

The Reward
Adapted from an Old Jewish Tale

A long time ago in a country far away, Motti lived with his family in a little cottage at the edge of the village. His father had gone off to the big city to look for work.

“Be sure to look after your mother and sisters whilst I’m away”, he said. And Motti was trying his best to do just that.

As the weeks went by, the little bit of money that his father had left was used up.

“How am I going to buy food for Shabbat?” sighed his mother. “There are no carrots or cabbages left in the cellar and the pickle barrel is completely empty”. A tear rolled down her cheek.

“Don’t be sad Mama”, said Motti. “Maybe there are some potatoes still left in the garden”.

Motti put on his boots and took the big shovel from the corner. He went out into the garden to dig for potatoes. He dug deeply into the ground and there lying in the earth were one, two, three, four, five big brown potatoes. He gathered them up out of the earth and shook off the mud. Just as he was about to take them into the house, an old lady passed by. She was wrinkled and bent, her clothes were ragged and she looked very, very hungry. Motti felt sorry for her.

“I will give her these potatoes. I’m sure there must be plenty more in the ground”. The old lady thanked Motti. “You are such a kind boy. May God bless you and all your family”.

Motti went back to digging the garden. He dug the shovel deep into one corner but there was nothing. He dug the shovel deep into the other corner. Still there was nothing. He tried again in the middle of the garden. He dug and dug but he still couldn’t find any potatoes. Just as he was about to give up, the shovel hit something hard. Motti pushed the earth away to find out what it was. It was a small metal box. He lifted it out of the ground and brushed away the clumps of earth. Excitedly he opened up the lid and inside lay five golden coins glinting in the sunshine.

He ran back to the house.

“Mama! Look what I found in the ground while I was digging for potatoes”.

He told his mother about the poor old woman. “You are a very kind boy, Motti. God has rewarded you for your kindness”, she said. “Now we will have plenty of money to buy food for Shabbat until Papa returns from the big city”.