

## THE FINAL STRETCH (II)

### The Footsteps of Moshiach

Why do Chazal tell us of the anticipated troubles of *ikvesa diMeshicha*? The Rebbe explains that obviously this is not to dishearten us, but to urge us to counter them by increasing our good deeds.

(תו"מ תשמ"ה ח"ה ע' 2764)

The Alter Rebbe contrasts the spiritual struggles of the earlier generations with the struggles of our times. In earlier times, people were usually completely good or completely evil. Having lofty *neshamos*, they could attain a fear of *HaShem* by simply considering His greatness for a short moment. Those who did sin, did so as an outright choice, to strengthen their evil side, and thus they were really evil.

In our times, most people are mediocre: not particularly good but not particularly bad. This is so because the *neshamos* today – in the era of *ikvesa diMeshicha* – stem from the level of *Elokus* which is called the "heel," and thus they have a much more difficult time overcoming evil.

(תורה אור מא, א)

### Amplified Value

Reb Chayim Vital once asked his Rebbe, the AriZal: "Why do you say that I am so great, if even an ordinary person in the earlier generations was a *tzaddik* or a *chossid*, and I don't reach his ankles?"

The AriZal replied: "The greatness of a *neshama* is not measured by a person's actions alone, but in accordance with the generation in which he lives. A small deed in this generation is equivalent to many great *mitzvos* in earlier generations, since in this generation the *kelipa* musters infinitely more strength than in earlier times."

(שער הגלגולים הקדמים לח ע' קנו)

In this *maamar*, the Frierdiker Rebbe clearly describes the challenge – and the privilege – of living as a Yid in our days:

The Yidden at the time of the *Beis HaMikdash* recognized *Elokus* in a revealed manner, and took it for granted. A man would make his way up to Yerushalayim and leave his door unlocked, and would return to find a snake wrapped around his door handle, protecting his home. During *golus*, however, the nature of one's worldly environment is felt more intensely. Yidden are in a low state

and are ridiculed for their Torah and *avoda*. They are crushed by *parnasa* and other worries that block their minds and hearts from being receptive to wisdom and inspiration. Thus they observe *mitzvos* without enthusiasm, and this in turn leads to a general decline in their *Yiddishkeit*.

*Golus* is geared for our benefit. When in our era we overcome these difficulties and learn Torah, fulfill *mitzvos*, and conduct ourselves with love towards a fellow Yid, we become much closer to *HaShem* than those who lived in better times. The darkness of *golus* makes the light of our *avoda* brighter. The earlier generations served *HaShem* with their minds and hearts – an enjoyable experience, whereas the *avoda* demanded of us today is the less pleasurable yoke of *kabbalas ol* and *mesirus nefesh*.

(סה"מ קונטרסים ח"א ע' 104 ואילך)

### Climbing the Mountain

At a *farbrengen* in תרצ"ט (1939), the Frierdiker Rebbe provided us with a strategy with which to overcome the difficult challenges that accompany the final stage of *golus*:

"We are in the midst of a battle, and we have to climb a tall mountain. The paths leading up are unfamiliar. Many of the climbers stumble and fall, but many others clamber up as far as the final stretch, the final *daled amos*. However, the strength that they had at the outset is weakening. At this point, they must summon every last bit of energy. Now that they are only *daled amos* away from the summit, everything is precious – every stalk of grass, every twig, every pebble that they can somehow use to help them struggle ahead. Light is crucial – to enable them to see those objects that can help them progress. Especially if they are not fully equipped, they must forge ahead with *mesirus nefesh*.

"We are nearing the tip of the mountain. *Moshiach* is close. A person with a superior level of spiritual sensitivity can – spiritually – hear and catch sight of his approaching presence. We must navigate the final stretch by cherishing every positive activity, and we must illuminate the steep upward path by learning Torah and teaching it to others.

