

The “Simple” Solution

One of the members of the illustrious Slonim family, who resided in Chevron, travelled once to visit his cousin, the Rebbe Maharash.

As part of his visit, he was granted a Yechidus and, after answering the Rebbe’s inquiries regarding the welfare of the Yidden in Eretz Yisroel, he turned to the Rebbe with a question that was weighing him down.

“I read in a Sefer somewhere,” he began, “that in Eretz Yisroel there are Yidden with very great Neshomos. I

am familiar with the Yidden there and I don’t see that there are people with loftier Neshomos than other people living elsewhere?”

Hearing his question, the Rebbe replied with one of his own. “Do you really have an understanding in lofty Neshomos?

“Come,” said the Rebbe, “let me tell you a story I heard from my father—the Tzemach Tzedek—and from this story you will be able to discern the true power of a





simple Yid in Eretz Yisroel.”

In a small village on the outskirts of Yerusholayim lived a simple Yid. He was unlearned and lacked the most minimal education. The meanings of the words in Davening were beyond his capacity and he didn't even know which Tefilos to say on the different days throughout the year.

He earned a living by selling fresh fruits and vegetables in Yerusholayim once a week, and each week, after he had finished in the marketplace, he would make his way to one of the Rabbi's homes and receive his directions for the upcoming week. Patiently, the Rabbi would

“DO YOU REALLY HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING IN LOFTY NESHOMOS?”

write down a detailed list of all the Tefilos for the week ahead and hand it to the villager. The simple Yid treasured the list greatly, for without it, the Siddur was of no use to him.

CLOSED!

One week, on his regular visit to Yerusholayim, he was shocked to discover every store in town closed and bolted shut. He began to wonder if perhaps he had calculated the days of the week wrong and today was in fact Shabbos, and he felt terribly aggrieved. But then, to his relief, he noticed a Yid walking with his Tefillin nestled under his arm. Seeing this, a calming sense of relief swept over him, but he was still mystified as to why the shops were all closed. Approaching the next person that passed by him, he asked for an explanation. “Today is a fast day,” he replied and hurried on his way.

His ignorance bothered him greatly and he checked the paper that the Rabbi had given him the previous

week. But the paper didn't have any indication of a Taanis for that day either. It slowly dawned on him that not only had he not Davened the appropriate Tefilos, he had also eaten on a fast day!

Shaken, he went to find the Rabbi and cried to him, “Rebbi what have you done to me? Why?”

A DIFFERENT APPROACH

“My son, what has happened to you? Tell me, what's the matter?”

The Yid sobbed. “Today is a Taanis, but you never marked it for me on the paper. And now I have eaten on a day when it is forbidden.”

The Rabbi smiled reassuringly. “The fast day was decreed for the residents of Yerusholayim due to the lack of rain. Because you don't live here, it doesn't apply to you.”

“What does a fast for no rain mean?”

The Rabbi explained. “When there is no rain for an extended period of time, and to the point where it becomes a threat to life, the Chachomim established particular days on which the Yidden fast and beseech Hashem for mercy.”

But the simple villager still didn't understand the concept, and couldn't fathom why the people would fast for rain.

“What do you suggest otherwise?” asked the Rabbi.

The Yid thought for a moment. “Well,” he began, “when my fields are short on rain, I stand outside and say to Hashem, “Father, I need rain.” And then it begins to rain.”

Hearing this act of simple faith, the Rabbi suggested that the Yid try his scheme here as well.

The villager went outside to the courtyard, turned his eyes to heaven, and cried, “Father, can it be that Your children in Your holy city should perish from hunger? Can't You see that they need rain?”

And as the words came out of his mouth, the skies opened up and quenched the thirst of the parched land.

Finishing the story, the Rebbe Maharash turned to his guest from Chevron and said, “So do you really know who in Eretz Yisroel has a lofty Neshoma?” ■