous Baal Shem Tov story.

**Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk** [of blessed memory: 5477 - 21 Adar 5547 (1717 – March 1787 C.E.)], was a leading disciple of the *Maggid of Mezritch*, successor to the *Baal Shem Tov*, and the leading Rebbe of the subsequent generation in Poland-Galitzia. Many of the great chasidic dynasties stem from his disciples. It is told that before he died, Rebbe Elimelech bequeathed the sight of his eyes to the Chozeh of Lublin, the spirit of his heart to the Kozhnitzer Maggid, the soul of his mind to Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Rimanov, and the power of speech to Rebbe Avraham Yehoshua Heshel of Apt. Other major disciples included Rabbi Naftali Tzvi of Ropshitz, Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov, and Rabbi Klonymos Kalman Epstein, known as the *Maor VaShemesh*. His book, *Noam Elimelech*, is one of the most popular of all chasidic works.