

The Weekly Farbrengens


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LOVING EACH OTHER (II)

THE POWER OF UNITY

Once, when the Baal Shem Tov was *davening* together with his *talmidim*, they finished first, and after waiting for a while, they figured it would still take a long time, so they went off to attend to their personal affairs, and later returned.

When the Baal Shem Tov finally finished *davening*, he told them the following *mashal*:

A king once saw a beautiful, colorful bird perched at the very tip of a tall tree. In order to catch it, he ordered a few people to form a human ladder by standing on each other's shoulders. However, while they were getting higher and higher, the lower people began to break up and so they all began to fall. The mission was not accomplished because they were not all connected the entire time.

So, too, explained the Baal Shem Tov: While we were *davening* together we were all connected and I could climb high, but when you each left and attended to your personal needs, it all collapsed and I could not achieve what I wanted to.

The Baal Shem Tov further explained that every Yid has a letter in the Torah, and just as the whole Torah is one unity, so too we all have to be connected to each other as one, and then we are able to achieve greater heights.

(אור החכמה פי' בהעלותך)

The *Tzemach Tzedek* once said: The first four letters of the *alef-beis* - *alef, beis, gimmel, daled* - stand for the words: *Achdus - Bracha, Gava - Dalus*. When there is unity, there is *bracha*, but when there is pride and hence discord, the result is poverty.

To this the Rebbe added: If in dealings in the realm of *gashmiyus*, unity brings *bracha*,

surely in the realm of *ruchniyus*, *achdus* is the key to success.

(אג"ק ח"א ע' קנא)

CONSIDER

Are the heights reached through *achdus* a reward or a natural result? Does it matter how that *achdus* is achieved?

If a person's *ahavas Yisroel* is not related to *ahavas HaShem* is it still superior?

LOVING THE BELOVED

At the young age of sixteen, the Mittlerer Rebbe was appointed to guide a group of *chassidim* of his father, the Alter Rebbe, and to teach them the *maamorim*.

Once, during a *farbrengen*, Reb Aharon Strasheler, the Mittlerer Rebbe's close friend and *chavrusa*, raised his glass and with tears in his eyes wished himself to be blessed with true *ahavas HaShem*. Soon after, the Mittlerer Rebbe raised his glass and wished himself to be blessed with true *ahavas Yisroel*.

The participants in the *farbrengen* began to debate which of these two loves is greater. Their uncertainty continued for several weeks before they decided to ask the Alter Rebbe. After suitable preparation and at an opportune time they presented him with their dilemma, to which he replied in his customary singsong:

"Both love of *HaShem* and love of *Yidden* are equally engraved in every Yid's *neshama, ruach*

and *nefesh*. Nevertheless, the *possuk* states clearly: 'I have loved you, says *HaShem*.' It follows that love of *Yidden* is superior - for you love whom your Beloved loves."

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ג ע' תכג, תלז, היום יום כ"ח ניסן)

In a letter to a young *chossid* the Frierdiker Rebbe warns him, "One must be very careful not to cause pain or embarrassment to anyone, especially a fine young woman, and when it concerns a personal matter, which is unforgivable."

He then quotes the Rebbe Maharash on the critical significance of *ahavas Yisroel*:

"Of what good is *Chassidus* and *yiras Shomayim* if the main quality, *ahavas Yisroel*, is lacking? And even worse, if one person *ch"v* pains another."

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ו ע' רפט, היום יום ח' מנ"א)

LOVE AND UNITY

Ahavas Yisroel refers to the *mitzva* of relating to others by acts of loving-kindness. *Achdus Yisroel* refers to the reasoning and feeling underlying the acts of love - one's awareness that *Bnei Yisroel* are like the organs of one body.

Why does the Torah only command us about *ahavas Yisroel*, which leads to the actions, and not about *achdus Yisroel*, the awareness that will automatically lead to such actions?

One explanation is the following: As a rule, the Torah and its *mitzvos* focus on one's practical actions, and not on the thoughts and feelings behind those actions. This is evident from the way the Torah discusses the details of all practical *mitzvos*. Here, too, the Torah only commands us to **act** in a kindly manner; the explanations are discussed in Torah *sheb'al peh* and in *Chassidus*.

(ת"ר מ' תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 664)

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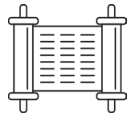
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KASHRUS OF A TOWN ERUV

What are the challenges to the *kashrus* of a small town *eruv*?

In those cases where a town *eruv* is halachically feasible, extra care must be given to the checking and maintenance of the *eruv* by a qualified *mashgiach*. An *eruv* cannot be made once; rather, it must be continuously maintained and updated, as changes are constantly being made by the city and utility companies and *pesulim* are common. An *eruv* that isn't properly maintained is meaningless.

Halacha says that while a *tzuras hapesach* ("doorway" *eruv*) can enclose a *karmelis*, to permit a bona fide *reshus harabim*, it is necessary to have solid walls with doors at the entrance. There is a dispute among the *Rishonim* as to what constitutes a *reshus harabim*:

Some say that it is any street that is 16 *amos* wide (approx. 24 feet), similar to the roads in the *midbar* which were wide enough to contain the *mishkan's* wagons.¹ Others add a condition that 600,000 people use the streets, like the roads in the *midbar* that were used by all Yidden (counting those explicitly mentioned by the *passuk*).

