

The Weekly *Farbrengens*

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

755 • יוחי תשפ"ד • לחמן ישמעו
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

REMEMBERING HIM (I)

HIDE-AND-SEEK

The chossid Reb Mendel Gurary was once traveling by train to his hometown, Kremenchug. The trip was days long and he was desperate for company, so he set about searching the cars for a Yid with whom he could converse. After some time, he spotted a figure in the corner wrapped in a blanket. Sensing that this was what he was looking for, Reb Mendel approached the figure and lifted the blanket. Sure enough, inside was the eminent chossid Reb Gershon Ber Paharer HaGadol, the *talmid* of Reb Hillel Paritcher. He was awake, but deep in thought, meditating on some concept in *Chassidus*.

Reb Gershon opened his eyes and exclaimed to the chossid in front of him, "*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' 41)

As a young child, Reb Avrohom HaMalach, son of the Mezritcher Maggid, once played hide-and-seeK with a friend. After some time Reb Avrohom came complaining to his father that he hid, but his friend did not come to look for him at all.

Hearing his child's words, the Maggid wept and said, "*HaShem*, too, complains that He hides from His children, but they don't look for Him. His real intention is that they should search for Him, and then they will surely find Him. Even when they merely *begin* searching for Him, He helps them and eases their search."

(לקוטי סיפורים פרלוב (חדש) ע' 10)

The Torah commands us to cleave to *HaShem*. How do we do that? The Sifri explains that by learning *agada* we come to recognize "the One who spoke and the world came into being."

(שוע"ר סי' קנ"ו ס"ד)

ALL DAY LONG

At the opening of the *Shulchan Aruch* the Rama writes:

"I hold *HaShem* before me at all times" is a major principle in the Torah and amongst the virtues of the righteous who walk before *HaShem*. For a person's way of sitting, moving and dealing while he is alone at home are not like when he is before a great king, and his speech and free expression are not as when he is with his household members like when he is in a royal audience. All the more so when one takes to heart that the Great King, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, whose glory fills the earth, is standing over him and watching his actions, he will immediately acquire fear and submission in dread of *HaShem*, and will be ashamed of Him constantly.

(רמ"א אור"ח סי' א' ס"א)

CONSIDER

Why is awareness of *HaShem's* presence such an important principle in Yiddishkeit?
If *HaShem* wants us to find Him, why does He hide at all?

In a letter of detailed instructions for *avoda*, the Alter Rebbe writes:

Always remember the Creator, as it is written, *Shivisi HaShem lenegdi tamid* - "I hold *HaShem* before me at all times." Forgetting about Him even for a brief moment should be viewed as a sin. Thus the Baal Shem Tov interpreted the *possuk* in *Tehillim*, "Praiseworthy is the man on whose account *HaShem* does not consider a sin," to mean, "Praiseworthy is the man for whom not considering *HaShem* at all times he views as a sin."

(אג"ק אדה"ז ע' שעד)

The father of Reb Menachem Mendel of Kosov was a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov by the name of Reb Kopel Shivisi. This is how he acquired his interesting name:

Reb Kopel was an extremely honest businessman. Before weighing goods, Reb Kopel would say "*Shivisi HaShem lenegdi tamid*," and remind himself of *HaShem's* presence. At the *yerid*, the regional fair, the *goyishe* merchants would trust him to weigh their goods. Whenever he would not show up the merchants would say, "If *Shivisi* isn't here, the *yerid* won't prosper".

From these words, the Baal Shem Tov derived a lesson in *avodas HaShem*: When a person is not sufficiently aware of *HaShem's* presence ("*shivisi*"), he cannot serve *HaShem* properly in his day-to-day life.

(אהלי צדיקים ע' סד, כתבי ר"י ש"ב אות ס', ליקוטי סיפורי התוו"ע (253 ע' 253))

CONSTANT REMINDER

The Czar once decreed that round hats without a brim may not be worn. The Alter Rebbe then said: "*Kelipa* is trying to block out the obligation, *Se'u marom eineichem* - 'Raise your eyes to the heavens,' as it is known that looking up at the sky is a *segula* for *yiras Shamayim*. Now therefore there must begin a new *avoda* - to turn the front-brimmed *kazirak* to the side."

(רשימת היומן ע' תנג)

The Baal Shem Tov taught that a person who is always conscious of *HaShem* can receive practical guidance every day from what he learned that morning, for *HaShem* thereby guides him to reach the correct conclusions. However, if his awareness of *HaShem* is sporadic, he does not merit this special insight. Lacking the heavenly guidance, he may not encounter (for example) the food and clothes with the sparks of *kedusha* designated for him to elevate.

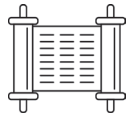
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KIDNEY DONATION

Am I allowed or perhaps obligated to donate a kidney?

The Torah says, "Lo saamod al dam rei'echa," do not stand idly by your friend's blood. Thus, one is obligated to invest effort, money, and discomfort (e.g., donating blood) to save the life of a fellow Jew.¹ But what about putting one's own life at risk for this cause?

The Talmud Yerushalmi writes that one must put oneself in danger to save another Yid. The Rambam rules that one must do "whatever one can" to save a life, and the Hagahos Maimonis explains that he must even endanger himself.

