

The Weekly Farbrengens



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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

THE LUMINARIES OF HOMES (II)

HIGHLY REGARDED

Reb Nechemia Zalman of Shventzian was a student of Reb Michel of Opotzk, one of the prominent chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. He was a phenomenal genius both in *nigleh* and in *Chassidus*, and would often spend his time alone in deep thought.

Being exceptionally organized, he kept a strict schedule. Every morning at about three a.m., when the sky showed its first pale signs of day, both on weekdays and on *Shabbos*, he would meditate on *Chassidus* for six hours with his *tallis* over his shoulder, and then *daven* for another six hours. It was then time either to go home to eat and rest, or to *daven Mincha* and *Maariv* and then go home, depending on the season.

He would make a yearly trip to Lubavitch around Shavuot time, and would stay for five or six weeks. On the first day of Shavuot, when the visiting *rabbonim* were invited to the table of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to hear exclusive stories of the Rebbeim and to discuss Torah thoughts with the Rebbe, Reb Nechemia Zalman was seated up front and would amaze the other guests with his novel Torah insights.

On the outskirts of Lubavitch, on a hill off to the left, there was a little pine forest, in the middle of which stood a booth made of branches. At the foot of the hill flowed a brook about six feet wide, and deep enough to reach a person's waist. Throughout his stay in Lubavitch, Reb Nechemia Zalman made this hut his home. Every night, after sleeping and reciting *Tikkun Chatzos* in the township, he would head out to the forest, where he would *toivel* in the river and prepare for *davening*. After *davening* he would eat something, rest for an hour, learn, *daven Mincha*, and return to town.

Yet though he chose to spend most of his day there in solitude, he returned to the Rebbe's courtyard every evening for the "*yechidus* dance." Traditionally, whenever a chossid exited *yechidus*, his fellow chassidim would join him as he danced in joy over his great merit to have been in the Rebbe's presence, while others clapped their hands to the

rhythm of the *niggun*. And though by nature Reb Nechemia Zalman was a loner, he eagerly looked forward day after day to witnessing this comradely celebration of the superiority of Mind over Matter, the superiority of the soul over the body.

The Rebbe Maharash once related how he himself would stealthily visit the forest to peek between the cracks of that hut. He wanted to observe Reb Nechemia Zalman's face as he meditated upon topics in *Chassidus*, his eyes closed and his face aflame, and seemingly detached from bodily concerns and indeed from This World.

CONSIDER

Why couldn't Reb Yosef Hillel have the same influence of *yiras Shomayim* on older students?

When is *mesirus nefesh* for personal benefit and when is it not?

At a *yechidus* in תרל"ח (1878), the Rebbe Maharash told his son, the Rebbe Rashab:

"The purpose of the descent of a *neshama* in this world is not to be satisfied with only elevating the individual himself, but also to impact another person. Reb Nechemia Zalman was exceptionally great, but his *avoda* was the *avoda* of an individual and did not draw anyone along with him. The ultimate purpose of the *neshama* in This World is accomplished by chassidim like Reb Yosef Hillel, the *melamed* who taught little children in Druye, and like Reb Shmuel Chaim, the *rov* of Lutzin.

"Reb Yosef Hillel the *melamed* was a student of the elder chassidim in Druye, whom the Alter Rebbe taught that the ultimate goal of a chassid is to share with others the spirit of *avoda*, the correction of *middos* and *ahavas Yisroel*. This schooling influenced Reb Yosef Hillel so deeply that although he was a talented *lamdan*, and could have taught older

students, which also would have brought him a greater income, he chose to teach young children – so that he could implant in their hearts a love for Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. In the course of the last fifty years he raised great numbers of G-d-fearing students.

"What Reb Yosef Hillel implanted in their young hearts cannot be uprooted, or even weakened, by all the winds in the world. This is the ultimate purpose of the descent of a *neshama* – to see to it that a Yid should live his life according to the will of *HaShem*.

"The town of Lutzin was made up primarily of coarse people, who were engrossed in *machlokes*, *rechilus*, jealousy and other bad *middos*. They would slander one another and make each other miserable.

"In תרל"ז (1867) they asked me to send them a *rov*, so I sent them Reb Shmuel Chaim, the *melamed* in Tcharei. Reb Shmuel Chaim had exceptional *middos* and loved everyone. While in his hometown, he had guided the *chassidishe yungeleit* with great success.

