

The *Kapo* that Helped a Rebbe

When Rabbi Mordechai Weber was younger, he merited to serve as an attendant to the great Chasidic leader, **Rabbi Aharon of Belz**. In later life, he traveled every day by bus to teach a Torah class.

On one occasion, when the regular bus came, it was full. The rabbi waited patiently for the next bus, but it was also full. And then a third bus which was also full. The rabbi pondered: he takes that bus every day at the same time and he never had to wait even for a second bus. It was very strange.

When the fourth bus came he was finally able to board and take a seat. Shortly afterward, a young rabbinical student requested to sit next to him. The student knew that Rav Weber used to serve as an attendant to Rabbi Aharon of Belz, so he asked him if he could please share some noteworthy insights that he heard from the mouth of the Rebbe.

Rabbi Weber began pouring forth from the wellspring of knowledge that he learned from the Rebbe. When the conversation turned to memories from World War II, he mentioned that the cursed Nazis got Jews to be in charge of other Jews in the Camps to make sure they were following orders. They were called *kapos*. Similarly, as in the camps, there were Jews in the ghettos who wanted to find favor in the eyes of the Nazis and were willing to inform on their own people to save themselves.

Some of the appointed *kapos*, however, who were Torah-observant,¹ refused to do anything that would hurt other Jews. They were willing to take the beatings themselves rather than report what their Jewish brothers were doing.²

Rabbi Weber then said, “Rav Aharon of Belz once mentioned a certain one by name,” and he said the name, adding, “he not only wouldn’t report on Jews, but he went out of his way to help them. He used his position to benefit them. The Rebbe would always tell me how much that person had helped him personally in the Bochnia ghetto.”

They then went on to speak about other topics until the rabbi got off the bus.

A few days later, a man phoned Rabbi Weber, inviting him to come celebrate the engagement of his daughter. Rabbi Weber did not recall ever meeting that person, but he went anyway to bring him joy.

¹ The original text is “G-d fearing,” but in addition to those heroes there must have been at least a few whose main motivation was “love your fellow Jew as [you love] yourself.”

² See Ex. 5:14 and Rashi’s explanation or the interesting note in Artscroll.

When Rabbi Weber arrived at the party, he was greeted by the host with great honor. The host said to him, “You don’t know me, but I was sitting behind you on the bus the other day and I heard what you said in the name of the Rebbe of Belz about that special kapo.

“Well, because of you my daughter is now engaged. You see, last week we were ready to finalize on this *shiduch*, but then some people told me the boy’s grandfather was a kapo in the Holocaust and we should stay far away from them. Because of that report I was going to break it off. But then I heard you say the name of that man, the *chatan*’s grandfather, and how he was really a hero.

So you see, you saved our *shiduch*. Thank G-d, my daughter is now engaged.”

Rabbi Weber then began to reflect. What explanation could there be for three buses being filled to capacity that day? Clearly, it was ‘Divine Supervision’ in order that Rabbi Weber would get on that fourth bus where a young man would request to sit next to him and ask about the Belzer Rebbe, and that the man who was already sitting in back of the seat that Rabbi Weber chose would overhear what he needed to hear, precisely when he needed to hear it.

He sincerely hoped that the man whose daughter is now engaged to the kapo’s grandson also realized that those three filled buses, plus the fact that the young rabbinical student sat next to Rabbi Weber, was all instigated by G-d Al-mighty just for him, his family and the *shiduch*.

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Source: Adapted by Yerachmiel Tilles from a transcript of an audio lesson (#1817) by **Rabbi David Ashear**, submitted by Mrs. Shulamit Tilles.

*Biographical note:*

**Rabbi Aharon of Belz** [5660 – 21 Av 5717 (1900 – August 1957)], the fourth rebbe in the Belz dynasty, was considered one of the purest holy men of his generation. In 1944 he miraculously escaped from the Nazis and moved to Israel, where after a brief time in Jerusalem he set up his court in Tel Aviv. The current Belzer Rebbe, who has established a huge center in Jerusalem, is his nephew.