

SHAVUOS

The Kedusha of the Day

What happens when two *tzaddikim* and *mekubalim* of the stature of Reb Shlomo Alkabetz and Rav Yosef Caro spend the awesome night of Shavuos together?

The answer is recorded in a 16th-century manuscript written by R. Shlomo Alkabetz: "The *Beis Yosef* and I decided to stay awake on the night of Shavuos and read passages of the Torah. [These passages are the basis of what later became the *Tikkun Leil Shavuos*.] After *chatzos*, as we reached the section of *Mishnayos*, a sweet voice was heard aloud from the mouth of the *Beis Yosef*. We all fell on our faces from sheer fright. The voice grew ever louder, until even the neighbors were able hear it, though they were unable to understand it. The voice, having been created by the *Mishna* we had learnt, told us of the pain suffered by the *Shechina* [in exile], and the great impact our learning this night had, silencing all the *Malochim* and piercing all the heavens. It then spoke of our great *zechus* of staying awake this night, and the greater effect it would have had with a *minyan*. The voice then encouraged us to continue learning throughout the night, not wasting even a moment. Finally, the *Shechina* instructed us to stand up and say *Boruch Shem...* aloud, as is done on Yom Kippur.

We wept profusely, from the joy of our experience and for the pain of the *Shechina*.

"When we met three other *chachomim* in the *mikve* the next morning, we related to them what had happened that night. They were understandably distressed, and we resolved to gather again on the second night, this time with a *minyan*.

"That night, because of our joy at having a *minyan*, the voice of the *Shechina* began speaking as soon as we started reading the *Aseres HaDibros* of *Devarim*. The voice praised our attainment, told us of the *ruchnius'dike* fire surrounding the house, and then directed us to say *Boruch Shem*. As the time of *chatzos* drew near, the *Shechina* spoke again and told us that for hundreds of years no such accomplishment had been attained."

The Shaloh HaKadosh copied this story from the manuscript of Reb Shlomo Alkabetz and concluded: "It is apparent in his writing that there was much more that he was not allowed to reveal. From this story we must learn how important it is to conduct

ourselves with a special *kedusha* on this night."

(סל"ה הקדוש מס' שבועות נר מצוה ה')

The Frierdiker Rebbe said: Shavuos is an *eis ratzon*, when *HaShem* confuses the one who accuses Yidden, just as He confuses him during the sounding of the *shofar* on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

Shavuos is an opportune time to make every effort to improve one's Torah learning and *avoda* in *yiras shamayim*, and to strive to do *teshuvah* concerning one's Torah study, without Satan's interference.

(היום יום, ג' וד' סיון)

Receiving the Torah

The Frierdiker Rebbe said: Every year on Shavuos, the same revelation of *HaShem* that was revealed at the time of *matan Torah* is revealed anew, and a Yid who at this time arouses himself to establish set times for studying Torah is successful in his *avoda*.

(סה"ש קי"ה ה"ש"ת ע' 116, תש"ג ע' 129)

"Once," related the Rebbe Maharash, "on the first night of Shavuos, I went to say *Gut Yom-Tov* to my great-uncle Reb Chaim Avraham, son of the Alter Rebbe. I found him sitting with his hands covering his tear-stained face. I asked him why he was crying on *Yom-Tov*. He explained that the Baal Shem Tov said that when one prepares himself properly during *Sefiras HaOmer*, he is found worthy on Shavuos of being admitted to the Fiftieth Gate of *kedusha* – "and I can't feel it," concluded Reb Chaim Avraham.

The Rebbe Maharash concluded, "My great uncle Reb Chaim Avraham was then seventy seven years old and was completely removed from all worldly matters. Yet on the night of Shavuos, he wept for the revelation of the Fiftieth Gate. This left me with a deep impression."

(ספר התולדות אדמו"ר מהר"ש ע' 73)

The eminent chossid, Reb Aizik Homiler, recalled that once before Shavuos, a number of chassidim discussed what they should ask of *HaShem* on the night of Shavuos. They decided to ask the Mittler Rebbe, and assumed that he would surely speak of

the study and understanding of *pnimiyus haTorah*.

Instead, he shared his own wish: "I would wish to have the fiery flame of *matan Torah*."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 108)

Recollecting his experience of Shavuos in תרמ"ה (1885), when he was a child of five, the Frierdiker Rebbe once said:

"On *erev* Shavuos, our *melamed* told us how Moshe Rabbeinu led the Yidden to *matan Torah*. He then called to us, '*Kinderlach!* Come with me and I will take you to *matan Torah*.' He took all thirty of us to Reb Binyomin's *beis medrash* and told us that the next morning, the first day of Shavuos, we should wake up an hour earlier than usual and come to this *beis medrash* for *kabbalas haTorah*.

