

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 *mashal*" 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)

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' קכד)

The Friediker 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)

CONSIDER THIS!

- 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*?



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A WAY OF LIFE

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

Verbal Harassment

The Torah says, "A man should not wrong his fellow."¹ Chazal explain that one must be sincere in social interactions just as in business, and one may not harass another person verbally or cause him any discomfort (*ono'as devarim*).²

Here are some examples of this prohibition brought in *halacha*:

1. One may not call a person by a derogatory nickname. Even if the nickname is generally used in a friendly manner (e.g. height, hair color), one may not use it if his intention is to make him uncomfortable.³
2. One may not mention to a person a previous lifestyle that will make him uncomfortable (e.g. before he was Torah observant).
3. One may not ask someone a question for which he won't know the answer and will be ashamed.⁴ Thus, one may not ask a guest to recite a *dvar Torah* if they don't have what to say.⁵ Likewise, it is forbidden to test a child on material or in a manner which he won't be able to answer, and he will become embarrassed (unless this is necessary to motivate him).⁶
4. One may not knowingly send a person to a supplier that doesn't carry the sought after product, thereby causing agony to the buyer or the seller.⁷
5. One may not tell someone who is going through a hard time that they are at fault, because they didn't do what they were supposed to.⁸ One may only suggest that they reexamine their actions in a gentle way that won't hurt their feelings.⁹

Chazal say that verbal harassment is even more severe than causing financial damage since he hurts the person himself (not his property) and the misdeed cannot be undone (unlike a financial loss which can be repaid). If the one who was harassed cries out to Hashem he is immediately answered.¹⁰

Beis Din has the authority to punish a verbal harasser. Some say that he should be placed in *nidui* (a form of *cherem*) until he will monetarily appease the offender, while others hold that he deserves *makas mardus* (lashes).¹¹

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| 1. ויקרא כה, ז. | 7. ראה שו"ע ר' הל' אונאה סכ"ח. |
| 2. ב"מ נח ע"ב. | 8. ראה שו"ע ר' שם, ומפרשי הגמ' בב"מ שם. |
| 3. שו"ע חו"מ סי' רכח ס"ה. | 9. ראה ברכות דף ה' ובמפרשים שם, שהרי אמרו חז"ל שכשיסורים באים לאדם יפשפש במעשיו. |
| 4. שו"ע שם ס"ד. | 10. שו"ע ר' שם סכ"ז. |
| 5. ספר חסידים סי' שיב. | 11. ראה פת"ח שם ס"ב ובהערות. |
| 6. ראה פתחי חושן הלכות אונאה פט"ו הע' יב. | |

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

OUR HEROES

Reb Avrohom of Tchechnov

Reb Avrohom Landau was the *rov* in Tchechnov, Poland starting from 5580 (1820). He came from a very distinguished lineage, and was a descendant of the *Ateres Zkeinim* on *Shulchon Aruch*. He was a master in *halacha* and wrote many *seforim*. Towards the end of his life, after the passing of the *Chidushei HaRim*, he conducted himself as a Rebbe and many chassidim flocked to him. To others he was known as "The Tzadik of Tchechnov." He passed away on 5 Adar I 5635 (1875).

In Tchechnov there was a simple *Yid* that would celebrate and get drunk the entire month of Adar. Reb Avrohom said that the man was actually acting correctly. Haman drew lots when to kill the Jews and it fell out on the entire month of Adar; why did he request from Achashverosh to kill the Jews only on 13 Adar, and not the entire month? We must say that Haman was afraid he might not succeed in his plot, and thereby the Jews would have celebrated the entire month. This thought Haman could not bear so he limited the decree to one day. But we, who know what his thoughts were, should celebrate the entire month.

(לקוטי סיפורי התועודיות לרמז"ג ע' 422)

It is told that after reciting *kinos* on Tisha B'Av, Reb Avrohom would not take the *sefer* home with him. He would say, "Why do I need it in my home? This coming year I will anyway not need it—I believe every day Moshiach will come."

(זכותא דאברהם ע' נו)

A fellow once traveled to Tchechnov only taking along his *tefilin*, figuring that he will borrow a *talis* at his destination. However, when he arrived, he could not find a proper kosher *talis* with which to *daven*.

In the meantime chassidim went to greet the Rebbe and he joined them. When his turn came, the Rebbe asked him if he had already *davened*, and the man replied he had not, since he had left his *talis* at home and could not find one here.

Reb Avrohom rebuked the man's carelessness saying, "You have embarrassed your *talis* by leaving him at home. The *talis* is now laughing at you, saying that there will come a time when you will leave your *tefilin* and only take your *talis* with you..."

(אוצר ישראל ע' צט)

זכות יהושע העשל בן חנה שי' לרפו"ש וקרובה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

If You Will Be, He'll Be...

Mrs. Martha Stock related:

In 5721, we went into *yechidus* with our family in honor of our son Benjy's *upshernish*. My husband Reb Shimshon said to the Rebbe that he was requesting a *brocho* for just one thing: that Benjy should be a chossid and a *lamdan*.

The Rebbe answered, "Shimshon, you have to show your son how to do it. He can't do it on his own. You must teach him. If you will be a chossid and *lamdan*, he'll be."

At another *yechidus*, Shimshon went in with our children. Benjy and his sister Chani, five- and six-years-old, were already attending school, and the Rebbe tested them on their studies.

After completing the questions, the Rebbe got up from his seat, came around the table and took hold of Shimshon, saying, "*Ken ich dir farheren?*" (Can I test you?)

Shimshon said, "Forget it, Rebbe." But The Rebbe would not hear of it, "It is not right. *Epes darfst du lernen.*" (You need to learn something.)

After the *yechidus*, Shimshon began consistently attending a *shiur*.

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