

The Weekly Farbrengens



500 • למען ישמענו • תרומה תשע"ט
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

DYNAMIC DEVOTION (I)

WARMTH AND PASSION

The Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim* were once traveling during the winter and while passing over a frozen river, they noticed peasants carving out crosses in the ice. The Baal Sham Tov gave orders to stop the wagon and he stood for a while and watched the peasants at work. The students were astonished at why their Rebbe would stop for such a scene and one of them mustered the courage to ask for an explanation.

The Baal Shem Tov explained that everything that a person sees or hears should serve as a lesson in his or her service of *HaShem*. Now, the peasants were able to carve out their *avoda zara* in the river only because it had frozen. The lesson: *Kedusha* must be approached with warmth and vigor.

(תו"מ חל"ה ע' 129, סיני מ"ח ע' פג)

It was a bitterly cold night, but the soldier in the Czar's army did not leave his guard post. He stood there without moving, to the point that his feet froze. When his superiors told this to the Czar, they were sure that he would reward the soldier for his outstanding dedication. Instead, the Czar ordered that he be whipped twenty-five lashes and explained, "The oath that a soldier makes to serve the Czar faithfully ought to warm him and prevent him from freezing".

The *chossid* Reb Nechemia of Dubrovna witnessed the whipping and later said: "This experience invigorated my *avodas HaShem* for twenty-five years. We too took an oath at Har Sinai, and it must warm us forever..."

(שמו"ס ח"ג מעשה קלט, ארבע חסידים ע' 107)

A DIFFERENCE OF LIFE AND DEATH

The elder *chossid* Rashbatz would tell the following *masha*:

There was once a king who had a beautiful bird and would play with it constantly. At one point, the bird broke one of its feet, yet the king still cherished it. Soon after, the bird broke her second

foot and her feathers fell off, but the king still loved it.

One day the bird died. The king was so distressed that he became sick. The doctors diagnosed the king with having a great desire for something and if this desire would be fulfilled, he would regain his health. Everyone knew it was the missing bird, but what could be done? Finally a plan was devised. Professional craftsmen were brought in who designed a bird made out of gold with feathers, eyes, feet and all. Its beauty surpassed the old dead bird by far. Now they were sure that the king would recover. But not only did the king not play with it, he didn't even pay any attention to it. When asked for an explanation, the king said: "The previous bird may not have been so beautiful, but it was *alive*. This one, with all its beauty, is lifeless..."

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 272)

CONSIDER

Isn't it equally possible to draw
holy images on the ice?

Is the value of holy passion
because it detracts from
negative excitement or is it
valuable in its own right?

Reb Menashe of Iliya was a strongminded person and was not swayed by public opinion. When he heard about the conflict about *chassidim*, some people saying they were great and holy while others were saying the opposite, he decided to travel to Liozna to see for himself. When he returned, he was asked what he saw. He replied: "I saw that they are living souls, whereas you are lifeless souls."

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"ג ע' 236)

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes in a letter:

"I am surprised by the frigidity of some of *Anash* with regard to themselves, as well as towards

others. In earlier times every one of *Anash*, no matter of what level, knew his mission and responsibility as a *chossid* – to himself, to others and to the whole of *Chassidus*. The simple wagon drivers of Schedrin and Nevel would listen to the words of *Chassidus* repeated by *chassidim* when traveling to Lubavitch, and when resting by the inns on the way. Despite their level of understanding they did it with a *chayus* just like the *chayus* of those who were knowledgeable in Torah and *Chassidus*, and at times with an even greater *chayus*.

"In those days a *chossid* was warm and warmed up others. But what of today? The *chossid* is cold himself, and thereby makes others cold, and as a result *chas veshalom* it is as if the wellspring of *Chassidus* is dried up."

(אג"ק אדהר"י צ"ח ע' שט)

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT?

The *makos* in Mitzrayim were not simply a punishment, but a process of refinement. In the first *maka* cool water was replaced with warm life-sustaining blood, since in order to leave Mitzrayim, literally and in everyday life, we must develop a passion for holy matters.

One may ask: Why must I be passionate about *kedusha*? Isn't it enough that I drop my passion for negative things?

A person must realize that it is impossible to be passionless. If one is impassionate about *kedusha* he will automatically gravitate to negativity. This is why the *yetzer hara* invests so much energy that a person should not be excited by *Elokus*.

(לקו"ש ח"א ע' 121 ואילך)

The Rebbe also notes that true warmth and passion exist only in the realm of *kedusha*. *Kelipa* is essentially of a cold nature, and was given an artificial passion just so that man would have free choice.

(לקו"ש ח"א ע' 123)

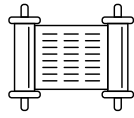


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BREAKAWAY SHUL

When a shul splits, who gets to keep the shul's *seforim*, furnishings, and funds?

Ideally, as long as one shul can physically hold the entire community, they should all daven together since "b'rov am hadras melech," the splendor of the king is in a multitude of people.¹ However, there are situations when having separate shuls is called for, such as when there are differences of *nuschaos* and *minhagim*, it is too small to contain everyone or when there is a desecration of shul respect.

