

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 1944, two newly arrived Jewish prisoners were interned at the women's section of Auschwitz concentration camp, a mother and a daughter. In their free time they prayed and recited *Tehillim*, beseeching Hashem to protect a man named "Gabor." Their fellow prisoners, particularly their cousin, Mrs. Strauss overheard this special prayer request, and wondered why two Jewish women should have such consideration for a man with a Gentile name, especially considering that they themselves were in such dire straits.

The mother and daughter explained that "Gabor" was actually a pseudonym for a Jewish man, who might have gotten into trouble with the Nazi authorities because of them. Gabor maintained a string of apartments across Budapest, in which he hid dozens of refugee families. The name "Gabor" and a certain post-office box number in Budapest were secretly known to Jews fleeing their homes from Nazi persecution. These refugees sent a letter to this post office box informing Gabor of their imminent arrival time in Budapest by train. Hopefully, Gabor would be there to meet them, secret them away to a safe apartment, supply them with food, and ultimately present them with forged Hungarian identification papers. The mother and daughter explained that this happened to them, but something went awry. The gentile superintendent of this particular apartment building suspected that something unusual was going on. Every few days the same man would appear at the apartment carrying boxes of food, while the "tenants" of this apartment never ventured outside. The suspicious super informed the Nazi authorities, who immediately arrested the pair, and questioned them about this man. They refused to divulge any information and were shipped to Auschwitz. The Nazi-beast sneered at them that it was alright that they refused to divulge information about the man: "We'll just wait for him to show up with the food." This, they explained to Mrs. Strauss, was the reason for their special prayers for the welfare of this man.

Mrs. Strauss was intrigued with the details of the story and the prayer spectacle in the midst of hell on earth. She thought about it often and wondered about the fate of Gabor. She was one of the fortunate few who survived Auschwitz, and was still impressed with the details of this incident many years later, in her new home in Brooklyn, New York.

In the meantime, the Nazis lay waiting for Gabor to show up at the apartment with food. Unknowingly, he walked into the trap, was arrested, and taken to Nazi headquarters in Budapest. His inquisitors wanted to know exactly what was going on, why was the apartment rented in his name, why was he hiding Jews, was this part of a bigger operation, was he himself Jewish, who else could be implicated in this plot, etc. Gabor protested his innocence, waved his Gentile identification papers at them, and pretended that he did not know what they were talking about. The interrogators threatened him with all sorts of tortures, and warned him that "nobody ever left the torture chambers alive." Gabor, who was still wearing his *talis katan* at that time, and who was in possession of some fifty false identification papers, knew that he was in a lot of trouble. All they had to do was remove his shirt or check his pockets and everything would be lost.

Gabor understood that the only thing that could help him in this situation was prayer to Hashem. And silently he did pray. Gabor had lost his parents at an early age, and was the youngest of nine children. Most of his four brothers and four sisters were already married and had families of their own. He knew that they had all been taken to concentration camps and were all probably murdered by now. (Years later it was discovered that a solitary niece had survived the camps.)

His prayer to Hashem was simple and straightforward: “Hashem, I have lost my father and mother, and my eight sisters and brothers and their families are probably all killed by now. I am probably the only surviving member of my family. Hashem, how can you allow all of us to be wiped out? There should be at least one family member left as a *zeicher*, one person left to say *Kaddish* for the rest, and one person left to re-establish the family in the ways of our fathers.”

As these thoughts were flashing through his mind, he was barely paying attention to his three interrogators. Suddenly, the chief inquisitor left the room to get a typewriter, and another decided to break for a cigarette. The lone Nazi left in the room seemed to be daydreaming. Gabor was seized by a feeling of restlessness, and took the liberty of standing up to exercise his feet. He strode back and forth across the room with the prayer in his mind. He noticed that he was only inches and seconds away from the door.

He boldly decided to head for the door, and upon reaching the door he confidently left the room, left the building, and did not look back. Gabor understood that this was all from Hashem.

Years later he and Mrs. Strauss became acquainted in Brooklyn and sometimes would reminisce about the war years. One day Mrs. Strauss suddenly realized his identity and exclaimed, “So, you’re the ‘Gabor’ I’ve been wondering about all these years.”

“Gabor” is my father, Reb Yishai ben Boruch Adler יצ"ל and his silent prayer had never left his lips. The writing of this *sefer* is only a small demonstration of what my father had in mind, when he wished to “re-establish the family in the ways of our fathers.” May he be a *meilitz yosheir* for my dear mother, the entire family, and for all of *Klal Yisrael*.

כ"ד תמוז תשנ"ז
תיניציב'ה'