

# The Weekly *Farbrenge*



למען ישמענו • פרשת שמיני • 406  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELINGER

## A DISTINCT NATION

### LIVING DISTINCT

The Torah instructs us to be holy nation, living distinct from the nations that surround us. We must not mingle with them or mimic their ways for we may become influenced by their lifestyles. Instead we should focus on our unique mission of Torah and *mitzvos*.

(ס' החינוך מצוה רסב)

At the age of fourteen, Reb Boruch, the Alter Rebbe's father, lost his parents. He traveled from town to town for three years until he arrived in Liozna, where he was employed to guard an orchard that two Yidden held on lease from the local *poritz*. Young Boruch enjoyed the peace and quiet and would spend his time *davening* and *learning*, without anyone detecting his greatness in Torah and *avoda*. At harvest time he would help his employers, Reb Avraham and Reb Ezriel, and their families and other workers who would gather and pack the fruits. The workers, including the *goyim*, were impressed by him, for he was well-built, handsome, had a sweet voice and spoke a fluent Polish.

One day, the *poritz* visited the orchard with his family and, noticing Baruch's capabilities, engaged him in a discussion. They were amazed to hear his rich language. Baruch felt very uncomfortable with all the attention he was receiving. The next day, the *poritz* and his family returned specifically to speak with him, and after their discussion, invited him to visit their estate. However, Boruch declined their invitation.

One evening, while alone in the orchard, Boruch was unexpectedly visited by the son of the *poritz*. "Good evening," said the young visitor. "My father would like to invite you to spend the night with us, for we know how lonely it is out here."

Boruch knew that this visit would not bring good results, so he told him that he could not leave the orchard unattended. The visitor left but returned shortly with two men accompanied by huge watch dogs, saying, "Here, they'll take care of the job while you're gone."

Boruch was stuck. Personally, he had no qualms refusing the offer of the *poritz*, but he knew that a refusal could cause the *poritz* to pour out his wrath on the Yidden of Liozna. He therefore decided to accept the invitation, but resolved not display any fear and to present himself with Yiddish pride, in the spirit of the Torah.

He was welcomed at the castle with great friendship,

which greatly displeased him, and he took the first opportunity to show his confidence by refusing to remove his hat. He explained in fluent Polish that a Yid is required to constantly feel *HaShem's* presence and hence cannot go bareheaded. The *poritz* and his family were deeply impressed by the self-assurance and boldness of a simple Yiddish watchman, especially since they were used to seeing Yidden trembling and behaving subserviently. In fact, the *poritz* showed such respect for his young guest that he covered his own head with his hat. Boruch entered into a deep discussion about the value of Yiddish *minhagim*, and emphasized the unfairness of using one's supremacy to interfere with another's beliefs and way of life. He displayed his wisdom and knowledge and explained many *psukim* and *maamarei Chazal*, all in fluent Polish, meanwhile contrasting the two worlds - the *goyishe* world of materialism and the Yiddish world of *ruchniyus*.

did not need to excuse himself, for at that moment the youngest child of the *poritz* burnt himself with hot water, and the whole family ran to help with the emergency. Baruch took the opportunity to slip away and return to the orchard. That night he could not sleep. What would he do if the children of the *poritz* came the next day to speak with him?

All through the night he said *Tehillim* with tears. The next day he heard that the child had died, but he still felt restless, knowing that the other children of the *poritz* were likely to come despite the tragedy. He decided to unburden himself to Reb Avraham and tell him of his decision to leave the job. Reb Avraham accepted his request and that night he and Reb Ezriel took over the task of guarding the orchard. It transpired that Baruch's suspicions were justified, for later that evening the son and daughter of the *poritz* came to the orchard, and when they heard that he was no longer there, they went home disappointed. As for Baruch, he received his wages from the partners and was now able to return to the *beis midrash* to immerse himself in *davening* and learning.

(ספר הזכרונות מוהרי"צ ח"א פ' יא-יג)

### CONSIDER

*Why was Reb Boruch concerned about interacting with the poritz and his family? Did he really think that he would be influenced?*

*Why will living distinctly create a kidush HaShem and not the opposite?*

The *poritz* thirstily drank all that Baruch said, but his children were unhappy with the direction the conversation had taken; they preferred lighter talk, so they decided to visit the orchard themselves the following day, just to schmooze. Foreseeing the possible danger in this friendship, Baruch was vexed, and tried to think of a solution to get out of it. Meanwhile, he was invited to the dining-room that had been set up with dozens of delicacies, and although the food was kosher, he decided to eat nothing in order not to strengthen their relationship. Fortunately, he

### A NATION APART

The Baal Shem Tov once went to the *mikveh* in a place that was populated by *goyim*. On his way back, after *toiveling*, he was afraid that a *goy* might touch him, *chas veshalom*. While he was walking, he overheard one *goy* tell another, "Be careful not to touch this contaminated Yid."

His grandson, the author of *Degel Machaneh Ephraim* explained that this is the meaning of the *possuk*, "*Hein am l'vadad yishkon*" - "They are a nation that dwells apart." The Yidden do not mingle with the *goyim* because (as that *possuk* continues), "*uvagoyim lo yischashov*" - "they are not counted among the nations," that is to say, the Yidden are not esteemed in the eyes of the *goyim*. And paradoxically, this is for the Yid's benefit!

(על התורה ועל העבודה)

On numerous occasions the Rebbe emphasized that standing apart from the *goyim* in all areas of conduct will not cause the *goyim* to dislike the Yidden (as some Yidden over history had believed); on the contrary, it will elicit their respect and admiration, seeing how the Yidden live distinct and true to their tradition.