When there is simply personal disagreement, some *poskim* posit that if there is much quarreling in the shul, it is preferable that they split in two than continuing as one shul fraught with *machlokes*.² Additionally, the *davening* is more pleasing and acceptable above when the congregation is *davening* together with unity as opposed to when bearing animosity and hard feelings towards fellow congregants.³

If the minority breaks away due to personal disagreement, everything stays with the majority. (Moving the assets to the minority might also be considered lessening the *kedusha* of those funds.) Thus, the majority gains ownership of the shul entity. If, however, the breakaway group is the majority, there is dispute amongst the *poskim*:

Some hold that the objects are taken by the majority, while others hold that they were consecrated to that specific shul with the purpose of staying there and should not be removed. Furthermore, the original shul possesses a *chazaka*, and cannot be forced to relinquish it ("kim li").⁴

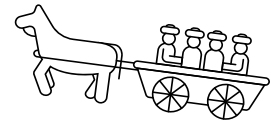
Yet, in a situation where the community split for a justifiable reason like lack of space or differences of *nusach*, the minority is also entitled to receive their percentage of the assets.⁵

In reality, it often happens that both sides are antagonizing each other and want the other side to leave so that they could remain as the "original" owners (*muchzak*). In such situations, they must ask *beis din* to arrange a fair split between them.⁶ An agreement should be made that those who leave will be entitled to receive their share, similar to when they open a new shul due to lack of space.⁷

1. מג"א סי' קנ"ד ס"ק כ"ג.
2. רדב"ז ח"ג סי' תע"ב, חת"ס חוה"מ סי' ב' וראה בס' ועד אורח ג'.
3. ראה שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ה סי' כ'.
4. ראה פסק"ת א"ח סי' קנ"ד ס"ק לה, וראה שו"ת מהרש"ם שם ובסי' י"ט ומה שמדייק משר"ת אבקת רוכל.
5. שו"ת באר יצחק חאו"ח סי' כ"ד, וראה פת"ש חו"מ סי' קס"ב סק"ו. וראה בס' ועד הבית כהלכה פרק ט' שאלה נ שמדמה מקרה זה למקרה בחלקו מצד שינוי נוסח.
6. סי' ועד הבית כהלכה ע' תק"ג.
7. ספק חיובי שכנים שיעורי הרב וזנר ע"ה עמ' ל"ח.

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

Our Heroes



REB YISROEL NEVLER

Reb Yisroel Levin was born in the year 5645 (1885) in the *chassidische* town of Nevel. He studied for many years in Lubavitch and became a *lamdan*, as well as a great *maskil* in *Chassidus*. After his marriage to the daughter of Reb Mordechai Pevzner, he settled in the city of Klimovitch. The Frierdiker Rebbe advised that he should be accepted as a *melamed* in order for "the children to know what a *chassidische melamed* is." Reb Yisroel was arrested twice for teaching Torah to children and each time was held in prison for many months. During World War II, he fled to Tashkent where he continued to teach Torah, infused with *chassidische* stories. He escaped Russia after the war but fell ill shortly after. He passed away on 9 Iyar 5709 (1949).

nefesh' is a *Yid* who possesses a *neshama*. Someone without a *neshama* is called a 'baal guf.'"

(רשימות דברים חדש ע' 289)

In Elul 5698 (1938), Reb Yisroel was arrested by the NKVD and was held in prison for over a year, enduring painful interrogations. Friends of the family suggested to Reb Yisroel's wife to send their little daughter to the communist schools, hopefully resulting in his release or a reduction of his sentence. The little girl began attending the school and a short time later Reb Yisroel was indeed released and he returned home.

The following morning he noticed his daughter carrying a knapsack and heading for the door. He inquired as to where she was going, and the little girl responded, "To school. Friends told mother that if I go to school you might be freed and that's exactly what happened!" Reb Yisroel replied firmly, "If this is the condition that warranted my release, I would rather stay in prison!"

Reb Yisroel once overheard someone telling his friend about a certain *halacha* where the Alter Rebbe writes in *Shulchan Aruch* that a *baal nefesh* should be *machmir* on himself. The friend responded, "I'm not a *baal nefesh*." Reb Yisroel entered the conversation asking, "If you're not a *baal nefesh*, then what are you? A 'baal

A Moment with The Rebbe



A HOLY PERSON

HaRav Elchonon Halperin, head of Hisachdus Kehillas Hachareidim of London, related what he heard from HaRav Moshe Mund, the Av Beis Din of Mikalov:

we left Paris at 8 pm, until we reached Katowice at 7:30 am. There was so much racket, passengers got on and off and peddlers mingled, but nothing seemed to disturb him.

I was once traveling on an interstate train from Paris to Warsaw. A *yungerman* with a remarkable demeanor alighted the carriage and sat down on one of the four seats in his cabin.

I was taken by this scene but had no idea who it was. At the Katowice station the woman got off and the *yungerman* sat down. A few stops later I saw a group of Lubavitcher *chassidim* who had come to greet the Rebbe's son-in-law.

After a few stops, a non-Jewish woman came on, and took her seat in the same cabin. The *yungerman* immediately got up, and stood at the end of the carriage, engrossed in a small *Gemara*. He stood for approximately ten hours: from just after

This is why I say that the Lubavitcher Rebbe is a *heiliger mentch* (a holy person)!

(*Shemen Soson Meichaveirecho*, vol. 1, page 168, transcribed as he heard from HaRav Halperin)