

The Weekly Farbrenging



לחמן ישמעו • עקב תשפ"ו • 890
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

WIELDING WORDS (II)

SPIRITUAL EFFECTS

The Alter Rebbe records how his teacher, the Maggid, would speak out any spiritual revelation that came to his mind, even when his listeners were unable to understand it. When a concept is spoken it is drawn down to the world, enabling anyone to reach that concept on his own.

(מאמר אדה"צ הקצרים עמוד ע' תסד)

Once, while in the Baal Shem Tov's shul in Mezhibuzh, someone had an argument with another fellow and shouted that he would tear him to pieces like a fish. The Baal Shem Tov told his *talmidim* to hold hands, and to stand near him with their eyes closed. Then, he placed his holy hands on the shoulders of the two *talmidim* standing next to him. Suddenly, the *talmidim* began to scream in terror, for they saw this fellow actually tearing apart the other man.

(היום יום כ"ט תשרי)

It is *psaken* in *Shulchan Aruch* that one should not tell a child that a dog or cat "will come to take them," for this can *ch"v* bring upon the child evil forces with those names, which can harm their body or their *neshama*.

(שו"ע אדה"צ הל' שמירת הגוף והנפש סי"ב)

POWERFUL WORDS

In the city of Posen, Reb Boruch Batlan, the Alter Rebbe's great-grandfather, lived as a tenant of the goldsmith Avigdor Tuvia and his wife Gittel. Though this couple gave *tzedaka* generously to many people, they were not refined people; he played cards, drank heavily and used bad language, and his wife also spoke in an unrefined way and cursed when she was angered. People would tremble from her curses, for they were known to materialize.

In the year תמ"ב (1682), when Avigdor Tuvia and his wife passed away, without children, their neighbors began to hear wild screams and drunken laughter coming out of their vacant apartment. Jumping and dancing feet shook the floorboards. Reb Boruch and his family moved to another area, because they were unable to fall asleep at night.

On his next visit to his Rebbe, Reb Yoel, the Baal Shem of Zamoshtch, Reb Boruch told him about the haunted house in Posen and about its past residents. Reb Yoel Baal Shem advised him that the only way to drive the *sheidim* from the house was to turn it into a *beis midrash*. He then gave detailed directives: Ten of his

talmidim should fast the following Sunday, *lein Vayeichel*, and spend the following night learning Torah. The next morning, five *sifrei Torah* wrapped in *talleisim* should be carried, each by two *talmidim*, and they should walk from the *shul* to the goldsmith's house. At the door, they should call out to the *sheidim*, telling them to leave the house and make way for the Torah. They should then go inside and say certain *kapitlach Tehillim*. *Minyanim* should be held there three times a day, and *shiurim* for young and old should be organized. "Then everything will be in order," concluded Reb Yoel Baal Shem.

CONSIDER

*How did the Baal Shem Tov's
talmidim perceive the man's
threat before their vision?
How did they understand it
afterwards?
Are forces created through
speech or are they the energy
of the speech itself?*

Meanwhile, the mayor of Posen came one evening to see the situation for himself. When he heard the sounds of screaming, yelling, and clapping of hands, he hurried to ask the local bishop for a special prayer to remove the *sheidim* from the town. The bishop called together his priests, and they walked in a procession, carrying their *tzlamim*, until they reached the house where they sprinkled water on the walls and closed their eyes, mumbling a prayer. The apartment was on the first floor and had four windows facing the street, where the priests were standing. Suddenly, the windows were flung open and terrible faces popped out, so frightening that some priests fainted and many of the onlookers fled in terror.

That Sunday, the *talmidim* did as the Baal Shem had instructed. Hundreds of men and women, both Yidden and *goyim*, crowded outside, waiting to see what would happen. Unafraid, the *talmidim* called out three times for the *sheidim* to leave, and when the noises from the house did not stop, they broke down the door and entered. At that moment, every window pane was

shattered, as the weirdest collection of creatures flew out, escaping for their lives.