"Just as at the very end of a wakeful night weariness sets in with a vengeance and threatens to overwhelm us, today, as the dark night of *golus*

draws to an end, the *am haaratzus* in even basic *halacha* is tremendous. Giving *tzedaka* is a very worthy *mitzva*, but in addition every individual must ensure that no day passes without at least half an hour of learning. This is the way to remain awake and not to miss out on greeting the forthcoming 'light of the day.'"

(ע"פ סה"ש תרצ"ט ע' 316)

In this pointed letter, the Rebbe alerts *Anash* in Eretz Yisroel to their urgent, historic responsibility:

"Whether we like it or not, we are the successors of the Chabad chassidim of all previous generations, starting from the eminent chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. They all paved the way for us and left us to deal with only the *pachim ketanim*, the minor remaining tasks in *avoda*. On the other hand, it is our responsibility to complete the final *beirurim*, to enable the latent *ruchniyus* of the world to surface, and to draw down the revelation of *Moshiach* into our physical world.

"Even a brief reflection upon this should cause one to tremble with awe, realizing that all the awesome revelations in the era of *Moshiach* that are found in the teachings of Chazal, especially as they are illuminated in *Chassidus*, are dependent on our *avoda* now. Yet despite all that, people simply fool around and are preoccupied with their own personal matters..."

"Time now is precious, every moment of time. It would be a waste of your time and of mine to devote any further correspondence to debating and discussing who did not show someone else the kind of respect that was expected, or who is greater than whom in Torah, *avoda* and *gemilus chassadim*. I don't know if anyone can gain any benefit at all from such deliberations..."

(אג"ק ח"ה ע' רפ"א)

### CONSIDER THIS!

- Whose *avoda* is loftier: that of the earlier generations or ours? Which is greater?
- Why is it so important to recognize that we live in the final moments of *golus*? How will this realization affect us?

## Motioning to a Tzedaka Collector

Someone approaches me for *tzedaka*, and I need the cash I have for something else later that day. May I motion with my hand that I don't have cash on me in order not to insult the man?

- The question is twofold: (a) Is motioning in a misleading fashion considered lying; (b) Can one lie in such a situation for the sake of not insulting the one collecting. (Please note that this discussion is only relevant in those situations when one is exempt from giving *tzedaka* – see A Way of Life, L'maan Yishmeu 231).

### Misleading motioning

- The Sefer Chasidim writes<sup>1</sup>: “One should be careful that even his motions be truthful. When one means to say yes he should nod his head, and when means to say no he should shake his head sideways.” Poskim<sup>2</sup> understand from this that a motion indicating something untruthful is *halachically* considered lying.

### Lying for the sake of peace

- As explained previously, it is a *mitzva* to alter ones words for the sake of peace. However, as explained, this only applies when one's words could be understood to mean something truthful, though they will most likely be not understood so by the listener. Thus here, it would only be permissible to motion as not having cash if it can also be understood to mean that one does not have **extra** cash.
- Nonetheless, this kind of misleading is forbidden for another reason:
- *Halacha* states<sup>3</sup> that one may only change the details of a story that happened and not the facts of a present or future activity. Simply understood, this *halacha* intends to permit only altering the **past** and not the **present** or **future**. For example, if Reuven said something negative about Shimon (past), he may change the story so that Shimon not become upset. However, Reuven may not imply to Shimon that he owns less than he really does (present) in order to avoid jealousy between them.
- Others<sup>4</sup> however explain this *halacha* to be differentiating between relating **information** to avoid friction, when changing the facts is permissible, and **guiding an activity**, when it is forbidden. Accordingly, Reuven may imply to Shimon that he owns less than he really does (present) in order to avoid jealousy between them (information), but not when Shimon is asking for a loan (guiding an activity).
- Subsequently, since motioning that one does not have any cash is relevant to a **practical action** in the **future** it would be forbidden to do so falsely according to all opinions. Instead one should motion the truth: that he is unable to give or that he is rushing.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

1. סי' תתרנ"ג.
2. ראה בהגהות ברית עולם מוה"ח"א שם.
3. מג"א סי' קנו סק"א בשם ס' החסידים, ובפשוטו, ואם כנים הדברים ניתן ליישב שו"ע אדה"ז שם סי' ב.
4. ראיתי שיש שמפרשים כך את ל' אדה"ז הנ"ל (דהיינו שאדה"ז פירש בכונת הס' חסידים באופן אחר מאיך שלומדים בפשוטו), ואם כנים הדברים ניתן ליישב הרבה קושיות על הלכה זו, והדבר צ"ע.