While the Mechaber in Shulchan Aruch considers every 16 *ama* street a *reshus harabim*, necessitating proper walls, the Rama considers it a *karmelis* if there aren't 600,000 people. The Alter Rebbe records the widespread practice to allow the construction of an *eruv* where there are no 600,000 people, but says that a *yirei Shomayim* should not allow a pole-and-string *eruv* on any 16 *ama* street.²

Halacha says that fields or bodies of water within an *eruv* (larger than 1375 square yards – *beis s'osa'im*) invalidate it since an *eruv* only works around living space.³ Parks with large areas of bushes and flowers where people aren't meant to walk is questionable.⁴ It is therefore important to ensure that the *eruv* doesn't include these types of areas.

Besides enclosing the area, Chazal required an *eruv chatzeiros* to unite all residents within the space as one. When there are non-Jewish or non-religious neighbors, it is necessary to "rent" from the non-Jewish homeowners or someone else who has access to the homes. While some say that one can "rent" from utility companies, police, or government officials, it is questionable whether they are considered to really have access to private homes to be able to "rent" them (see issue 425 at length).

If an *eruv* breaks in the middle of Shabbos, it becomes immediately prohibited to carry. Even one distorted *tzuras hapesach* can invalidate an entire *eruv*. An *eruv* should be checked weekly, and it is assumed to stay kosher unless there was a heavy storm.

Due to these reasons and others – such as people forgetting the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos or poor *hashgacha* – the Rebbe often discouraged the construction and use of community *eruvim*. The Rebbe predicated the construction of an *eruv* on the support of local *rabbonim*, who will weigh the gain against the loss.⁵ One who feels the need to use a town *eruv* should investigate it thoroughly as they would for the *kashrus* of anything else.

1. ראה שבת דף צט ע"א.
2. ראה שו"ע סי' שמ"ה סי"א ואילך ובסי' שס"ג סמ"ד.
3. ראה שו"ע סי' שנה ס"ט-י ובביאור הלכה שם ד"ה אוסורים.
4. ראה צדיק למלך ח"ד ע' 226.
5. ראה שו"ע סי' י"ח. א"ק ח"ט ע' קס"ה.

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

Our Heroes



REB MOSHE VILENKER

Reb Moshe Vilenker, a great chossid of the Alter Rebbe, was unique in his ability to grasp and discover depths in Chasidus. The Rebbeim spoke extremely highly of him, describing Reb Moshe as having attained very lofty levels in *avodas Hashem*. Eventually, he also became a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe.

make sure he does not miss any words in Maariv or Krias Shma Sheal Hamita due to his great ecstasy. He went around on such a high for about two weeks, until he returned to his regular self..."

The Frierdiker Rebbe quotes the following in the name of Reb Moshe Vilenker: One of the achievements of the Alter Rebbe was the *takana* of *mikvah*, which was widely accepted by all *chassidim*.

He then explained its application in the daily *avoda* of a chossid: The walls of a *mikvah* are essential to it, unlike a *sukkah* whose walls are only there to serve the *s'chach* (which is why it is not obligatory to have four complete walls). The walls of a *mikvah* must be complete; one crack creates a *shaala*. Similarly, every chossid must have 'walls', limiting how much he can express himself, and whom he can let in to his world.

The Rebbe writes in Hayom Yom: For three years, Reb Moshe Vilenker prepared himself for his first *yechidus* with the Alter Rebbe. Then he remained an additional seven years in Liozna to apply what he had discussed in *yechidus* into actual *avodah*.

Reb Aharon Strasheler told the Tzemach Tzeddek, "After his first *yechidus* with the Alter Rebbe, Reb Moshe was so engrossed in thinking about the Rebbe's words, that he asked two young *chassidim*, Sholom Yanovitsher and Chaim Droier, to

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE PERCEPTION CAMPAIGN

Reb Binyomin Klein related:

also become non-kosher!"

A *rov* of a far-flung town was once in *yechidus*. Of the various communal matters, the Rebbe focused on the *kashrus* situation in his community. "It would be advisable to begin a campaign in your city, encouraging people to purchase kosher food," the Rebbe said.

But the Rebbe explained to him that the problem is a deeper one, "In your city, the general perception is that kosher food doesn't taste good. Once people are introduced to kosher food and see that it is tastes good, they will realize that it is not that different from what they are used to.

The *rov* was perplexed. "Rebbe, what would we gain with these people buying kosher food?" he asked. "Their kitchens are *treif* anyway, so once the kosher food would be cooked in their kitchens, it would

"Then," the Rebbe continued the elucidate the strategy, "once they begin buying and eating kosher food, it will be much easier to inspire them to *kasher* their kitchens."

HELP US CONTINUE

Dedicate an issue of *The Weekly Farbrengen* in honor of a *simcha* or *yahrtzeit*

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