"When he arrived in Lutzin he was perturbed by the lowly state of the people there. Yet unfazed, he immediately got to work, to drive out whatever was negative and to introduce light. And within a few years of patient *mesirus nefesh* he transformed the town.

"Aside from the fact that the *mesirus nefesh* of Reb Yosef Hillel and Reb Shmuel Chaim impacted a multitude of people, their *mesirus nefesh* was truly elevated, since it was not for their personal benefit. And this is the vessel for the *bracha* of the Alter Rebbe – that chassidim should be successful in their Torah and *avoda*."

The Frierdiker Rebbe records the above in a letter to teachers and he concludes:

The lesson from this is that aside from the responsibility to teach his students, every teacher must educate and guide them in *yiras Shamayim*, *middos tovos* and *derech erez*. The responsibility for their future lies on his shoulders, and their future depends on his personal conduct.

(אג"ק אדהר"י"צ ח"ח ע' 497)

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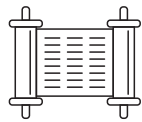
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MELACHA AFTER SHABBOS

When may we prepare the video of the Rebbe to be shown Motzoei Shabbos?

Even after waiting a few minutes beyond nightfall for the sake of adding to Shabbos,¹ one may still not do *melacha* before escorting Shabbos by reciting *havdala*.² *Havdala* is said twice: once in *shmoneh esrei* (*ata chonantanu*) and again over a cup of wine. The primary *havdala* is the one in davening, for that was the original institution, yet the *havdala* over wine is also very important just like any other rabbinic institution.³

While one may do *melacha* after reciting *havdala* in davening, one may not eat or drink (besides water) until making *havdala* over wine (from *shkia*), and the Chabad custom is to refrain from drinking even water.⁴

If one forgot to say *ata chonantanu*, one needn't repeat *shmoneh esrei* because he will say it later over wine. However, if he subsequently ate before making *havdala* over wine, he must repeat *shmoneh esrei* to recite *ata chonantanu*.⁵ The Alter Rebbe adds that likewise, if he subsequently did *melacha* without saying *boruch hamavdil*, he must repeat *shmoneh esrei*.⁶

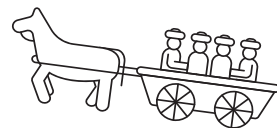
Technically, *melacha* is permitted upon reciting *havdala* in davening, or even before *maariv* by escorting the Shabbos through saying "*boruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol*." Nonetheless, the Alter Rebbe quotes that it is proper to withhold from *melacha* until the congregation has concluded *v'ata kadosh*, and blessing will not be seen from work done before then. Yet, the Alter Rebbe restricts this limitation to *melachos* like igniting fire, and not to carrying *muktza*. Additionally, *melacha* is permitted for *mitzva* purposes (e.g. turning on light so that people can *daven*) as long as *borchu* was recited.⁷

Interestingly, the Zohar says that one should wait until after *havdala* over wine (though lighting the candle for *havdala* is allowed), since doing *melacha* before Shabbos has completely departed evokes judgement on the souls of those who desecrated Shabbos, and in return they curse him.⁸ This may be why the Rebbe's father strongly disapproved when people smoked before *havdala*,⁹ and why the Rebbe was cautious not to do certain *melachos* (in public display) before *havdala* (though he did ride home in a car before he made *havdala* at home).¹⁰ These customs, however, are added stringencies and are not halachically mandated.

Based on all the above, preparing the video of the Rebbe is permissible after *havdala* in *shmoneh esrei*, and more so once *v'ata kadosh* was said by the congregation. This is especially so because the *melacha* involved is *midrabanan* and it is for *mitzva* purposes.

1. באכילה אבל שיעור כותב בחצונו מלאכה. א"כ י"ל שהסתפק בזה, אבל י"ל שזה בגלל שהמקור מ"ח הרשב"א ולא מהשו"ע וצ"ע.
2. שיעור סי' רצ"ט ס"ט. ויש להסביר שברכו הוא ע"ד הרמ"א בס"ח תקנ"ג ס"ב שמחליפים נעלים מוצ"ש תש"א אחרי ברכה. ראה בס' קיצור הל' שבת אדה"ז במילואים לסי' רצ"ט.
3. זוהר הקדמון י"ד ע"ב. לכאורה סברת אדה"ז היא שהנשמות חוזרות לאחור ואתה קדוש.
4. לקט הליכות ומנהגי שב"ק ע"ק ס"א.
5. ראה תו"ם תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 136-137 (הרבי לא רצה לנאום במקורפון לפני הבדלה). נסע ברכב לפני הבדלה - כן כתב לי ר' מיכאל זליגסון שי.
6. שיעור סי' רצ"ד ס"א.

