

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • קרח תשע"ט • 521
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

EVERY SINGLE YID (II)

WITH MESIRUS NEFESH

Reb Mordechai HaTzaddik, a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, had two close friends from his *yeshiva* days, and he very much wanted to share with them his new path in serving *HaShem*. However, he was hesitant to leave his Rebbe. Besides, who knew if he would be able to find them. And even if he did find them, would they listen to him?

True, the Baal Shem Tov had once taught that "one must have *mesirus nefesh* to do a favor *begashmius*, and even more *beruchnius*, for even a single Yid. A *neshama* can descend to this world and live for seventy or eighty years or more, just to do a favor for even a single Yid." Accordingly, Reb Mordechai nearly resolved to begin the journey and seek his friends, but somehow he could not bring himself to actually leave. He decided to remain with the Rebbe for just a few more days, and then he would go.

After a few days, he considered approaching the Rebbe, telling him the whole story, and asking his advice. Then, by means of his *ruach hakodesh*, the Rebbe could tell him where his friends were now. That would certainly save him time. But a moment later, Reb Mordechai rejected the idea. Hadn't the Rebbe clearly said that "one must have *mesirus nefesh* to do a favor for even a single Yid?" So why ask if he should go? And as to asking the Rebbe to use his *ruach hakodesh* to save him some time – what a *chutzpa*! Furthermore, if Reb Mordechai did know where they were, he would have less *mesirus nefesh*. No – he would not ask! He decided to take to the road and search for his friends.

On the day of his departure he rose very early and prepared himself for *Shacharis*. After *davening* he packed a little bag with his *tallis* and *tefillin* and his belongings, and began the journey. He had already passed the city limits when the Rebbe's *shammes* ran after him with a message: the Rebbe wished to speak with him!

When he entered the Rebbe's room, the Baal Shem Tov said to him: "*Boruch HaShem*, you won your battle with yourself!" The Baal Shem Tov gave him instructions and a *bracha* for success, and Reb Mordechai was indeed successful in his mission. After a long journey he located his friends and brought them to the path of the Baal Shem Tov.

(אגרות קודש אהר"צ ח"ג ע' קעד)

The Rebbe once spoke of how precious it is to help just

one Yid. One of the *nevuos* of the *Geula* is that *HaShem* will gather together all the Yidden, one by one, and lead them by the hand out of *gulus*. Since the *Geula* is dependent on our *avoda* now, we must learn a lesson from this. Some people, when offered the opportunity of traveling on *shlichus*, only want to go to a place that has thousands of Yidden. They feel that anything less would be a waste of their talents. But just as it is befitting for *HaShem* to take a single Yid to *Eretz Yisroel*, so is it befitting for us to go and help even one single Yid, and kindle within him the light of Torah and *mitzvos*.

On another occasion the Rebbe pointed out two advantages of going to a city with a small number of Yidden. Firstly, one should always run to fulfill those *mitzvos* which others overlook. This is similar to the obligation of leaving everything in order to deal with a *meis mitzva*, a dead person who has no friend or relative to bury him. Secondly, working in a big city with a large Jewish population can leave a person with a feeling of *yeshus*, a bloated ego, which could cause him to be satisfied with his achievements and go off to rest. In a little town, where his activities are less publicized, he knows that he must constantly grow and expand.

(שיח"ק תש"ל ח"ד ע' 385, שיח"ק תשל"ד ח"ב ע' 280)

CONSIDER

Why are we inclined to dedicate
ourselves only for a multitude?
Why isn't this correct?

AN ENTIRE WORLD

Chazal write: "Whoever saves one *Yiddishe neshama* is considered as if he had saved an entire world."

(סנהדרין פ"ד מ"ה)

In תשי"ד (1954) Reb Yochanan Twersky, the *Rachmistrivka* Rebbe, visited New York for the *chassuna* of his son. He used the opportunity to visit the Rebbe, whom he knew from his youth, when he had been involved in an underground *cheder* in *Nikolayev*.

At the *yechidus* the Rebbe mentioned a particular student from that *cheder* who had since immigrated to the United States, where he left the path of Torah.

The Rebbe added that *Lubavitcher chassidim* had tried to bring him back but to no avail, and perhaps he would be able to influence him. Then and there, the Rebbe picked up the phone and dialed the man's number. "I have Rabbi Yochanan Twersky sitting here. Do you remember him? He is interested in meeting with you. When can you meet?"

