

The Weekly Farbrengens



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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

THE FINAL STRETCH (III)

COMING CLOSER

The Mezritcher Maggid taught that during the time of *golus* it is easier to connect to *HaShem* than when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood. In fact it is even easier during the Three Weeks, when the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed.

Reb Elimelech of Lyzhensk explained this surprising statement by means of an “incredible and sweet *marshal*” that he once heard from the Maggid:

A close friend of the king once invited the king to come to a special feast in his home. The king of course turned down his warm request, since it is unbecoming for a king to leave his palace, apart from exceptional circumstances and extraordinary requests.

It once happened that the king was on the road and night was approaching, so he ordered his convoy to stop at a modest hotel in a nearby village. Although it was nothing like his magnificent palace, he was willing to spend the night there, provided that it was clean.

Similarly, in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash* one had to refine himself to lofty levels in order to acquire *ruach hakodesh*. But today, when the *Shechina* is wandering in *golus*, it will rest wherever it can find a home, so long as it is clean of sin.

The Koznitzer Maggid quotes the Mezritcher Maggid as finding an allusion to this in *Eicha*, which says, “All those who pursued her (רודפיה) caught her between the boundaries (*bein hametzarim*).” At the straightforward level of *pshat*, that *possuk* simply describes the nations’ pursuit of the Yidden during that three-week period. Yet it can also be understood to refer to the special ability of Yidden to pursue *HaShem* (רודף י"ה) during this somber time.

(אור תורה אות שצט, נועם אלימלך כא ע"א, עבודת ישראל ר"פ מסעי)

STUBBORN SERVICE

The Rebbe Rashab once said:

In this era of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” it

is essential for a person not to follow his understanding, since mortal reason is often misleading. Rather, we should observe the Torah out of a simple and unquestioning faith in *HaShem*.

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"א ע' תפח)

CONSIDER

During the time of
bein hametzarim is
HaShem more hidden or
accessible? Can it be both?
How does *pnimiyus*
haTorah pierce the
darkness of *galus*?

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, when the Divine Presence was openly manifest, the Divine sparks that had fallen into the *kelipos* were sifted and elevated as a matter of course: the *kelipos* spontaneously became null and void, losing their separate identity as they became incorporated in the forces of holiness, just as a candle becomes lost in a great flame. Moreover, Yidden delighted in their divine service on account of the intense revelation of *Elokus* in the *Beis HaMikdash*, and by nature they were drawn to it.

In the time of *golus*, by contrast, a man’s *avoda* is motivated mainly by the attribute of *Netzach*, conquest. This involves battling and standing firm against all the internal and external forces that hinder anyone who seeks to draw close to *HaShem*. Indeed, the attribute of *Netzach* is aroused specifically when one is challenged by obstacles.

Another characteristic motivated by the attribute of *Netzach*: Even when one does not derive delight from the pleasant flavor (*taam*) of his service, he persists in his service notwithstanding, in a way that transcends intellectual delight and understanding (*lemaala mitaam vadaas*).

(אור התורה שיר השירים ע' ככד)

The Frieddiker Rebbe once said:

We are living in *ikvesa diMeshicha*, the era that can hear the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*. We are, so to speak, the “feet” – our *avodah* is based on simple, unwavering *emuna*. What matters most is not how well developed are our intellectual attainments and our *middos*, but that we stand firmly on our “feet,” not retreating, and conceding nothing. For sure one should be *mekarev* others to *Yiddishkeit*, but without giving ground. If you’re standing on the tenth step and the other fellow is on the first step, you shouldn’t go downstairs towards him. Rather, stretch out your hand and draw him up towards yourself.

(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 36)

Before he passed away, Moshe Rabbeinu was shown all the generations of the future. When he gazed upon our spiritually poor generation, whose comprehension of *Elokus* is close to nothing, and yet despite all of its difficulties Yidden in this generation fulfill Torah and *mitzvos* and *daven* with a *chassidische geshmak*, with *bitachon* and simple *emuna*, he was so utterly overawed that he felt less worthy than them.

(סה"מ תקס"ב ע' נא, סה"מ קונטרסים ח"א ע' 106)

FINAL FORETASTE

There are two explanations as to why *pnimiyus haTorah* was revealed precisely in these last generations before *Moshiach*: (1) Since the darkness of *galus* is thickening, an ever more brilliant light is required to pierce it. (2) It is a foretaste of the Torah’s secrets which will be fully revealed in the Days of *Moshiach*.

Though the first reason emphasizes the lowly state of our generation, while the second highlights our privilege of being granted a glimmer of the future revelation, they are not in contradiction. The essential power of *pnimiyus haTorah* is expressed specifically in lighting up the heavy darkness at the end of *golus*.

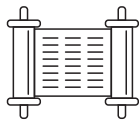
(לקו"ש חט"ו ע' 282)

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MISTAKES IN A SEFER TORAH

If a mistake is found in the *sefer torah* in the middle of *leining*, what should be done?

