

From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles <editor@ascentofsafed.com>

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Heavenly Porridge

Rabbi David of Lelov once came to the house of his friend who lived in a nearby village, intending to travel with him to visit their Rebbe, the **Chozeh ('Seer') of Lublin**, as was their custom. This friend, who was as poor as he was pious, hastened to ask his wife to prepare a meal in honor of the worthy guest who had just arrived. The poor woman did not know which way to turn. The pantry was bare, except for a little flour, nor was there firewood. How could she prepare a meal?

She went out to the forest and gathered some dry twigs for firewood, then mixed her bit of flour with water, having neither oil nor spices to improve the taste, boiled it and served this unpretentious dish to the two *tzadikim*. They finished their meal and set out for Lublin.

When Reb David eventually came home, he told his wife "When I was at my friend's house in the village, I was served some kind of delicacy, and in it I really tasted the taste of the Garden of Eden".

The *rebbetzin* knew how far removed her husband was from delighting in the pleasures of This World, so she set off at once to that village, to find out from the woman who lived there just how she prepared the dish which her husband had praised so highly.

The woman told her of her circumstances, and how she had been utterly without anything which could add flavor or fragrance to the sorry mixture. While she was preparing it, therefore, she had addressed the Al-mighty as follows: "Master of the Universe! You know full well that I would not have spared the rarest of delicacies in order to provide a meal worthy of the visiting *tzadik*; but what can I do when I have nothing in the house? But You, Master of the Universe, You have a Garden of Eden. So please, won't you add a touch of the flavor of the Garden of Eden into this simple mixture I am cooking, so that the *tzadik* will enjoy what I have prepared?"

The woman concluded: "It seems that the Almighty heard my prayer, and that is why your husband the *tzadik* tasted the flavor of the Garden of Eden."

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Source: Supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from *A Treasury of Chassidic Tales on the Festivals* by Rabbi S.Y. Zevin, as translated by **R. Uri Kaploun**.

*Connection*—weekly reading: “He [Yaakov] brought him [Yitzchak] wine and he drank” (Gen. 27:25).

Midrash *Tan’huma Yashan*: “From where did Jacob have wine? The Archangel Michael brought him wine for the Garden of Eden.”

*Biographical note:*

**Rabbi David Biederman of Lelov** (1746 - 7 Shvat 1814) was a close follower of the “Seer” of Lublin. He was known for his extraordinary compassion for, and inability to see faults in, his fellow Jews. His main disciple was Rabbi Yitzchak of Vorki, whose son, Yaakov David, was the first Amshinov Rebbe. Two printed collections of stories about him are *Migdal David* and *Kodesh Halulim*.