

The Weekly Farbrengens



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

745 • נח תשפ"ד • לחמן ישמעו
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

LOVING LOYALTY (III)

PHYSICAL EFFORT

After his arrest in תקנ"ט (1798), the Alter Rebbe was escorted to the secret cells of the dreaded Peter-Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, where he was to spend over seven weeks until his miraculous release on *Yud-Tes Kislev*. The interrogations took place not there, but in the headquarters of the Tainy Soviet, the Secret Council on the other side of the Neva River, so that the Rebbe had to be taken across each time by ferry.

On one such occasion, the Rebbe asked the official accompanying him to stop the ferry so that he could stand and recite *Kiddush Levana*. He refused, whereupon the Rebbe said, "If I want to, I can stop the boat myself." And indeed, after the man again refused to oblige, the boat stopped in the middle of the river. The Rebbe then recited the *pesukim* of *Tehillim* which are said before the *bracha*, but did not pronounce the *bracha* itself. The ferryman realized that unusual forces were at work and he begged the Rebbe to release the boat. The ferry then proceeded on its way.

When the Rebbe again asked the official to stop the boat, he asked, "What will you give me in exchange for the favor?" In reply, the Alter Rebbe gave him a *bracha*. The man then demanded it in writing, and the Rebbe recorded it on a note in his own handwriting.

One year on *Yud-Tes Kislev*, the Frierdiker Rebbe related the above episode and added:

"When I heard this story at nine years old, I wondered: Since the Alter Rebbe had already stopped the boat, why did he not recite the *bracha* as well? Why did he have to depend on a favor? When I had grown older and studied *Chassidus*, I understood that there was a point of principle involved. The Rebbe had been obliged to act as he did, for a *mitzva* is made to be performed only when it is clothed in the ways of nature, and not through supernatural miracles."

The Rebbe points out that from this story we learn that not only should a *mitzva* itself be done in a natural manner, but even the means to enable us to perform the *mitzva* should be natural. Challenges to

perform a *mitzva* are an essential part of the *mitzva*: they should not be sidetracked by miraculous means. Of course, we need not look for difficulties, but if we do encounter a difficulty, we should appreciate its role in elevating the physical world.

(לקר"ד ח"ד ע' תשנ"ב, ב. לקו"ש ח"ה ע' 80)

CONSIDER

Is it better when a *mitzva* is accompanied by difficulties or without?

Was Reb Hillel required to exert himself so much for his personal custom? Why did he do it?

VALUABLE EXERTION

Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai said: When a person does a *mitzva*, he should not do it freely and easily, but use his full capability. *Kedusha* will rest upon him only after he has toiled to cleanse himself. In contrast, the spirit of *kelipa* makes itself at home for free and demands no work.

(זהר תרומה קכח, א)

On his way to the big regional fair in Leipzig, a Jewish merchant once stopped overnight in Frankfurt. It was so late that the whole town was fast asleep. He searched for a home with the light still burning and when he found one, he was warmly ushered in and was offered a hot meal and a place to sleep. He soon realized that his host was no ordinary man but rather a great *talmid chacham*. In fact this was none other than the renowned *rov* of the city, Reb Pinchos Horowitz himself.

So the guest asked his host: "I have to travel far and work very hard to earn a living. Will I be granted a share in the World to Come?"

Reb Pinchos replied: "The answer can be derived from your business, which you just mentioned. Let's make a *kal vachomer*: If for a material livelihood – to bring home some bread and spices – you need to work hard, how much more so do you have to work hard to earn a share in *Gan Eden*. For *Gan Eden* is an infinite G-dly pleasure. All the physical pleasures in the world are not worth even a single hour of *Gan Eden*. So surely a share in *Gan Eden* demands a lot of plain hard work!"

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 215)

DEVOUT DEDICATION

Rebbi Yehuda beRebbi Ilo'i would drink four cups of wine at the *Seder*, even though this gave him such an intense headache that he had to keep his head bandaged until Shavuot.

(נדרים מט ע"ב, שו"ע אדה"ז סי' תע"ב סכ"א)

Reb Hillel Paritcher would perform *hagba* himself at *mincha* on *Shabbos*. One *Shabbos* he suffered from a hernia and was bedridden, and so a *minyán* was held for him in his room. Before *Krias HaTorah* Reb Hillel requested that the *bima* be moved closer to his bed. The *chassidim*, thinking that he wanted to hear the *Kria* better, complied with his request. However, when the time came for *hagbah*, Reb Hillel jumped out of bed and fulfilled his custom as usual.

This was Reb Hillel's characteristic manner; once he accepted a practice upon himself, he would fulfill it to the point of *mesirus nefesh*.

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 247)

Once it rained very hard on *Sukkos*, and the Rebbe Rashab sent a messenger to see what the *bochorim* of *Tomchei Temimim* were doing—if they were eating indoors as the *halacha* allows when raining, or in the *sukkah*.

The messenger returned and reported to the Rebbe that the *bochorim* were eating in the *sukka*, and to keep the rain out of the food, they covered their heads and their plates with their coats. The Rebbe was very pleased by this and said: "In this one can see the effect of learning *Chassidus*. Even if they are exempt from the *mitzva*, they still seek to perform it."

(רשימות דברים ח"ב ע' קמו)

Be Seen
ADVERTISE HERE
INFO@MERKAZANASH.COM



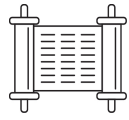
GOOD NEWS.
anash.org



SELL MILES NOW
www.SELLMILESNOW.com
732-987-7765



Yoseph Shomer
Certified Public Accountant
(718) 301-7014 | SHOMERCPA.COM



UNDERSHIRT TZITZIS

Can one wear "undershirt tzitzis" or regular tzitzis directly on the skin?

