

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • חג השבועות תש"פ • 568
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

THE FINAL STRETCH (I)

CHALLENGING TIMES

The Zohar predicts, "So will the *Geula* for the Yidden occur: When the sun of the *Geula* is about to shine upon them, they will be burdened with crisis after crisis, and darkness after darkness. And while they are in that state, the light of *HaShem* will shine upon them."

(זוהר חדש בראשית ו,א)

In order for the new state of *Geula*, to be born, the previous state must first dissolve. Thus states the *Maharal*.

The Alter Rebbe adds that this is why shortly before the Yidden were redeemed from *Mitzrayim*, the *golus* worsened. In preparation for the new revelation at *Matan Torah*, whatever light remained had to be withdrawn.

(נצח ישראל פ"ב, תורה אור וארא נד,ד)

The Rebbe Rashab explains that during the final *golus* it is our task to elevate the highest sparks that have fallen the lowest. This is the reason for the immense challenges that we face during the present *golus*.

(סה"מ פר"ת ע' קז)

HOLDING ON

The Mezritcher Maggid said, "Before *Moshiach* comes, there will be a repeat of the confrontation between *Eliyahu HaNavi* and the prophets of the Baal on Mount Carmel. However, unlike that match, when a fire miraculously descended from Above on to the *mizbeich* of the prophets of *HaShem*, this time the fire will descend on the other side. And that will be the greatest test of all."

(כפר חב"ד גליון 418, דברי שמואל ע' מ)

The Chozeh of Lublin once said, "Before *Moshiach* arrives, it will be difficult for a Yid to hold on to his *emuna*. He will have to struggle to remain an upstanding Yid. It will be like climbing up a straight wall, grasping it with no more than pliers."

(ומביא גואל ע' 35)

On his deathbed, Reb Volf of Zhitomir, a leading

talmid of the Baal Shem Tov, shared with those around him what the future holds:

"Let it be known that there will be difficult times before *Moshiach* comes. It will be possible for a person to eat at home on Yom Kippur R"L, and then show up at *shul* in a fancy carriage, and be honored with *Shishi* or *Maftir*.

"Publicize this now, so that the Yidden living at that future time will know that many years earlier there lived a certain Reb Volf who predicted that state of affairs, and then they will not be overwhelmed and *chas veshalom* despair."

(לקו"ט פרלוב ע' רפ"ט)

CONSIDER

Is the advantage of *golus* due to the increased thirst, the exceptional efforts or the level of the sparks elevated?

What is the common theme of the spiritual challenges predicted for the end of *golus*?

This is how Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha would describe the upheaval before *Moshiach* arrives: "At that time, there will be winters without cold, 'rich' without wealth, 'lomidim' ignorant of Torah, 'chassidim' empty of *Chassidus*, 'tzaddikim' without *maasim tovim*, and 'baalei middos' with every flaw..."

(חסידים מספרים סי' תקכ"א)

Once at *yechidus*, Reb Zalman Gurary asked the Rebbe why in recent times there are so many *tzaros* among Klal Yisroel, with unrelenting suffering? The Rebbe explained to him that during the time before *Moshiach* comes, the forces of *kelipa* gather strength, and thus the darkness grows thicker.

(בכל ביתי נאמן הוא ע' 307)

THE GOLUS ADVANTAGE

In *Tehillim*, Dovid HaMelech yearns for *HaShem*: "My *neshama* thirsts for You... in a parched and weary land without water. So too, to see You in the holy [place]..."

In this *possuk*, the Baal Shem Tov saw how passionately Dovid HaMelech envied the yearning that Yidden would experience during the time of *golus*. Specifically in that state, when the *neshama* is far from *HaShem*, it yearns for Him. *Halevai*, Dovid HaMelech beseeches, that the *neshama* should similarly thirst for *HaShem* even when living in a state of holiness.

(הוספות לכ"ט אות ס"ד ושי"ג)

Before he passed away, Moshe Rabbeinu was shown all the generations of the future. When he gazed upon our spiritually poor generation, whose comprehension of *Elokus* is close to nothing, and yet despite all of its difficulties Yidden in this generation fulfill Torah and *mitzvos* and *daven* with a *chassidische geshmak*, with *bitachon* and simple *emuna*, he was so utterly overawed that he felt less worthy than them.

(סה"מ תקס"ב ע' נא, סה"מ קונטרסים ח"א ע' 106)

The Rebbe points out that even today, when we don't face decrees against *Yiddishkeit*, we face another kind of challenge that is sometimes more difficult – abundance and wealth. In order to withstand this challenge, we must battle the *Yetzer HaRa* fiercely. And since this is the task of *ikvesa diMeshicha*, we were obviously given the ability to awaken the inner strength of our *neshama*, so that we can dedicate ourselves to *HaShem*, His Torah, and His *mitzvos*.

