

The Weekly Farbrengens



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

FACING THE KING (II)

ENSURING RESPECT

In the summer of תקפ"ג (1823), the community of Paritch asked the Mittlerer Rebbe to visit them for a few weeks during the upcoming winter, as was the custom. He replied by letter that although he was not in perfect health, he would fulfill their request, on condition that they resolve an issue about which he was extremely bitter - talking in *shul*. In his letter, he recalled the numerous warnings given by his father, the Alter Rebbe, but unfortunately had gone unheeded.

He then wrote: "Therefore let it be known in my name, in every town and *minyans*, that they should make a firm resolve, enforced by a vow, not to speak during *davening*, from the moment that the *sheliach tzibbur* stands before the *amud*. They should also appoint a trustworthy supervisor who will favor no one, and who will be willing to disgrace any person who violates the vow. This will literally revive me from the intense pain that this matter is causing me."

The Mittlerer Rebbe then went on to explain how, in his view, the many tragedies that had befallen the Yidden during that time resulted from the habit of conversing in *shul*. He added that due to the talking, even the *tefilos* of the other *mispalelim* in that *shul* are not accepted Above. He concluded that he was waiting for the townsmen of Paritch to notify him that they had begun to implement the above-mentioned proposals, and then he would visit them.

(אג"ק אדהאמ"צ ח"א ע' רעא)

Reb Eliezer Papo writes in his famous work *Peleh Yoetz*:

Some people, who would prefer not to converse in *shul*, feel intimidated by others who might mock their "excessive holiness." So they respond to the talkers, until they too become insensitive to small talk in *shul*. Now, how would the same people react if they were threatened by a robber or a murderer, *r"l*? They would raise a commotion, regardless of embarrassment. So here, too, without being bashful, they should state, "Sorry, I don't speak during *davening*."

(פלא יועץ ערך ביהכ"ג)

A SERIOUS MATTER

The Rebbe once said: "If a person chooses to talk during *davening*, that's his business. Let him go into another room and observe his '*minhag*' of talking during *davening*. But why should I be forced to *daven* in a *minyans* in which there is talking?!"

On another occasion the Rebbe said that it was not the children that needed to be silenced, but the adults. "A child knows that he comes to *shul* to *daven* to *HaShem*, and if he did not see adults talking there, he would not learn to do the same..."

(תשורה סיום הרמב"ם כפ"ח תשנ"ו, התועודיות תשמ"ג ח"ב ע' 1131)

The Rebbe once related that at one time he had challenged the *rov* of a certain *shul* in which people would walk around before *davening* was over, disturbing those who were still *davening*.

To this the *rov* replied: "Is that the only problem that we have?!"

The Rebbe was not impressed, and made it clear that the matter must be resolved.

(שיח"ק תשמ"א ח"א ע' 463)

CONSIDER

Why should one disgrace those talking during *davening*?
Is that the way to influence another person?!

Would all these tragedies that occurred as a result of talking during *davening* have happened if people had not *davened* at all?

In the *shul* of the *Sfas Emes* of Ger, there were two daily *minyans* for *Shacharis*, one after the other. While the second *minyans* began to *daven*, the *mispalelim* from the first would stay to talk. When word of this reached the *Sfas Emes*, he rescheduled the *minyans* so that the first group would finish socializing before the second *minyans* began...

(שיח שרפי קודש ח"ב ע' לב)

The Alter Rebbe records in *Shulchan Aruch* that young children should be trained to stand in *shul* with reverence and awe. Those children who run around in *shul* should not be brought at all.

The Chida adds that if someone converses during *davening*, it would be better that he not come at all,

because he is sinning and also causing others to sin.

(שו"ע אדה"ז ס' קכד ס"י, פתח עינים להחיד"א)

POWERFUL EFFECT

Eliyahu HaNavi was once seen together with 4000 laden camels. When he was asked what they were loaded with, he replied, "With fury and wrath."

"Why?" the people questioned.

"To wreak fury and wrath upon those who converse between *Amen, yehei shmei rabba* and *yisbareich*."

(שו"ע אדה"ז ס' נו ס"ז)

It is related that a certain Yid dreamt of his deceased friend, whose face appeared to be jaundiced. He asked him why he was being punished so, and he answered, "Because I used to talk when the *sheliach tzibbur* was saying *Kaddish* and did not listen."

(שו"ע אדה"ז ס' רסח ס"ז)

After the widespread massacres during the years ת"ח ת"ט (1648-1649), when tens of thousands of Yidden across Poland and the Ukraine were killed, the author of *Tosafos Yom-Tov* fasted and *davened* so that he be told why this had occurred. In a dream it was revealed to him that it was due to idle conversation during *davening*, for this deleted the letter ו from the word דבור (*dibbur* - "speech"), leaving דבר (*dever* - "plague"). The *Tosafos Yom-Tov* then composed a special *Mi SheBeirach* to be recited every *Shabbos* for all those who refrain from talking during *davening*, blessing them with health, with all the *brachos* listed in the *Tanach*, and plentiful *nachas* from their children.

(שי למורא ע' כה)

In the late 5730s (1970s), when a number of tragedies occurred in Crown Heights, many residents were left wondering what lesson they should take to heart. When Reb Yitzchok Ushpal, the head of the *Chevrah Kaddisha* at the time, asked the Rebbe what in particular should be changed, the Rebbe told him that the issue that needed correcting was the talking in *shul* during *davening*.

(מפי הרחשד"ב ליפסקר - גבאי חברה קדישא)

The *Zohar* teaches that one of the last obstacles delaying the *Geula* is conversation in *shul*, for this banishes the *Shechina*. By keeping a *shul* quiet, we invite the *Shechina* and hasten the coming of *Moshiach*.

