

The Weekly Farbrengens


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THE FOUNDATION OF THE HOME (III)

DEDICATED TO TORAH

Chassidim once asked Maharil, the Alter Rebbe's brother: What was the *zechus* by virtue of which his parents were blessed with four sons who were Torah giants?

Maharil told them that it was probably due to the *yiras Shamayim* and the passionate love of Torah of his mother, *Rebbetzin Rivka*. He illustrated this with the following story:

My father, Reb Baruch, once traveled on a business trip and brought back an expensive coat as a gift for my mother. Our *melamed's* wife became so envious that she began nagging him to give her gifts as well. This distressed him, and his usual enthusiasm faded. Noticing this, my mother questioned him and he told her of his troubles. Without hesitation, she took out her coat and gave it to the *melamed*, saying, "Give this to your wife, and continue to teach my sons with enthusiasm."

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 198)

When Reb Levi Yitzchak, the Rebbe's father, was exiled to a remote village in Kazakhstan, *Rebbetzin Chana* joined him with *mesirus nefesh*. Although they lacked essentials, and lived on minimal rations of bread and water, she went to great lengths to enable her husband to write his *chiddushim*. She would secretly gather various herbs from the fields and soak them to create ink. And since there was no paper on which to write, Reb Levi Yitzchok wrote his insights on the margins of the *seforim* she had brought with her.

After Reb Levi Yitzchak passed away, the *Rebbetzin* guarded those precious writings, and with *mesirus nefesh* smuggled them out of Russia. If the authorities had discovered them while inspecting her luggage, they would probably have imprisoned her, especially since she was the wife of someone who had been imprisoned and exiled for disseminating *Yiddishkeit*. Besides, her family name was Schneerson. Yet she took them with her, and succeeded in getting them out of Russia. Now, in her merit, they are available to be learned by all.

(תו"מ תשמ"ב ח"א ע' 58)

The Rebbe Maharash was very organized. The chassidim knew his exact schedule, including the time at which he would go for a stroll. As soon as he left they would quietly enter his home and copy the *maamorim*, while one of them stood outside to watch. His daughter-in-law, *Rebbetzin Shterna Sara*, who was able to write quickly and neatly, would join the copyists. There are some *maamorim* whose only surviving copy today is in her handwriting.

(סה"ש תד"ש ע' 65, תו"מ ח"א ע' 221, חל"ה ע' 72)

The Rebbe taught that the value of supporting and encouraging a husband's Torah study is relevant to a young girl as well, since she is being educated to become an *akeres habayis*, and must be taught about this as well.

(תו"מ תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 960)

morning, she should wake up her husband to learn Torah. The same is true for a sister towards her brother.

In the postwar refugee camp in Peking, there was a noteworthy practice: someone would make the rounds every morning and wake everyone up to learn Torah. In fact he would not move on until each sleeper actually got up.

The Rebbe concluded, "In plain words: All Chabad women and girls should see to it that a generation of *lomdim* will appear, a generation that will observe the *mitzvos* and gives *tzedaka*. And this will bring them all the blessings in children, health and *parnassa*."

(ש"פ נשא תש"כ, תו"מ ח"כ ע' 136)

The Rebbe also held that women are responsible for instilling in their children an appreciation for the outstanding value of Torah study:

It is the task and *shlichus* of women in this generation to implant in children an appreciation of the Torah's innate goodness, and not because he will be patted on the shoulder and told that he's a good student. That innate quality of Torah study is superior even to *mitzvos*, because through Torah one achieves a complete unity with *HaShem*.

(תו"מ חל"ו ע' 132)

In preparation for *Rosh HaShana* תשכ"ב (1961), the Rebbe wrote a letter to all women of *Anash* about the need for a *cheshbon nefesh* concerning the Torah study of their husbands. The Rebbe explained that it is the women's duty to encourage and strengthen the learning of their husbands, brothers and sons. In fact a woman should demand (!) that her husband maintain a daily learning schedule, so that the mere sight of his wife will remind him to sit down and learn.

The Rebbe notes the great reward which women receive from their share in the *mitzva*, and asked that all women requesting a *bracha* of the Rebbe for the coming year should include a detailed report of all the learning undertaken by their husbands.

(אג"ק ח"כ ע' ש"ל)

CONSIDER

Did the Alter Rebbe's mother's actions affect her children spiritually or naturally?

Why should a woman ensure that her husband studies Torah? Is it a form of *arvus* – general responsibility - to ensure that others perform *mitzvos*?

ENCOURAGING STUDY

The Rebbe once said:

One of the responsibilities of a woman, who is the foundation of her home, is to see to it that her husband studies Torah. At night, she should ensure that he doesn't go to bed until he has finished all his daily *shiurim*, even if it means falling asleep over the *sefer*... Similarly every



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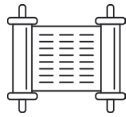
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SELLING A SHUL

May a shul be sold to build a new one in a different neighborhood?

The Gemara distinguishes between a “village shul” that may be sold and a “city shul” that may not be sold because it belongs to the public.¹

Rishonim offer three explanations for the uniqueness of a city shul: (1) It is designated for and therefore owned by Jews in the entire world;² (2) Jews worldwide donated money for this shul and are partners in it;³ and (3) because many Jews—including from other locations—*daven* in it, the shul has added *kedusha*.⁴

The first two points prohibit the sale from a monetary perspective, while the final one prohibits the sale due to the unique *kedusha* the shul possesses. A communal *mikvah* would follow similar guidelines according to the first two points but not according to the third since it doesn't have *kedusha*. If the money for the shul was collected solely from the local community, that shul may be sold according to the second reason.

