

א חסידישער דערהער...¹

Volume 1, Issue 3

ערש"ק פרשת תצוה, ז' אדר א' תשע"א

Leben Miten Rebben - Visits of Rabbanim

Excerpts of a diary written in 5744, one of the years in which the kevius is similar to this year's.

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Wednesday, 12 Adar I

Visit of Reb Pinchas Menachem Alter

At approximately 8:00 in the evening, Reb Pinchas Menachem Alter (Brother of the Gerer Rebbe and Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Sefas Emes in Yerushalayim¹) arrived at 770 escorted by a distinguished delegation, to see the Rebbe. The Rebbe and Reb Alter conversed for about 45 minutes.

Amongst the many Torah-related subjects discussed: It is well known that the Gerer Rebbe instituted a daily study of the Talmud Yerushalmi (similar to Daf Hayomi). The Rebbe was very supportive of this project in various ways, including sending a letter with words of encouragement to the participants in the Siyum celebration – as shall be mentioned below at length. (It's interesting to note, that from the initiation of this project in 5742, the Rebbe began to include in his Hadran² on each Mesichta, an explanation on the Siyum of that Mesichta as it appears in Talmud Yerushalmi as well).

Now, the Rebbe suggested that a new edition of Talmud Yerushalmi be printed, including the Mishnayos of those Mesichtos that don't have explanation of Talmud Yerushalmi on them. In this manner, the conclusion of the study-cycle would not be with Mesichta Nidda, a rather negative way of ending off (as we know of the rule "Mesaymim Betov").

Towards the end of the conversation, the Rebbe again began to discuss the daily study of Talmud Yerushalmi, suggesting that the Siyum ceremonies be conducted with more publicity. Reb Elimelech Neiman, a prominent Gerer Chossid and activist, mentioned that upon the completion of one Seder in the first cycle they indeed did arrange a large Siyum celebration in New York, and the Rebbe sent a letter of blessing for it. The Rebbe acknowledged his words, saying, "Yes. That is why I ask, because I recall receiving a notification about it, but only once!" The Rebbe continued with a lengthy discussion, citing many Torah sources that matters of holiness must be done in a most public way, and concluded on a more practical note, saying that it is very evident that when something is done with a tumult and with much publicity, it arouses more people to get involved in it.

Reb Alter then requested that he be allowed to speak with the Rebbe privately. All the guests left the room, and the Yechidus lasted until 10:15.

Visit of the Oksover Rebbe of Be'er Sheva

When Reb P.M.A. took leave, the Oksover Rebbe entered along with his Shamash. He began by telling the Rebbe about the wonderful activities coordinated by the Chabad Chassidim in Be'er Sheva, adding that he often takes part in them in person, or offers his assistance.

The Oksover Rebbe requested that the Rebbe convey some words of encouragement with him to the Chassidim in Be'er Sheva.

The Rebbe said that, as we approach Purim Katan, we are reminded of the story of the Frierdiker Rebbe on Purim Katan, 5687. The Frierdiker Rebbe went then to visit Moscow for communal affairs. Although he knew very well that the KGB was following his every move, keeping a watchful eye behind each of his steps, he nonetheless chose to recite a Maamor at the large Chabad Shul in the city. The Maamor began with the Possuk "Vekibel Hayehudim..." from the Megila, calling fervently upon the listeners to remain strong in the observance of Torah and Mitzvos, and particularly in ensuring a proper Jewish education for the children. The Frierdiker Rebbe spoke in this manner even while he knew that spies had been planted within the crowd to report to the government of all that they were hearing. And indeed, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was actually arrested in Sivan later on that year, his interrogators made mention of the Purim Katan episode.

The Rebbe concluded, "If you wish to bring anyone some words of encouragement ("Ah Gut vort") the best words are those mentioned above..."

Upon the Oksover Rebbe's request, the Rebbe blessed him with much success in all his endeavors.

¹ Reb Pinchas Menachem Alter subsequently became the Gerer Rebbe.

² At any Farbrengen that was held on a Yartzeit (namely, Vov Tishrei, Yud Shevat, and Chof Av), the Rebbe conducted a Siyum on a Mesichta, thereby avoiding the Halachic issue of Farbrenging on a day when there are opinions who maintain that one is to fast. On Yud Tes Kislev as well, the Rebbe conducted a Siyum in connection with the Chalukas Hashas. After citing the conclusion of the Mesichta as it appears in Gemora, the Rebbe would expound upon it and give in-depth explanation, known as the "Hadran".

