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## SAVED BY A WEDDING

Reb Aryeh, a chasid of **Rabbi Shneur-Zalman**, founder of Chabad Chasidism (**the 'Alter Rebbe'**), had been appointed by the authorities as "burgomaster" of his town. As chief magistrate and official record keeper for the government, one of Reb Aryeh's responsibilities was keeping track of all marriages, births and deaths in the Jewish community, entering them in a special register.

It happened once that a local gentile converted to Judaism. This was a grave offense in those times and in that place. Anyone even remotely suspected of having helped in the conversion process was subject to stiff penalties. This being so, Reb Aryeh was asked to conveniently "forget" to record the name of a certain Jew who had just died. The convert, who was approximately the same age as the deceased, would be given the dead man's papers and assume his identity.

It was a clever plan, and it might have worked if not for the informer who brought the plot to light. The burgomaster was caught and a trial date was set.

Reb Aryeh was in grave danger. Being a true chasid, he went to the Alter Rebbe and explained his predicament. The Rebbe advised him to postpone the trial, and it was rescheduled for a later date.

When the second trial date rolled around Reb Aryeh returned to the Rebbe. Again, the Alter Rebbe advised him to defer it. This happened several times, until finally Reb Aryeh was unable to push it off any longer. At long last the burgomaster would be tried for his "crime." The chasid begged the Rebbe to save him.

Oddly enough, the Alter Rebbe responded by inviting Reb Aryeh to his grandchild's wedding, which was about to take place in the town of Zlobin, Ukraine, in 1807. It was a union between two rabbinical dynasties: The Alter Rebbe's granddaughter, Baila,<sup>1</sup> was marrying the grandson of **Rabbi Levi-Yitzchak of Berditchov**,<sup>2</sup> Yekutiel-Zalman.

"Why don't you come and present your problem to Reb Levi Yitzchak?" the Alter Rebbe suggested. "I'm sure that he can help you."

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<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Rabbi DovBer, the 'Mittler' Rebbe to-be.

<sup>2</sup> A son of his daughter.

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Reb Aryeh traveled to Zlobin, but getting in to see Reb Levi Yitzchak was very difficult, as thousands of other people had arrived with the same idea. Unwilling to give up, Reb Aryeh decided to come back in the middle of the night and stand outside Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's door. The following morning, he would be first in line.

That night, Reb Aryeh positioned himself outside Rabbi Levi Yitzchak's room and peeked inside. A strange sight met his eyes!

On one side of the *tzadik's* bed stood one of his attendants with a volume of *Mishnayot*; on the other side stood a second *gabbai* with the holy *Zohar*. Both men were reading aloud – at the same time – while Reb Levi Yitzchak appeared to be sleeping. Yet, when one *gabbai* mispronounced a word, the *tzadik* turned and protested, “*Nu! Nu!*”

This continued for some two hours, after which Rabbi Levi Yitzchak arose from his “nap” and Reb Aryeh was allowed to enter.

The first thing Reb Levi Yitzchak asked Reb Aryeh was who had sent him. “My Rebbe,” the chasid replied.

“And who might that be?”

“Rabbi Shneur-Zalman, in Liadi, Belarus,” Reb Aryeh answered.

“Ah, him!” Reb Levi Yitzchak exclaimed. “My in-law is your Rebbe? Such a *tzadik* and scholar, such a holy man of G-d!” He continued in this vein for some time, praising Rabbi Shneur-Zalman to the skies. “So, tell me,” he said fondly, “what can I do for you?”

Reb Aryeh explained that he was the burgomaster of his hometown. “A burgomaster?” the *tzadik* repeated after him. “What does that mean?”

The chasid described his various duties and responsibilities.

“You mean to say that a Jew is in charge of the whole town?” Rabbi Levi Yitzchak asked, duly impressed. “How can that be?”

“To tell you the truth,” Reb Aryeh replied, “the only reason I took the job was that the Alter Rebbe urged me to do so.”

“Aha!” the *tzadik* declared emphatically. “My in-law – the sage, the saint, the learned scholar, the righteous one - guided you to take this position. In that case you have nothing to worry about. G-d will surely help and guard you from all harm.”

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Reb Aryeh went back to the Alter Rebbe and related his conversation with Reb Levi Yitzchak.

“So, what do you think?” the Alter Rebbe asked. “Did I give you good advice?”

He then repeated the question. “I gave you good advice, didn’t I?”

On the day before the trial was due to begin a fire broke out in the courthouse. All the important documents in the building were completely burned – including the official indictment against Reb Aryeh. With no other record the case was dropped, and that was the end of the accusation.

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*Source:* Supplemented and slightly modified by Yerachmiel Tilles from a post on *ShabbosStories.com*, based on *LChaimWeekly.org*.

*Connection:* Next Sunday night-Monday is *Chai (18<sup>th</sup>) Elul*, birthdate of Rabbi Shneur-Zalman.

[It is also the birthdate of the Baal Shem Tov. If you feel you are missing out on *Besht* stories, you might consider joining my video & audio story WhatsApp group (with email option also), where there will be three of them on the next two Saturday Nights. **To join or for more information, [click here.](#)**]

*Biographical notes:*

**Rabbi Shneur-Zalman** [18 Elul 1745-24 Tevet 1812], one of the main disciples of the *Maggid* of Mezritch, is the founder of the Chabad-Chassidic movement. He is the author of *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* and *Tanya* as well as many other major works in both Jewish law and the mystical teachings

**Rabbi Levi-Yitzchak of Berdichev** [of blessed memory: 5500 - 25 Tishrei 5571 (1740 - Oct. 1810)] is one of the most respected and popular rebbes in chasidic history. He was a close disciple of the *Maggid of Mezritch*, successor to the *Baal Shem Tov*. Many of his teachings are contained in the posthumously published *Kedushat Levi*. He is best known, however, for his love for every Jew and his perpetual intercession before Heaven on their behalf.