

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

744 • לחמן ישמעו • בראשית תשפ"ד
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

LOVING LOYALTY (II)

AT ALL COST

The disciples of Rebbi Zakkai asked why he had been blessed with long life. Among other things, he said to them: "I never neglected to recite the daytime *Kiddush* on *Shabbos* over wine. Once I didn't have enough money to buy wine, and my elderly mother sold her veil and brought me wine for *Kiddush*."

When Rebbi Zakkai's mother passed away she left him an inheritance of three hundred barrels of wine. When Rebbi Zakkai passed away he left his children three thousand barrels of wine.

(מגילה כ"ז ע"ב)

Reb Meir Refoel's was a respected community leader in Vilna who became a chossid of the Alter Rebbe.

Once, during a business trip, he noticed that his *tzitzis* had torn and become *possul*. He immediately removed them and told his driver to stop, so as not to carry on four *amos* without *tzitzis*. They waited at the side of the road for several hours in the hope of encountering a passerby who would happen to be carrying *tzitzis* strings. As it was getting dark outside they saw someone in the distance. Reb Meir called out to the man but he did not reply. He called louder until he was shouting, and finally the man turned towards him.

"Do you have any *tzitzis* strings by any chance?" asked Reb Meir.

"And if I would," said the man, "do you think I'm going to unload and rummage through my packed sack for just a few strings?!"

"I will pay you well," Reb Meir assured him.

"How much?" barked the man, "A few rubles? Not worth my time! I need to get back in time before nightfall!"

"I will pay you anything you ask!" begged Reb Meir. "I will give you everything I have!"

"Alright," said the man, "give me what you have and I will do it for you."

Reb Meir promptly gave him all the money he was carrying and the man found the *tzitzis* and gave it to him.

Soon after, Reb Meir visited the Alter Rebbe. As he walked in, the Rebbe stood up and handed him the exact money he had given that man. Apparently, that man was Eliyahu HaNavi: he had come to test his commitment to that *mitzva*.

(מגדל עד עי קעו)

Such was the *emuna* of chassidim of old: They trusted the Baal Shem Tov's assurance with complete faith and even risked their life for it.

(לקו"ם פרלוב חדש ע' רצ"ג)

PRECIOUS ARTICLES

Once, as the builders were erecting the *sukkah* outside the home of the esteemed chossid Reb Hillel Paritcher, the elderly chossid himself appeared. Taking a hammer, he joined the effort by knocking nails into the walls. "Rebbe," the men pleaded with him, "We do not need your help. You can be sure that we will build for you a *kosher sukkah*." Reb Hillel responded, "You should know that the four walls of the *sukkah* correspond to the four letters of HaShem's holy name. I too want to have a share in this."

(לקו"ם פרלוב חדש ע' רצ"ז)

Every year before Chanuka, the esteemed *gaon* and *chossid*, Reb Aizik Homiler, would personally clean and shine the *menora*. Such was his love for this *mitzva*.

(לקו"ם פרלוב חדש ע' תעג)

CONSIDER

Why did Reb Meir go through such great lengths to acquire new tzitzis? Was he required to?

How did the chassidim who tried to rebuff Reb Hillel view their work? What did Reb Hillel teach them?

Reb Groinem, the illustrious *mashpia* in Tomchei Tmimim of Lubavitch, once spent *Shabbos Zachor* in a town where there was no *mikveh*, and the river was frozen. Unable to imagine not going to the *mikveh* on *Shabbos Zachor*, he searched the river until he found a hole in the ice, that had been made to enable people to draw water for the animals. He undressed in an abandoned mill, and walked barefoot on the ice until the hole.

Before he immersed he told the river: "You should know that you have no permission to harm me, because the Baal Shem Tov taught that one *tevila* will do no harm!" Due to the severe cold, he was unsure if his head had fully submerged under the water, so he *toiveled* again.

He then headed back to the mill, his wet bare feet sticking to the ice, but the event did not harm his health.

After every heavy rain, the unpaved roads in Lubavitch were often extremely muddy. Once, as Reb Hillel Paritcher trudged through the deep mud on his way home from *shul* holding his *talils* and *tefillin* (which happened to be larger than most), a younger chossid offered to carry them for him. Reb Hillel refused his offer and explained:

"During the *avoda* of the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur, he would make a special entry to the *Kodesh HaKadashim* to retrieve the spoon and pan used for the *ketores*. This entry even required an additional *tevila*. From this we see that bringing the *keilim* back is also a *mitzva*. So too, carrying one's *tallis* and *tefillin* home from *shul* is also a *mitzva*. I'm not going to give it away!"

(לקו"ם פרלוב חדש ע' תכא)

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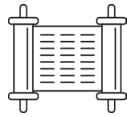
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MIDNIGHT LEARNING

I often fall asleep while learning Rambam at night. Do I need to say *birchas haTorah* when I wake up?