לימוד התורה

* אויף צו זיין "נרות להאיר" דארף פריער זיין יגיעה – אויף צו זיין א למדן מוז מען לערנען ביגיעה, "לא יגעת ומצאת אל תאמין" – עס איז ניט שייך במציאות אז מען זאל זיין א למדן אן לערנען ביגיעה.

(משיחת ש"פ מקץ תשמ"א)

* בשעת ער לערנט תורה, דארף ער ניט טראכטן וועגן אן אנדער זאך, נאר ער דארף וויסן אז ס'איז ניטא קיין שום זאך, אויסער די תורה און דער וואס לערנט די תורה.

(משיחת ש"פ במדבר תשל"ו)

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* אהבת ריעים בא חסידים איז א טבע, און ניט א טבע שני נאר א טבע ראשון, און אויב בא איינעם פעלט דאס איז ער א בעל מום, אזוי ווי עס זיינען חסירי יד או רגל מבטן ומלידה.

(ס' השיחות תרצ"ו ע' 209)

Bearer of Good News

Reb Shimon the Blecher

In answer to your letter from the 20th of this month: I enjoyed hearing the good news of the birth of a son to... in Mazel Tov, may Hashem grant that he grow to Torah Chuppa and Maasim Tovim....

Reb Shimon the Blecher

.... It once happened, in the time of the Alter Rebbe, there was a village in which lived a group of Chassidim. Unfortunately the misnagdim there gave them no rest and harassed them with no mercy. Eventually, the slanders and lies of the misnagdim got some of the Chassidim thrown into prison. When, with Hashem's mercy the case was dropped and the Chassidim were let free, the Chassidim of the town sat down to write a letter to their Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe to tell him the good news of the deliverance and salvation.

In that town there was a chassid by the name of Reb Shimon Der Blecher. He was of average intelligence but mekushar to the Alter Rebbe with "chains of love" and a powerful devotion. He would constantly say: "Ai der Rebbe, Ai der Rebbe".

Reb Shimon was a plate-maker by profession and from time to time he would travel through the nearby villages selling his ware, but he wasn't very successful and lived a hard life.

When they prepared the letter to be sent to the Alter Rebbe, Reb Shimon brought money to pay for a special courier to rush the letter to the Rebbe.

In every village in those days, there was a special Vaad - a committee - that regulated all that happened among the Chassidim. One of the elders was the mentor and educator of that city and he would report to the Alter Rebbe everything that happened.

When Reb Shimon came with the money to pay for the courier to take the letter to the Alter Rebbe, the members of the Vaad refused. Knowing his financial situation as poor man who barely eked out a living, and who's wife and children were sick, they refused to take the money from him. However he would not let up, declaring that the one extra hour of nachas the Alter Rebbe would receive by getting the letter by express courier was worth more to him than all the riches in the world.

When the matter reached the elder

Chassid, the one who was appointed by the Alter Rebbe to be the educator and mentor for this village and the collector for the Tzedaka of Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes and Ma'amod, he decided in Reb Shimon's favor, so they sent the letter by express courier. The story of Reb Shimon Der Blecher reached the ears of the the Maharil - brother of the Alter Rebbe- who was the Memuna at that time.

Some time passed, and Reb Yaakov Semilyan, the shliach of the Alter Rebbe, traveled through the region collecting the monies of Tzedaka and Ma'amod¹.

When he arrived at this village, the Chassidim were stunned, when at the meeting in the presence of all the townspeople, he presented a hand-written letter from the Alter Rebbe to Reb Shimon Der Blecher. In the letter, the Alter Rebbe thanked Reb Shimon for sending a special messenger to bring him the good news, and gave him a Bracha that on account of this, Hashem will bless him to be a bearer of good news.

Not much time elapsed, and Reb Shimon's situation improved. His wife and children recovered, and Hashem sent him increased parnassa with hatzlacha in all that he did, and the Bracha of the Rebbe came to be. Reb Shimon would regularly send good news to the Rebbe about himself in particular, and about the Chassidim of his town in general.

