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ACCESSING THE HIDDEN LIGHT OF CREATION

“Rabbi Elazar said: The light that the Holy One, blessed be He, made on the first day of Creation was not that of the sun but a different kind of light, through which Adam could observe from one end of the world to the other. But when G-d looked upon the generations of the Flood and the Dispersion and saw that their ways would be corrupt and that they might misuse this light for evil, He arose and concealed it from them.... And for whom did He conceal it? For the righteous people in the future, as it is stated: “And G-d saw the light, that it was good” (Gen. 1:3), “good” referring to none other than the *tzadikim* (perfectly righteous people).” (Talmud Chagiga 12a)

The uniqueness and greatness of the holy **Baba Sali**, Rabbi Yisrael Abuhatzeira of blessed memory, was not limited to those times that he revealed his powers by performing open miracles, for his entire behavior and true spiritual level were beyond the comprehension of ordinary men. All were amazed by the simplicity with which he spoke about the secrets of creation and the hidden ways in which G-d guides His world. Even as we know that the pathways in heaven are as familiar to *tzadikim* as the entryways to their own homes, the matter-of-fact manner in which the Baba Sali spoke about heavenly concepts was astounding.

Stories heard from reliable witnesses abound. One of the most remarkable stories about the holy light and vision of the Baba Sali took place over fifty years ago:

A terrible incident occurred in 1972 when a daughter of one of the most prominent Jewish families in Mexico was kidnapped by a group of Mexican gangsters who had been tracking the girl in the hopes of holding her for a large ransom. They demanded \$60 million for the safe return of the young girl. If their demands were not met, they threatened, the girl would be executed. There were to be no further negotiations, they declared.

Unfortunately, this was not wholly uncommon. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the Mexican Jewish community lived in relative stability. The economic boom that followed World War II lasted for nearly thirty years and continued to allow Mexican Jews to greatly prosper. However, the country began to experience economic

difficulties, which affected them in numerous ways. Abductions, theft and gang-related crime became all too commonplace and no one was safe, least of all the wealthy Jews of Mexico and its environs.

The family of the girl was in a state of panic. They could not possibly come up with that absurd sum of money and the Mexican police could not be relied upon to find their daughter alone.

An uncle of the kidnapped girl was dispatched to Netivot, in southern Israel, to seek the blessing and advice of the holy Baba Sali. The man rushed to the tzadik's home and explained what had occurred to his niece in Mexico. He informed the Baba Sali that the kidnappers had said they would not negotiate. They wanted their money or the consequences would be dire.

The *Chacham* (sage, wise man) sat in his chair motionless. His face was almost entirely covered by the veil he wore over it. He seemed to have immersed himself totally inward.

Suddenly, he called for a pen and paper. His attendant ran to bring the items and the Baba Sali began to talk as he traced the shape of a building on the paper. This is what he said:

"In order to rescue the girl, this is what you must do. Go to so and so (he named a specific place) and there you will find two of the kidnappers. One is short and stout like a barrel and the other is tall and thin like a tree. Bring with you twenty policemen and overwhelm the two kidnappers who are acting as lookouts.

"Then, take these two men and have them lead you to the spot where the girl is being kept. Be careful. There are another six kidnappers who are hiding there. Let the first two open the doors and then the police can storm in and rescue the girl. Do this and you will be successful."

The uncle rushed out and relayed the information, just as the Baba Sali had drawn it up on paper. The police were informed, the raid was successful, thank G-d, and the girl was rescued. The entire plan was carried out exactly how the Baba Sali had outlined it from his home in Netivot, over 6,000 miles away!

The Baba had never stepped foot in Mexico, nor, of course, had he ever seen the buildings he diagrammed or how the kidnappers looked. And yet, he could see them; he could see it all! Undoubtedly, it was the special light -- the "*Ohr Haganuz*" ('Hidden Light) -- which enabled him to see from one end of the world to the other.

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*Source:* Adapted and supplemented by Yerachmiel Tilles from the Parshas Bereishis 5779 email of *Torah Tavlin*, as posted on *ShabbosStories.com*.

*Biographical note:* **Rabbi Yisrael Abuhatzeira** [1890 – 4 Shvat 1984] known as **Baba Sali**, was born in Tafilalet Morocco, to one of Jewry's most illustrious families. From a young age he was renowned as a sage, miracle maker and master kabbalist. In 1964 he moved to Eretz Yisrael, eventually settling in 1970 in the Southern development town he made famous, Netivot, and where, since 1984, his tomb has become one of Israel's most visited pilgrimage sites. A number of collections of stories featuring him have been published, including at least two in English.

*Connection:* The third verse in the weekly Torah reading encapsulates the theme of the story.