

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



למען ישמעו • מסות-מסעי תשע"ט • 525
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

FEELING FOR A FELLOW

Before Pesach תרי"ו (1880), two chassidim arrived in Lubavitch to see the Rebbe Maharash. The first chossid, Reb Michoel Aharon Pisarevsky, though not particularly knowledgeable in Torah and Chassidus, had a warm *chassidisher* heart. He was always concerned for others. The second chossid, Reb Leib Posen, was a wealthy man from Vitebsk who gave *tzedakah* and occupied himself with *gemilus chassodim*, but all within certain limits.

When Reb Michoel Aharon entered the Rebbe's study for *yechidus*, the first subject he raised was the situation of his old friend, Reb Nachman Zeltzer. He described the poverty of the family, which included children of marriageable age, and pleaded for *rachmonus* on his friend's behalf. The Rebbe gave his *brocho* that *HaShem* should help him, and Reb Michoel Aharon begged the Rebbe that the *brocho* be a firm commitment.

When he then described his own dire situation, the Rebbe said, "It seems you're even worse off than Reb Nachman!" Reb Michael Aharon answered, "About myself, I know I don't deserve anything better, so I mustn't complain, and I have to be satisfied with what I have." The Rebbe covered his eyes, sat in a state of *dveikus* for a short while and then said, "If a person *davens* for a fellow Yid, his own *tefillos* are answered first. May *HaShem* grant you *hatzlocho!*"

And not long after, both Reb Nachman and his friend Reb Michael Aharon succeeded in their businesses and became very wealthy.

The second chossid, Reb Leib, began his *yechidus* by describing his personal matters at length and asked for a *brocho*. Only then did he sigh and report the situation of his *chaver*, a chossid called Reb Shmuel Brin. Even though Reb Shmuel was a very active and successful businessman, he would learn an in-depth *shiur* in *Gemoro*, *Choshen Mishpot* and *Chassidus* every day. Lately, his business had not been doing well, and swindlers had also thrown him deeply into debt.

Reb Leib related Reb Shmuel's misfortunes and concluded, "Of course it's all from *HaShem*, but he still is to be pitied." The Rebbe covered his eyes and sank deep in thought, but did not reply.

Soon afterwards, a fire broke out on the street where Reb Leib's storage houses stood, and he lost tens of thousands of rubles. At the same time another fire caught onto his shop, causing him an additional loss. He soon traveled to see the Rebbe, and at his *yechidus* he told the Rebbe of his great losses and wept bitterly. With a penetrating look, the Rebbe said, "When tragedy befell Reb Shmuel Brin and left him penniless,

you accepted it calmly, but now, when it has come to *your* merchandise, you cry out. The *you* and the *I* are two separate things!"

Realizing now that his hardships had resulted from his attitude towards his friend, Reb Leib wandered around in a daze, not knowing what to do. After two days he returned to the Rebbe's room, asked to be guided on a path of *teshuvah*, and undertook to think about the welfare of others.

CONSIDER

Were these Chassidim rewarded for what they *said* or for how they *felt* regarding their fellows?

In response, the Rebbe Maharash quoted the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, that whenever one passes judgment on another, he is automatically passing judgment on himself, whether in a positive direction or the opposite. Thus, if one passes judgment on another for something he has done, he causes the Heavenly Court to press charges against himself. If, instead, he shares in the anguish of that other person and argues that he deserves help from *HaShem*, he himself is dealt with compassionately. The Rebbe then instructed Reb Leib to lend his friend 3000 rubles, and to proceed to Moscow to buy merchandise for his own shop. After the Rebbe gave him a *brocho* he headed for home, ready to do as instructed.