"On Shavuos morning I awoke at seven o'clock and prepared to go there. My mother [*Rebbetzin Shterna Sara*] wanted me to eat something before leaving, but I insisted that I wouldn't eat before *matan Torah*. I set out to the *beis midrash*, where I found all of my classmates, and after *davening* our *melamed* took us all on a walk."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 100)

It was the custom of the Frierdiker Rebbe, and also of the Rebbe, to wish all Yidden the *brocho* of *kabbalas haTorah besimcha uvipnimiyus* – that we receive the Torah with *joy*, and that it *permeate* us.

The Rebbe explained this dual blessing as follows: Appreciating that we are *HaShem's* holy nation and that we are able to connect to Him via the Torah and its *mitzvos*, we are joyful – and this *joy* will enable us to be *permeated* by the Torah and not regard it (*chas veshalom*) as a burden.

(לקו"ח ח"ה ע' 292)

CONSIDER THIS!

- What brought the revelation of the *Shechina* in the *beis medrash* of the *Beis Yosef*: their learning or the auspicious night?
- What should one do to receive the revelation of *Matan Torah*?

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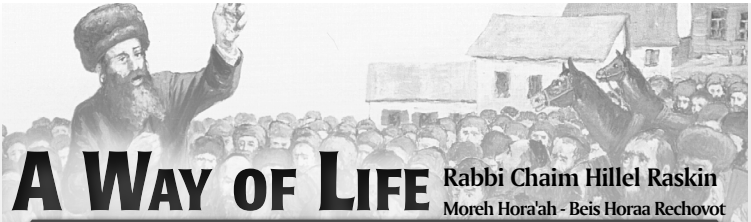


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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

OUR HEROES

Reb Berel Kurnitzer

Reb Berel Garfinkel, born to Chabad chassidim from the city of Kurenitz, studied in Lubavitch during the years 5676-7 (1916-7). Later he served as *mashgiach* in several underground branches of Tomchei Tmimim in Russia. After leaving Russia in the year 5696 (1936), he was appointed as *mashgiach* and general *menahel* of the *yeshiva* in Otvotzk, Poland. He brought a new *chayus* into the *yeshiva*, and he would often walk among the tables encouraging the *bochurim* in their learning, calling out, "Lebediker! Lebediker!" He married shortly before World War II. In the beginning of the war he was *mashgiach* of the *yeshiva* in the Radom Ghetto. He and his wife were killed *al kidush Hashem* in Auschwitz in the year 5703 (1943).

In his youth, Reb Berel once told his friends, "Come with me, I will ask the Rogatchover Gaon a question that he won't be able to answer!" They went to the Rogatchover and Reb Berel asked, "The Torah writes 'Vayehi erev vayehi boker,'—night and then day. The *Mishnah* as well begins with the *din* of *Shema* at night. If so, why does the *Shulchan Aruch* start with the *halachos* pertaining to the morning?"

The Rogatchover was quiet for a very long time, and finally told the astonished *bochurim* that he does not have an answer. After taking leave of the *gaon*, Reb Berel said to his friends, "This question the Rebbe Rashab asks in a *maamar* and does not give an answer. I was therefore certain that the Rogatchover would not be able to answer this question either."

Reb Mendel Futerfass related:

Reb Berel was five years older than me had incredible capabilities. When he was seventeen years old he was fluent in the three "Bavos" and additional *masechtos* with Rashi, Tosfos, and other *rishonim*.

When we met next, he was twenty one. I asked him where he was up to, and he replied sincerely that he knew all of *Shas* with Rashi, Tosfos, and other *rishonim*, as well as all the printed *maamorim* – all by heart! He said it without any air of pride or "humility." He wasn't proud at all.

(ר' מנדל ע' 253)

לזכות יהושע העשל בן חנה שיי' לרפו"ש וקרובה

Up All Night

Do I have to wash *negel vasser* after being up all night?

- There are three reasons given for why we wash *negel vasser* in the morning: (1) **Cleanliness**: In preparation for *davening* since one may have touched a covered area of the body.¹ (2) **Sanctity**: To prepare to serve Hashem by sanctifying the hands like the *kohanim* in the Beis Hamikdash.² (3) **Purity**: To remove the *ruach hatumah* (spirit of impurity) which rests upon a person during sleep at night and remains on the hands upon awakening.³
- There are several practical differences between these explanations: (a) If washing is for cleanliness, one would wash hands with a *bracha* before all *tefilos*. (b) Cleanliness is accomplished with regular washing, sanctity requires one pour on each hand from a vessel,⁴ and removing *ruach hatumah* requires three times on each hand alternately.⁵ (c) *Ruach hatumah* also bars a person from learning Torah before washing.⁶
- If a person remains awake all night, it is a *machlokes* if he is susceptible to *ruach hatumah*. Some say that it is caused by sleeping, while others say that it sets in regardless at the end of night.⁷ (For this reason one who rises before sunrise should wash again after sunrise without a *bracha*.)
- There is a general dispute concerning *birkos hashachar* whether they were instituted as *brachos* over actions, in which case one who does not perform the specific action (e.g. wear a hat) does not recite that *bracha*, or if are they are general praise for Hashem instituted to recite each morning regardless. Our practice follows the second opinion.⁸ Some argue that likewise *al netilas yodoyim* for sanctity is a daily *bracha* even for someone who didn't wash his hands.⁹
- Practically, one should wash even if he is only obligated according to one reason, but he does not make a *bracha* unless he is obligated by all three (since *safek brachos l'hakel*, when in doubt concerning a *bracha* we refrain). Hence, if a person remains awake all night, he should wash hands in the morning without a *bracha*.¹⁰ Likewise one should wash hands before *mincha* and *mariv* as well.¹¹
- Additionally, one who remains awake all night, and uses the bathroom after sunrise would recite a blessing, as several strong quashing requirements combine;¹² the obligation to wash for cleanliness, and a possible obligation for sanctity and purity. This is sufficient reason to recite *al netilas yodoyim*.¹³

