



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

Seuda Shlishis Eikev 5778

I would like to relate, in full detail, a story that took place decades ago. In my youth, I spent a summer in Camp *Machane Bnei Torah* which was established and led by the *Gaon Harav Baruch Mordechai Eizrachi zt"l*.

On *Erev Shabbos Parshas Eikev*, I felt a strong desire to spend *Shabbos* with the Gerer Rebbe, the *Beis Yisrael zy"a*. I made some calls and discovered that even though he usually spent the summer *Shabbosos* in Chaifa, he had returned to Yerushalayim for that *Shabbos*. Without telling anyone, I left camp and set out for Yerushalayim with no idea of where I would eat or sleep.

When I got to Yerushalayim, I tried to find a place to stay. I knocked on the door of a relative who was part of the Gerrer community, but he explained that he wasn't able to host me for that *Shabbos*. On *leil Shabbos*, after *Maariv*, I approached R' Yaakov Buch z"l, a *chasid* whom I had met when he had visited my father, and asked if he had room for me to sleep in his home, and if I could join him for the *seudos*. He gladly welcomed the opportunity to host me for *Shabbos*.

I then had to wait a long time for him to complete his *tefillos*, and even more time when he sat down to learn before going home. Eventually he completed his holy *avoda* and set out for his home. By this time, I was extremely hungry.

The *seuda* didn't really solve the problem of my hunger, for R' Yaakov was very poor, and the meal consisted of some *challa* and a bit of soup. I went to sleep and got up before dawn to go the *beis medrash*. A moment



[1]

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after I sat down at a table, one of the Rebbe's *meshamshim* came over and told me that the Rebbe had summoned me.

When I entered the Rebbe's room, he expressed his surprise at my presence and asked me what brought me there for *Shabbos*. I responded that even though I was participating in *Machane Bnei Torah*, I really wanted to come for *Shabbos*. The Rebbe asked if I had told anyone where I was going, and I responded that I told no one, especially not my father z"l who, to put it mildly, was not pleased with my growing attachment to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe told me that it was good that I hadn't told anyone, and then kindly asked me where I was staying and eating. When I told him that I was staying with R" Yaakov Buch, he sighed and said, "Oy Vey". I felt his love and mercy as he went on to say, "R' Yaakov is a big *oveid*. You must have had to wait until nearly midnight for him to go home from *shul*. He is also very poor and can barely put food on the table!" I admitted that I hardly ate anything at the *seuda* and was still very hungry.

The Rebbe expressed his sympathy and then thought for a moment. He explained that he was unable to invite me for the *seuda*, but instructed me to come in after the *davening*, and he would give me *shirayim* from his table.

He then went on to ask me many specific questions about *Machane B'nei Torah*. He wanted to know the daily schedule, both in terms of learning and activities. I told him what we were learning, and also the schedule of sports, activities, and swimming. The Rebbe wasn't happy with some aspects of the program and instructed me to participate in any activities that could be done in my "yeshiva clothes". When it came to activities that required changing into other clothes, he told me to quietly slip away and refrain from those activities.

He explained that the *Parsha* begins with the words. וְהָיָה עֶקֶב תִּשְׁמָעוּן and said in Yiddish, מ'דארף גוט היטען יעדע טעריט און טריט - One must be very



[2]

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careful with each and every step (the word עקב means “heel” and symbolizes “footsteps”).

After *musaf* I went in to the Rebbe, and discovered that an entire *Shabbos seuda* of food from the Rebbe’s table had already been prepared and packed up for me. There were *challos*, fish, eggs, *cholent* and more. He told me that he had already instructed Yosef Tirnauer, who then learned in the Chevron Yeshiva, to accompany me and share the *seuda* with me in the Yeshiva.

Yosef and I walked over to the Yeshiva and shared the *seuda* with a group of *talmidim* who had also begun to follow the *Beis Yisrael zy”a*. We had a wonderful *seuda* with many *divrei Torah V’Chasidus*.

After *seuda shlishis*, before we had even *davened Maariv*, the Rebbe summoned me. He repeated his instructions as to which camp activities I should participate in. He then added, (in *lashon ha’kodesh*), that at *Mincha* we read the beginning of next week’s *parsha*, ראה אנכי נתן לפניכם, - היזם ברכה וקללה. - See that I place before you today blessing and curse. The Rebbe said that there are *tzadikim* who explain that the *pasuk* contains a hidden rebuke. Moshe *Rabeinu* said, “Look at yourselves! You need to be motivated by the promise of blessings to fulfill *mitzvos*, and to be threatened with curses if you don’t fulfill the *mitzvos*. You are like a little child who needs to be motivated with candies, and punishments. Take a look at yourselves and understand that the need for these promises reveals that you are on a very low spiritual level.”

He then added another *peirush* from early commentators. ראה אנכי - each person should look at his אנכי - at himself, and before every word or action, calculate if it is positive or negative. We must try to predict and evaluate the results of our actions. This will enable us to choose the right steps as we navigate life.

The Rebbe then introduced his own *peirush*. “און יאך זאג” - and I say, ראה אנכי means that every moment of a Jew’s life, he should see before



[3]

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him the One who said, אֵלֶיךָ ה' אֶנִּי at *Matan Torah*. In other words, he should always remember that Hashem is omnipresent and omniscient, watching every action and aspect of a person's life. A Jew must try to imagine this to the extent that, before each thought, word, or action, he feels that he is in Hashem's presence.

The Rebbe then sent me on my way with a very warm and loving *bracha*.

This conversation remains engraved in my heart. I can still hear his penetrating words, see his holy image, and feel his *ahava* and *rachamim*.

וזכותו תגן עלינו, שנזכה לילך בדרכיו והנהגותיו הקדושות, אכי"ר



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