On Friday afternoon, as arranged, the former student and the *Rachmistrivka* Rebbe met, and after exchanging reminiscences, the man offered him a generous check. To his surprise, the *Rachmistrivka* Rebbe declared, "I won't accept a check until we discuss your *Yiddishkeit*." The man protested that he was a respected member of his Jewish community and even went to *shul* occasionally. However, it soon became apparent that he did not observe even the basics of *Yiddishkeit*.

Reb Yochanan's eyes filled with tears. "Was it for a 'Yiddishkeit' like this that we invested so much effort in you in the *chadorim* in *Nikolayev*? Each of your teachers put his life in danger – and for what? So you would grow up to be a *yerei Shamayim* and a *frum Yid*. Just look how far you've strayed . . ." The man was moved, and resolved to do *teshuva* and begin observing *mitzvos*.

He again tried to present the check, but again Reb Yochanan insisted: "I will accept it only after I find out that you have kept your word and have done *teshuva*. And how will I know when I don't live here?" He then answered his own question, "When the *Lubavitcher Rebbe* tells me that you did *teshuva*, only then will I accept your donation."

During his remaining few weeks in New York, the *Rachmistrivka* Rebbe received many people who came to him for *brachos* and advice. One day, the phone rang at his host's house and the *Rachmistrivka Rebbe* answered. The voice on the line asked to speak with Rabbi Twersky.

"Who's speaking?" she asked. "*Doh ret-men fun Lubavitch* (I'm calling from *Lubavitch*). Realizing it was the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*, she excitedly gave the phone to her husband, who was happy to hear the Rebbe's update: their former student had indeed begun to observe *mitzvos*.

"Reb Yochanan," the Rebbe added, "you think you came here in order to marry off your son? You came here so that a Yid would do *teshuva*. Now this man is *frum*!"

(מפי נכדו הר"ר נחמן יוסף שי' טווערסקי)



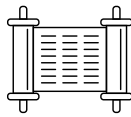
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YICHUD ON THE ROAD

Is there a problem of yichud between siblings?

The prohibition of *yichud* precludes a man and woman being alone together in a quiet place unless it is reasonable that someone else will enter within a minute (e.g. in an elevator).¹ The prohibition is transgressed even if nothing improper occurs as a result. The prohibition isn't applicable to a car on a road where there are constantly vehicles passing by, as people can see into the car.² However, some roads are not frequented, especially at night, and in that case there is concern for *yichud*.³

For *yichud* not to apply, there must be at least two men⁴—provided they are G-d fearing—or at least three women, but preferably a man shouldn't be alone even with many women.⁵ At night, there must be at least three men or four women in case one falls asleep. The same applies whenever traveling, since one may need to leave to use the facilities.⁶

If one's spouse or a child aged 6-9 is present, *yichud* doesn't apply. The same applies if among the women there is a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, sisters, sisters-in-law, or a step mother and step daughter, for they are afraid to do something wrong in front of each other.⁷

Between siblings, *yichud* is an issue for long term stay, but not for short term.⁸ A brother may not share a home alone with even two sisters, but two brothers may share a home with a sister.⁹

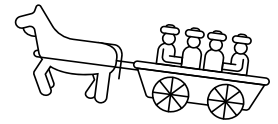
The definition of long-term *yichud* is disputed amongst the *poskim*. Some define long-term *yichud* as longer than three days,¹⁰ while others set it at thirty days.¹¹ Some hold that it isn't defined by time, but whether it is a temporary stay as a guest or as a permanent residence.¹² Some hold that on a trip the limit time is three days, while at home it is up to thirty days.¹³

Even when there is no issue of *yichud* (such as when they are at home with their parents), it is halachically recommended for a brother and sister not to share a room, preferably from when both are six years old, and at least before the boy turns nine.¹⁴

In practice, it is permissible for siblings to drive alone or to spend a few days alone at home.

