



## The Friendship That Saved

### Parshas Shmos

The stars shining above Jerusalem were familiar to my grandfather, Rabbi Yitzchak Dovid Grossman, as he was making his way around midnight to the Mikveh at the Shiloach Spring, as was his want. He would then continue to pray and study throughout the night. On his way there Basel Dirany, a member of a Jerusalem Arab crime family, hid in wait for him.

My grandfather put his head under water, and then Dirany came out of hiding and held his head under the water. My grandfather struggled, but to no avail. A minute passed, his oxygen was running out, and he began to prepare for his death. Then footsteps coming towards them were heard. My grandfather's study partner, Rabbi Dovid Biderman, the Lelover Rebbe, came behind the Arab and hit him over the neck with his wood clogs, and he was pushed back. "How did you know to come?" grandfather asked after several minutes of recuperation. "A good friend senses", was his answer.

\*\*\*

In our weekly parsha we read about Moshe Rabeinu: "Now it came to pass in those days that Mohse grew up and went out to his brothers and saw their suffering, he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man of his brothers."<sup>1</sup> Moshe sensed the suffering of his brethren and proceeds to help and save them.

It is stated about Iyov that there were three hundred parsaos between himself and his colleagues.<sup>2</sup> How did they know of his anguish? "Some say that they had crowns, and some say that they had had certain trees, when the trees were unhealthy is served as a sign to them. Raba said: This bears out the popular saying: Either a friend like the friends of Job or death." Their friendship was so close they could sense each other's pain and happiness.

\*\*\*

When I was young I entered the Lelov synagogue for the first time. Rabbi Moshe Mordecai, the next Lelover Rebbe, was preparing for Rosh Chodesh.<sup>3</sup> When he saw me he called me over and asked my name. When I told him his face lit up. I sat next to him and he told me: "My grandfather saved your grandfather". He told of the incident and then concluded: "My grandfather gave the bandit such a whack, he won't even resurrect from the dead..."

---

<sup>1</sup> Shmot 2, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Tractate Baba Batrah 16b.

---

<sup>3</sup> Is the name for the first day of every month in the Hebrew calendar, marked by the appearance of the new moon. Contrasted with the astronomical definition of new moon - which is not visible to the naked eye - the new moon in the Hebrew calendar is marked by the day and hour that the new crescent is observed. It is considered a minor holiday