However, arriving at Reb Shmuel's home, he found out that his friend had traveled to nearby Lubavitch. So, even though he was anxious to travel to Moscow for his own purchases, he was afraid to deviate from the exact order of the Rebbe's instructions. Finally, when he went to *shul* on *leil Shabbos*, he found the recently-returned Reb Shmuel in a joyous mood and surrounded by chassidim, who were listening excitedly to what he was saying. Reb Leib envied him: despite his losses, he looked like the happiest of men. The *gabbai* then quieted everyone. Reb Shmuel *chazer'd* the *maamar* that he had just heard from the Rebbe, and the following day, he *chazer'd* it twice more.

On *Motzoei Shabbos*, Reb Leib hurried to Reb Shmuel's house to give him the money. Welcoming him warmly, Reb Shmuel tried to raise his friend's spirits by talking about the well-known saying that "after a fire one

prosper." Reb Leib was moved by the way Reb Shmuel was able to console him, when only recently he himself had also suffered financial loss.

Reb Shmuel then told him of the despair that he had felt when he first found out about the calamity that had befallen him. However, not long after, a special messenger brought him a message from the Rebbe, telling him that he knew of his circumstances but did not agree with the way he was responding to the situation.

Reb Shmuel continued, "When I then visited Lubavitch, I was instructed to buy readymade rafts, and received a *brocho* for my merchandise and for a side income as well. So I traveled to Riga to order some fine rafts. On the way home I met a Yid looking for an arbitrator to settle a dispute between two businessmen. I agreed, and after successfully sorting out the matter, I was paid.

"How will you pay the people who will deliver the rafts?" Reb Leib asked. Reb Shmuel reassured him that he had the Rebbe's *brocho* and *HaShem* would no doubt help.

Not knowing how to properly broach the topic, Reb Leib blurted out, "Don't worry about the money! I've brought you a certain sum for that!" And he told him of the loan of 3000 rubles that he had in his wallet. When Reb Shmuel refused to accept it, Reb Leib told him the whole story.

Reb Shmuel said, "You have done what the Rebbe has told you to do. However, our *chachomim* assure us that *HaShem* considers a good thought is as if it was actually done. I am not accepting the money."

That same night Reb Leib traveled to Lubavitch, complained to the Rebbe about Reb Shmuel's refusal, and left the bundle of rubles on the table. Early Monday morning, a messenger from the Rebbe knocked on Reb Shmuel's door with a sealed envelope and a note written by the Rebbe: "I am sending you three thousand rubles until after you sell the rafts. Have *hatzlocho!*"

Reb Shmuel accepted the money, bought the rafts and sold them at a handsome profit. At the same time, Reb Leib traveled to Moscow, where the suppliers agreed to sell him merchandise on credit. Moreover, he won thousands of rubles in a lottery and on the advice of the Rebbe, bought and sold flax for an incredible profit.

All the above four chassidim finally enjoyed great success and remained wealthy throughout their lives.

(התמים חוברת ד' ע' קג)



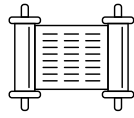
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RENOVATIONS IN THE NINE DAYS

What kind of renovations aren't allowed during the Nine Days?

Halacha states that once the month of Av begins, we must decrease in joyous activities, including joyful construction, such as a "wedding home" or adding decorative moldings to any home.¹ While some apply this prohibition to the construction of contemporary wedding halls, others point out that today's hall owners have no personal joy associated with the building, unlike in Talmudic times when a house would be constructed especially for one's child's wedding.²

Painting a home shouldn't be done during the nine days and one shouldn't either attach wallpaper.³ Some write that painting furniture is likewise prohibited.⁴

One may not plant flowers, trees or grass for beauty during these days, though one is allowed to do regular activities to keep the flowers and trees alive. Fruit trees may be planted.⁵

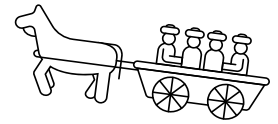
One may not have a non-Jew do any of the above prohibited forms of work during this time if he is being paid per hour or per day. If he is being paid a set price for the job and he was hired before the Nine Days and he chooses out of his own preference to do the work during this time, it can be allowed. Yet, one should try to convince the non-Jew to postpone the work for after the Nine Days, even if it means offering him some extra pay.⁶

Though home expansions for the mere purpose of having more space aren't allowed, building for non-joyous purposes is permitted when the circumstances are dire. Thus, if one's family grew and one needs another room, or people are about move into a house or apartment and it needs renovation, it is allowed, since it is not being done for joy but for need.⁷ The same applies if a wall needs painting due to discoloration from a leak.

