



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 Mishpatim 5768

Motzaei Shabbos is a time to strengthen *emunas tzadikim*. That is why we have the *minhag* to tell stories of *tzadikim* at Melave Malka.

This week, I heard a first-hand story from a Gerrer *chassid*. About thirty years ago, his parents sent him from America to Eretz Yisrael to learn in a yeshiva gedola. One day they called and told him that someone had proposed a *shidduch* that sounded promising. They asked him to return home in order to meet the young woman.

He reserved a place in a *sherut* taxi that would take him to the airport. The driver instructed him to wait outside the Karlin beis medrash, because he would be picking up some other passengers there. He arrived early and decided to wait in the beis medrash. It happened to be a *yoma d'pagra*, the day of a special occasion in Karlin, and everyone was singing and dancing. The young man simply sat on the side without participating. Suddenly my grandfather zy" a sat down next to him and asked him why he was sitting by himself and not dancing with everyone else.

The *bachur* responded, "I'm not a Karliner *chassid*." My grandfather asked him, "What does it mean to be a Karliner *chassid*? To daven with *hislahavus*? To be happy? (דאווענען ווארעם או זיין פריילעך) You're a Jew aren't you? Every Jew has to daven with *hislahavus*, to dance and to be happy. Now that you have said that you aren't a Karliner *chassid*, it's as if you said that you don't want to daven with *hislahavus* and to be *b'simcha*!"



[1]

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My grandfather continued, “What you have to do now is to say three times out loud that you are a Karliner *chassid*. That will enable you to disassociate yourself from your previous statement.” The young man realized that he had no choice, and declared three times out loud, “I am a Karliner *chassid*”.

That wasn't enough for my grandfather. He said, “Just saying those words doesn't prove that you are truly a Karliner *chassid*. Now, you must join in and dance with everyone.” The boy saw that my grandfather wouldn't take no for an answer and joined the dancing. Afterwards, my grandfather wished him well, and the *bachur* went on to the airport.

For one reason or another, the *shidduch* that brought him to America, didn't work out, but he stayed in America. One year followed another, but he didn't manage to find his *bashert*. One day, a very promising idea came up. They met, and it seemed that he was finally going to become a *chasan*. Suddenly, the girl's father said that before they could get engaged, the *chasan* would have to agree to one condition.

“I am a Karliner *chassid*”, said the girl's father, “I'm not asking you to become a Karliner, but I need you to reassure me that you have no opposition to Karlin.” When the *chasan* heard this, he declared, “The Tolner Rebbe can testify that I am truly a Karliner *chassid*!” With that, the *shidduch* was “closed” with *Mazal Tov*.

Aside from the *mofeis* in this story, it contains an important lesson for the younger generation. They must learn that in every Jewish community around the world, there are good things that every Jew can learn and adopt, no matter what group he is affiliated with. They should learn from Chassidim, Misnagdim, *Teimanim* or *Eidot Hamizrach*. We are all brothers, and we all serve Hashem.

If a *chassid* steps into the Mirrer Yeshiva to wait for a taxi, and sees everyone learning with great *hasmadah*, he shouldn't say, “I'm not a Mirrer *talmid*, why should I join in with their learning.” Instead, he



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should take a gemara and sit down to learn with everyone. This applies to every Jewish community you will encounter. You always can and must learn from them. You will discover new ways to improve your *midos*, and *hanhagos tovos*, beautiful customs that you can appreciate and incorporate into your *avodas Hashem*.

There was a similar story with the *Beis Yisrael zy*"a. There was a *bachur* who learned in the Mir but would occasionally come to the Gerrer *beis medrash*. The *Beis Yisrael* called him over and began to speak with him about matters of *kedusha* (as was his custom). The *bachur* told the Rebbe, "I'm not a Gerrer *chassid*." The *Beis Yisrael* cried out, "You're not a Gerrer, but you are a Jew!"

That was truly the way of my grandfather *zy*"a. From his youth, he was a *קונה הכל*, one who tried to learn from everyone. He went from place to place to find new ways to reach *shleimus* and learn new ways of Torah and *avoda*. It was well known that nearly every Shabbos, he would walk from his house in Bayit Vegan, to join the *seuda shlishis* of the Gerrer Rebbe. From there, he would make his way to Rachmistrivka, and then to Karlin.

Often, he would only get to the Gerrer *Beis Medrash* towards the end of the *tish*. He would take his place behind the rows of *bachurim* in order to simply join in with those who were able to see the Gerrer Rebbe. A *chassid* told me that once my grandfather arrived at the *tish* and stood behind him. The *chassid* should have moved aside so that my grandfather would be able to see the Rebbe. However, he was a fervent young *chassid* and he refused to budge from a place that enabled him to see the Rebbe.

Soon afterwards, the *chassid* standing next to him moved away to make place for my grandfather, who thanked him profusely. When the *Beis Yisrael* noticed that my grandfather was there, he immediately motioned to the people standing near my grandfather, indicating that they should be careful not to push him. The *Beis Yisrael* then sent a large amount of



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fruit to my grandfather. The *chassid* said that my grandfather immediately gave the fruit to him, and to the other *bachur* who made room for my grandfather.

He told me that when my grandfather gave him the fruit, he was ashamed of himself for not making room for my grandfather as soon as he arrived. After the *tish*, he approached my grandfather and apologized for his behavior. My grandfather told him, "What are you talking about? *Helevai* - I wish that I could be a Gerrer like you!"

Here in my grandfather's *Beis Medrash*, we should commit ourselves to refrain from discounting any *kehilla* or *eida*. On the contrary, we should be wise enough to be **לומד מכל אדם**, learn from each person. Let us learn good *hanhagos* and *minhagim* from every community in every place, **לטוב לנו כל הימים אכי"ר**.



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