



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

Seuda Shlishis Parshas Korach
(חדוותא דזעיר אנפין מאמר ט"ז)

In honor of the *yahrzeit* of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Harav Menachem Mendel Schneerson zy"א, (ג"ת תמוז), who spread Torah and *teshuva* throughout the world, I would like to relate a wonderful story.

There was a Jew from Poland who survived the horrors of World War II and went on to build a home and business in Europe. His business interests led him to travel to New Zealand where he became quite wealthy. At one point, he took a business trip to New York. One day, he was taking an elevator. It stopped, and when the doors opened, a Jew entered and immediately asked him where he was from and what brought him to New York.

The man explained that he was visiting New York on business, but that his business was based in New Zealand. The anonymous Jew asked him if there are other Jews in New Zealand. He responded that there is a small Jewish community. At that point, the Jew asked him if the community had a *mikvah*. The man shrugged and said that the community is so small that they don't have much need for a *mikvah*.

At this point the anonymous Jew said, "Since you live there, you must ensure that there will be a *mikvah* for those who need one."

The elevator reached its destination and they each went their own way. The visitor from New Zealand was curious and asked a bystander to



[1]

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identify the Jew who had joined him in the elevator. The man said that he is the young son-in-law of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Harav Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson zy”a.

Forty years passed, and the businessman from New Zealand once again travelled to New York. He had heard about the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s distribution of dollar bills on Sundays, and decided to attend. When his turn came to approach the Rebbe, the Rebbe gave him a dollar bill and asked, “Is there now a *mikvah* in New Zealand?”

Startled, he was initially unable to imagine what the Rebbe was referring to. However, a minute later, he flashed back to their brief discussion in the elevator forty years ago. Even though his appearance had changed to the extent that no one who met him briefly forty years ago should have been able to recognize him, the Rebbe immediately identified him.

At one point, I told this story to the *Pnei Menachem zy”a* , who always praised the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The *Pnei Menachem* said that it isn’t so surprising that a person of such *kedusha* like the Lubavitcher Rebbe could recognize someone whom he only met briefly forty years ago. Changes to the man’s external appearance would make no difference to the Rebbe, because when he looked at someone, he saw the image of the person’s *nishmas Yisrael*. Therefore, he immediately recognized the man’s *Neshama* regardless of the changes to the man’s physical appearance.

However, the *Pnei Menachem* said that the *chidush* of the story was his constant concern for the tiny community in New Zealand, never forgetting their need for a *mikvah* that he had discovered forty years ago.

In order to understand the magnitude of that *chidush* we have to remember that during those forty years, the Rebbe bore the burden of the generation on his shoulders and constantly labored with all of his strength to be *mekarev* Jews to Hakadosh Baruch Hu by sending his



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shluchim around the world. And yet, while being involved in so many endeavors around the world, he never forgot his concern that a tiny community in New Zealand would have a *mikvah* available for the few people who needed one.

This can only be understood by realizing that to the Rebbe, each Jew was an entire world, and he never stopped caring for the wellbeing of each and every Jew in the world.

This outlook was evident in his distribution of dollars on Sundays. At an advanced age, the Rebbe would stand on his feet for hours on end, greeting tens of thousands of Jews warmly. Once someone asked him how he had the strength to stand for so many hours, and greet so many people with a genuine smile. The Rebbe responded that just as someone who counts his collection of diamonds never tires, he is never exhausted by greeting one precious *neshama* after another.

We live in a generation of terrible superficiality and small-mindedness. Leaders are measured by the amount of their followers. If they lived in our generation, *tzadikim* such as the Rav of Dorhovitch, the *Toldos Yaakov Yosef*, my ancestor Rav Zusha of Anipoli zy”a or any of the Baal Shem Tov’s *talmidim* would be viewed as insignificant. None of them had tens of thousands at their *tish*. We should hang our heads in shame for caring more about foolish, meaningless external factors rather than seeing and recognizing the inner *neshama*.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe could have been the “biggest” Rebbe in the generation had he kept all of his *chasidim* near him. Instead, he chose to send many of his *chasidim* to the most distant corners of the earth in order to draw Jewish hearts closer to Hashem. No matter where or how they lived, each of those *neshamos* was precious to him.

Now, as we approach his *yahrzeit* we should commit ourselves to following in his holy ways, realizing that every Jewish *Neshama* shines with a precious light, and that we need to be *mekarev* every Jew to



[3]

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Yiddishkeit. Each person must be prepared to descend from his *madreiga* in order help someone who has less connection to *Yiddishkeit*.

This isn't limited to classic "*kiruv rechokim*" outreach. *Gedolei Hador* have already instructed us that not everyone is suited for that challenge. However, even within our own communities, we are surrounded by *neshamos* who yearn for *chizuk* and warmth. We must do everything we can to draw them close with **אהבה ואחוה שלום ורעות**, and to help them with all of their needs in any area of life.

ובזה נזכה שימליץ טוב בעדנו אכי"ר



[4]

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