



**Ransom**  
**Purim Special**

Rabbi Asher of Stolin, the son of the Great Rabbi Aharon, was known for his righteousness, for his charity and for his big heart. He would support the many needy families in his flock and would save them from becoming destitute.

His sexton and confidant, Rabbi Yehoshua Torover, was sent by him on all sorts of missions. The Rebbe would give him a name and an address and Rabbi Yehoshua would make deliveries on his behalf.

He was once surprised by the Rebbe – he was given an envelope with cash and told to deliver it to a family living in a small hamlet on the countryside. This is not the first time the Rebbe had sent him on a long-distance mission, and immediately he left on his mission.

He searched and found the address immediately upon arriving at the village. It was a cold winter's night when he knocked on the door. The sight of poverty he was exposed to was hard to describe. The children were freezing and hungry, while the mother sat holding a baby, with no food to feed her children or wood to heat the hut.

Rabbi Yehoshua entered the home, took out the cash and sent the children to get some wood. He went himself to buy some wood and began to prepare bread. Within minutes, after the bread was ready, he left the home without letting the family know who their benefactor was.

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Purim is different from other Jewish holidays.

On Purim we have a special commandment to give gifts to the poor. We should give charity year all year round, but charity is an integral part of Purim's commandments.

On Purim, our Sages tell us, anyone who asks for charity is given, without asking questions. Why do our Sages emphasize this?

We are further taught that we need to make an effort to properly do acts of kindness. The Talmud states: "Rabbi Eleazar further stated, he who executes charity and justice is regarded as though he had filled all the world with

kindness, for it is said, "He loves charity and justice, the earth is full of the loving-kindness of the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

The Talmud continues: "But lest you say that whoever wishes to do good succeeds without difficulty, Scripture expressly says, "How precious is Thy loving-kindness, O God," meaning that it requires efforts to achieve.

A proper contribution to a real poor person, this is an achievement which is not easy to come by, and which is a merit to encounter.

On Purim there is a special merit that one can encounter such a situation without much effort. On Purim, all are considered needy, and therefore charity on Purim is done in the highest degree.

Why is one told not to ask questions on Purim to see if the needy is really as poor as he says he is? Haman, when he tried to annihilate the Jewish nation, did so by paying Achashverosh in return for his permission to execute his nefarious plan, and our Sages come and say "money for money" – we were all doomed for destruction, and now we are all meriting life and peace. This is a form of ransom that every Jew is worthy of.

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Rabbi Yehoshua decided to return immediately to the Rebbe in Stolin that night. When he arrived at the city he was again surprised to find the Rebbe waiting for him at the city's gates.

The Rebbe was restless from the moment he left, Rabbi Yehoshua was told, walking back and forth and waiting for his return.

"Well, did you find them? How was it?" The Rebbe demanded.

"Of course I did," his sexton replied.

The Rebbe's face let up, and he began to recite the evening prayer, relaxed after the mission was crowned a success.

The Rebbe said "One should make efforts, even if one fails to fulfill a Mitzvah nine hundred and ninety nine times, and subsequently succeed to do the Mitzvah properly even just the once, and truly give charity, it is worth all of the effort".

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<sup>1</sup> Tractate Succah 49b.