For a tallis katan to be kosher, it must be a (a) four-cornered (b) cloth (c) garment. These are relevant for fulfilling the mitzva, reciting the bracha, and possibly "carrying" the strings on Shabbos (if the garment doesn't need tzitzis).

Four-cornered: To be "four-cornered," it must be open on both sides along the majority of what hangs below the arms. Buttons or tight hooks cannot close the lower half of the garment's length. To perform the mitzva according to all opinions, the Alter Rebbe recommends that the garment be completely open on both sides, without any clips or seams, including openings for the arms.

In addition, the shoulder areas together must be wider than the neck cutout. If not, the shoulder areas are considered insignificant (bottel) and invalid.

Cloth: To be considered "cloth," a tallis katan should be of wool, ideally (see issue 475), or some other natural fiber. A garment made of netted or synthetic material is of questionable obligation.

Garment: There is debate whether a garment meant to absorb sweat is halachically considered a proper garment (e.g., for kriah R"l) and is therefore exempt from tzitzis. With garments designed to be tzitzis and also be worn on the skin, some poskim posit that one's intention for the mitzva makes it into a "garment," while others argue that in fact it absorbs the sweat. If it is meant to serve as an undershirt, it is especially problematic, even if it is worn as the only layer of clothing (i.e., a t-shirt).

A further issue with wearing it on the skin, which is relevant even for a regular tallis katan, is disrespect to the mitzva by wearing it directly on the body. Some counter that tefillin are wrapped directly on the body and it's not an issue. Yet, there is reason according to Kabbalah to have a separation between the tallis katan and one's body. One may be lenient for children to wear regular tzitzis on their bodies.

- 1. שוער ס'ל ח ס"ח.
2. פסקי הסיידור אדה"ו.
3. ראה הנסמן בפסק"ת סי' ט אות א.
4. ראה רא"ש פ"ג דמו"ק סי' מ"ג. וראה מ"ס' ציצית ברייתא ה' בארגמן ד"ה אפריקסון.
5. ראה ספר דעת נטה ציצית סי' קע"ו ושם הע' 214.
6. הליכות שלמה - תפילה ציצית פ"ג אות י"א וראה אור לציון ח"ב פ"ב ציצית אות ד.
7. ראה שער הכונות דרוש ו' מהציצית אודות האריז"ל: "הטלית קטן היה לובשו למטה משאר מלבושיו ע"ג חלוקו".

REB PINCHAS REIZES

Reb Pinchas Reizes, one of the greatest chasidim of the Alter Rebbe, was an incredible gaon in learning. The Rabbeim trusted him fully, involving him in many private and clandestine activities having to do with them and the chasidim. He was also a wealthy and influential resident of Shklov and did a great deal for the Alter Rebbe in that respect. He was a chozer during the time of the Alter Rebbe who was known for the preciseness of his hanachos (transcriptions). The Mitteler Rebbe called Reb Pinchas the "field marshal" of chasidei Chabad.

Reb Pinchas traveled to the Alter Rebbe for four months during the year: Elul, Tishrei, Nissan and Sivan. Once, Reb Pinchas fell ill and was unable to make the journey for Tishrei. Later on during the month, he felt better, but because the winter had already set in, he remained in Shklov. While sitting in his sukkah on Shmini Atzeres, he suddenly cried out, "Oy Rebbe!" and said to those sitting with him that the Rebbe had just thought of him.

At this same time, the Alter Rebbe was sitting at his seudah in his sukkah, and he said: "Pinchas Reizes needs his body to be cured. That which I cannot give him, I cannot give,

but a bodily refua I can give him."

The chassidische young men from Shklov were very surprised to hear the Rebbe suddenly mention Reb Pinchas in middle of the Shmini Atzeres meal. After Yom Tov, upon their return home, they immediately went to the home of Reb Pinchas and asked him for mashke, which he supplied. As they were speaking, they discovered that at the same time the Alter Rebbe had mentioned him, Reb Pinchas had screamed, "Oy Rebbe!"

Chasidim have always been averse to an outwardly showing of greatness by displaying ruach hakodesh and the like, and reprimanded him for such behavior. Reb Pinchas declared, "It was not me. The first time I went for yechidus, I gave the Rebbe my nefesh. The second time, I gave him my ruach, and the third time, I gave over my neshama. Being that my entire neshama had been given over to the Rebbe, it was not my powers that did this."

The Rebbe explained that some aspect of this is relevant today through total dedication of the neshama to the Rebbe. However, this level was reached only after the intense learning and toiling in avoda as Reb Pinchas would do.

A Moment with The Rebbe



TECHNOLOGY VS. HUMANITY

When Dr. Mordechai Shani, the director of the Sheba Medical Center, was in yechidus in the autumn of 5737 (1976), the Rebbe brought up the issue of the place of technology in medicine.

"At that time," relates Dr. Shani, "the dawning of the age of the personal computer, technology was not yet a dominant component of the medical world. The problems related to technology in medicine would not become apparent for years to come. But the Rebbe was forward-thinking.

"The Rebbe said to me, 'It is up to you, the doctors, to determine the outcome: whether this technology will be used for

the benefit of the people.'

"The Rebbe expressed the worry that technology might distance the doctor from the patient. 'At the end of the day,' the Rebbe explained, 'the emotional support of the doctor, the human being, is most important, and while technology can be a very helpful tool, it cannot become a replacement for listening and caring.'

"Unfortunately," concludes Dr. Shani, "the Rebbe was right to worry. Today, for many doctors, technology has become the central means of practicing medicine instead of using it as a helping tool, sometimes to the detriment of the patient."

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