

The Wicked Poritz

Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

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The Town of Horki, 5593 - 1832

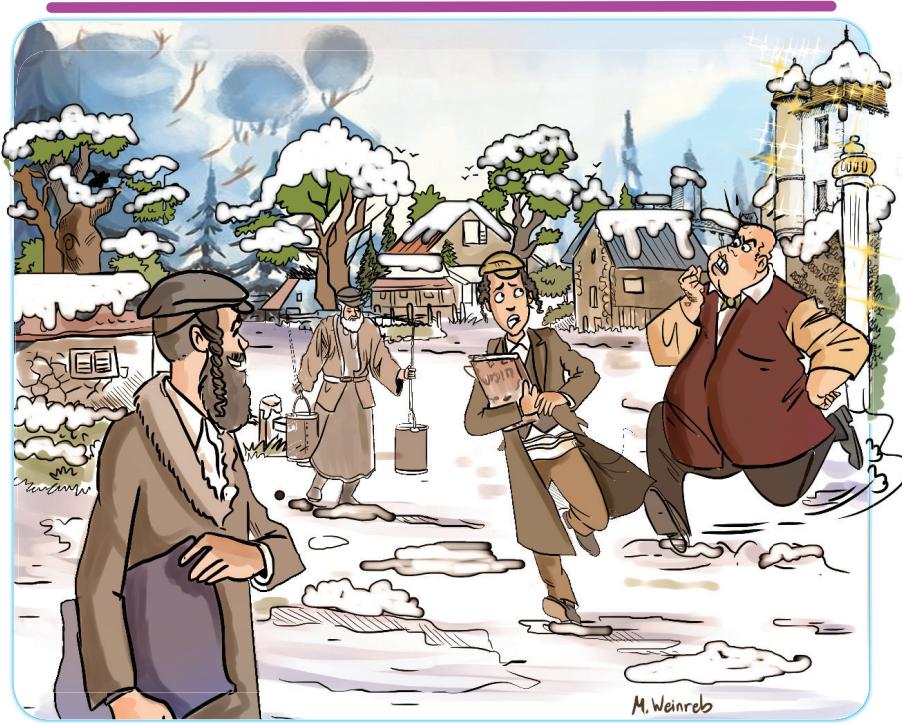
Boruch trudged home from cheider through the snow that was once again falling on the Horki Shtetel. He waved happily to Velvel the water-carrier and Aharon the fish-man as he headed home after cheider. Horki was the poorest of all of the chassidishe shtetlach, but everyone served Hashem besimcha and it was a very pleasant place to live.

Boruch was especially happy these days, as his Bar Mitzvah was only a few weeks away and he was going to lein the entire Parshas Vayeitzei in the small wooden Horki Beis Medrash, in front of the Rebbe and all of the chassidim.

However, today Boruch was feeling nervous. The mean goyishe poritz who ruled over Horki and the surrounding areas had made a new law that no boy was allowed to have a Bar Mitzvah until the poritz tested him on the leining.

Boruch wasn't at all looking forward to meeting with the poritz, but he had to have a Bar Mitzvah! So after feeding the chickens, Boruch grabbed his old, worn Chumash and headed over to the poritz's mansion at the edge of the shtetl.

Wow, what a fancy mansion! Boruch had never seen the poritz's mansion up close before - the Horki children were all too terrified to ever come anywhere near it. Trembling, Boruch approached the gold-trimmed door, and



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knocked softly on the door. To his horror, the poritz himself flung the door open with anger in his eyes.

"Who do you think you are, knocking so hard on my door?" snarled the poritz, as Boruch fought back tears. "Do you know how much this door costs? Be careful! Now come inside - now you're late because I had to yell at you!"

As scared as Boruch was, he could not help but be amazed at how fancy everything in the poritz's house was. There was gold and silver everywhere, the walls seemed to glitter with diamonds, and the chairs! Boruch had never seen such comfortable looking chairs and couches. In fact, Boruch had never even sat on a chair with a cushion on it before! But as the poritz led him towards two massive leather chairs with gold trimmings, diamond studded arm rests, and silver cupholders, he reached behind one of the seats and pulled out a rickety wooden crate with nails sticking out of it.

"Here," he said, plunking it down on the floor. "You sit on this."

Boruch did the best he could to sit on the tiny crate without sitting on any nails.

"Now," said the poritz, sinking deep into his cushy chair and grinning nastily. "Read your Torah portion!"

Boruch was shaking all over, as he opened the Chumash to Parshas Vayetzei and started to lein: "V-v-vayeitzei Y-y-akov m-m-m-B'er Sheva, vayeilech Charanah..."

"That's **ENOUGH!**" barked the poritz, making Boruch jump. "You read every word wrong! If you want to have a Bar Mitzvah, you will have to come back here and read to me every single night for the next three weeks! And of course," he added slyly. "Your family will have to pay for my precious time."

"Now out! Out! Out!" the poritz kept yelling at Boruch as he chased him out of his mansion.

Boruch hurried away from the poritz's house as fast as he could, towards his father who was waiting for him at the edge of the estate. Boruch couldn't hold back any longer and burst into tears.

"Totty, I hate him! He's a terrible Rasha! Yemach shemo vzichro l'olmei ad. He doesn't even read Loshon Hakodesh - what right does he have to test me?" Boruch fell into his father's arms sobbing, as he related everything that had happened.

"Boruch," Totty said. "I want you to listen very carefully and think about your Bar Mitzvah Parsha. Why do you think Hashem made Yaakov Avinu spend twenty years by Lavan? I'll tell you why. Because reshaim make us great! Imagine if Yaakov Avinu just married Rochel and left. We wouldn't have Leah Imeinu! We wouldn't have Bilhah and Zilpah! And more importantly, Yaakov Avinu would not have become the tzadik he became if not for the nisyonos of living with a rasha like Lavan."

"So while we should definitely daven to Hashem to save us from the goyim who make our lives difficult, at the same time we must realize that if Hashem is putting us in this situation, it is for **our best** and an opportunity to grow into bigger and better ovdei Hashem."

Boruch smiled for what felt like the first time all day.

"Thank you, Totty," he said. "I will try to use the nisyonos from the poritz to grow closer to Hashem." After pausing for a second, he added "and I am going to daven that Hashem should destroy him and all of his wealth will go to the Horki Chassidim!"

Have A Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

Difficult people are sent our way by Hashem to help us improve.



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