

He Sees with His Ears

by Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer

Once there was a blind man who lived with his sister in a hut near the forest. His eyes saw nothing, but he knew more than those whose eyes were sharp. He would sit outside his hut and answer the questions of passers by, and his answers were always correct.

"Blind man," people would ask him, "how is it that you are so wise?"

"Because I see with my ears," he would say.

His sister married a hunter, who then came to live with them. The hunter, however, had no time at all for the blind man. "What use," he would say, "is a man with no eyes?"

The hunter would go into the forest every day, with his traps and his spears. When the hunter returned in the evening, the blind man would say, "Tomorrow, let me come with you, to hunt in the forest."

But the hunter would shake his head. "What use is a man with no eyes?"

One evening, the hunter had returned home with a fat gazelle. In a good mood, he turned to the blind man and said, "Tomorrow you will come hunting."

The next morning they set off into the forest, the hunter with his traps and spears leading the blind man by the hand. Suddenly, the blind man stopped. "Hush," he said; "there is a lion!"

The hunter looked about but could see nothing. "There is a lion," said the blind man, "but it's all right; he's asleep. He won't hurt us."

They went along the path and there, sure enough, was a great lion fast asleep under a tree. The hunter asked, "How did you know about the lion?"

"I see with my ears," said the blind man.

They continued into the forest until they came to a clearing. The hunter set one of his traps, helped the blind man set another, and said, "Tomorrow we'll see what we've caught."

The next morning they walked into the forest to where the traps had been set. The hunter saw straight away that there was a bird caught in each trap. And he saw that the

bird caught in his trap was a little grey one, and the bird in the blind's man trap was a beauty, with feathers of green, crimson and gold.

"We've each caught a bird," he said. "I'll fetch them out of the traps." He gave the blind man the little grey bird and kept the beautiful bird for himself, and they set off for home.

As they walked, the hunter said, "If you're so clever and see with your ears, then answer me this. Why is there so much anger and hatred in this world?"

"Because the world is full of so many people like you, who take what is not theirs."

The hunter was filled with shame. He took the little bird from the blind man's hand and gave him the beautiful one instead. "I'm sorry," he said.

As they walked on, the hunter said, "If you're so clever, then answer me this. Why is there so much love and kindness in this world?"

"Because the world is full of so many people like you, who learn by their mistakes."

From that day on, people continued to ask, "Blind man, how is it that you are so wise?"

And the hunter would put his arm around the blind man's shoulders and say, "Because he sees with his ears and hears with his heart."