



Adapted from the sefer **חמין במוצאי שבת** and **חדוות דעיר אנפין** collections of
maamarim
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Melave Malka Parshas Ki Sisa 5771

In this week's *Parsha*, Moshe Rabeinu says to Hakadosh Baruch Hu:

ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת
And now if you forgive their sin...but if not please erase me from your book.
(שמות ל"ב:ל"ב)

The *Zohar Hakadosh* says:

"He did not let go of Hakadosh Baruch Hu and was even prepared to die, as the *pausk* says, **ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת**

And Hakadosh Baruch Hu forgave them...

And Noach did not act this way, rather he asked to be saved, and abandoned the rest of the world. And whenever *Din* manifests itself in the world, Hashem says, 'Woe that no one like Moshe can be found', as the *pasuk* says in Yeshaya (ס"ג:י"א)

ויזכר ימי עולם משה עמו איה המעלים מים את רעי צאנו איה השם בקרבנו את רוח קדשו
And he remembered the days of old, Moshe who drew them up from the water like a shepherd his flock. Where is he who placed within them *ruach kodsho*.

The *Zohar Hakadosh* tells us that when Moshe Rabeinu gave his life to save Am Yisrael, they were saved in his merit. However, Noach only acted and davened to save himself and his family.

Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov zy"va wrote in his *Sefer Kedushas Levi*,



[1]

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“Moshe said, מחני נא מספרך - the letters of the word מחני also spell מי נח - For Moshe repaired the *neshama* of Noach who did not *daven* for the benefit of his generation. By being *moser nefesh* for *Yisrael* he repaired the *neshama* of Noach for Moshe was composed of all *neshamos*.”

This is the way of all true leaders of Am Yisrael in each and every generation. They abandon any self-interest and are *moser nefesh* not only for *Clal Yisrael* but for each and every Jew. They descend from their lofty *madreigos* and forego their desires, honor, and position in order to help any Jew, no matter what his status, *yichus*, or situation may be.

These words are so appropriate to the *hilula kadisha* of *Harav Hakadosh* the *Pnei Menachem zy”a*. Throughout his lifetime, he was *moser nefesh* in order to help any Jew. By disregarding his self-interest he followed in the footsteps of Moshe Rabeinu’s request, מחני נא מספרך. He was prepared to give up his reputation, position, honor, or personal aspirations for the benefit of any Jew.

I often quote the powerful comment of my ancestor the Meor Einayim of Chernobyl zy”a on the *pasuk* (שמות ל”כ”ג) קח לך בְּשָׂמִים ראש מֶרְדּוֹר - freedom and relief, to all those whose souls are bitter and depressed because of their *tzaros* and suffering, is the one who deserves to be ראש בני ישראל - the head of Bnei Yisrael.

The *Pnei Menachem zy”a* personified that approach. On one hand, his head was בְּשָׂמִים - in the heavens, for he was an איש אלוקים קדוש הוא, but on the other hand, his entire goal was to bring relief to any embittered soul. He was *moser nefesh* for each Jew sharing their pain, and rejoicing with them in their times of *simcha*.

We would never be able to completely describe his *avoda* of caring for Am Yisrael as a whole, and for each Jew in particular. Nevertheless, I will tell some stories that illustrate this aspect of his greatness.

Harav Ha’chasisd R” Aharon Yehoshua Goldschmied z”l was *zoche* to be *meshamesh* the *Pnei Menachem* while he still served as *Rosh Hayeshiva* of *Yeshivas Sfes Emes*. He told me that once, an urgent meeting of *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* - The council of Torah Sages, was convened in the *Pnei*



[2]

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Menachem's home. In the midst of the deliberations, someone knocked on the door loudly and repeatedly.

The *Pnei Menachem* quickly stood up and hurried to open the door, only to discover that the one knocking was an emotionally unstable *Yerushalmi* Jew, who used to spend a lot of time davening at the *Kever* of the *Pnei Menachem's* father, the *Imrei Emes zy"l*. The man began to complain loudly about the lack of *Sifrei Tehillim* with large letters by the *kever*. He told the *Pnei Menachem* that it was difficult for him to read the small letters.

The *Pnei Menachem* happily informed the man that he has a *Sefer Tehillim* with especially large letters. He said that if the man would wait a minute, he would go to find it for him. He hurried to his study, where the *Gedolei Torah* were sitting, waiting to resume the discussion that had been interrupted. The *Pnei Menachem* began to search for the *Tehillim*. A few minutes later, he found it and hurried to the door, only to find that the man had already left.

Rather than return to the important meeting, the *Pnei Menachem* left his house and went down to the *tziyun* of his father, hoping to find the man there. Only after discovering that the man wasn't to be found at the *tziyun* did he return home and reconvene the meeting.