In generations when the community council and leadership (“*shiva tuvei ha'ir*”) had full communal power, some say they had the right to sell even a city shul that was built with local money if they see fit. It was considered a precondition during the original construction that they had the right to make changes later.⁵ Additionally, more recent *poskim* posit that the categorization of a “city shul” is no longer applicable in the present age.⁶ Shuls can also be sold with the consent of a major rov to whom all are beholden.⁷

Still, Halacha prohibits selling a shul to *goyim* or to be used for disrespectful or sinful purposes, and certainly not for a place of non-Jewish worship. An allowance to sell it to *goyim* only applies in a case of great necessity when no one other Jews live there.

In places where non-Jews do not let go of their deserted places of worship, it is a *chillul Hashem* to sell a shul.⁸ However, this only applies where we can upkeep it by holding on to it—unlike the destroyed communities in Europe with desolate shuls occupied by squatters, where it is recommended to sell the shul and transfer the *kedusha* onto money. Even then, it should be sold for a respectable purpose.⁹

In the famous sicha on Acharon Shel Pesach 5729 (1969), the Rebbe decried the selling of Jewish homes in Crown Heights to non-Jews and, even worse, the selling of shuls and *batei midrash*. The Rebbe noted three primary issues: (1) the *kedusha* they possess—this would be mitigated if they were originally built with a stipulation; (2) the decrease in the number of shuls—unless new ones will be built in a different neighborhood; and (3) that the locals won't have a shul with their *nusach* anymore. This final point applies even if a new shul will be built in a different neighborhood.¹⁰

1. מגילה כ"ו ע"א.
2. רמב"ם הל' תפילה פ"א ה"ט. רא"ש ג, א.
3. אור זרוע ב, קפה.
4. ככה למד הפרמ"ג. ראה שו"ע א"ח סי' קנ"ג ס"ז.
5. משאת בנימין מובא בבית"ל שם ד"ה אבל של כרכים. יש לציון למה שמביא שם המשנ"ב שבארצותינו אין לפרנסים כזה כח - ובנוסף הרבה
מקפיקים על דין זה.
6. ראה פסק"ת סי' קנ"ג אות י' וש"נ.
7. גמי מגילה שם.
8. שו"ת חת"ס א"ח סי' לא.
9. ראה פסק"ת סי' קנ"ג סק"ז. וראה שו"ת דברי חיים ח"ב סי' ט"ז, וראה דובב מישרים ח"ב סי' מ"ד.
10. לקו"ש ח"ו ע' 350 ואלך.

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

Our Heroes



REB BORUCH MORDECHAI BABROISKER

Reb Boruch Mordechai Itinga, known as Reb Boruch Mordechai Babroisker, was of the great chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. He was an exceptional *gaon* and *chossid*, renowned for his sharpness and wit. Reb Boruch Mordechai served as *rov* in Babroisk for about 50 years. He later traveled to *Eretz Yisroel*, and passed away on the 14th of Elul, 5616 (1856). He is buried on *Har Hazeisim*.

Two business partners once came to the Alter Rebbe to help resolve an argument. The Alter Rebbe looked into their contract, where he found their exact issue addressed, and the two left pleased with the ruling. Soon, however, they returned with a different argument, and again the Alter Rebbe looked into their contract and again found a clause that resolved the exact problem. After a few more repetitions of this occurrence, the Alter Rebbe inquired about the author of their contract. It was Reb Boruch Mordechai.

When Reb Boruch Mordechai next visited the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe reprimanded him, “Your head is too engrossed in business if you are able to think of every possibility...”

Two women, who worked as vendors in the market, once approached Reb Boruch Mordechai for a *Din Torah*. When the Rov *parkened* in favor of one of the women the other woman began shouting derogatory statements against the Rov. Reb Boruch Mordechai's *rebbetzin* could not contain herself, and asked her husband why he does not chase this wicked woman out of the house. “Don't worry,” the Rov soothed her, “She does not mean what she is saying.” Hearing this, the rants and curses escalated further!

Turning to the woman, the Rov asked, “Would you want your children to grow up like me?” The woman jumped up, “Oy, *halevai!* If only that were to become true...” Reb Boruch Mordechai commented to his wife, “You see, she does not mean it.”

A Moment with The Rebbe



לזכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות

“FOR WHICH CHABAD HOUSE IS THIS?”

Reb Shlomo Cunin relates:

When I first went out on *shlichus* to California in 5725 (1965), the Rebbe said to me, “*Shlomo, zolst aynnemen gantz California,*” you should conquer the entire California.

When we established the first Chabad House on a college campus in Los Angeles, I came to the Rebbe with our legal advisor and backer, Marvin Goldsmith, and we gave the Rebbe a copy of the key. The Rebbe took it

and asked, “For which Chabad House is this?”

“There is only one,” Marvin said, somewhat surprised.

“Don't be so humble,” the Rebbe responded. “It will spread from the west to the north, and from the north to the south. And then to the east where we really need it.”

Indeed, that's what happened. This is the story of the 220 Chabad Houses currently spread over California.

לע"נ ר' חיים מרדכי ב"ר משה ע"ה

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