1. ובשעת הדוחק 90 שניות - ראה תורת היחוד פ"א ס"ד.
2. משמרת היחוד פט"ז ס"ג, פכ"ח ס"א, אוצה"פ סי' כ"ב ס"ה ס"ק כ"ה אות ב'.
3. משמרת היחוד שם פכ"ח ס"ב ע"פ מש"כ בס' דבר הלכה סי' א' הע' כ"ג.
4. לעדות מזרח יש להחמיר בזה.
5. לפי המחבר אה"ע סי' כ"ב ס"ה, אסור אפילו ריבוי נשים אא"כ אשתו עמו או שלושה נשים ביחד עם שלושה גברים. לפי האשכנזים שהולכים בעקבות הרמ"א, לעת הצורך יש להקל.
6. גמ' קידושין דף פ"א ע"א, שו"ע אה"ע סי' כ"ב ס"ה.
7. ראה שו"ע אה"ע סי' כ"ב ס"ה.
8. קידושין דף פ' ע"ב.
9. שו"ת אג"מ אה"ע ח"ד סי' ס"ד.
10. ראה המונבא בשו"ת שבה"ל ח"ה סי' ר"א.
11. אמרי יוסף ח"ב סי' מ"ג.
12. אג"מ אה"ע ח"ד סי' ס"ד.
13. ארחות הברית פי"ד הע' י"א.
14. ראה נט"ג יחוד פמ"ט סי"ב עד גיל שש.

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



REB CHONYE MOROZOV

Reb Elchonon Dov (Chonye) Morozov was born in Cherkass, Ukraine in 5638 (1878). He was sent to learn in Minsk and eventually made his way to Lubavitch, where he was part of the first group of *bochurim* in Tomchei Temimim. He was chosen by the Rebbe Rashab to be a *chavrusa* with the Friediker Rebbe. After his marriage, he was appointed *mashgiach* of *Chassidus* in Lubavitch. Later on he was appointed as the Rebbe Rashab's *gabbai* and secretary, a position he continued to hold under the Friediker Rebbe in Rostov. Shortly before Pesach 5698 (1938), the NKVD arrested Reb Chonye and sentenced him to death. Before being killed the officer barked to him: "The Lubavitcher Rebbe is G-d's emissary on this world, and because you are the Rebbe's emissary in Russia we are killing you."

Reb Chonye would fast quite often, especially during the weeks of "Shovavim Tat" (an acronym for the

parshiyos of *Shmos* through *Tzaveh*, for which some have the custom of fasting during these weeks), eating his meal only after dark. He kept his fasting a private matter with the Holy One, and even his closest friends didn't know about it. On one of his fast days, two friends paid him an unexpected visit with the intention of *farbrenging*. Reb Chonye motioned to his children to bring out food and *mashke* and Reb Chonye sat down and said *l'chaim* with them. This was his nature; he would rather break his personal fast than let it become known to others.

The *sefer Derech Chaim* by the Mittlerer Rebbe discusses the various levels of *teshuvah* at great length. When Reb Chonye learned this *sefer* he would cry bitterly, until the Rebbe Rashab called for Reb Chonye and forbade him to learn the book. However, Reb Chonye was so affected by learning this book that he would burst into tears whenever he saw the cover.

A Moment with The Rebbe



A NESHAMA AROUSED

Mr. Yaakov Zerubovel was a staunch secular Zionist, a leader of the Socialist Zionist parties. He frequently published his anti-religious views and refused to don a *yarmulke*, even at official ceremonies.

One day in 5718 (1968), a relative of his, Reb Dovid Avrohom Leselboim of Kfar Chabad, received a letter from the Rebbe with a directive to approach Mr. Zerubovel. He was to tell him frankly that since he certainly self-doubts his own secular lifestyle, and as he had no qualms with going against the grain, he shouldn't be embarrassed to tell his students that he was wrong...

The Rebbe concluded the letter with a remarkable display of *ruach hakodesh*: "And a sign for him to be aroused should be his dream close to

the time of receiving this message."

Reb Dovid mustered the courage, went to his office, and simply read out the letter. To his surprise, Mr. Zerubovel stood up with respect as he received the message. Silence followed.

As he turned to leave, Mr. Zerubovel casually commented that he wouldn't mind receiving a copy of the letter. However, upon the Rebbe's explicit instruction in a letter dated 4 Adar, Reb Dovid didn't give him a copy until he asked for it again directly.

Sometime later Mr. Zerubovel came to visit Kfar Chabad with his wife. He was wearing a *yarmulke*.

(*Igros Kodesh* vol. 16, pages 130 and 317; *Maynosecha* issue 37)