(אגה"ק ס"י כג)



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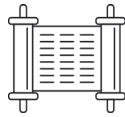
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HASHEM'S NAME

May one say "Thank G-d" in response to the question of how one is doing?

Reciting Hashem's name in vain, when not in the context of praising Hashem, transgresses the *min hatorah* prohibition of "lo sisa... lashav," reciting Hashem's name in vain. It is a severe prohibition, and the Gemara associates Hashem's name being mentioned freely with negative consequences.¹

The prohibition applies to the seven names of Hashem that may not be erased, and also to names designated for Hashem in other languages, such as the term 'G-d' in English or 'Boga' in Russian.²

The Alter Rebbe notes that there is no prohibition to recite Hashem's name in supplications and requests. Also, Chazal permitted greeting another and blessing them with Hashem's name.³ Some suggest this as a basis for the Rebbe's common custom to bless Yidden with the phrase "May G-d A-Imighty bless you."⁴

Even when permitted, Chazal were nonetheless reluctant in this regard. Therefore, a missed *yaaleh veyavo* from Rosh Chodesh *bentching* — which isn't a full obligation — isn't filled in later as a *Harachaman* since it includes Hashem's name, in contrast to *V'al hanisim*.⁵

The Frierdiker Rebbe was particular not to say Hashem's name in Yiddish, but rather say "Gimmel Alef Tes." The Rebbe mentioned the practice of singing the *nigun* Nyet with the words "krami yeva" as a substitute for the Russian version of G-d.⁶

One may bless Hashem and mention His name when expressing gratitude to Him out of genuine joy, as this is a legitimate purpose. But the Alter Rebbe emphasizes that this allowance doesn't apply to casual phrases, such as a habitual "Thank G-d."⁷

It is desirable to thank Hashem for everything and mention Hashem often. However, unless one has genuine joy, it would seem preferable to respond to an inquiry regarding one's welfare with "Boruch Hashem" or an English alternative, such as "Thank the One above."

1. נדרים ז ע"ב, וראה שו"ע"ר סי' קנ"ו לאלפים (לבעל הפלא יועץ) סי' רט"ו ס"ב.
 2. ראה שו"ע"ר סי' פ"ה ס"ג, וראה לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 410 לגבי "לארד".
 3. משנה ברכות נ"ד ע"א, שו"ע"ר סי' קפ"ח ס"ב, סי' קנ"ו ס"ב, סי' רט"ו שם.
 4. ראה שו"ת אתרא דרב (AskTheRav.com) שאלה ביתשלא בארוכה.
 5. שו"ע"ר סי' קפ"ח שם, וראה חסד
 6. נדרים ז ע"ב, וראה שו"ע"ר סי' קנ"ו לאלפים (לבעל הפלא יועץ) סי' רט"ו ס"ב.
 7. ראה סה"ש תש"ג ע' 62, ת"ו חמ"ד ע' 71.
 8. סדבה"ג פי"ג ה"ד שצריך להזהיר אנשים ע"ז, ולהעיר מהליכות שלמה פכ"ב אות ט' בשם הגרש"א דאין למחות כי טוב הוא שיהא שם שמות שגור בפייהם.

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

Our Heroes



REBBETZIN RIVKAH – MOTHER OF THE ALTER REBBE

Rebbetzin Rivkah was born in Vitebsk to her father Reb Avrohom "Der Gertner" (the gardener), a great *tzadik* and *gaon* who was a descendant of Reb Avrohom Chaim, author of *Tzon Kodoshim* and *Toras Chaim on Gemara*. On 17 Elul 5503 (1743), she married Reb Boruch who was the sixth generation from the Maharal of Prague. She was very learned, and was fluent in *Tanach* and *Midrash*. She also learned *mussar seforim* and some *Mishna* and *Gemara*. The Alter Rebbe instructed his grandson the Tzemach Tzedek to hear stories from his mother Rebbetzin Rivkah.

Mitteler Rebbe fainted twice from excessive weakness and pain. Rebbetzin Rivkah told him, "I swear with my life, that it will be as my father prophesied to me that this week your father will be released from his imprisonment."

(ספר התולדות אדה"ז ח"ג ע' 701)

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)

The Alter Rebbe's arrest in 5559 (1798) negatively impacted the health of his family. Despite this, his wife Rebbetzin Sterna, his children, as well as his grandson the Tzemach Tzedek (who was nine-years-old at the time) would fast every day, recite Tehillim with a *minyan* and visit the grave of the Alter Rebbe's daughter, Rebbetzin Devorah Leah. Despite being weak and sick, the Alter Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Rivkah, strengthened everyone's spirit with her strong mind, calm spirit and clear intellect.

On Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, the

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



A TEACHER'S DAVENING

Reb Shneur Zalman Gafni related:

After running Or Temimim Baal Teshuva Program for a while, I came to New York in 5729 (1969) to discuss my progress. I was primarily concerned that my *yeshiva* responsibilities were hindering my own davening at length.

The Rebbe responded that my *talmidim* should be my first concern. He gave me an example from the story of Rabbi Shmuel bar Shilas, who the Gemara describes as entirely dedicated to his students, never taking his mind off them.

As the Rebbe spoke, I thought to myself, "This is the end of me; from now on, only

the students matter..."

Suddenly the Rebbe stopped talking and looked up at the ceiling. After a moment, the Rebbe addressed my thoughts. "But we still need to find a solution..."

The Rebbe suggested that I recite several passages of davening slowly, with intensity, and the rest at a regular pace. But I should bend the page where I stopped my intense davening, and after several days continue to the next part.

The Rebbe concluded that I still had Shabbos to make up for it, adding that "If one davens properly on Shabbos, that illuminates the entire week."