

Ki Seitzei / כי תצא

Ugo the Ugly is Caught



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Toras Avigdor Junior

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller z"l

Lythbourne, Valundia
5229 - 1469

"Hear ye, hear ye!" came a voice, crying in the distance.

"Ewald," called a woman who was carrying a large basket of fish. "What is going on?"

Nearby, a man looked up from the well.

"It sounds like a royal proclamation," replied Ewald. "Come, Fiorella, let's go see what it's all about."

Fiorella put down her basket of fish and hurried with her husband to the town square, where a crowd was gathering. As they approached, they heard the clattering of horse's hooves coming towards them.

"I was right, Fiorella," Ewald said. "Look, it's the royal horses!"

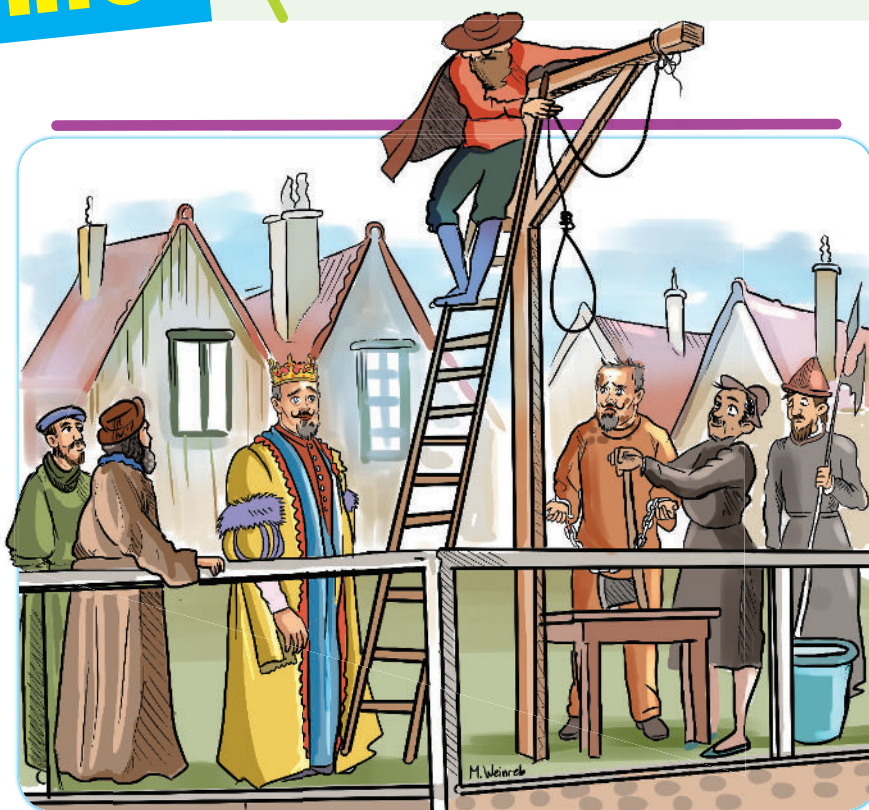
Fifteen large horses rushed into the town square with riders carrying royal banners and the flag of Valundia. It was an impressive sight.

The horses came to a stop and tossed their manes impressively. In the center, sitting atop the largest horse was a royal knight in full armor, carrying a large scroll.

"Hear ye, hear ye!" he cried loudly. "In the name of his majesty the king! It has been so declared, and duly ordered, that the thief who is known as 'Ugo the Ugly' shall be put to death!"

The townspeople gasped. They had heard of the atrocious crimes committed by Ugo the Ugly - was he hiding in their town?

"Furthermore," the knight continued, "the man or woman who shall deliver this thief to the hands of the royal guards, shall be handsomely rewarded by the king himself!"



No sooner had the knight finished reading the royal proclamation than a farmer stumbled into the town square, dragging a man behind him, bound in ropes and mud all over his face.

“I caught him!” announced the farmer. “He was in my barn, trying to steal my chickens!”

The knight leapt off his horse and looked at the man, who was struggling to get free.

“How do we know that it is he?” asked the knight.

“Well, I just told you, he was trying to steal my chickens!” the farmer said, somewhat annoyed.

“Ewald!” Fiorella exclaimed excitedly. “That is the very same man who stole our fish last week!”

“And last week he killed and ate one of my sheep!” another man said angrily.

“Well that is enough evidence for me!” the knight said. “By order of his majesty the king, I order you to death by hanging! The execution shall take place at six o’clock this evening!”

Another gasp filled the town square.

Immediately, two of the guards took off in the direction of the royal palace, while the others tied up their horses and began building a large gallows.

A few hours later the townspeople gathered once again to witness the execution. Ugo the Ugly was led up to the gallows and the executioner prepared the noose.

Suddenly the sound of trumpets were heard, as two royal riders in splendid purple and red coats road into the townsquare, followed by a large ornate chariot.

“Behold!” they cried. “His majesty, the king!”

The townspeople all bowed as King Marzander IV descended from his royal coach.

As the king watched, the knight announced: “In the name of his majesty the king, the execution of the evil Ugo the Ugly shall now commence!”

The executioner did his job, and everyone cheered. But the King had a look of concern on his face as he looked at Ugo hanging from the gallows.

“Remove the mud from his face!” he ordered sharply.

Quickly, the executioner took a rag and wiped the mud off of Ugo’s face. Screams of shock filled the air.

“My brother!” the king exclaimed. “My twin brother Lysandor! You! You were Ugo the Ugly, the worst criminal to ever plague the peaceful nation of Valundia?”

Indeed, Ugo looked exactly like the king! A tear trickled down the king’s face. Everyone, including the royal guards, watched awkwardly, too frightened to say or do anything.

“Take him down!” the king ordered suddenly. “Take him down this instant! It is a disgrace to the kingdom!”

Quickly, the royal guards lowered the body of Ugo / Lysandor from the gallows, covered him with a cloth, and loaded him into the back of the king’s chariot. The king quickly climbed inside and rode off, accompanied by the knight and the guards.

In this week’s Parsha, the Torah tells us that when a Yid chas veshalom needs to be killed by Beis Din, his body is not allowed to be left hanging on display overnight. And the reason is because we are made בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים - in the image of Hashem. It is a terrible disgrace to leave a portrait of Hashem hanging dead for all to see. So Hashem says “take him down, because he looks like Me.”

Have a Wonderful Shabbos!

Takeaway:

When we look at the faces of our friends we must think about how they resemble Hashem, and treat them with respect.



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