

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • בלק תשע"ח • 468
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

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.

(תר"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 הקדמה לח ע' קנו)

In this *maamar*, the Friediker 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)

CONSIDER

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?

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN

At a *farbrengen* in תרצ"ט (1939), the Friediker 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"ט 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...”

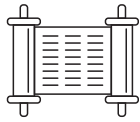
(אג"ק ח"ה ע' רפ"א)

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KASHERING AN OVEN

I moved into an apartment that was previously rented by non-Jews. How do I kasher the oven?

Kashering removes the taste from a utensil in the same way it was absorbed (kebolo kach polto). When non-kosher taste was absorbed directly into the utensil without any liquid in between, libun gamur is required to burn out the taste. This is accomplished by heating the metal until it turns red hot (i.e. sparking) or the top level shaves off. (Libun gamur may be done without waiting 24 hours beforehand, and one need not rinse the utensil afterwards.)

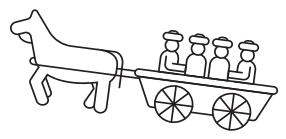
In earlier times, when people cooked food on the oven walls, an oven required libun gamur. Presently, food only touches the floor if it falls, in which case it gets burned if there is fire on the bottom (i.e. conventional ovens). Additionally, this isn't the consistent manner of absorption and b'dieved doesn't dictate the method of kashering. Thus, in a situation of dire need (hefsed gadol), one may kasher the walls, door and floor of the oven with libun kal (explained in issue #461) or hagala since they absorbed taste primarily via steam or liquid. Racks and flat trays that absorbed directly without liquid require libun gamur.

When libun gamur is required, contemporary poskim are concerned that modern utensils usually don't reach such a stage without getting ruined, and therefore it may not be applied to the majority of modern-day utensils. Some, however, argue that although modern-day metal doesn't spark due to its superior manufacturing, the heat that used to cause sparking can still burn out the taste as libun gamur (this can be assumed at 842° F). In practice, one may rely on this in times of need.

Earthenware may not be kashered with hagala or libun kal, and this is relevant to ovens with ceramic coatings. Some are also stringent not to kasher the glass door of the oven in this manner, as it is comparable to earthenware (though there is room for leniency in times of need year round, excluding Pesach). Libun gamur, however, may be used for ovens with earthenware coatings and glass doors (but one must make sure the door reaches the required heat).

Other utensils or trays made of earthenware (e.g. ceramic, porcelain), may not be kashered with libun gamur, for a person may be concerned to expose the inside of the utensil to an open flame and might not do it properly (unlike ovens which are normally heated from the inside).

1. שוע"ר סי' תנ"א סי"ג (שיטת האג"מ בס' הגע' כלים ע' תמ"ה).
2. דרכ"מ יו"ד סי' קכ"א סקט"ו ערוה"ש יו"ד סי' קכ"א סכ"ב (א"צ לחכות). מאירי פסחים ל ע"ב (א"צ לשטוף).
3. ראה שוע"ר סי' תס"א ס"א.
4. ראה שוע"ר סי' תנ"א סכ"ו סכ"ז שנוהגין להחמיר ואין לשנות ובסכ"ח שבדיעבד כשכבר הגיעו ליש להקל.
5. ראה קיצור הלכות הכשרת כלים פ"ו ג' וראה שם יש לצרף שלפי כמו"כ דיעות אין איסור זיעה בתנורים שלנו ממילא אינם יכולים לאסור בחזרה.
6. ראה שו"ת מעשה חושב"ו ע"ר ד"ד שאולי בגלל האיטום לא רואים את האדמימות ומסתמך על זה



R. AVREMKE ZHEBINER

R. Avrohom HaLevi Landau, known as R. Avremke Zhebener, was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash. He was a grandson of R. Zalman Kurenitzer, who was the leading chossid of the city of Kurenitz and was of the great chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. At first, R. Avremke was in business in Kurenitz and was quite a gvir. When things changed and he lost his fortune, the Rebbe Maharash appointed him to be the rov of the city Zhebin.

R. Avremke was once asked why he chose to be the rabbi of such a small town as Zhebin, when he could have been a rabbi of a much more respectable city.

R. Avremke replied, "If I was interested in taking a position of rabbi, a more respectable community would have been my choice. But to me, the honor and power of a rabbinic position is undesirable, and so the smaller the community, the better."

R. Groinem once came to know an esteemed individual who rose early each morning to lament the

destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. R. Groinem asked his mashpia R. Avremke if he knew any chassidim who did this. R. Avremke replied that there are chassidim who do it, but they are particular not to let others know about it.

R. Groinem took it as referring to R. Avremke himself.

Once, a kernel of wheat was found in a room that had been cleaned for Pesach, and R. Avrohom cried about it bitterly.

In earlier times, it was hard to get large amounts of wheat for matza that was guarded from the time of harvest (shmura). The common practice was to eat shmura matza only at the sedarim, and the rest of Pesach people would eat handmade matza that was made with non-shmura wheat.

When it was suggested to R. Avremke that he undertake the stringency of eating shmura for all of Pesach, he replied that he hadn't yet reached that level.

A Moment with The Rebbe



A PERSPECTIVE SHIFT

At a hachnosas sefer Torah celebration, tragedy struck. A young woman, who was suffering from an illness, suddenly underwent an attack, and was pronounced lifeless shortly thereafter. The host, most distraught, asked the Rebbe why such a great mitzvah had such a sad outcome. The Rebbe's handwritten response transformed his perception.

The Rebbe began by establishing that one cannot understand Hashem's ways, that a sefer Torah could only bring good, and that a person's days are precisely numbered. The Rebbe continued:

this: were it not for the celebration, she would have passed away on the street, amongst goyim and certainly without hearing soothing words and seeing faces of Yidden. Could these two scenarios be compared? Could we conceive the significance of what one experiences during the last seconds of life?

"Perhaps," the Rebbe continued, "the reason you were originally aroused to donate the sefer torah was so that this woman could leave this world with tranquility, in a Yiddische home, guarded by a mezuzah..."

(For the complete response, see Likutei Sichos vol. 35, page 345)

"Perhaps we could look at it like