When the meeting finished, and the *Gedolim* went home, R' Aharon Yehoshua who was rearranging the room, was bold enough to ask the *Pnei Menachem* about his behavior. "Why", he asked, "Did the *Rosh Hayeshiva* put so much effort into finding a *Sefer Tehillim* with large letters and bringing it to that Jew? Weren't *Gedolei Yisrael* waiting for him in his study?"

The *Pnei Menachem* simply looked at him and replied, "*Shua'le*, when a Jew knocks on the door, the meeting of *Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah* is closed!"

When R' Yehoshua told me this story, I replied that it exemplifies the teaching of Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav (שבת קכ"ז)

גדולה הכנסת אורחים יותר מהקבלת פני השכינה, דכתיב: ויאמר אד-ני אם נא מצאתי חן
בעיניך אל נא תעבר מעל עבדך (בראשית י"ח:ג).

Rashi explains that Avraham asked Hashem not to leave, and he then left to greet the guests.



[3]

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R' Elazar said, 'Come and see that the *mida* of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not like that of human beings. In the world of flesh and blood, a *katan* cannot ask a *gadol* to wait for him until he returns. However, that is what Avraham Avinu was able to request from Hakadosh Baruch Hu."

I remember another, similar story. Once I had the *zechus* to travel in a car with the *Pnei Menachem zy"l*. As we returned, we were nearly at his house, but the street was jammed with cars, and traffic was nearly at a standstill. Suddenly, someone knocked on the window of the car. It was an eccentric fellow of Sephardi background who had decided to join the Ashkenazi *kanaim* - zealots, of Yerushalayim.

The Rebbe immediately rolled down the window, and the man had the *chutzpa* to ask, "Gerrer Rebbe, why aren't you doing enough to prevent the desecration of graves?" (At that time, the *kanaim* had found something to occupy themselves, a location where there may have been graves and the *safek* that if those graves existed, they would be desecrated. The holy *derech* of the *Pnei Menachem* was not to join these protests unless it had truly been clarified that there was an actual problem of *chilul kevarim*).

The Rebbe listened to him and responded with the utmost seriousness, "I hear what you are saying, and I will reevaluate my actions." Afterwards, I asked the Rebbe why he paid any attention to the meaningless rantings of that rude, chutzpadik Jew. He responded, און יוד קלאפט אויף מיין פענסטער, און "ר' יצחק מנחם, א יוד קלאפט אויף מיין פענסטער, און "R. Yitzchak Menachem, a Jew knocks on my window, and I won't open it?"

There is another story that I recalled only recently. There was a *bachur* who had to be expelled from *Yeshivas Sfas Emes*. The *Pnei Menachem*, who was the Rosh Yeshiva, tried again and again to help the young man remain in the Yeshiva, but eventually, it was decided that he would have to go. The *Pnei Menachem* met with the *bachur* and explained that even though, as Rosh Yeshiva, he is obligated to expel him from the Yeshiva, he himself requests that the boy will continue to maintain a bond of *yedidus* and friendship with him.



[4]

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The *Pnei Menachem* made sure to find another Yeshiva that would be more suitable for the *bachur*. He attended that Yeshiva but strayed from the way of life that he had grown up with.

One day, the *Pnei Menachem* summoned me and told me that he heard that this *bachur* had become a *chasan* and was about to get married in the near future. The Rebbe asked me to go to the home of the boy's parents, who were simple *Yerushalmi* Jews, and to deliver a significant sum of money that would help with the wedding expenses.

I went to the *chasan's* home and asked to speak with him. I told him what the *Pnei Menachem* had said, and I gave him the money that the Rebbe had sent. The young man was very moved and burst out crying. He said that he can't understand how the Rosh Hayeshiva could treat him so kindly when he doesn't deserve such kindness. He asked me if there is any way for him to express his gratitude to the *Pnei Menachem*. I told him that if he would build his home on foundations of Torah, I was sure that this would be the greatest expression of *hakaras hatov* and would bring great pleasure to the Rosh Yeshiva.

A few years ago, I met a Jew whom I didn't recognize, and he excitedly introduced himself as that *chasan*. He said that in the *zechus* of the *Pnei Menachem's* kindness, he built a home of Torah, and his children lead lives of Torah and *mitzvos*. All of this was brought about by the *Pnei Menachem* following in the ways of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, מה הוא רחום אף אתה רחום - Just as he is merciful, so should you be merciful. He did all that he could to benefit Am Yisrael and prevent even one Jew from being lost.

Now, on the day of his *הילולא קדישא* - each of us can follow in his holy footsteps. We can open the doors of our homes and our hearts to every Jew. We should step down from whatever *madreiga* we are on in order to help even one Jew. Like Mordechai, we should be *מר דרור* - those who bring freedom and relief to embittered souls.

If we follow that path, we will be *zoche* to have the doors and windows of *shamayim* open when we knock.

ויענו לדפיקתנו ובקשתינו, וימהר ויחיש גאולתנו ופדות נפשנו, בב"א



[5]

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