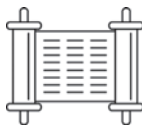
For six weeks, everything went smoothly, but then sounds were heard once again, this time coming from the cellar. The neighbors, who had been enjoying the relief, were horrified to once again hear loud barks and noises, giving them no peace by day or night. One tenant, a dealer in furs, was a *misnaged* to the Baal Shem, and denied the miracle, so when the *sheidim* returned, he was delighted. When the neighbors suggested inviting the Baal Shem himself to resolve the matter, this man was furious and declared he would fight to prevent this from happening. One day, a customer came to see some fur skins, so the dealer sent his son down to the cellar with the customer. As soon as they moved to open the cellar door, it flew open on its own, and out jumped the most frightening creature they had ever seen. The customer went white, the son became crazy, and they both ran screaming into the street, eventually fainting from fright. When they came to, the son had to be tied with rope to be kept under control. Now, even the *misnaged* did not object to have the Baal Shem come and rid them of the *sheidim*.

The Baal Shem traveled to Posen and arranged for the *Beis Din* to hold a *din Torah* with the *sheidim*. The newly-established *beis midrash* in the apartment was prepared, with a special area sectioned off by *mechitzos*, and the Baal Shem called out for the *sheidim* to appear, warning them not to hurt anyone. As soon as the *sheidim* made their presence felt, the Baal Shem began, "I have called you to a *Din Torah*, for you have exceeded the limits *HaShem* has set, by coming among mortals." Strange incomprehensible sounds were heard. At the instructions of the Baal Shem, the head of the *Beis Din* stood up and decreed that one of the *sheidim* be able to speak clearly. "We have every right to come here," the *sheid* countered. "We were created by the curses of Avigdor Tuvia and his wife, Gittel, so we are the lawful heirs, and their house rightfully belongs to us. We left the apartment only because the light of the *sifrei Torah* was too much for us to handle." The *sheidim* crowed and squeaked loudly, terrifying all those present. The Baal Shem called out: "I command you, in the name of *HaShem*, to be silent immediately and to remain hidden from human eyes. You must obey the *psak* of the *Beis Din*!"

The *shul* became perfectly silent and they disappeared. The *Beis Din* immediately *psaken* that they had no right to the inheritance, and they were never heard of again.

(ספר הזכרונות לאדרי"צ ח"ב ע' 106)





CHARGING FOR A MITZVAH

May a mohel charge for performing a bris?

Chazal derive from Moshe's words to the Yidden that just as Hashem gives us His Torah without charge, we must also teach and perform mitzvos without taking a fee. For this reason, a dayan, a witness, and anyone engaged in a mitzvah may not charge for the mitzvah itself.¹

Regarding a mohel, the Rama rules that one who refuses to perform a bris unless he is paid is not conducting himself in the way of the descendants of Avraham Avinu. On the contrary, the finest mohelim seek out the merit of performing a bris without charge.²

Nonetheless, a mohel may accept payment in several cases, since the money is understood not as a price for the mitzvah but as compensation for what surrounds it, similar to a doctor, who may not charge for the healing itself – which is an obligation – yet may be paid for his time, effort, and expenses.³

The first rule is that a person may be paid for what he is under no obligation to do. The Alter Rebbe rules that although a witness may not take payment to testify about what he already saw, since that is his Torah obligation, he may be paid to go and watch an event to become a witness, since he's not obligated to do so. This is why witnesses on a *get* may be paid for signing a document (their obligation is only to testify when called upon).⁴ A mohel, similarly, is not obligated to travel to the child, so he may charge for the trouble of coming.