...because of the good news you have told me, may the kindness of Hashem come as the payment for the Mitzva, to provides you and your wife with all you need in gashmiyus and ruchniyus, and Hashem should gladden your hearts and give you children, a good strong livelihood.²

The Importance of Good News

The Frierdiker Rebbe's appreciation of B'suros Tovs as displayed in the letter above is not at all a foreign concept in Darkei Hachassidus. In numerous letters, the Rebbe quotes the sorrowful notion, expressed by the Frierdiker Rebbe, that some people tend to act as "Tzaros-Chassidim", writing to the Rebbe only upon facing difficulties and when in dire need of a blessing for salvation.

But when all is well, they seem to "forget", and don't let the Rebbe know when good news arrive. Often, the Rebbe rebukes the Chassidim for this conduct and

at times, quite sharply.

In one particular letter the Rebbe writes that it may be possible that Hashem brings a hardship upon a Chossid just to bring about that he writes to the Rebbe, thereby strengthening the connection of two Yidden, one with the other. So why not avoid the difficulty from arising in the first place by frequently writing about good news?³

A Unique Request

In this regard, mention should be made of an incredible letter from the Rebbe that appeared in a recently published Teshura⁴. The letter is addressed to Mr. Shlomo Yosef Zippel, a very distinguished Baal Habos in Milano, Italy.

"It is quite some time since I heard from you and while "no news is good news," I would be pleased to hear explicitly that this is so for you and all the family...

Pursuant to the above, it is with particular pleasure that I can share with you a most gratifying matter which came to me unexpectedly a few days ago, in the auspicious month of Adar, making it even more joyous.

I refer to the great and pleasant surprise of receiving a letter from your son Dov Baruch, full of good tidings, namely that he is learning at a Yeshiva, that he intends to learn there the whole year, that the Yeshiva is in the Old City of Jerusalem, a Yeshiva exclusively dedicated to Torah study and, on top of all, the letter discusses one of the basic precepts in Chassidus.

It is not unusual for a Jew to complain when the opportunity arises, so I could file a complaint for not having received this good news from you. However, this is not the purpose of my letter at all, but solely to share with you the good news, as mentioned above...."

¹ Ma'amod is the money Chassidim would send to the Rebbe for the support of Beis HaRav.

² Adapted from a Letter of the Frierdiker Rebbe - 24 Adar 5698 (תר"ץ) Vol. 4 p. 276

³ See also Igros Kodesh Vol. 3 pg. 416.

⁴ From the wedding celebration of A.T. Nisselevitch; 19 Shevat, 5771.



שערי זגונה

Der Zhebener Kup

"Der Zhebener Kup" is a very deep Nigun indeed, expressing profound contemplation and deep-rooted thought. This Nigun is also known as "Reb Hillel's Kup", as the famed Chossid, Reb Hillel Paritcher, was the one to bring it to Lubavitch and teach it to the Chassidim, as the following story illustrates:

The Chossid Reb Michael Dvorkin related that he had heard from Reb Dov Zev Kozvenikov, known as "Reb Berre Volf" (a student of Reb Hillel Paritcher), that this Nigun was composed by Reb Pesach Mallestovker¹ and bequeathed to Reb Hillel as a gift. During one of his visits to Lubavitch, Reb Pesach met a Yungerman who had arrived from the city of Babroisk, where Reb Hillel served as the Av Beis Din. When Reb Pesach learned that this individual would soon return to his hometown, he asked of him to listen to a Nigun that he composed, and bring it to Reb Hillel as a gift.

Upon his return home, the Yungerman felt a bit uncomfortable to actually approach the famed Gaon and Chossid and convey the special message, so for the time being the Nigun stayed with him and was not brought to Reb Hillel. A short while later, one of the Chassidim in Babroisk celebrated the Bris Mila of his son. The Yungerman attended the festive meal along with all the members of the community, as did Reb Hillel. When the assembled crowd began to sing Chassidische Nigunim, the Yungerman was reminded of his mission and he disclosed the secret to his peers. One of them called out to Reb Hillel, saying, "There is a Yungerman here who has recently returned from a trip to Lubavitch, and he carries a message for the Rav from Reb Pesach Mallestovker..." Reb Hillel requested that the Yungerman come forward, and sing the new Nigun that he had heard from Reb Pesach. When he concluded, Reb Hillel remarked, "*Der Nigun iz gemacht mit kup...*" (Loosely translated: this Nigun was composed with intellect).

