

Toras Chayim - are there two Torahs?

In attending to communal matters, the Rebbe Maharash once traveled to S. Peterburg near the day of Ches Teves – the Yorzheit of his mother, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. The trip would mean that he could not make it back to Lubavitch for the Yohrzeit; something he always tried to prevent, but this year was left without a choice.

The Rebbe's group, as usual, rented a few rooms in the Serapinsky hotel, and to accommodate the masses of Chassidim who had traveled to spend time with the Rebbe, and especially to hear him as Chazzan, a large hall was arranged for Davening.

Among the guests were Chaim Eliyahu of Slutsk (who had learnt Shas eight times from when he had become a Porush), and the chossid Reb Eliezer Eliansky from Tzarskia Sela, as well as many other great scholars of illustrious families.

On his way into the hotel, Reb Eliezer met Powel Demeenov, a Russian general, who had just exited the military academy across the street. Noticing the large amount of Yidden in the street, the gen-

eral inquired of Reb Eliezer if there was a festival. "No," replied Reb Eliezer, explaining that the Lubavitcher Rebbe had Yortzeit for his mother and he would be leading the prayers for the sake of her soul.

"Listening to him pray is a great privilege," he concluded.

Hearing this, the general stammered in surprise, "Rabbi Schneerson is still alive?"

"I remember him...it must have been about thirty years ago when I was still a regular soldier...I was in hospital recovering from an injury when the Rebbe Schneerson of Lubavitch came to visit the sick Jewish soldiers and give them his blessings...If I remember correctly, they had told me he was over sixty years of age...And that was then!"

Understanding the general's surprise, Reb Eliezer explained that the Rabbi Schneerson who had arrived in town was in fact the son and successor to the Rabbi he had met thirty years earlier.

The general nodded and before turning to leave, asked if he could attend the Tefillos to hear the Rebbe daven. It was

now Reb Eliezer's turn to be surprised, but despite his surprise, he did not object.

Out of concern for his identity, the general paid Reb Eliezer ten Rubles to rent a room next to the hall where the Rebbe would lead the Davening, and to bribe the hotel guard from revealing his presence.

Reb Eliezer did so, and then hurried to the big hall to ensure a place for Maariv.

Even before the Rebbe entered to daven, the hall was packed from wall to wall, and the crowd had spilled into the corridor with barely room to move.

Before beginning, the Rebbe stood near the Amud and sang a niggun *Gaguim* for a few minutes. The hall was silent; all eyes were focused on one person, all ears were attentive, and all hearts were trembling. Suddenly the holy voice of the Rebbe Maharash was heard reverberating through the entire room, "Vehu Rachum."

Each word penetrated deeply into the hearts of those present, and, in unison, they all began to daven.

Maariv itself lasted forty-five minutes. The voice of the Rebbe Maharash was powerful and yet, had a pleasant tone to it.

After Maariv the Rebbe sat to rest for a few minutes. He then spoke about the major role his mother had played in saving the 'Cantonistim'. He praised these 'Neshomos' profusely, saying how most of them were 'Moiser Nefesh Al Kiddush Hashem', withstanding the many tests thrown in their paths, and remaining loyal to Yiddishkeit.

He concluded in quoting the Tzemach Tzedek, "The 'Cantonistim' will give back their Neshomos as Yidden - Baaleh Teshuva".

The next day, toward the end of Mincha, by the B'rocha of Sim Shalom, the Rebbe drew out his pronunciation of the words, "Borcheinu Avinu Kulonu K'echod," and when he said the phrase, "Ki B'oir Ponecho...Toras Chaim," his voice was filled joy, and a sense of happiness pervaded throughout the room.

After Mincha, while the Rebbe Maharash was sitting and resting, two elderly gentlemen approached him and said:

"Boruch Hashem, we are privileged to be of those that sit and learn Torah a whole day; we can truly say that learning is our occupation. We are therefore not required, according to Shulchan Aruch, to be 'specific' with our davening. We also don't spend time with the understanding of the words for this would waste time from our learning and be considered Bittul Torah.

"Today, however, when we were listening to you daven, and we heard the way you said the phrases in the last Berochah, we had an opportunity to understand the meaning of these words, and, in fact, they are most puzzling – we just never 'noticed' this beforehand!

"Firstly, how is it that we ask Hashem to bless us all as one; do all Yidden really deserve the same Berochos? Does Avraham Shlomo, the Shamash (caretaker), really deserve the same Berocha as us who learned and toiled in Torah for more than ten years?

"Secondly, what does it mean that we should merit "Oir Ponecho" (the light of your countenance), how is this within the capacity of a human being?

"And finally, what is the meaning of the term 'Toras Chaim', are there two Toras? One of life and one of death – Ch"v Ch"v?"

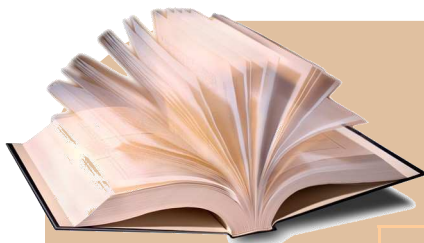
The Rebbe remained quiet until they had finished speaking, and then replied: "Yes, all Yidden are equally deserving of Hashem's Berochos. In fact, these simple people are more cherished than those of great stature; Hashem loves their simplicity and sincerity.

"Regarding your second question: the words "Oir Ponecho" mean the understanding of Hashem which is explained in Midrash, Zohar etc. and elaborated upon in Chassidus."

Concluding, the Rebbe Maharash said, "Toras Chaim is when one's Torah is permeated with a true fear of Hashem. This is only attainable through the "Oir Ponecho" – without the "Oir Ponecho" of Chassidus, one's Torah is not Toras Chaim."

ידוע שהנשמה כללית הנה על ידה צ"ל כל ההמשכות, ולא רק אלו שברוחניות בלבד, ואמר כ"ק אדנ"ע: לערן מיינע חסידות וועסטו ווערן מיין חסיד. שזוהו הוראה לכל דור ודור באופן ההתקשרות שצ"ל ע"י תורה, ובפרט אצל חסידי חב"ד.

פנים



Rambam

פירוש
מורה נבוכים

פרק א' ליום	ג' פרקים ליום	יום
ה' דעות פרק ו.	ה' תפילין פזוזה וספר תורה פרק ה-ז.	ו' ז' ניסן
פרק ז.	פרק ח-י.	ש"ק ח' ניסן
ה' תלמוד תורה... פרק א.	ה' ציצית... פרק א-ג.	א' ט' ניסן
פרק ב.	ה' ברכות... פרק א-ג.	ב' י' ניסן
פרק ג.	ה' ברכות... פרק ד-ו.	ג' י"א ניסן
פרק ד.	פרק ז-ט.	ד' י"ב ניסן
פרק ה.	פרק י-יא. ה' מילה... פרק א.	ה' י"ג ניסן
פרק ו.	פרק ב-ג. סדר תפלות כל השנה. נהגו העם... ימלוך עלינו וכו'.	ו' י"ד ניסן