



Adapted from the sefer **חמין במוצאי שבת** and **חדוות דזעיר אנפין** collections of
maamarim
given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Acharei Mos - Kedoshim 5772

In honor of the upcoming *yahrzeit* of my ancestor the first Tolna Rebbe, **Harav Hakadosh Rav Dovid Mi'Tolna zy" a** (י' אייר), I will share a story that my grandfather zy" a often told.

My grandfather heard from elder *chasidim*, that the famous *chazan* R' Nissan Spivak (often called Nissi Belzer), spent much time in the *chatzer* of Rav Dovid. On some of his visits he would bring his *kapelya* (choir) along and they would sing for the Rebbe and the *kehila*. Many stories are told about those visits, and many *nigunim* that they sang were preserved and transmitted to the next generations.

One member of the choir was a talented young boy name Ephraim, who had a very sweet voice. Ephraim's father was a devoted *Tolner chasid*, and Ephraim was often called upon to sing at the Rebbe's *tish*, for the Rebbe greatly enjoyed Ephraim's singing.

At one *tish*, Ephraim sang a special *nigun* to the words of the *pasuk*,

הבן יקיר לי אפרים אם ילד שעשעים כי מדי דברי בו זכר אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ עוֹד עַל כֵּן הִמּוּ מְעִי לוֹ
רַחֵם אֶרְחַמֶנּוּ נָאִם ה' (ירמיהו ל"א:י"ט).

“Is Ephraim not my precious son, and the child of my delight, for whenever I speak of him, I yet remember him, therefore, my innards cry out for him, I will surely have mercy on him, says Hashem.”



[1]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

On this occasion, Ephraim's singing was particularly moving, and as he sang, the Rebbe sat with his eyes closed, clearly in a state of great *dveykus*. When Ephraim finished singing, the Rebbe opened his eyes, leaned over to Ephraim and told him that this *nigun* will protect him wherever he goes.

The years passed, and as Ephraim grew up, he was swept away by enthusiasm for the *haskala*, and gradually distanced himself from *Yiddishkeit*. Eventually he left his parents home and way of life. He embarked on a new musical career, singing non-Jewish songs in the big cities of Ukraine and Russia. Later, he was invited to perform before great crowds in Vienna. His reputation grew to the extent that he became known as one of the greatest singers in Europe.

One day, he got up to perform before a crowd of thousands in one of the great European cities. He was accompanied by a world-class orchestra and choir. Unexpectedly, he began to sing *Haben Yakir Li Ephraim*, with great emotion. The audience of *goyim* were outraged at his choice of a Jewish *nigun*. They shouted him down, and he was forced to leave the stage in shame. This event ended his career and he soon found himself penniless and homeless.

Eventually he joined up with a group of vagabonds who wandered from town to town begging for money, food, and a place to rest. One Erev Shabbos, they reached the city of Tolna and decided to stay for Shabbos. On *leil Shabbos*, they went to the Rebbe's *tish*. Fifteen years had now passed from the last time Ephraim sang at the Rebbe's *tish*. He had changed so much that no one recognized him.

The one exception was the Rebbe, Rav Dovid zy" a. He immediately recognized Ephraim, and asked him to come up and sit next to him. Once he was seated, the Rebbe asked him to sing *Haben Yakir Li Ephraim*. He once again raised his voice, and sang so beautifully that everyone who heard him felt that they were experiencing something wondrous.



[2]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com

The next day, Ephraim passed away and his soul left this world on *Shabbos Kodesh*.

After *Shabbos* the *levaya* was arranged and the Rebbe himself walked behind Ephraim's coffin. He was buried with great honor in the *beis hachaim* of Tolna.

My grandfather zy"va always told this story with great emotion. He said that he had met some of Ephraim's relatives.

On a positive note, let us conclude with the *tefilla* that we should merit the fulfillment of the promise - רחם ארחמנו נאום ה' -

ונזכה לגדל בנים ובני בנים עוסקים בתורה ובמצוות אכי"ר.



[3]

© כל הזכויות שמורות למכון 'המאור שבתורה' שע"י מוסדות טאלנא עיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א

The editor is solely responsible for any mistakes and omissions

If you would like to be added to our mailing list, or for any comments, please email us at

hamaortolna@gmail.com