Yet, most Rishonim don't accept this Yerushalmi as halacha, and some go so far as calling one who does so a "chossid shoteh," a foolish pious.² While the Beis Yosef quotes the Yerushalmi in his commentary on the Tur,³ he omits it in his Shulchan Aruch, implying that one should not endanger oneself to save someone else. Likewise, the Alter Rebbe writes that it is forbidden to endanger oneself even to save a friend from definite death.⁴

What about donating a kidney?

Years ago, there was a significant risk to kidney donors. Therefore, eminent poskim like the Minchas Yitzchok and Tzitz Eliezer prohibited taking this risk.⁵ However, as medicine developed, the risks of kidney donation has decreased and apply to less than 1 % of donors. Recent poskim therefore note that it is no longer categorized as a common risk, or even a safek, probable risk.⁶ While there is still a small risk, the Radvaz writes that one is allowed to place oneself at a minor risk to save his friend from a definite danger.

Still, poskim rule that there is no obligation to donate one's kidney due to the degree of risk that still exists and potential complications down the line.

Yet, it is midas Chassidus and a great mitzvah to save another life in such a manner,⁷ and he has great merit in this world and the next.⁸

1. דברי יציב חו"מ סי' ע"ט. 2. דברי יציב חו"מ סי' תרכ"ו. 3. ב"י חו"מ סי' תכ"ו. 4. שו"ע ר"א סי' שכ"ט ס"ח, ובהל' נזקי גוף ונפש ס"ז מביא מוח' אם מחוייב ובמוסגר כותב "וספק נפשות להקל". 5. מנח"י חו"מ סי' ק"ג, וראה צ"ח סי' ח"ט. 6. ראה שו"ת רדב"ז ללשונות הרמב"ם רוצח פ"א. שו"ת יחוה דעת ח"ג סי' פ"ד. 7. שולחן שלמה ערכי רפואה א, מד. 8. ראה תו"ר ח"ב סי' תשל"ג.

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

Our Heroes



REBBETZIN STERNA

Rebbetzin Sterna was born to her parents Reb Yehuda Leib and Beila Segel. Reb Yehuda Leib was a prominent *gevir* in the city of Vitebsk, and was from the leading community members. On 12 Av 5520 (1760), she married the Alter Rebbe and lived in Vitebsk. Her husband's holy ways were strange in her parents' eyes and they pressured her to demand a *get*, and when she refused they began to suffer greatly. She had great *mesiras nefesh* for her husband and he in return respected her greatly. After the Alter Rebbe passed away, she moved with her son the Mittlerer Rebbe to Lubavitch and lived many long years.

sister found her almost frostbite. Just then the Alter Rebbe finished davening and asked if there is what to make *kidush* on. She replied that she will go get something from her father's house, to which the Alter Rebbe said that according to Torah that is prohibited. Instead, her sister offered to bring something from her house.

(סד"ש תרצ"ז ע' 193)

Once during the early years of his leadership, the Alter Rebbe looked out the window and saw many chassidim flocking to his home, from far and near. He fell to the ground and exclaimed, "What do they want from me? What do they see in me?" His wife Rebbetzin Sterna, who understood that it was her job to direct the development of things smoothly, walked in and said to him "Why do you think they are coming for you? It is only that you merited being by the Mezritcher Maggid, so they are coming to hear what you received". "If that is their will", said the Alter Rebbe, "I will fulfill their will, I will teach and teach more".

One Friday evening after Rebbetzin Sterna refused to demand a *get*, her father drove her out of the house. Her husband the Alter Rebbe, was davening in the attic of her father's storehouse, so she went there and waited for him in the hallway of the attic. It was winter time and it was freezing, but she did not want to disturb her husband. She stood there for a long time until her

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE ALTER REBBE'S SHULCHAN ARUCH

Ever since being entrusted by the Maggid with writing the Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe's monumental work has served as a guiding light for Chassidim in how to practice *halacha* according to its spiritual framework. The Rebbe saw its study and proliferation as part of *hafotzas hamoyonos*.

to Reb Mordechai Ashkenazi, then a *moreh hora'a* in Kfar Chabad. "You must dedicate a specific time every week to engross yourself in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. If this means that you need to lock the door for some time, so be it..."

"Please do me a favor," the Rebbe requested from a surprised Rabbi Yisroel Yitzchok Piekarsky, a Rosh Yeshiva at 770 who was from a Sochatchov background.

Similarly, in a 14 Sivan 5739 *yechidus*, the Rebbe told Reb Levi Bistrizky, Rov of Anash in Tzfas, to publish notes on *halacha*, either from the Alter Rebbe or the Tzemach Tzedek.

"In Sochatchov they held the Alter Rebbe in high esteem. I therefore ask you to please write explanations on the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch."

"Although you are also capable of writing in Chassidus," the Rebbe told him, "You should write in *halacha*, and this will be your part in *hafotzas hamayonos!*"

In a Sivan 5735 *yechidus*, the Rebbe said (Kfar Chabad issue 520 and 685; Halev Shel Tzefas p. 142)

In honor of the wedding of Yossi and Yehudis Deutsch 22 Teves 5784