

“If a man will have no redeemer.” (25:26)

What a terrible feeling – not to have anyone. It is our obligation to see to it that no Jew is alone or feels alone. Some individuals make it their business to see to the physical and emotional

needs of their brethren, realizing how important this is. One individual who was a towering example of *chesed* at its zenith was the *Skverer Rebbe*, *Horav Yaakov Yosef Twersky, z.l.* After World War II, he took a small apartment in Bucharest, Romania. During the three years that he spent there, this tiny apartment served the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of thousands of Jews from all walks of life. The *Rebbe* did not wait for someone in need to come knocking on his door. He sent agents daily to the train station in search of Jews who were arriving from the various concentration camps. Broken, dejected and oppressed, these shards of humanity came seeking hope, encouragement and a reason to continue living. Often a survivor would arrive to be greeted by a hearty, “*Shalom Aleichen*, welcome! The *Skverer Rebbe* has sent me to invite you to his home. This is his address. He awaits your arrival!”

The *rebbetzin* and her daughters would stand for hours on end happily preparing meals for whomever appeared. They were hearty, filling meals that sustained and nourished, as well as made the individual feel wanted. The *Rebbe* was their father, and the *rebbetzin* was their mother. One can only conjecture how many *neshamos*, Jewish souls, returned to observance, how much Jewish faith was catalyzed as a result of the *Rebbe's* love and *chesed*.

What motivated the *Rebbe* and his family to give so much of themselves? They simply wanted to serve as *sheluchei d'Rachamana*, Hashem's agents, to assist in rebuilding the nation that the Nazis had so cruelly decimated. Their love for each Jew was overwhelming. The apartment was a restaurant, *bais ha'medrash* and dormitory. No one complained. They were carrying out Hashem's will.

Friday night, the *Rebbe's Kiddush* and *Zemiros* brought tears of ambivalence to everyone's eyes. They wept in sadness over what they had lost, but cried with renewed hope for what they would rebuild.

One *chasid* remembers his first welcome to Skver. He walked into the apartment. He knew no one, having recently arrived from a displaced persons camp where it had been confirmed that he had lost his entire family. As soon as he entered, the *rebbetzin* noticed him and said, “*Bachurel*, young man, go wash your hands and eat!” One can only imagine the meaning of these words to a brokenhearted survivor. No one asked him who he was, from where he had come, whether he had the ability to pay. He was Jewish and in need – and they were there for him.

As soon as he had completed eating his meal to his heart's content, he broke down and cried uncontrollably. The years of pain and persecution, the terrible loss he had sustained, all surfaced with the unprecedented love and kindness that was manifest by the *Skverer Rebbe*.

The *Rebbe* looked at the young man with a father's compassion and said, "Do not worry, my child. From here on, this will be your home. My bread is your bread; my beverage is your beverage. You are my son." These powerful words were reiterated many times, as the *Rebbe* gave encouragement and hope to those in need. He was their *goel*, redeemer. He saw to it that they did not feel alone.