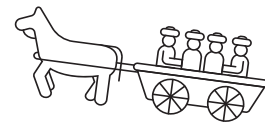
When several mohalim are available, and the family chooses him in particular, he may charge for his special expertise. When the family sets the bris at a designated time on the eighth day, restricting his schedule, he may be paid for having to work around it.⁵

A mohel may also collect *schar batala*, the wages he could have earned had he spent that time at work (similar to a *melamed*). Were he not engaging in this activity, he would be earning a living elsewhere.⁶ And he may certainly charge for his surgical supplies and for examining the child in the days that follow.⁷

Payment for a bris on Shabbos poses a separate concern of *sechar Shabbos*. Treating it as *sechar mitzvah*, like a chazzan who is paid to daven, is a matter of debate among the poskim, and in any case, wages taken for Shabbos see no *siman bracha*. It is therefore preferable that any payment be given *behavla'ah*, folded together with compensation for travel and preparation before Shabbos or for checking the child once Shabbos has ended (see article 277).⁸

1. דברים ד' ה' (ראה למדתי אתכם). בכורות.
2. רמ"א יו"ד סי' רס"א ס"א, ע"פ שו"ת הרשב"א ח"א סי' תע"ב. וראה ביאור הגר"א שם ס"ק ז'.
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8. ראה רמב"ן תורת האדם שער הסכנה. ושו"ע יו"ד סי' של"ו ס"ב.

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



R. SHAMAI VIGAN

R. Shamai Vigan was a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab and Frieddiker Rebbe. A grandson of the chossid R. Zalman Scherbiner, he was born in the small village of Scherbin, near Lubavitch. R. Shamai learned in Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch and was known for his sincere *avodas Hashem*. He served as a shochet in Rostov and was *moser nefesh* to teach bochurim until he was arrested in 5696 and exiled to Siberia for three years. After his release he served as a shochet in Novozybkov, Russia, where he was killed *al kidush Hashem* by the Nazis in 5702.

R. Yudel Chitrik recorded:

From my days in Schedrin, I became friends with "Shamai Scherbiner" as he was called. Shamai was a *yirei Shomayim* and a *pnimi*, and he shared his inner feelings and experiences with me. He told me that he thought through the *maamar* "Tanu Rabanan" 5643 before davening over 100 times.

Before Pesach, bochurim wished to adopt all the Rebbe Rashab's *hidurim* in making *matza*. But Shamai questioned us, "Are we on the level of such *hidurim*?" Yet, we concluded that in

order to be receptive to Chassidus, we ought to be *mehader* as much as we can.

When he reached the age of shidduchim, he was matched with the daughter of R. Avrohom Fradkin. He met with her and the shidduch was almost finalized, but then Rebbetzin Shterna Sara suggested for him a girl from Gzatzk. He was uncertain of what to do. In the end, both fell through, and he married the daughter of the shochet from Zhebin.

(רשימות דברים חדש ע' 303)

When his sister developed a growth on her tongue, the doctors said it was dangerous and must be operated on immediately. Shamai ran in anguish to the Rebbe Rashab, who assured him that it was nothing more than a rotting tooth that must be pulled out. Indeed, they found the tooth and removed it, and the growth disappeared.

When someone noted to the Rebbe Rashab that he is publicly displaying *mofsim*, the Rebbe replied, "Shamai came in crying that his sister must be saved. Nu, what was I to do?!"

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"ג ע' 218)

A Moment with The Rebbe



AN OPENING FOR COLLEGE

The Rebbe's position against attending college is well known. The Rebbe repeatedly warned of the heretical environment and lack of moral standards in many colleges, which can pose a significant spiritual danger to those who attend.

Before establishing Touro College, Dr. Bernard Lander visited the Rebbe in *yechidus* and shared that his plans, which included separate classes for men and women and careful selection of subjects taught. "I was sure that the Rebbe would be happy with it and give me his blessings," he recounted.

However, the Rebbe requested that he not open the college.

"You're opening the door for going to college at all," the Rebbe said. "You have no guarantee that they will stay with you. One year they'll go to your college, and then they'll go to Columbia, Harvard, and so on. Once they get a *'heter*' for your college, they'll forget which college this allowance was intended for.

"So, you're actually encouraging young people to go to secular college!"

(As heard from Reb Leibel Groner AH)