

Good Shabbos Everyone. In this week's portion Massei the Torah tells us about the journeys of the Bnai Yisroel. Why is it so important for the Torah to describe in such great detail the wanderings of the Jewish people? The commentary Maor Eynayim explains that there is a reason for every place that we must go in life. Namely, we must go to that certain place to elevate the sparks of holiness, which lay there, waiting to be elevated. We elevate the sparks of holiness in that place, by serving Hashem in that place. This is especially true in places with little or no Jewish communities. The following inspiring true story illustrates one Jew's journeys in this world. One of the ways that Jews interact with others in their journeys is through experiencing Hachnasas Orchim, hosting others, which is a huge mitzvah.

Reb Yechiel Fishel, the son of the Alexander Rebbe, was blessed with great wealth with which he performed endless acts of chesed. He owned a huge home where he would house many guests at one time. Some of the guests were great roshei yeshivah; some were homeless paupers. It mattered not to Reb Yechiel Fishel. He and everyone in his family were happy to have any type of guest at all.

One time, a middle-aged man by the name of Reb Mordechai was on his way back from a fair in Lodz. It would take a few days for him to make the journey all the way back to his home. When he heard that there was a great host in Melintz, he decided to stop off and spend the night there. He walked into the house of Reb Yechiel Fishel and was amazed to see that there was a big event taking place; the table was set for a feast, with an endless array of delicacies.

What shocked him was that there were paupers partaking of the food. He approached one poor fellow, whose plate was heaped high with delicacies. "Aren't you ashamed to take food that the host prepared for his fancy gathering tonight?" Reb Mordechai asked.

The poor man looked up, smiled, and said, "This is the way the food is always served in this house! Always! For everyone who comes in!" As he slowly adjusted to this new and unbelievable set of circumstances, Reb Mordechai was shown to a beautiful guest room, one of many in the house. He glanced around the room and was thrilled to find that the bed looked comfortable, the room was warm and cozy, and the pillows were plump. He had not enjoyed a good night's sleep in many months and could hardly wait to shut his eyes. He removed his clothing and put his torn and shabby shoes at the side of his bed. Then he laid his head down on the pillow. Within moments, he was out cold.

The next morning the bright sunlight peeked through the shades in the room. Reb Mordechai smiled as he realized that he had just enjoyed the best night's sleep he had had in a long time. But when he went to dress, he realized that his shoes were gone! He couldn't believe it. Someone in this magnificent home had stolen his shoes! As he looked around the room, he spied another pair of shoes and when he tried them on, he saw that they fit perfectly. Then he realized that they were his own shoes, but someone had repaired and shined them overnight!

He went downstairs to find another lavish display of food, served by waiters meeting the guests' every need. Reb Mordechai sat down at the table and told the fellow next to him about the strange incident that had taken place with his shoes.

Another guest began to nod; the same thing had happened to him. A third visitor mentioned that his coat had been torn, and in the morning he had found it repaired and restored. Reb Mordechai had been ready to set out that day and return home but the excellent accommodations encouraged him to rethink his plan and instead spend another day in the town to perhaps find some work and make some money.

During the second night in the beautiful house, he decided to keep watch to see what would happen overnight with his clothing. It was already quite late when Reb Mordechai came back to his room. He got undressed and put his shoes next to his bed. The house was quiet and he shut his eyes just enough to look like he was sleeping. And then he waited.

Sure enough, a few moments later, a small boy he had seen around the house entered the room. The child, Tzvi Chanoch, checked Reb Mordechai's shoes and coat and pants to make sure that everything was in good condition. When he saw that all was in order, he smiled, walked out, and proceeded to the next room. Reb Mordechai waited a few minutes and then got up to watch from his door to see where the young boy was going.

Sure enough, the child went from room to room to check the guests' clothing. Reb Mordechai wondered to himself: Who was fixing the clothing and shoes in the middle of the night? He simply had to find out. He followed Tzvi Chanoch down the steps and kept a safe distance so as not to get "caught." The boy, his arms full of clothes and shoes, headed to a room at the bottom floor of the mansion. Reb Mordechai kept following.

He could not believe what he saw. It was after 1 a.m., but the room was full of tailors and shoemakers repairing the garments and shoes that Tzvi Chanoch had brought down. It was dark and quiet outside, but inside this room it was literally daytime! Careful not to interrupt or get noticed, Reb Mordechai watched in awe as each of the specialists performed their craft.

After a while, Tzvi Chanoch retrieved the clothing and shoes and began to make his way back upstairs. Reb Mordechai ran up the stairs and watched again from his room as the possessions were returned to their rightful owners. Reb Mordechai went to sleep that night amazed at the amazing hachnasas orchim he had witnessed. The boy, Tzvi Chanoch, grew up to become one of the greatest machnisei orchim of the past 200 years — the great Rav Tzvi Chanoch HaKohen Levin. (Reb Yechiel Spero A Touch of Warmth p. 166) **Good Shabbos Everyone.**