

## Those men said to him... Why should we be diminished by not offering Hashem's offering at the appointed time? (9:7)

A group of people, who due to their being in a state of *tumah*, ritual impurity, were ineligible to bring the *Korban Pesach*, presented themselves before Moshe *Rabbeinu*, asking for a dispensation of some sort. Their desire to offer the *Korban Pesach* was so intense that they appealed to Moshe to somehow, someway, help them experience this milestone event. As a result of their burning desire to perform the *mitzvah*, Hashem made them agents through whom He revealed the *mitzvah* of celebrating *Pesach Sheni*, the Second *Pesach*. Essentially, it was to be viewed as a makeup *Pesach*.

This is the only *mitzvah* of its kind – a commandment initiated by a group of people whose intensity for serving Hashem was so great that Hashem provided them with the opportunity to perform the *mitzvah* at a later date. As a result, *Pesach Sheni* has become a *mitzvah*, as well as a standard for demonstrating how much one can achieve if he sets his heart onto something.

One who desires to come closer to Hashem – yet, his actions are not worthy because he is on a level akin to ritual contamination – can, and should, pray to Hashem to enable him to experience the *mitzvah*. *Lama nigara*, “Why should we be diminished?” Why should we lose out on this *mitzvah*?

*Ein davar omeid bifnei ha'ratzon*, “Nothing stands in the way of one's (strong) will (desire).” A Jew never gives up hope, never stops aspiring for greatness. The road is tough and filled with many obstacles and challenges. Yet, if a person is resolute and tenacious, he will persevere and achieve his intended goal.

Not every *gadol b'Yisrael*, Torah luminary, was born with a brilliant mind. They achieved their prodigious distinction through toil and persistence. Indolence was not in their vocabulary, as they doggedly endured and triumphed over many challenges on their long road to *gadlus baTorah*, greatness in Torah. One such *gadol* was the venerable **Maharam Schick, zl**, one of the most distinguished students of the *Chasam Sofer*.

As a young boy, he toiled diligently in what seemed almost impossible studies to master. His mother would tell him to go to sleep, but the child continued to study until he physically could not go on any longer. Regrettably, the next day when he came to *cheder* and the *rebbe* would ask who had understood yesterday's lesson, his hand did not go up in the air. He had reviewed and reviewed countless times – to no avail. His ability to retain the lesson seemed to be nonexistent.

His parents supported his efforts at mastering the *shiur*, lesson. One night, after observing how her son went to bed after crying himself to sleep, she bemoaned his plight to her husband, “If only our Moshe would be like other boys. He works so hard and is so intense in his commitment to his

studies. Yet, regardless of how hard he tries to achieve, it eludes him. He is not a strong child. The late nights filled with persistent study and little sleep are taking their toll on his body. Do you notice that he never smiles? His is so sad over his inability to achieve success – to be like everyone else.” With these words, his mother broke down in bitter, uncontrolled weeping for her son who wanted so much to understand a *blatt*, page, of *Gemorah*.

Her husband listened. While he, too, was concerned, he sincerely believed that all of his son’s *hasmadah*, diligence, would one day pay off. He was certain that at a certain point, his son’s *hasmadah* and profound desire for Torah achievement, coupled with his mother’s prayers and tears, would amount to the recipe for success. Hashem would listen. His son would one day illuminate the Torah world and be counted among the great Torah leaders of his generation.

The next day followed the usual pattern as the many days that had preceded it. The *rebbe* explained the passage in the *Gemorah*, then he asked who had not understood what he had said. One hand was raised: Moshe Schick. The *rebbe* made a “silent” moan, as he began to explain the passage once again for Moshe’s benefit.

“Now do you understand?” the *rebbe* asked. “No, I do not,” Moshe replied, to the visible smirks and chuckles of the other boys in the classroom. This did not bother Moshe. He knew what was taking place around him, but he was totally focused on the *rebbe* and his explanation of the *Gemorah*. Only one thought coursed through his young mind: “I want to understand! I want to understand, to understand, to understand!”

The *rebbe* continued with his discourse. He attempted to cite a difficult question from the preeminent Torah giant of the generation, the holy *Chasam Sofer*. The class sat dumfounded as they applied their minds to understand the profundity of the question. “Does anyone understand the question?” the *rebbe* asked.

Suddenly, one of the students screamed out, “Moshe Schick!” This brought the house down, as the entire classroom erupted in laughter. Imagine, Moshe Schick understanding the question. What a joke. The *rebbe* did not laugh. He was shocked; the pain he felt for young Moshe was obvious. One need only look at the *rebbe*’s face. The student who called out was filled with regret and shame. The entire classroom became still; one could hear a pin drop. The *rebbe* continued staring at the student who had called out, and without warning, closed his *Gemorah*, and, began to shake back and forth.

The children looked at their *rebbe* incredulously. What was he doing? It appeared as if he had “lost it.” A few moments went by, and the *rebbe* began to speak. “You are all Hashem’s children. Every Jew is a beloved child of the Almighty. We do not fathom Hashem’s ways. We cannot know, we cannot understand why one boy is blessed with an acute mind, while the other is not; why one is destined for great wealth and the other for abject poverty. One thing is for certain: Hashem gives each person what is best for him; no different from a loving parent who gives his child the very best

that is suited for that individual child.

“How much pain Hashem experiences when His brilliant child humiliates his academically challenged child. We are all guilty! With two words, we allowed an arrow to be shot into a child's heart! I do not know what *teshuvah*, repentance, we are collectively obliged to perform.” The *rebbe* stopped for a moment, and then he added, “And I do not know what *teshuvah* I personally must do, because such an egregious act of public humiliation occurred in my classroom.”

Moshe Schick took all of this in. He stood up and, in an attempt to assuage his *rebbe*'s pain, said, “*Rebbe*, do not be concerned. He did not mean to hurt me. It was only a joke.” The rest of the class turned to Moshe with admiration, the result of appreciation for what he had just done. Clearly, he was hurting inside, but he concealed his pain for the sake of his *rebbe*.

The boy who had called out was now crying hysterically. He realized that Moshe Schick was no ordinary student. Everyone understood that they were in the presence of greatness, of a child that would one day be a very special adult. It was the *rebbe* who articulated their collective feelings when he said, “Moshe, I have no doubt that you will one day be a leader in *Klal Yisrael*!” With these words, the *rebbe* kissed his *Gemorah* and left the room.

Moshe Schick maintained his routine, reviewing the lesson many times until he grew stronger in his understanding of the lesson. With time, his hidden talents matured and his acuity became more and more honed until he was counted among the most superior students of the *Chasam Sofer*. Indeed, Moshe Schick became one of the *gedolei ha'dor*.

Rav Moshe Schick wrote about himself: “As a child, I was not blessed with a good mind. Hashem blessed my diligence and toil, as I ascended upon the ladder of Torah erudition... I reviewed my lessons up to forty times. I prayed to Hashem, supplicating Him to take pity on me and allow me to understand His holy Torah. Finally, after much toil, tears and prayer, Hashem listened to my pleas and blessed me with a deeper understanding of His Torah.” Nothing stands in the way of one's will.