Reb Hillel was then faced with a dilemma: It was his custom each year to sing three of his latest compositions at the conclusion of Ne'ila on Yom Kippur. Later, these three Nigunim would be sung in front of the Tzemach Tzedek before the recitation of a Maamor. Hearing this new Nigun of Reb Pesach, he felt it appropriate that it be sung before the Maamor as well, but when? To sing it as the first song was not an option, since he had already decided on a first Nigun and could not replace it. On the other hand, to merely squeeze Reb Pesach's Nigun in between two others would be disrespectful to an esteemed Chossid of his caliber. Reb Hillel therefore resolved that he would sing this Nigun as the third one; the one that would lead straight into the Maamor.

This Nigun is widely known however as "Der Zhebener Kup". The reason being that in the city of Zhembin, a city filled with Chassidim who were very passionate about their Avodas Hashem, this Nigun was often sung. It is told that the members of the community there were generally categorized in two groups: Maskilim (i.e. Chassidim who placed more emphasis on in-depth study of Chassidus and contemplation on its concepts), and Oivdim (i.e. those who placed more emphasis on Avodas Hashem with their heart, working to arouse within themselves a fiery feeling of Ahava and Yirah). Hence, there is another Nigun known as "Der Zhebener Hartz"², who's stanzas express more heartfelt feeling. The "Kup" is said to have been frequently sung by the Maskilim, while the "Hartz" is generally attributed to the "Oivdim".

¹ Reb Pesach as a young man was a Chossid of the Alter Rebbe, and later of the Mittler Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek (as was Reb Hillel). See Sefer Hasichos of the Friediker Rebbe 5691, pg. 244; footnote 10.

² Nichoach vol. 7 track 4.

Portrait of a Chassid

~ Misha Der Decher - 3 ~

Misha had one niece who, together with her husband, were released from Soviet Russia and were planning to come to the United States. Loyal as always, Misha came to 770 to share the latest significant development in his life with the Rebbe. As he began to tell the Rebbe of his efforts to bring his relatives over to the United States, the Rebbe suddenly interrupted him and said, "Why must you be so urgent that they come here; can you be accountable that following their arrival they will eat only Kosher and keep Shabbos?"

Misha was dumbfounded by the Rebbe's words. Indeed he admitted that he was not able to assume such a responsibility. The Rebbe continued, "If, on the other hand, they will move to Israel things will be different. In Israel everything is Kosher and they don't work on Shabbos..."

The Rebbe went on, "And how will they manage with making a living?" Misha told the Rebbe, that his niece was a professional in textiles, and her husband was a qualified engineer, and both carried the necessary documents to certify them for their respective professions.

The Rebbe was unsatisfied, "Do you know the American government's attitude towards Russian diplomats? If their papers are not recognized here, they may have to sweep the streets... And either way, you should do research and find out if there is a demand for the field of their profession in America altogether."

Misha began to investigate. He immediately sent a message to his niece in Italy to send over their diplomas along with any other helpful pieces of information with regards to their professions. At the same time he began to explore what the odds would be to find them employment in the United States. He soon discovered the concerns raised by the Rebbe, to be absolutely valid. Firstly, any agency in the country would not accept certification from Russia, and in order to receive employment they would be required to study and be re-examined all over again; secondly, there really wasn't much of a demand for the professions of their field anyway, even if they had proper licenses.

When retelling the story Misha would express his amazement, "How did the Rebbe know so much information from before?"

When Misha finally brought his results to the Rebbe, the Rebbe again repeated his words that he had said at an earlier occasion, "Being that the stores in Israel sell Kosher products, and they don't work on Shabbos, your relatives will be able to keep Shabbos there, as well as manage to make a living. What would justify their coming here?"

The Rebbe continued: "You, as an uncle, and as an American citizen, should travel to Israel and assist them in finding proper living quarters there, and since there is great bureaucracy there, you'll just have to hit on the table with one 'American strike', and the officer there will get up from his chair and understand that it's HIS attention that you want. And I'm sure you'll help them out with a few dollars as well..." Misha immediately responded that there was absolutely no question; he was definitely going to contribute financially. After all, these are his only relatives! Hearing this, the Rebbe smiled broadly.

Needless to say, as soon as Misha returned from his trip to Israel, after all of the Rebbe's instructions were carried out accurately and everything was in order, he went straight to the Rebbe to express his warm, heartfelt thanks as only Misha could...



A difference in the approach towards learning between a Chassid and a Misnaged

Selections from a letter of the Rebbe from 2 Iyar 5714 Chelek Tes p. 5. Free Translation.

