

Good Shabbos Everyone. On the second night of Pesach we begin counting the Omer. We count 49 days of the Omer and then celebrate the giving of the Torah on the Yom Tov of Shavuos. The *Gematria* - the numerical value of the Hebrew word "*Midah*," is 49. "*Midah*" means character trait. The Sages tell us that the time between Pesach and Shavuos is a special time to work on ourselves. Each day of the Omer represents a different character trait. The following beautiful Pesach story shows what makes great people great, namely, their great character.

In April of 1945, shortly after the Second World War, the Skulener Rebbe, Rabbi Eliezer Zusia Portugal (of blessed Memory)(1896-1982) was in Czernovitz, Bukovina (formerly Romania, but then governed by Russia.) Jews who had survived the labor camps and ghettos of the Ukraine found themselves in Czernovitz, and almost all of them were weary, poverty stricken, and brokenhearted.

Pesach would begin in a few weeks and the Skulener Rebbe was concerned how anyone would have matzos for the upcoming sederim (sedars). He asked one of his Chassidim, Reb Fishel Kerpel, to go to a local farm and buy wheat, so that it could be milled into flour for matzos.

Painstakingly, Reb Fishel was able to get wheat and a millstone, and the Rebbe's chassidim began working feverishly to produce as many matzos as possible. Knowing that there were other Rebbes in Czernovitz, he instructed his chassidim to seek them out and give them each three matzos for their sederim.

Skulener chassidim dutifully followed their Rebbe's instructions and soon it became known that he was giving matzos free of charge to Jews in the area. A week before Pesach, Reb Moshe Hager, the son of the Seret-Vizhnitzer Rebbe, Rabbi Baruch Hager (1895-1963), came to the Skulener Rebbe. "*My father sent me,*" said Reb Moshe. "*He needs matzos for Yom Tov.*"

"Why, of course," replied the Skulener Rebbe. "*I am honored to give him matzos for the seder.*"

The Rebbe took out three matzos and handed them to Reb Moshe. Reb Moshe thanked the Rebbe profusely, but then added sheepishly, "*My father said that he needs six matzos.*"

"*How can I give you six matzos?*" asked the Skulener Rebbe incredulously. "*It is so difficult to bake matzah, there are so many people who need them and we simply don't have enough to give anyone six matzos.*"

"*What can I say?*" said Reb Moshe. "*My father insisted that I can't leave the Rebbe's house until I get six matzos. It is matter of kibbud av (honoring a father).*" The Skulener Rebbe thought for a few moments and then said, "*Then we have no choice. We will give you the six matzos, and please wish your father in my name a chag kosher v'samei'ach.*"

Reb Moshe was ecstatic as he brought the matzos home to his father Rav Baruch.

On erev Pesach, Reb Moshe came back to the Skulener Rebbe carrying three matzos. He presented the matzos to the Skulener Rebbe and said, "*My father, the Seret-Vizhnitzer Rebbe, said that I should give these three matzos back to the Rebbe.*"

The Skulener Rebbe was startled. "*Now you bring back the matzos? I wanted to give you only three matzos to begin with. Why did your father insist on having six? What is the point of bringing the matzos back now?*" Reb Moshe's reply was classic. "*My father said, the Skulener Rebbe is so kind and considerate that he will probably give out every last matzah and not even have any for himself. Therefore my father took an extra three matzos so that he should be able to give them back to you right before Yom Tov, so that you will have matzos for your own seder.*"

And those indeed were the matzos the Skulener Rebbe used at his seder! While the Skulener Rebbe was thinking of everyone else, the Seret-Vizhnitzer Rebbe was thinking of him. (Rabby Paysach J. Kroh, Echoes Of The Maggid p.50)

Let us always remember this story and be inspired by it to love our fellow Jew. Hashem cares very much about how we get along with each other, that it is why it is so important for us to work on ourselves. There once was a father who had several children. Unfortunately, the children argued with one another constantly. The father gave each child what he needed. Unfortunately, the children fought continually. The father promised the children that if they got along and did their chores, he would treat them with a reward. Whenever the children argued, the father reminded them of their reward awaiting them for behaving properly.

We are all children of our Father in Heaven. As the verse tells us: "*You are Children to Hashem your G-d.*" (Devarim 14:1) Hashem likes it when His children treat each other properly. Any parent who has ever watched his children argue, can understand Hashem's anguish when we don't get along with each other. Hashem promises his children that if they are good, He reward us with all the good in the world. So let us work together to get along with one another. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**