Rishonim dispute whether one may read from a Torah that contains an absolute error. Some hold that it must be fully kosher to read from it with *brachos*.¹ Others disagree and hold that although it doesn't have the *kedusha* of a *sefer torah*, it may still be read from in public, for the essential *mitzva* of reading the Torah doesn't require a completely kosher Torah.²

Mahari bei Rav, teacher of the Beis Yosef, ruled that when one finds a mistake, he should stop wherever he is holding and resume the reading in another Torah from the beginning of the *posuk*. He need not read over what was already read, for *bdieved* we rely on the view that the reading is valid. The *oleh* doesn't recite a new *bracha* on the new *sefer torah*, and only makes the concluding *bracha* at the end of his *aliya* in the second *sefer torah*.³

The Mordechai (an Ashkenazic *rishon*) disagreed on two points: Firstly, a concluding *bracha* should be made on the first Torah before putting it away, and if he were to continue his *aliya* in another Torah, he would need to make another opening *bracha* since he didn't have it in mind by his original *bracha*. Secondly, one may only stop and switch to another Torah at a point where one is allowed to complete the *aliya* (i.e. he must have already read three *pesukim* and there are at least three *pesukim* remaining before the next *pesucha* or *setuma*). Otherwise, he should read the correct text by heart and continue in the non-kosher Torah until a permissible stopping point, for to leave it in the middle without properly stopping is disparaging to the Torah.⁴

Due to these concerns, Rema makes a compromise and rules that if it's a place where one may stop, the *oleh* should make a final *bracha* before switching, but if he can't stop there, he switches the Torah without a *bracha* and recites the *bracha* at the end of the *aliya*.⁵

In his responsa, the Tzemach Tzedek rules (for a place that doesn't have an established custom) that if only one word is mistaken or missing, one should continue reading until a stopping point and then recite an ending *bracha* in order not to disparage the first Torah (not like the Rema's compromise). But if there is a mistake in two consecutive words, one may not read them by heart due to the prohibition of reciting *devarim* (plural) *shebichsav* by heart, and one should switch immediately, even at a point that can't conclude the *aliya*.⁶

If there is no other Torah, one may continue the *kriah* and distribute the seven *aliyos* with this Torah, since the *kriah* was begun in a permissible manner. (However, an eighth person shouldn't be called for *maftir*. Instead, the seventh should read the *haftora* and *chatzi kadish* should be recited after the *haftora*.) Additionally, if the mistake is in a different *chumash* (e.g. mistake is in Chumash Vayikra and the parsha of the week is in Chumash Bamidbar), one may use this Torah even to begin with if there isn't any other available.⁷

1. שו"ת הרא"ש כלל ג סי' ת. שו"ת הרשב"א ח"א סי' רכז, וכן פסק בשו"ע ר"א א"ח סי' רפד ס"ד.
2. שו"ת רמב"ם פאר הדור סי' ט.
3. הובא בבית יוסף י"ד סי' רע"ט, וכן פסק בשו"ע א"ח סי' קמג ס"ד.
4. מרדכי מסכת מגילה רמז תשצג-תשצד.
5. רמ"א א"ח סי' קמ"ד ס"ד. וראה משנ"ב שם סק"ג.
6. שו"ת צ"צ סי' ע"ו. וראה נתיבים בשדה השליחות ח"א עמ' נב-נד.
7. שו"ת צ"צ שם.



R. MICHOEL DER ALTER

R. Michael Beliner was known as R. Michael der Alter, since he was old enough to remember the Tzemach Tzedek when his beard was still blond. He was trained in the ways of *Chassidus* by R. Peretz Chein. For many years, he was the *mashpia* of the town of Nevel, but in his later years the Rebbe Rashab appointed him as a *mashpia* of *Tomchei Temimim* in Lubavitch. He was a great *oved* and his *ahavas Yisroel* was extraordinary. He passed away on the 28th of Cheshvan, תרע"ב (1911).

R. Michael would annually teach the *maamar* "Ani Ledodi" in *Likutei Torah*, where it discusses how a *Yid* should be bothered by the distance of his *neshama* and its source in Hashem as a result of wrongdoing. The *maamar* says that if it doesn't bother a person, it is a sign that he is, G-d forbid, totally disconnected, like a detached limb that cannot feel.

When R. Michael would reach this passage he would burst into tears. His students were deeply affected and would continue to recount it for years to come.

(זכרונותי (שווקין) ע' 63)

R. Michael would say, "If there was only one *esrog* in the world, and

only one Jew could use it, and it was given to me, I would give it away to another Jew."

He explained that Hashem's will would be fulfilled no less through a different Jew doing the *mitzva*. He would not be that selfish to be the only one to fulfill the *mitzva*, in order to accumulate *olam haba* for himself.

Once, as R. Michael was in the midst of saying *Kerias Shema*, a youngster with torn shoes passed by him and R. Michael hinted to someone to take care of the child.

When asked why he couldn't have waited until after *Kerias Shema*, he replied that the whole point of *Kerias Shema* is to nullify oneself to Hashem and by extension to every Jew and be ready to sacrifice even one's spirituality for this aim.

(המושפיע ע' ק"ד)

When R. Michael was sick, the doctors recommended that he drink plenty of hot water. R. Michael would not bother himself with the nuisance of getting the water and heating it up. Only when his students came to visit would he go through the trouble as a gesture of *hachnasas orchim*, and as a secondary result he would drink some himself.

A Moment with The Rebbe



WHAT CHASSIDIM SHOULD KNOW

Mr. Zalman Shazar, then serving as a member of Knesset, visited the Rebbe on *chol hamoed* Pesach 5714 (1954). As the lengthy *yechidus* drew to a close, he turned to the Rebbe:

"Rebbe, you know that as soon as I leave this room, I will be harassed by your chassidim to repeat something of our conversation. But since our discussion was confidential, how

should I respond?"

The Rebbe answered, "I will tell you something to deliver to the chassidim:

"The Rebbe Maharash would inflict physical pain on his body. He wore belts that would cut into his flesh, and he would sit in a forest among biting insects."

(Otzar Hachassidim NY, page 258)