

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's portion Ki-Savo Hashem tells us "if you observe the commandments of Hashem, your G-d, and you go in His ways. Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed upon you, and they will honor you." (Devorim 28:9-10) The verse teaches us that when we Jews act according to the Torah, the nations will recognize that we are a holy people.

The following amazing true story shows how we Jews can be "a light unto the nations."

In 1908, Queen Wilhelmina of Holland went for a brief vacation to the popular resort area of Marienbad, Austria, near the German border. Since this was not an official state visit, she only had a small entourage of people with her, and there was no welcoming ceremony on her arrival at the train station in Marienbad.

As the Queen got off the train, she noticed a large crowd on the platform. Obviously, a prominent personality had just arrived. Everyone was gathered around trying to get a glimpse of the famous person. Queen Wilhelmina asked and was told that a great Jewish personality, the Munkaczer Rebbe, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Spira (1845-1914) had just arrived. Many of the Rebbe's chassidim had come to greet him at the train station.

The Queen then asked what a Rebbe is. She was told that a Rebbe is a very holy man of great wisdom who gives blessings and advice to his many followers. Thousands seek his counsel and ask the Rebbe to pray on their behalf. Often the Rebbe's prayers are answered and those who seek his blessings live to see their wishes fulfilled.

When the Queen heard that the Rebbe had spiritual power, she immediately thought of her own situation. The Queen and her husband Prince Hendrik were childless. Both she and her husband were concerned that the Dutch monarchy should continue in their family. Without children, the royal line would end with Queen Wilhelmina.

The Queen and her entourage left the train station. Later that day, the Queen asked one of her attendants to try to arrange for her to meet the great Rebbe privately. The next evening, the Munkaczer Rebbe was brought to a secluded area of a beautiful park just outside of the city. Queen Wilhelmina was accompanied by two attendants and the Rebbe came with two bochurim (yeshiva students).

As the Rebbe and the Queen sat down, the Queen sensed that the man sitting opposite her was a personality of great stature. She spoke candidly to the Rebbe about how sad she was about being childless. The Rebbe listened attentively and told the Queen not to worry. Her monarchy would continue. As the Queen was about to depart, the Rebbe cited a verse from the Torah saying that the Queen's kingdom will not be severed "until Shilo comes." (Genesis 49:10) Meaning, the Queen will have descendants until the coming of the Moshiach (the Messiah)

The next year, in 1909, the Queen had a little girl and named her Juliana. It was the only child that the Royal couple ever had. (Thirty-nine years later, in 1948, Juliana became Queen of Holland. Her daughter, Beatrix is presently the Queen of Holland.) A little more than 30 years after the Munkaczer Rebbe had given Queen Wilhelmina a blessing for a child, a black cloud descended over Europe. World War II had begun. The Germans sought out Jews in every country where they could find them.

Rabbi Yakov Tzvi Katz was one poor Jew who was caught in the German net. During the War, Rabbi Katz was sent to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Rabbi Katz's 18 year old son Shmuel was deported from the ghetto and never heard from again. 12 volumes of Rabbi Katz's writings on halacha (Jewish law) were burned.

After the war was over Rabbi Katz returned to his native Hungary, in an attempt to put his life back together. He quickly saw that there was no future for the Jews in post-war Hungary. Many Jews at the time were trying to emigrate to Holland. Rabbi Katz tried, but he was denied entry into Holland twice. Holland was only accepting those Jews who had professions which would benefit the country. There were already plenty of rabbis in Holland.

One day, Rabbi Katz decided to write a letter directly to Queen Wilhelmina. He explained the hardships he and his family had experienced in the war. He then wrote, "Surely Your Highness remembers the very momentous meeting that preserved the course of royalty in Holland."

He detailed the Queen's encounter with the Munkaczer Rebbe in Marienbad, almost 40 years previous. Rabbi Katz continued writing in his letter to the Queen that the Rebbe had insisted that two boys come along with him for the meeting with the Queen. The Rebbe would need an interpreter since the Queen would be speaking German. Rabbi Katz wrote, "I was that 18-year-old boy who accompanied the [Rebbe], and it was I who transmitted to the Queen the wonderful news from the saintly Rabbi that [the Queen] would bear a child within a year."

The letter which Rabbi Katz had sent to the Queen was written in Yiddish. Although Rabbi Katz could have written the letter in German, he was concerned that one of the Queen's attendants would intercept the letter, read it, and then prevent it from getting to the Queen. Therefore, when the letter in Yiddish arrived, and old Russian chazan named Rabinowitz was summoned from his synagogue in The Hague and asked to translate the letter. The chazan read the letter. Realizing its significance, the chazan translated the letter with all the emotion he could manage. The translated text was brought to Queen Wilhelmina. After reading the note, the Queen saw to it that Rabbi Katz be granted immigration papers swiftly. Then he was able to rebuild his life which had been largely destroyed. (from: Echoes of the Maggid, R. Pesach J. Krohn p.95-99)

We see from this amazing story the power of a Jew to make a good impression on the nations. As the verse tells us, "If you observe the commandments of Hashem, your G-d, and you go in His ways. Then all the peoples of the earth will see that the Name of Hashem is proclaimed upon you, and they will honor you." (Deuteronomy 28:9-10) When a Jew acts according to the Torah, he shines with the holiness of Hashem.

The Munkaczer Rebbe and Rabbi Yakov Tzvi Katz showed the nations the beauty of a Torah observant lifestyle. Let us all learn from their examples and then we will truly be a light unto the nations. As the Prophet tells us, "...I will strengthen your hand; I will protect you; I will set you for a covenant to the people, for a light unto the nations..." (Yishayahu 42:6) **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."
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