

Good Shabbos Everyone

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's parsha Vayeitzei we read about how, on the way to Charan, Yakov Avinu stopped to rest for the night. As he slept, Yakov dreamt that he saw a ladder. The famous dream of the ladder contains some of the most inspirational spiritual lessons of the entire Torah. The verse tells us that Yakov "dreamt, and behold! A ladder was set on the earth and its top reached towards the heavens..." (Bereishis 28:12)

The Sages teach us that the ladder symbolizes the position of a Jew in this world. Although we stand on the ground like the base of the ladder, we strive to reach up to the heavens, like the top of the ladder in the dream. As the verse states, "A ladder was set on the earth and its top reached towards the heavens..."

The following emotional story illustrates how one Jew climbed very high in life through his spiritual dedication.



Reb Gedalia Moshe Goldman, who later became the Grand Rebbe of Zvhil, and Chaim Shaul Bruk,

a renowned Chabad mashpia (mentor), were serving time together in a Soviet prison camp. Their "heinous" crime? Observing and spreading Judaism under the Communist regime.

One Shabbos, the sadistic commandant of the camp called Reb Gedalia Moshe into his office. "I have here the papers for your release," he said as he waved some papers in the air, "and if you sign them now you will be a free man." "But it is Shabbos," replied Reb Gedalia Moshe. "I cannot and will not sign on Shabbos." The commandant – who, of course, knew that Reb Gedalia Moshe wouldn't transgress the Shabbos – shouted, "If you don't sign the papers now you will remain here another eight years!"

"Nevertheless, I will not sign and desecrate the Shabbos."

"Very well," sneered the commandant. "Don't sign. You will be in this prison for eight more years. And we'll see how your G-d will help you..."

"If you don't sign the papers now you will remain here another eight years!"

"If my G-d wants to help me, He'll do it without you. And if He wants me to be in this prison eight more years, I will be here eight more years even if you would decide to let me go," replied Reb Gedalia Moshe calmly. "It has nothing to do with you."

The already enraged commandant saw red. He whipped his pistol out of its holster, pointed it at Gedalia Moshe's heart, and screamed "Let's see who will help you now!" He cocked the gun...

At that moment his daughter walked into the office. She saw her father pointing the gun at Reb Gedalia Moshe and said in a bored voice, "Father, it's a waste of a bullet..." Slowly the commandant lowered the gun. "Don't think it was your G-d that saved you!" he shouted at Reb Gedalia Moshe who was standing there serenely. "If it hadn't been for my daughter you would be dead by now!"

He turned to an aide and yelled to him, "Bring in the other Jew trouble-maker, Chaim Shaul!" A few moments passed, and Reb Chaim Shaul was standing in the office next to Reb Gedalia Moshe.

The commandant made him the same offer as he had to Reb Gedalia Moshe: "Sign these papers and you can go free."

"Of course I can't sign the papers," replied Reb Chaim Shaul, "It's Shabbos, and I don't violate the Shabbos." "You will remain here another eight years." "I will not write on Shabbos."

Suddenly Reb Gedalia Moshe said, "Give me the papers. I will sign for him." The commandant was dumbfounded.

"What? You said you wouldn't write on Shabbos! You're going to be here for another eight years! And now you'll sign for him?"

"Of course I wouldn't sign on Shabbos to gain my freedom," Reb Gedalia Moshe replied. "But this is different. I'm strong, and I can withstand the conditions in this prison another eight years. But Reb Chaim Shaul is weaker, and he cannot stand this place any longer. It would be dangerous for him to remain here another eight years. Give me the papers and let me sign..." Both men were freed from prison within the next few days. For after all, it wasn't the commandant who was in control. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

In memory of Shusha Malka bas R' Avrohom ה"ע

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