

and his wife with children, long years, riches and extraordinary grace. He told Reb Gavriel to close his business in Vitebsk and to deal with diamonds and precious stones. The blessing was wholly fulfilled. Gavriel "Nossay Cheyn" (the 'graceful')--as he came to be called—became a wealthy man and the father of sons and daughters. He died at the age of 110 years and was out-lived by his wife by two years!

The "coins of charity" (material or spiritual charity) may be the same as ordinary coins in number and in value, but when the commandment is done with self-sacrifice—yet with joy—it acquires an inestimably greater value, and shines with a brilliance that illuminates one's whole life.

THE "COINS OF CHARITY" MAY BE THE SAME AS ORDINARY COINS IN NUMBER AND IN VALUE, BUT WHEN THE COMMANDMENT IS DONE WITH JOY—IT ACQUIRES AN INESTIMABLY GREATER VALUE

THE COINS SHONE
BY RABBI YITSCHAK MEIR KAGAN

Rabbi Gavriel—a disciple of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (the "Alter Rebbe")--and his wife, Chana Rivka, had been married for twenty-five years, but were childless. Rabbi Gavriel had been a prosperous merchant in Vitebsk, but hard times and persecution had destroyed Gavriel's fortune. The Alter Rebbe was at that time trying to arrange for the release of some Jewish prisoners. Large sums of ransom money were needed, which the Rebbe attempted to raise amongst his followers.

Gavriel was "estimated" as being able to donate a certain sum—but he

could not; he was heart-broken at not being able to participate in the great commandment of Redemption of Captives (Pidyon Shevuyim) to



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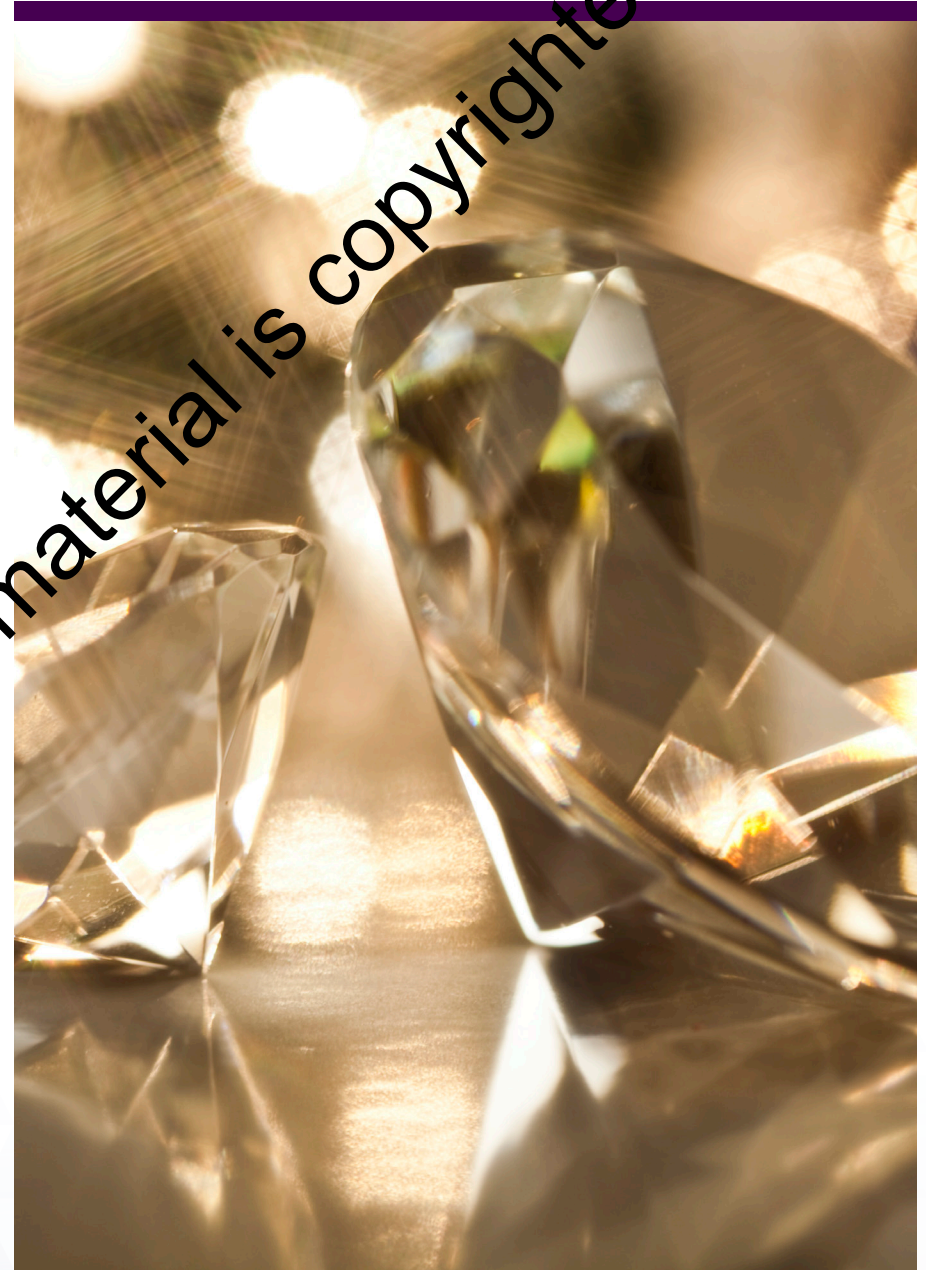
OF ALL THE
GOLD, SILVER
AND COPPER
WHICH THE
JEWS GAVE TO
BUILD THE
TABERNACLE
(THE DESERT
SANCTUARY)
NOTHING
SHONE BUT
THE BRASS-
LAVER AND
ITS STAND.
(THESE WERE
MADE FROM
THE COPPER
COSMETIC
MIRRORS
WHICH
THE JEWISH
WOMEN HAD
GIVEN TO THE
SANCTUARY

the extent expected of him.

On learning of her husband's distress, his wife sold her pearls and jewelry for the required sum of money. She then scoured and polished the coins till they sparkled, and with a heartfelt prayer that their fortune should also begin to shine, she packed up the coins and gave them to Gavriel to bring to the Rebbe.

When he came to Rabbi Shneur Zalman, Gavriel placed the package in front of the Rebbe on the table. At the Rebbe's request he opened the package; the coins shone with an extraordinary brilliance. The Rebbe became pensive, lost in thought for a few moments. Then he said, "Of all the gold, silver and copper which the Jews gave to build the Tabernacle (the desert sanctuary) nothing shone but the brass-laver and its stand. (These were made from the copper cosmetic mirrors which the Jewish women had selflessly and joyously given to the sanctuary!)" "Tell me," continued the Rebbe, "where did you get these coins?" Gavriel told the Rebbe of his plight and how his wife Chana Rivka had raised the money.

The Rebbe rested his head on his hand, and was lost for a long while in profound thought. Then, raising his head, he blessed Gavriel



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