1. רא"ש ברכות פ"ט סי' כ"ג שו"ע רבנו מהדו"ב או"ח סי' ד' ס"א.
 2. שו"ת מהדו"ק סי' ד' ס"ג, סימן תצ"ד ס"ג פסקי הסיידור – סדר נטילה ד"ה אם ניעור.
 3. אב"ל לא צריך כלי, כח נותן, ולא מים כשרים לנטילה זו – פסקי הסיידור.
 4. ראה הגהות הגרעק"א סי' ד' סק"ו.
 5. כך הורה רבינו ביחידות – היכל מנחם ח"ב ע' ר"ג. וראה הגהות הגרעק"א שם, דעת הגר"ש אויערבאך באשי ישראל פ"ב אות ל' ובאריכות בהערה צ"ט שם. אך באג"ק ח"ג ע' ד' הוראה בספ"ר לברך (בלי שום תנאים, וראה מה שחקר בספר שולחן הוזהב עמ' 195 בזה). ובביאור ההוראה ובמנהג חסידים ראה ספר שערי תפילה ומנהג לגרמ"ש אשכנזי ע"ה סי' ד'.
 6. רא"ש ברכות פ"ט סי' כ"ג שו"ע רבנו מהדו"ב או"ח סי' ד' ס"א.
 7. שו"ת רשב"א ח"א סי' קצ"א שו"ע רבנו מהדו"ק או"ח סי' ד' ס"א.
 8. זוהר פרשת וישב קפ"ד ע"ב שו"ע רבנו מהדו"ב או"ח סי' ד' ס"א.
 9. מסקנת רבינו בפסקי הסיידור, אך ראה שו"ע מהדו"ק סי' ד' ס"ב.
 10. פסקי הסיידור סדר נטילה.
 11. שו"ע רבנו מהדו"ב סי' א' ס"ז.
 12. שו"ת מהדו"ק סי' ד' ס"ד.
 13. שו"ת סימן מ"ו ס"ו.
 14. ב"י סי' ד' ד"ה ומשמע שאם. וראה ט"ז

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

לזכות הרה"ת שמשון וזוגתו חוה איידל שיחיו דרייזן
לרגל חתונתם בשעמ"צ
נדבת הורי החתן הרה"ת מרדכי דוב וזוגתו חנה שיחיו דרייזן

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

A Servant of Hashem – Throughout the Year!

"Please sing a *niggun* connected to Shavuot," requested the Rebbe during the *yom tov* meal of Shavuot 5729 (1969) to Reb Zalman Taibel. After some encouragement, he melodically sang a *niggun* to the words "Ano avda dekusho brich hu (I am a servant of Hashem)." When he said he heard it from Reb Shimon Kloper of Nikolaiev, the Rebbe, himself a Nikolaiever, said: "Oh yes, I knew him! He was a *chassidisher Yid*..."

The *niggun* quickly caught on amongst chassidim, and from then on, this *niggun* became synonymous with Reb Zalman. Often during *farbrengens* he would start the *niggun*.

Motzoei Rosh Hashono 5741 (1980). Reb Zalman was in his nineties, yet he made his way in the line for *kos shel brocho*. When his turn came, the Rebbe unexpectedly put his *becher* down, grasped Reb Zalman with both hands, and began singing his *niggun*. Rebbe and chossid sang in unison of the service of Hashem, and the entire crowd followed after them...

The Rebbe concluded with emotion, "Ano avdo through Elul and *selichos*; ano avdo through *Rosh Hashono*; ano avdo through *Aseres Yemei Teshuvo*; ano avdo through *Succos* and *Simchas Torah*; ano avdo through the entire year!"

לזכות הילד רפאל משה שיי' לרגל הכנסו בבריתו של אא"ה
נדבת ולזכות הוריו הרה"ת ישראל ארי' לייב וזוגתו חי מושקא שיחיו
להצלחה רבה בגשמיות וברוחניות