

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • משפטים תשפ"ג • 710
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 *mashal*:

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 craftsman 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)

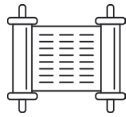
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TOIVELING A TOASTER

Must I *toivel* electric toaster or similar appliance before use?

Many electric food appliances fit the criteria to be obligated in *tevila*. While some *poskim* consider them "attached to the ground" via the plug and therefore exempt (like a faucet),¹ the mainstream view is that since they are easily detached they aren't considered attached to the ground.²

Though many appliances have warnings against immersion in water, typically no harm is done if it is dried with a blow dryer and left to thoroughly dry for a few days after the *tevila*. One may wet his hand in the mikva and then during the *tevila*, cover the holes where water could enter the electrical part. One need not immerse the entire plug wire; only the small portion that exits the utensil.³

When a pot is too large to be *toiveled*, Halacha permits its use by puncturing it, removing its status as a "utensil," and then having a Jewish craftsman patch the hole, rendering it a "Jewish-made" utensil.⁴

Based on this, some suggest that if a Jewish technician disassembles part of the appliance and then reassembles it, it is considered to have been made by a Jew and does not require *tevila*.⁵ Some hold that taking apart the electronic infrastructure is sufficient (merely taking apart the plug and reattaching it does not suffice), while others require a hole in the actual utensil (which is more challenging). Others question the whole idea and argue that the Jew isn't considered to have made it.⁶

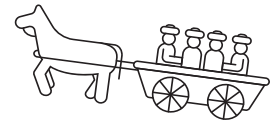
Another solution brought in halacha for cases when *tevila* is temporarily not possible (e.g. on Shabbos, when *tevila* isn't permitted) is to gift the utensil to a non-Jew and borrow it back.⁷ Some hold this idea only works on a short-term basis (up to 30 days), or otherwise it appears like it is owned by the Jew.⁸ The Alter Rebbe mentions that even if this was done for Shabbos only, one should *toivel* it after Shabbos without a *bracha* (if one does not take ownership of it).⁹ Some suggest renting it annually from the non-Jew to keep this agreement relevant and known.¹⁰

A similar solution suggested by *poskim* is to have in mind at the initial purchase not to "acquire" the utensil, so that it should be considered to still be owned halachically by the seller.¹¹

In practice, when one cannot *toivel* an electric appliance, one may rely on one of the latter *heterim* (i.e. gifting to non-Jew or having a Jew reassemble it), in combination with the minority view that plug-in utensils are exempt to begin with.

1. ראה יד אפרים על יו"ד סי' ק"כ ס"ה, שו"ת חלקי" יו"ד סי' מ"א וסי' מ"ו. תפא"י כלים פי"א מ"ב אות י"ד, שערי הלכה (סלונים) סי' רמ"ח.
 2. ראה שו"ת מנח"י ח"ב סי' ע"ב, תשו"ה ח"א סי' ת"ג.
 3. שו"ת אג"מ חו"ד ח"א סי' נ"ז - קובץ מבית הלוי.
 4. ראה פת"ש סי' ק"ב סק"א.
 5. שבה"ל ח"ב סי' נ"ז מנח"ש ח"ב סי' אות ד'.
 6. ע"פ הט"ז סק"י"ג.
 7. ע"פ שו"ת אור"ח סי' שכ"ג ס"ז ויר"ד סי' ק"כ סט"ז. וראה מנח"י ח"ה סי' קכ"ו אות ב', דרכ"ת סי' ק"כ ס"ק ק"ב. וכן מובא בשם הגריש"א קור נטרס טבילת כלים סי' ל"א.
 8. ראה ט"ז יו"ד ק"ב ס"ק י"ח.
 9. שו"ת אור"ח סי' שכ"ג ס"ח.
 10. ראה טבילת כלים חלקה פ"י סק"ט.
 11. שם ס"ו.

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



R. SHMUEL NISSENEVITCH

R. Shmuel Nissenevitch was born in Borisov (approx. 5652) and was thus known as R. Shmuel Borisover (not to be confused with the famous earlier chossid, R. Shmuel Ber Borisover). A *talmid* of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, he was appointed to serve as a Magid Shiur in Lubavitch while still a bochur. With his unique combination of *geonus* and *bittul*, R. Shmuel raised a generation of Chassidische *talmidei chachomim*. He tragically passed away at a young age on 11 Iyar, 5682.

R. Shmuel was an exceptional *gaon*, yet incredibly unassuming and humble. He taught *bochurim* in the "Shiurim" who were 15-16 years old, and after learning with him for a year the *bochurim* were ready to learn on their own in Schedrin and Lubavitch.

His style was of logical reasoning without excessive *pilpul*, and he would say that after understanding a *sugya* thoroughly, any contradictions fall away. He would often say the *meforshim's* explanations on his own, without having learned them.

When a *maggid shiur* was needed in Lubavitch during its developmental years, *talmidei chachomim* from across the country would be invited come to Lubavitch and deliver a model shiur. The shiur would be said before a small group of *lamdanim* from the senior bochurim, who would then decide if he was up to standard.

R. Zalman Shimon Dvorkin recalled R. Shmuel as an incredible genius, and said he was capable of answering questions posed by R. Akiva Eiger on the spot.

One time, after being dissatisfied with several applicants, they suggested to the Rebbe Rashab to take instead the bochur in *yeshiva* Shmuel Nissenevitch, whom they knew to be an outstanding *lamdan*. The Rebbe agreed and told them, "When a bear is hungry, it gnaws at its own paws..."

R. Avrohom Mayor shared how during one shiur, the Frierdiker Rebbe, then the *menahel* of Tomchei Temimim, entered the room. All the *talmidim* were overcome with awe and fear, but R. Shmuel was so absorbed in what he was teaching that he did not notice his presence. When the *talmidim* motioned to him about it, he didn't stop the shiur, rather he got more involved in the Gemara, sharing even deeper insights than ever before.

(ליובאוויטש וחיילה ע' 84)

(תולדות חב"ד ברוסיה הצארית ע' 240 ואילך, כרם חב"ד ג' ע' 265. התמים חדש לד' ע' 51)

A Moment with The Rebbe



DIRECTION IN DAILY STUDY

The artist, Reb Boruch Nachshon of Chevron, merited personal direction from the Rebbe regarding his personal development.

Three years later, at a personal *yechidus*, the Rebbe specified:

Reb Boruch relates:

"You must learn every day, for at least two hours. You should study *Gemara*, the practical parts *Shulchan Aruch* which are of daily use, and Chumash with Rashi.

Already in my early stages of being drawn to *Yiddishkeit* observance, the Rebbe wrote to me (21 Shevat 5721 (1961)) on the imperative to study Torah daily. "This is of the essence," he wrote.

"Regarding Chassidus," the Rebbe said, "you should study whatever you most enjoy."

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