Building for business purposes, to rent or sell, is also not considered for joy and is permissible.⁸ Building for communal *mitzva*-related purposes is permitted, thus a shul may be built or expanded during this time.⁹ The same applies to schools, *yeshivos* or any communal buildings.¹⁰

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' תקנ"א ס"ב.
2. הלכות בין המצרים ע' ע"ג הע' 17.
3. שו"ע או"ח שם.
4. בא"ח פ' דברים וראה, וראה משנ"ב סי' תקנ"א ס"ק נ"ד.
5. שו"ע תקנ"א ס"ב.
6. משנ"ב או"ח סי' תקנ"א סק"ב בשם המג"א סק"ז.
7. ע"פ משנ"ב שם ס"ק י"ב וס"ק י"ג.
8. ע"פ משנ"ב שם סק"א.
9. משנ"ב שם.
10. ערוה"ש או"ח סי' תקנ"א ס"ז.

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



REB GERSHON BER PAHARER

Reb Gershon Ber's father passed away while his mother was pregnant with him, and he was named after his father. A short time later his mother passed away as well and he was raised by his relatives. Eventually, he was taken in by his uncle Reb Abba der Lebediker, a chossid of the Alter Rebbe who brought him close to the ways of *Chassidus*. In the year 5609 (1849), Reb Gershon Ber met Reb Hillel Paritcher and became his *talmid*. Reb Gershon Ber became a *mekushor* to the Rebbe Maharash and then the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab appointed him as a *shadar* to the cities in the Kherson region where he would collect money and *chazer Chassidus*.

"*Yungerman, yungerman!* Remember to tell your children that *Hu levado ve'ein zulaso* - There is nothing else but *HaShem*."

(מפי חסידים, חסידים הראשונים ח"ב ע' 14)

Once, Reb Gershon Ber sat with his fellow chassidim and expressed his gratitude to Hashem for all that had passed over him:

"As a child under my mother (his father had passed away before he was born), my life was surely good. Then, after my mother passed away, my uncle took me in, and that too was good. Then, my uncle passed away and the community took charge of me, and was also good.

"When I grew older, the community handed me over to a craftsman to learn a trade (craftsmen were known to treat their apprentices harshly), and that was good as well. Then, I became one of the *yungeleit* who served Reb Hillel Paritcher, and that is surely good. After that, I became a *melamed* and I earned a living, and that's good (*melandim* were actually paid a meager salary and lived very poorly). Finally, I merited to become a *Shadar* for the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab, and that is definitely good.

"I must therefore not be ungrateful R"L, and I should rejoice and thank Hashem for His kindness and mercy."

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 852)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TRUE LEADERSHIP

When Montreal's *HaRav* Pinchas Hirshprung visited communist Romania in 5715 (1955), he met the only *frum shochet* there. He led a beautiful, *Yiddishe* home, educating his children with *mesiras nefesh*, not even letting them out to the street for fear of negative influences.

After spending a few days there, before he turned to leave, the *shochet* poured out his heart to the *rov*. "The only person who can help me is the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Please go and ask him to take me out of this heretic hole, for my children's sake. I am sure he can do it."

Back in New York, when *HaRov* Hirshprung gave over the message, the Rebbe fell silent. A most grim expression spread over the Rebbe's face, and he looked down for a long time.

Finally, the Rebbe picked up his head and said somberly, "My father-in-law sent people to places like this; how could I remove him? Who will replace him?"

This encounter had a profound effect on *HaRov* Hirshprung. He met in his own words, "a true leader, a *Moshe Rabbeinu*."

(*Shemen Soson Meichaveirecho* vol. 1, page 272)