Question:

In the letter from my Father-in-Law he explains the difference between the method of learning of a chassid and the method of learning of a Misnagid. Both learn in-depth and both search for inconsistencies in the material and their solutions, yet there is a difference. The chassid knows that what is written in the *sefer* is good and true, and the mistake is in his understanding. The misnagid, however, proves how his *pilpul* and knowledge is the truth and the mistake must be in the *sefer*....

And you wonder, how could he say that the learning of greatest of the misnagdim was with this approach?!

Answer:

(To note: my Father-in-Law, the Frieddiker Rebbe, is speaking about a **misnaged**, not a *oilomshe* [*heimishe*], which is a very specific type of person; this also helps us understand what he wrote in his letter.)

One of the big differences between a chassid and a misnaged lies in their world outlook. The foundation of a chassid's outlook is that his neshama (and the neshamos of all his friends) is a spark and a branch of a neshama kloli. This neshama kloli is his Rebbe. As an result of this, both in gashmiyus things and in ruchniyus things they have a very strong connection. What happens by one affects, to a certain degree, the other. And as we said, this is both in gashmiyus and ruchniyus, obviously including learning Torah and doing Mitzvos.

-With this we can understand the saying of the Nessi'im of Chassidus: "Tzaddik lives with his belief" don't read (יחי) he will live rather (יחי) he will *make* live. The tzaddik, through his *emuna* and his *avoda*, gives life to all those that are connected and attached to him. -

From this it is quite clear that one single neshama is never has the last say [the *posek acharon*] even in a matter of Torah learning because he is only a part of a larger whole. And there are other parts that can enlighten this single neshama. The neshama kloli can even the more so enlighten this neshama to the point that even he will understand better and think deeper.

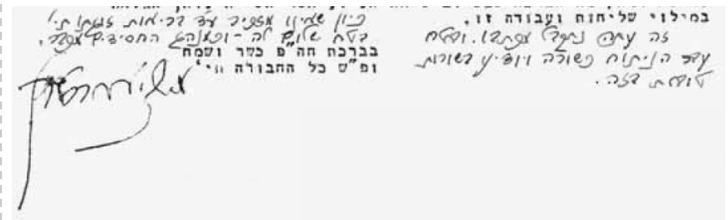
Similarly to the way an understanding of some of the details of a sugya in Gemara leads to a better understanding of the other details. It makes sense to say that the same rule that applies to the understanding of the mind also applies to the intellectual capacity of the mind. Therefore an addition of another thinking mind adds more power to the collective whole.

This knowledge itself, that although he has an obligation

to learn Torah and do Mitzvos, (and he isn't discharged by the fact that another neshama, even the *neshama klali* is doing the same because these were commanded to him) and the Torah was given to human beings, makes him understand that he is only one single entity of a whole, and his understanding is only one detail of a larger being (consciousness) and he can make mistakes with the other parts helping him and fixing him. And especially the *neshama klali* can shine upon him, helping him understand better.

This knowledge itself changes the chassid's approach to learning Torah, as mentioned above in the letter from my Father-in-Law, that what is written in the *sefer* is undoubtedly true and right, (because it has spread throughout Yidden and was recognized by many of the single entities) and the mistake must be in him, being that he is only one detail of the whole, and surely the other parts, whom he must ask for help, will come to his aid and resolve his misunderstanding.

In connection with "Bearer of Good News" we bring this amazing *Ksav Yad* of the Rebbe. (Printed in the *Teshura* from the wedding of Nisselevitch/Garelik; 19 Shevat, 5771.)



זה עתה נתקבל מכתבו. ובטח עבר הניתוח כשורה ויודיע בשורות טובות בזה.
כיון שאינו מזכיר ע"ד בריאות זוגתו תי' בטח שלום לה - וכמנהג חסידים מכבר.

מורה שיעור ללימוד הרמב"ם		
פרק א' ליום	ג' פרקים ליום	ז' אדר א'
ה' תומאת צרעת פרק יב	ה' שאלה ופקדון פ' ג-ה	ז' אדר א'
פרק יג	פ' ו-ח	ח' אדר א'
פרק יד	ה' מלוה ולוה פ' א-ג	ט' אדר א'
פרק טו	פ' ד-ו	י' אדר א'
פרק טז	פ' ז-ט	יא' אדר א'
פרק יז	פ' י-יב	יב' אדר א'
פרק יח	פ' יג-טו	יג' אדר א'