



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of  
maamarim  
given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

### *Melave Malka Parshas Chukas 5779*

Our *Parsha* teaches us an important lesson about how careful we must be to honor every Jew.

It is surprising that while Moshe Rabeinu's name appears in the first *Pasuk* of *Shiras HaYam* - אז ישיר משה, his name is never mentioned explicitly in *Shiras Ha'Be'er* in *Parshas Chukas*. It is only hinted to in the words (במדבר כ"א:י"ח) בַּחֲזֶקֶת בְּמִשְׁעָנֵתָם.

Rashi (כ"א:כ) brings Chazal's explanation of this omission, "And why wasn't Moshe mentioned in this שירה? Since it was through the *be'er* that he was punished."

Certainly, Moshe Rabeinu wouldn't have been upset by the mention of his name in the *shira*. However, the Torah omitted his name in order to teach all future generations that we must always consider the feelings of those around us, and to do anything in our power to avoid hurting the feelings of any Jew.

I would like to tell a story about the Lubavitcher Rebbe zy"l which illustrates his care and concern for the feelings of each Jew. The story was transmitted by R' Chaim Mordechai Isaac Chodokov z"l, who served as the Rebbe's secretary for decades.

The ninth of Kislev is the *yahrzeit* of the second Lubavitcher Rebbe, (also known as the *Mitteler Rebbe* or *Ha'admor Ha'emtzaee*. All of the Rebbes who followed him would convene a great *hisvaadus* - gathering in



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honor of the *yahrzeit* on *tes Kislev*. The last Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel zy" a made an especially large *hisvaadus* that was transmitted to Chabad communities throughout the world.

In the year תשל"ה, the ninth of Kislev came out on Shabbos. On years when that occurred, thousands of *chasidim* would come to Crown Height for the special Shabbos *hisvaadus*. However, that year, without any warning or explanation, the Rebbe announced that there would be no *hisvaadus* in honor of *tes Kislev*. Delegations of very distinguished *chasidim* approached the Rebbe and asked him to reconsider, but the Rebbe refused, and no one knew why.

Just before Rabbi Chodokov passed away, he revealed to his son, the Rebbe's reason for cancelling the *hisvaadus*.

Years before the cancelled *hisvaadus*, a boy had been born with a terrible deformity. His face was very disfigured. He learned in a Lubavitch school, and his mother wrote a letter to the Rebbe, describing her son's painful experiences in school. The other children in the school constantly teased him and mocked his appearance.

After reading the letter, the Rebbe wrote to the woman informing her that he had appointed his personal secretary, Rabbi Chodokov, to personally ensure her son's welfare in all ways.

One day, the Rebbe learned that the boy's *bar mitzva* was going to take place on that Shabbos, the ninth of Kislev. He was supposed to get an *aliya* in a local shul, and to have the *bar mitzva seuda* in shul. The Rebbe was concerned that if the *hisvaadus* of *Tes Kislev* would take place on that Shabbos, less guests than expected would attend the boy's *bar mitzva* celebration. Therefore, he cancelled the entire *hisvaadus*!

In order to grasp the magnitude of that decision, one needs to bear in mind how much effort the Rebbe would invest in each *hisvaadus* and how many Jewish *neshamos* were elevated at those special gatherings. The



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Rebbe decided to forego all of that in order to prevent the possibility of causing distress to one *bar mitzva* boy.

This was also the approach of the *Pnei Menachem zy"l*. Before he became Rebbe, he convened a meeting of *mechanchim* in his home. The subject of the meeting was finding ways to deal with the dangers posed by new technological devices. The Rebbe gave me a list of *mechanchim* and asked me to go and invite them to the meeting.

A few days later, the Rebbe asked me to cancel the meeting. I was surprised that after investing so much effort in arranging the meeting, the Rebbe would suddenly cancel it. The *Pnei Menachem* explained that after inviting the educators, it came to his attention that one of the *mechanchim* was going through a very difficult time with one of his children. One of his sons had strayed from the path of his father, and actually kept one of the technological devices in question, in his father's home.

The Rebbe told me that once he became aware of the situation, he began to imagine how that *mechanech* would feel, participating in a meeting where the sole topic would be dealing with the destruction wreaked by such devices. Since it was clear to him that the *mechanech* would suffer more and more as the topic was addressed by so many *mechanchim*, the Rebbe cancelled the gathering, and decided to deal with the issue in other ways.

My grandfather *zy"l* who founded this *beis medrash*, followed the same path. He did everything in his power to avoid hurting the feelings of any Jew. After ninety-three years of mitzvos and *maasim tovim*, he left the world without any Jew holding anything against him.

One of the stories that comes to mind involved an older, unmarried man who lived in Bayit Vegan. He was a neighbor of my grandfather, and asked my grandfather to learn *Daf Yomi* with him *b'chavrusa*. Of course, my grandfather agreed happily and for a long period of time, they



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learned *Daf Yomi b'chavrusa*. If it ever happened that they weren't able to learn one day, they learned the *daf* they had missed on the next day.

Once, while they were in the middle of *Maseches Yevamos*, my grandfather told his *chavrusa* that he was very busy and wouldn't be able to learn with him for a few days. A few days later, when their *chavrusa* resumed, my grandfather suggested that since a few days had passed, rather than make up the *dapim* they had missed, they should simply rejoin the cycle and learn today's *daf*.

The *bachur* told me that for a long time, he wondered why the Rebbe decided not to even try to learn the *dapim* they had missed. Eventually, he discovered that in those *dapim*, (יבמות ס"ב – ס"ג) the *gemara* discusses how many spiritual benefits aren't accessible to a man who isn't married. He realized that because the Rebbe was concerned that learning those *dapim* may cause him to feel sad, he both avoided learning those *dapim* with him, and suggested that they not make up what they had missed.

I will provide another answer of my grandfather's special *midos*. People of all types came to speak with him. He would automatically shift his accent and pronunciation to match that of his visitor. When speaking to a *Yerushalmi*, he would speak a perfect *Yerushalmi* Yiddish. Once, a shopkeeper in Bayit Vegan who came from Hungary, asked me where in Hungary my grandfather came from. I explained that my grandfather and his forefathers all lived in the Voholin region of Ukraine. He was amazed because my grandfather always spoke to him with the Hungarian accent and pronunciation.

It resembled Chazal's statement that everyone who saw Esther was sure that she came from his country!

The important lesson that we need to learn from these stories of *Tzadikim* is how careful we must be with the *kavod* of each and every Jew.



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