1. ראה משנ"ב סי' רצ"ג סק"ה שמחכים לנ' כוכבים קטנים ורצופים וזהו הן כדי להתמיד שיצא היום ובנוסף בגלל תוספת שבת ולכן מחשיבים צאת השבת כשהשמש 8.5 מעלות מחמת לאופק במקום 6 מעלות מתחת לאופק שמחשיבים כיום למועדי.
2. שיעור סי' רצ"ט ס"ו (וראה שם שיש כמה דברים שאיסורם מדרבנן מצד עובדין דחול שמותרים כגון לתקוע במוצאי יוה"כ).
3. שיעור סי' רצ"ד ס"א.
4. לוח היום ג' אייר.
5. וראה פרמ"ג סי' רצ"ד משב"ז סק"ב שבנוגע אכילה גם אם אמר בירוק המבדיל לא מהני.
6. שיעור סי' רצ"ד ס"ג. המשנ"ב בבב"ל לומר דין זה רק



R. SIMCHA BUNIM OF PESHISCHA

Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshischa was a *talmid* of both the "Yid Hakadosh" of Pshischa and the "Choze" of Lublin, and modeled his manner of Divine service after that of the "Yid Hakadosh." Reb Bunim was a businessman and did not dress with the traditional garb of a rebbe. Some of his famous chassidim include Reb Mendel of Kotzk and the Chidushei Harim. Reb Bunim passed away on the 12th of Elul, תקפ"ז (1827).

that he had done a wonderful deed, and the merit of his self-sacrifice would always stand by him. Then, he called for the townsmen who had been attacking the humble custodian.

"What is the meaning of the *posuk* in Tehillim: 'To'isi kseh oved bekash' - I am like a sheep lost in hay?" he asked them. The men looked at him blankly, since the normal reading is "*bakesh*" and has a different meaning. R. Simcha Bunim explained with a parable:

There was once a plague in the forest, and the lion, king of the beasts, was set upon finding the sinner who had caused the plague. The animals all filed past the lion and his team of judges, and each were interrogated as to their potential sins. The wild animals told of how they had eaten a calf or a sheep; all were exonerated, as it was deemed to be their nature to do so, and therefore not their responsibility.

When it came to the sheep though, she was not spared. She admitted to once being invited into a home on a particularly cold night, and eating the hay inside her host's shoe. "That must have been it!" the wild animals exclaimed in unison. "The sheep is responsible for our predicament!"

R. Simcha Bunim concluded, "That is what the *posuk* is saying: sometimes a humble "sheep" is attacked by proud predators for a mere piece of hay..."

One day an unknown man stumbled into *shul*, put his head down on the table and started to cry. Moshe Chaim, the custodian of the communal fund for repairing the *shul's seforim*, went over to find out what was wrong. The man told Moshe Chaim that he was collecting for his daughter's wedding and had not yet accumulated more than a few *kopeks*. Moshe Chaim decided that he would give the man the money from the *seforim* fund, and then recollect the money from the town's rich men.

When Moshe Chaim started doing his rounds again it created an uproar, and many in the town demanded that he be penalized for the his incompetence. Word reached R. Simcha Bunim of Peshischa and he requested that Moshe Chaim appear before him. R. Simcha Bunim told him

A Moment with The Rebbe



SEFARDIC TRADITION

As a rule, the Rebbe encouraged adhering to family *minhogim*. At the Rebbe's behest, a *minyán* was arranged for the *Sefardi bochorim* at the Brunoy *yeshivah*, where they *davened* in their own *nusach*. At a winter 5719 (1959) *yeshidus* the Rebbe remarked, "In France, the *Sefardi bochorim daven vosikin* [at dawn] with their *kavonos*, and it doesn't bother anyone." (*Tzadik Lamelech*, vol. 7, page 255)

In a 5735 (1975) *yeshidus*, the Rebbe said to Joseph, "There's something very important that I want to ask you to do for your community: I want you to make a recording of the best *chazan* you can find, singing your *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur chazonus*. It is important that the children understand how their grandparents and their parents *davened*."

Mr. Joseph Cayre and his brothers, proud Syrian Jews, were the founding owners of Salsoul Records, a successful recording company.

Mr. Cayre did as he was asked. The Syrian community was very appreciative, and to this day the recordings serve many *chazonim* in Sephardic *shuls* around the world.