

HELPING OTHERS IS HELPING YOURSELF

When it comes to communal activism there are many groups and organizations that help others. It is easy to exempt oneself from helping, especially because it doesn't really seem that one person's effort will make any significant change in the grand scheme of things.

There was once a group of wealthy and aristocratic young people that had a meeting with the Rebbe Maharash to strategize on how to stop the pogroms that were common then in Russia.

This happened in the year 5640* when anti-semitic leaders were instigating the ignorant masses to loot and terrorize their Jewish neighbors.

The Rebbe Maharash had many acquaintances in the Russian government and he traveled to them to request their assistance to still the fire of anti-Jewish propaganda.

As a result of these connections, it only took a few days time to procure a plan of action. The officials he was connected with suggested that he gather the Jewish upper class of Petersburg to visit the Minister of Interior and the President of the Senate to present the proposal.

The Rebbe was known among the Jewish elite for his independent way and how he never convened with them, always operating on his own. They resented him for this.

Nevertheless, he called them to his residence at the Serepinsky Hotel and outlined his plan. He then suggested that the members of the group select a few individuals from among themselves to join his delegation.

A certain brazen individual didn't appreciate the way this meeting was being run, and spoke out on behalf of the others.

He told the Rebbe that he and his colleagues were not chess pieces. If he considered them to be intelligent, he needs to value their opinions, and if not, then he doesn't need them for this either.

The Rebbe answered him that in the Megillah there was a similar issue

where Jewish lives were in danger, and Mordechai told Esther that if she wants she could avoid getting involved because the Jewish people will surely be saved in one way or another but then she will have lost an opportunity.

“To me it is certain that liberty and deliverance will come to the Jews. If you do not wish to have a part in this, then it will come from somewhere else. But then, you and your father’s household will have lost out.”

WE DON’T NEED YOU. YOU NEED YOU.

At first glance this seems like a strange thing to say to someone you are hoping will join in your

efforts. Why did the Rebbe Maharash tell them that the job could be done without them? How is being dispensable supposed to motivate them to do more?

Yet we see that it did motivate them because it made them realize that joining the Rebbe’s efforts was in their own best interest.

I’M SURE SOMEONE ELSE IS DOING IT.

What can we learn from this story?

When it comes to doing *mitzvot*, supplying those in need with ample provisions for Yom Tov, or inviting guests for Yom Tov meals, people

always think: “Someone else is doing it.”

This might be true, but then you would have missed out on the opportunity, and that is only hurting yourself.

“One is obligated to say, ‘It is for me that the world was created.’”

This is how to view other institutions of aid. They were created for my benefit, for me to participate in all the activities they are active in, for my own good. **T**

*(Adapted from Sichas Shabbos
Parshas Haazinu, 13 Tishrei 5746)*

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' מרדכי וזוגתו מרת אדל רייזל שיחיו
וולבובסקי

שיראו רוב נחת חסידותי מכל יו"ח שיחיו
לאורך ימים ושנים טובות
מתוך שמחה ובריאות הנכונה

נדפס ע"י
משפחתם שיחיו