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

לזכות הת' בנציון אלפרוביץ וב"ג הנה גולדשמיד  
שיחיו לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ

לעילוי נשמת הילד שמעון אליעזר ע"ה  
בן יבלח"ט ר' שלמה אשר הכהן שיחיו נופילד  
נפטר כ"ט שבט התשנ"ה

In loving memory of Shimon Eliezer Hakohen Newfield

## OUR HEROES

### Reb Asher Nikolayever



The chossid Reb Asher Grossman was a *shochet* in Nikolayev. He was one of the young men who were guided by Reb Hillel Paritcher, and he was a chossid of both the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. Besides being a great chossid, he was also involved with helping the Rebbe Rashab with community work. He was a talented *ba'al menagen*.

The Rebbe's grandfather, Reb Meir Shlomo Yanovsky, was the Rav of Nikolayev. Once, there was a typhus epidemic and Reb Meir Shlomo fell ill. At that time there was no known cure for the illness. All the victims were quarantined in a building outside the city to avoid spreading the disease, and they were treated by a doctor who visited daily. Very few people returned from the building alive.

When Reb Asher found out that Reb Meir Shlomo was quarantined he came to visit him. He was not allowed to go into the building, so he stood outside, as close to Reb Meir Shlomo's room as possible. He started to read aloud from a Tanya, *Igeres Hakodesh "Lehaskilach Bina"*. In that *Igeres* the Alter Rebbe explains that nothing bad comes from Hashem and if a person is imbued with this awareness, he will merit to see open good.

Reb Asher did not even know if Reb Meir Shlomo heard him or not; he just hoped. He returned every day and read the section of Tanya again.

After a few weeks, Reb Meir Shlomo was discharged from the quarantine, having made a full recovery. When he saw Reb Asher he called to him excitedly, "You saved my life! The reading of those holy words gave me the strength to overcome all the pain and depression and I was able to overcome the illness!"

The Rebbe once related:

Reb Yitzchak Yoel Refolovitch, the *Rov* of Kremenchug, once turned to Reb Asher during a *farbrengen* and exclaimed, "Asher! If I would have your beard I would get paid double"... (Reb Asher had a great 'Hadrass Ponim' with a long beard, whereas Reb Yitzchak Yoel had a very short one. Reb Yitzchak Yoel was expressing the irony that the townspeople were he was did not have much appreciation for Torah knowledge and what was important for them was the external appearance). Reb Asher replied, "If I had a head and mind like yours, and it was not submerged in *galoshes*, my understanding of *Chassidus* would be totally different..." (Reb Yitzchak Yoel had a business of *galoshes* to subsidize his *rabbonus*.)

לזכות הילד מנחם מענדל סלבטיצקי שיחיו שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### Our Children

When the Belzer Rebbe made his second visit to the Rebbe (4 Adar, 5741), he began the *yechidus* by saying that he came to the Rebbe to warm himself.

The guest was accorded great respect. Following the *yechidus*, the Rebbe agreed to the request of the Belzer chassidim present to 'take *sholom*', to allow the chassidim to shake the Rebbe's hand.

The Rebbe explained, "Although it is not the *minhag Chabad* for chassidim to shake the Rebbe's hand, in honor of the distinguished guest, it will be done."

During the discussion, the topic of conversation moved to *chinuch*. In response to a point the Rebbe made, the Belzer Rebbe asked the Rebbe if he was referring to "*unzereh kinder*" (our children), the children of *frum* families.

The Rebbe responded sharply, "all children of *klal Yisroel* are *unzereh kinder!*"

לע"נ לאה בת אפרים - ל' שבט