Prior to verbalizing – but not just thinking – words of Torah, one is obligated to recite a *bracha* over Torah study. *Poskim* note the importance of being scrupulous regarding this *bracha*, which expresses how we value and cherish Hashem's Torah, in which Hashem takes delight every day, over all pleasures in the world, and that we are studying Torah for its own sake.¹

The Agur (15th-century Italian *rishon*) held that *birchas haTorah* is a daily *bracha* just like the *birchos hashachar* which are recited once a day to cover the entire day and the following night until going to bed.² The Rosh, however, held that it is comparable to a *bracha* over the *mitzva* of learning Torah, and it must be repeated after a bona fide interruption in which one diverts his attention from studying afterward.³

Still, even according to the Rosh, pausing to attend to personal matters or *parnasa* isn't considered an interruption since a person's mind is always on Torah, and he looks forward to going back to learning upon completing his activities. The same is true for using the restroom or taking a cat nap (laying his head on his arms) since he hasn't removed his mind from studying afterward. Sleeping in bed is considered a bona fide interruption and would require a new *bracha* according to the Rosh.⁴

If one remained awake all night and would like to study Torah, he would likewise be getting into the *machlokes* between the Rosh and the Agur. According to the Rosh, he does not need a new *bracha* in the morning since he did not make an interruption, whereas according to the Agur, he must repeat the *bracha* at daybreak, like all other *birchos hashachar*. If he stayed up all night but had previously taken a substantial nap by day, everyone would require a new *bracha* afterward since it is both a new day and after an interruption.⁵

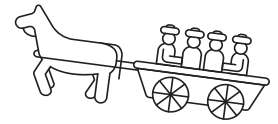
The Alter Rebbe writes that the accepted custom follows the Agur not to recite a new *bracha* in the middle of the day, even after a full interruption.⁶ For one who is up all night, in his Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe recommends hearing the *bracha* from someone who slept (out of concern for the Rosh's view), yet in his Siddur, he rules that the *bracha* can be said and does not mention this preference.⁷

For one who retired for the night and wakes up before dawn – but after *chatzos* – it is considered a new day for most *birchos hashachar* and *birchas haTorah*.⁸ However, if one falls asleep out of bed with a Rambam in his hands and plans on going to sleep properly afterward, this is not considered the end of his day, and he does not need to recite *birchas haTorah* when continuing to learn before dawn.⁹

1. שו"ע א"ח סי' מ"ז ס"א.
2. וראה משנ"ב שם ס"ק כ"ו אפילו לא למד במשך היום.
3. שו"ע שם ס"ז.
4. ודנו אחרוני זמנינו אם יש היכי תימצי של שינת ארעי במיטה.
5. הגהות רעק"א ד"ה צ"ע.
6. שו"ע"ר שם.
7. סידור אדה"ו ד"ה ברכת התורה.
8. שו"ע"ר שם ס"ח (כל הברכות חוץ מהנותן לשכוי - שו"ע"ר שם ס"ט). סידור.
9. ראה שו"ע"ר שם ס"ז. וראה הליכות שלמה תפילה פ"ו הערה ג.

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

Our Heroes



REB BETZALEL AZARITZER

Reb Betzalel Azaritzer was a *talmid* of Reb Hillel Paritcher and was of those *yungeleit* who were guided in *Chassidus* by the Mittlerer Rebbe. He was of the great chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek, and served as a *Shadar* for him. The Frieddiker Rebbe praised Reb Betzalel for his ability to learn from any person.

Reb Hillel Paritcher and Reb Betzalel were very close friends. They would visit one-another every week, alternating between Reb Hillel travelling to Reb Betzalel and vice versa. Once, Reb Betzalel was not well and did not visit Reb Hillel. Reb Hillel sensed there was something wrong and decided to travel to see Reb Betzalel. The travel fare was a hefty six ruble, and Reb Hillel's wife protested. "Why are you wasting six ruble for a wagon?!" she said, "This is anyways not your week to visit him! We will not have the money that we need for our needs!" Reb Hillel was insistent and went on his way.

This was Thursday. Reb Hillel traveled with a *minyán* of chassidim and when they arrived at the house, Reb Hillel saw that his intuition was justified; Reb Betzalel was seriously ill. The visitors spent Shabbos there, staying in one room, while Reb Betzalel lay in the adjacent room. At *Seudah Shelishis*, as was his custom, Reb Hillel said *Chassidus* three times, each prefaced by three *niggunim*. At that time, they heard that Reb Betzalel was nearing death. Reb Hillel went in to Reb Betzalel's room and said, "Tzalkeh! What's happening with you?" He placed the *sefer* Kesser Shem Tov on Reb Betzalel's heart and said, "Look at the *oisys* of the Baal Shem Tov". With that, Reb Betzalel's *neshama* left his body.

Reb Betzalel used to say that he does not understand why people think it is hard to be a chossid. "The first thing is *'taporu da plachu'* (lit. 'the ax on the wood') – which means action. Then one can become an *oved* Hashem through *davening*, learning, Torah and *mitzvos*."

A Moment with The Rebbe



A BOCHUR AS THE REBBE EXPECTS

As a *mashpia* at the Yeshiva in Kfar Chabad, during Tishrei 5734, Reb Mendel Futerfass approached some bochurim from Eretz Yisroel who were learning in 770 and asked them to join the *yeshiva*. He explained that their coming would dramatically help the *yeshiva* flourish.

The bochurim preferred to stay in the Rebbes presence, in 770, but agreed to come, nonetheless. Their only condition was that they should be sent by the Rebbe, thereby meriting the title "*shliach*."

When Reb Mendel reported his success to the Rebbe, he was shaken by the

response: "When a Tomchei Temimim *yeshiva* bochur follows the instruction of his *mashpia*, as stated in the sichos of the Rebbe Rashab, the term *shliach* cannot apply.

"For *mimo nafshoch* (whichever way you put it): If he is already a bochur in Tomchei Temimim as the Rebbe expects, he doesn't need to be a '*shliach*.' And if *chas vesholom* he isn't as expected, I should not be suggested to say about him *shlucho shel odom kemoso* (that he like the one who sent him)."

(*Mikdash Melech* vol. 3 p. 153)

לע"נ ר' חיים מרדכי ב"ר משה ע"ה

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