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From the desk of Yerachmiel Tilles

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Fondling Gold Coins

On the first Purim after **Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua-Heschel of Apta** came to serve as Chief Rabbi of Yaasi, his first rabbinical post, the townspeople sent him a *mishloach manot*¹ package that included a large number of gold coins. The Rav took these coins and played with them awhile, handling the money affectionately.

His son, R' Yitzchak-Meir, was surprised. He knew his Father as a man who despised money. "Haven't you taught us, Father, to hate money?" he asked.

The *tzadik* smiled. "All year long," he explained, "money is worth nothing in my eyes. But today, when the *mitzvah* of the day is to give alms to the poor, I realize that I should be giving away something that has value to me. Therefore, today I have made it my business to inculcate in myself a love of money! When that love grows strong, I will distribute all the money to the poor. In that way, I shall be able to fulfill the *mitzvah* in a much better way."

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[Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from "**Stories my Grandfather told me**" (Mesorah, p. 191) by *Zev Greenwald*]

*Biographic note:*

**Rabbi Avraham-Yehoshua Herschel** (1755- 5 Nissan 1825) the **Apter Rebbe**, was a main disciple of the Rebbe Elimelech of Lizhinsk. He is also often referred to as "**the Ohev Yisrael**," both after the title of the famous book of his teachings, and also because its meaning ("Lover of Jews") fits him so aptly.

Connection: "Purim Katan"<sup>2</sup> falls on Tuesday of this week (Feb. 15)

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<sup>1</sup> A gift of food and drink, primarily for the Purim feast.

<sup>2</sup> This is a "pregnant" year on the Jewish calendar (seven times in every 19 year cycle), in which the month of Adar is doubled. The main celebration of **Purim** is set to be on the 14<sup>th</sup> of the second month of Adar (*Adar Sheini*), so in such a year Purim is referred to as *Purim Gadol* ("Major Purim") and the 14<sup>th</sup> of the first month of Adar (*Adar Sheini*) is called *Purim Katan* ("Minor Purim").