

A Sudden Specialist

A certain Dr. Goldstein from Queens, an ear, nose, and throat specialist, was once visited by a couple with their daughter who was stricken with classic deafness, for which there is no known cure. The Doctor would have dismissed them without any medical attention, but they insisted that the Ribnitzer Rebbe had sent them specifically to him for a treatment and a cure. So to appease their persistence, he prescribed a regimen of vitamins and sent them on their way.

Within a short period of time the parents received a surprising phone call from one of the teachers at the special-school for the deaf that the girl had been attending. It seems she started to exhibit signs of being able to hear. When it was verified that she could in fact hear, everyone was amazed, and Dr. Goldstein was crowned with the credit for his healing prowess.

Word spread that Dr. Goldstein could, indeed cure deafness. He was then faced with a steep legal challenge. Since he had honestly deflected all credit he was charged with withholding treatment, which is a crime! He had to prove in a court of law that he had offered the girl no more than a placebo.

Ultimately the real cause of the cure, by default was *legally* credited to the miraculous powers of the Ribnitzer Rebbe, and so it was duly recorded.

Years later Dr. Goldstein received a call from the *gabbai*-attendant of the Ribnitzer Rebbe requesting a home visit for the Rebbe, to assist him with a problem that he was having with his hearing. After administering whatever needed to be done, the Dr. asked the Ribnitzer the obvious question. "Why didn't the Rebbe, who was able to make miracles happen, heal himself from his own ear ailment?"



The Rebbe quoted the Talmud (Brochos 5b) where it says, "A prisoner cannot remove himself from prison!" There it tells about R. Yochanan who had relieved others of their pain and yet required the help of someone else to

alleviate his. What we do for others, often we cannot even do for ourselves...*, **

* *Author L. Lam:* ...Sometimes a doctor needs a doctor, a lawyer may need a lawyer, and a psychiatrist needs a psychiatrist.

** *Compiler Y. Tilles:* ...not even a Rebbe, not even a miracle-working *tzadik!*

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Source: Extracted and adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from a post on Torah.org (August 26, 2010) by **Rabbi Label Lam**.

*Biographical note:*

**Rabbi Chaim Zanvil Abramowitz** [of blessed memory: 5654\* – 24 Tishrei 5756 (1893\* - Oct. 1995), **the Ribnitzer Rebbe**, was a main disciple of Rabbi Avrohom Matisyohu of Shtefanesht, grandson of the "holy Rhyzhiner" (along with Rabbi Eliezer-Zusia Portugal, founder of the Skulener dynasty--see story #561 on this email list) The Ribnitzer was acknowledged by all Jews across the spectrum as a renowned performer of miracles. He lived in the USSR under Stalin's rule, yet lived a fully Jewish religious life. He served as *mohel* and *shochet*, holy tasks he carried out with tremendous self-sacrifice and risk to life (frequently accompanied by the famed Chabad chasid, Rabbi Mendel Futerfas (see story #515 on this email list). The Russian gentiles feared and revered him. The KGB brought their wives and children for blessings (!) and experienced miracles. It is known that from the 1930s until the end of his life he fasted on all days when it is permitted to do so under Jewish law. After emigrating from Russia in 1973, he lived in the Mattersdorf section of Jerusalem for a few years before moving to the United States, where he lived for a while in Miami, Los Angeles and Brooklyn before eventually settling in Monsey, New York. He is buried there in the Vizhnitzer Cemetery, where throngs of people flock there constantly. He was married twice but had no children.

\* According to R. Mordechai (Ben David) Werdiger, who was a close follower and occasional attendant during the Rebbe's years in Brooklyn, he was 102 years old when he passed away.

*Connection:* Monday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of Tishrei (the day after Simchat Torah outside of Israel), is the 35<sup>th</sup> yearzeit of the Ribnitzer Rebbe.