(לדוגמא: תי"מ תשמ"ה ח"ה ע' 2994)

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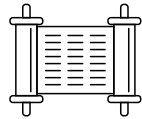


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## FLOWERS IN A VASE

### Can I place flowers in a vase on Shabbos?

Planting (*zoreia*), whether in earth or in water (i.e. sprouting seeds or pits), is a *melacha*.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, complete flowers with roots at the bottom can continue growing, and may not be placed into water on Shabbos.<sup>2</sup> However, regular vase-ready flowers which are cut at the bottom cannot continue to grow, and do not pose a problem of *zoreia*.<sup>3</sup>

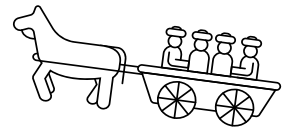
*Chazal* rules that one may not fill a flower vase with water or add water to a vase under the decree of *tircha yeseira*, extra labor. If the vase contains water from before Shabbos, the Alter Rebbe holds that one may insert new flowers inside.<sup>4</sup> Adding water is permissible on *yom tov*, but not on Shabbos.<sup>5</sup>

Bulbs which will open from the water may not be inserted into water (even if they were in the water previously), since the blooming of the bulbs is an extension of *zoreia*, causing something to grow.<sup>6</sup>

Although ordinary twigs and leaves are *muktza*, nonetheless if they were designated before Shabbos for use, they are not *muktza*. Thus, flowers which have been designated for decorative use may be moved on Shabbos.<sup>7</sup> However, if they contain unopened bulbs, they should be moved softly so that they are not moved in or out of the water.<sup>8</sup>

1. שבת ע"ג ע"ב. משנ"ב ס"ל של"ו
2. ס"ק נ"א. ארוחות שבת פי"ח ס"ד.
3. רמ"א ס"ל של"ו ס"א, מנהגי מהרי"ל שבת ס"ט.
4. שוע"ר של"ו ס"ח. משנ"ב ס"ל של"ו סקנ"ד.
5. ש"ש כ"כ פכ"ו סכ"ו. ע"פ שו"ע או"ח
6. רמ"א ס"ל של"ו ס"א בשם המהרי"ל וראה ערוה"ש סימן של"ו סעיף ל' שהאיסור מדאורייתא וגם בעציץ שאינו נקוב.
7. שוע"ר או"ח ס"ח סב"ה.
8. שלמי יהודה פ"ג הע' ס"ד. וראה פסק"ת שם הע' 163 שמביא שיש מחמירים בזה.

לע"נ מורת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



## REB YOSEF TUMARKIN

Reb Yosef Tumarkin was the son of Reb Eliyahu, a prominent chossid of the Alter Rebbe. Reb Yosef was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash, and was a *talmid* of Reb Nechemya of Dubrovna, the great Rov and chossid of the Alter Rebbe. Reb Yosef was a great *gaon* with an incredible mind. He loved collecting *seforim* and amassed many rare ones. He was the Rov in Kremenchug and devoted himself to his community, especially in freeing Jews from army service. Reb Yosef passed away on the 23rd of Tammuz, תרל"ד (1876).

In the winter of תר"י (1850), Reb Yosef spent three months in Lubavitch. At that time, the Tzemach Tzedek showed him a lot of *kiruv* and allowed him to copy some unpublished *teshuvos*. One day, the Rebbe called him and showed him a *shaila* that had just been posed. The Rebbe told him to go to his son the Maharin (Reb Yisroel Noach) and his son-in-law Reb Leivik, and together they should research the *shaila* and bring him an answer the following day.

It was a very difficult *shaila*. The Rov that sent it was a tremendous *lamdan* who was fluent in the Talmud Bavli

and Yerushalmi, the Rambam and many other *seforim*, and detailed his *sha'aloh* with very deep reasoning.

"We spent all day and night on the *shaila*," Reb Yosef later related, "and we could not reach a conclusion. The Maharin went in to his father, the Rebbe, and asked for an extension of another day. On the third day, a Wednesday, we went in to the Rebbe and we merited to hear brilliant *chidushei Torah* from the Rebbe about this *shaila*. He finished by saying that this was revealed to him by his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe.

"The Maharin told me that the next day he went in again to his father to discuss the *shaila*. On that occasion his father told him, "In the merit of printing the Likkutei Torah, which made it possible for two Jews to sit and learn the *ma'amorim* of my *Zaide* with the notes (of the Tzemach Tzedek) that explain the content, my *Zaide* revealed to me secrets of the Torah. You cannot fathom the *nachas ruach* that is brought to a *tzaddik* when people learn his Torah. The entire *heichal* (spiritual abode of the *neshama* of a *tzaddik*) lights up from joy and the *bracha* of the *tzaddik* shields the person, his children, and grandchildren."

## A Moment with The Rebbe



### MIVTZA H TEFILIN

Following the Six Day War, Major General Ariel Sharon agreed to lay *tefilin* at the Kosel. The iconic photograph was an immediate sensation, and gave a great boost to *mivtza tefilin*.

Reb Chaim Gutnik told the Rebbe that he was present when the picture was taken. The Rebbe bemoaned, "He would have put on *tefilin* again the next day, if only someone had thought of going to him."

Reb Chaim then told the Rebbe of the initiative of Shifra Golembovitch, whose husband had fallen in battle. When his fellow soldiers came to be *menachem ovel* her, they asked what they could do in his honor. She requested that they lay *tefilin* in his memory, and even presented them with pairs of *tefilin*.

As Reb Chaim told the story, he noticed tears well up in the Rebbe's eyes.