



A Class For Two - An Unforgettable Memory

Can little, undramatic acts, without a crowd to witness them, have lasting meaning? Lior Frishman, chairman of the Rehovot Religious Council, told me the following story last night.

"Once in the month of Elul, Simcha Hakohen Kook zt"l, the esteemed Chief Rabbi of Rehovot, conveyed to me his wish to say a few words of inspiration before the next day's Selichot (prayers for divine forgiveness) in one of the city's Sephardic synagogues. I asked if I could drive him there and he agreed.

At 4:15 the next morning I waited for him outside his home. He requested that I first take him to the mikveh on Shoftim Street. He immersed in the mikveh and then we drove to the Sephardic synagogue. We arrived there at 4:45, entered the synagogue, and saw . . . the gabai (synagogue manager) but no

one else. That was it: me, the rabbi, and the gabai. The gabai's face turned as white as a sheet. He did not know what to do with himself. How embarrassing. Here he had invited the city's chief rabbi, troubled him to get up before dawn, but apparently had not sufficiently publicized his appearance and therefore no one had come. What was there to do?

Clearly, each of us would have preferred to see a synagogue full of people, but Rabbi Kook just smiled and said: 'Gentlemen, let's learn together. It will be a true delight to make the two of you my Torah study partners.' I will never forget those moments. And then he added: 'Listen well, do not be disappointed. It's worth it for me to make the effort to get up before dawn and to

come here to the synagogue even if I can open the heart of even one Jew. And look, there are two Jews here with me.'

Since then, fifteen years have passed. I

am reminded of this story every year in the month of Elul. We are accustomed to speak of Elul in terms of dramatic deeds and grandiose changes, promising ourselves the world. But every little act of ours is important. Even a class for two before dawn." ■



Rabbi Simcha Hakohen Kook zt"l