

**Good Shabbos Everyone.** This week we will tell another story about the Holy Baba Sali, of blessed memory, one greatest Tzadikim (righteous people) of recent history.

A popular young student at Yeshivat HaNegev was in the Israeli Army when he had decided to become a baal tshuvah. He had just begun his way back to the fold of observant Jewry in the year 5738 (1978).

One of the first things he concentrated on was tefillah (prayer). However, his commanding officer did not see the importance of davening in the morning and took him to task for coming late. "Get up earlier if you want to pray. You can't come late just because you have to pray," he said.

As time went on the commanding officer increasingly became nasty. It was hard enough for the boy to pray and make it to his appointed place on time, but he also had to deal with an officer, who seemed intent on punishing him because of his prayers.

One Rosh Chodesh the officer's chance came. Because of all the additional prayers, the soldier came more than half an hour late. The officer was waiting for him at the entrance to the building. "Okay," he said triumphantly, "this time you're going to pay for coming late!"

He then wrote out a report and sent it to the army authorities. At the soldier's military trial, the soldier explained to the judge, "My only crime is being a baal tshuvah and wanting to pray with a minyan on Rosh Chodesh. That's the only reason I came so late!" The judge gave him only seven days in military jail, instead of fourteen days. At the trial's end, the officer walked by the young boy with a smug look his face. His "promise" had been realized and the soldier would now sit in jail! However, the young soldier could find no correlation between the crime and the sentence. Soon after being put in jail, the boy escaped. Before he realized the severity of what he had done, he found himself on a chase, through wooded hills, towards the direction of the bus route to Beer Sheva. Although the police set out a dragnet, they were unable to capture him, and he successfully escaped into the city.

The young man used this time undercover to study in a yeshiva. Although the police came to his house, he was never found there. His whole life had become the yeshiva. From time to time he visited his family but he was careful—since he knew the police would not give up their search until they found him.

The young fugitive understood that his life underground could not go on forever. During a conversation with one of his friends in the yeshiva, it was suggested that he go to the Baba Sali and ask for help.

Discreetly, he went with his friend to the home of the the Baba Sali and told the gabbai Rav Eliyahu his tale. Rav Eliyahu told him to return the next day at ten a.m. and everything would turn out well.

The next morning the two of them appeared on time. The soldier's friend spoke on his behalf, since the soldier was too frightened to say anything. Rav Eliyahu was told everything that had happened, and he told everything to the Rav. When Rav Eliyahu returned to the two men he gave the young soldier a bottle of water from the Rav. "You can go home. The Rav said that when a person prays with a minyan nothing evil can come of it. No harm can come from such a mitzvah!"

The Baba Sali had said his bracha over the bottle of water - making the water "shirayim" - the leftovers of a Tzadik. With the bottle of water in his hand, the young man departed. When the soldier came to the bus stop, the first bus that stopped was going in the direction of the army base that the young man had run away from. Feeling that he was safe with the blessing of the Baba Sali, the young man jumped into the bus which was headed to the base.

When the bus arrived at the base, he got off. His sudden appearance at the base startled his officer. "Where did you disappear to?" the astonished officer demanded. "This time you'll be sentenced to at least a year and a half in jail!" and he proceeded to write out a report.

Suddenly the nasty officer spied the bottle of water in the soldier's hand. "What's that?"

"It's water from Rav Yisrael AbuChatzeirah," the soldier said nonchalantly. "Don't you think it's crazy to make such a big deal out of a few minutes I was late? All I wanted to do was daven with a minyan?" continued the soldier. "The Baba Salt asked that you pardon my offense because it was brought about by praying with a minyan, on Rosh Chodesh."

The officer abruptly stopped writing. "Is the Baba Sali involved in this?" he asked. The young man nodded. "Then I don't want anything to do with it. As far as I'm concerned, everything has been straightened out. And, now that everything has been straightened out between us, won't you please give me some of the water?" The officer's attitude had changed completely. Everything was cleared up promptly because tales of the Baba Sali were known near and far. (From, Baba Sali, our Holy Teacher, C.T. Bari, p. 204)

This story illustrates the power of Tzadikim, our righteous leaders to bless us. The Torah portion this week in parshas Lech-Lecha discusses this issue. Hashem tells Avram "and you shall be a blessing." (Bereishis 12:2) Rashi explains that Hashem is telling Avram, "until now, the power to bless was in my hands, now you may bless anyone you chose." From here we see that Hashem has given the Tzadikim the power to bestow blessings. In every generation Hashem gives Tzadikim the power to bless. We can take advantage of this power by being close to the righteous leaders of our generation. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

**A Refuah Shleimah to Shusha Malka bas Golda "Anyone who brings merit to the masses, no wrongdoing will come into his hands."**