(תו"מ סה"מ מלוקט ח"ד ע' נח)

The Rebbe Rashab said: When *Moshiach* arrives, people will miss the bygone days of *golus*. At that time they will start feeling regret for not having devoted themselves to *avoda*; they will be deeply pained by their lack of *avoda*. These present days of *golus* are days of *avoda* – to prepare ourselves for the coming of *Moshiach*, speedily, in our time, *Amen*.

(היום יום ג' אב)

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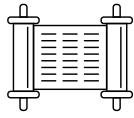
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GOOD NEWS.



BIRKAS KOHANIM AT HOME?

I can't attend shul for *birkas kohanim*. Do I still get the *brachos*?

The *mitzva* of *birkas kohanim* includes both the kohanim and the congregation who listen attentively to their *brachos*.¹ Missing even one word, detracts from the *mitzva* or misses it completely according to many.² It is important to answer *amen*, even in the middle of *birchos krias shema*.³ The *tefila* for dreams should only be recited while the kohanim sing the tune before each of the last three words, but not while they say the words when one must listen silently.⁴

To avoid getting distracted by the congregation, the kohanim should look downwards, while beseeching Hashem to bless the Jewish people. The congregation should not look at the kohanim, and certainly not anywhere else. To minimize distraction, the *minhag* developed for the kohanim and the congregation to cover their faces (and hands) with a *tallis*,⁵ and for those who don't have a *tallis* to close their eyes.⁶

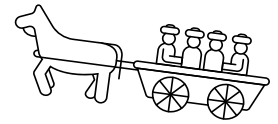
The obligation of *chinuch* does not require bringing children of age to *birkas kohanim*, as it involves the participation of others (younger children are certainly not obligated). However, children who are in shul should certainly attend both for the sake of *chinuch* and to receive the *brachos* in the optimal fashion.⁷ Many have a custom to take their unmarried sons under their *tallis* during the blessing. (The Alter Rebbe did so for his young grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek, for whom he had accepted parental responsibility).⁸ One should ensure, however, that this custom should not disturb one's focus on the *brachos*, which is essential.

To be included in the *brachos*, one must stand in front of the kohanim, or directly to their side, and face towards them (children under the *tallis* should also face forward). One may even be in another room or outside of the building, since "a wall of iron cannot separate between them." One may not, however, stand behind them even slightly (e.g. on the side of the Aron Kodesh when they are standing in front of it).⁹ When the kohanim say the word *yevarechecha*, the **listener** should tilt his head forward while still facing the kohanim; when they say Hashem's name, he tilts his head to the right; at *veyishmerecha* he tilts forward; at *ya'er* he tilts left, and so forth.¹⁰

One who could come to receive the *brachos* face-to-face as ordained by the Torah and chooses not to, shows that he doesn't view the *brachos* as important and is therefore not blessed. However, those who are unable to attend shul for whatever reason are included in the *brachos*, even if they are behind the kohanim.¹¹

1. ראה לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 41. וראה ביה"ל ר"ס קכ"ח.
2. ראה הליכות שלמה תפילה פ"י ה"א והמסומן שם.
3. ראה פסק"ת סי' קכ"ח סקמ"א, וראה שו"ת אג"מ ח"ד סי' כ"א.
4. ראה שווע"ר סי' קכ"ח ל"ט.
5. שווע"ר אור"ח סי' קכ"ח סל"ו. הכהנים גם ידיהם ע"פ כף החיים סי' קכ"ח ס"ק קמ"ג וכן בערוה"ש סי' קכ"ח סל"ו (ע"פ האריז"ל). ובמקור חיים לחו"י
6. שהעם צריכים לנהוג כמו הכהנים, וראה כפה"ח ס"ק קמ"ב.
7. ראה משנ"ב אור"ח סי' קכ"ח ס"ק פ"ט.
8. ראה חינוך הבנים כהלכתו פט"ז הע' ע"ב.
9. ראה לוח היום יום ט"ו תשרי.
10. שווע"ר סי' קכ"ח סל"ו.
11. לוח היום יום ז' סיון.
12. שווע"ר שם.

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



DER FETER YOSSELE

R. Yosef, the son of R. Yissochro Ber the rov of Lubavitch, was a great *gaon* and *chossid*. He was married to the sister of R. Sholom Shachna, the Tzemach Tzedek's father, and was thus affectionately known as "Der Feter Yossele" (Uncle Yossele).

R. Yosef was a *shadar* who would travel collecting *tzedaka* funds for the Rebbe.

In one of the towns R. Yosef visited, he told his host to stop by his home for a tea on his next visit to Lubavitch. One *Erev Shabbos*, the *chossid* arrived in Lubavitch and looked forward to taking up R. Yosef's offer.

When he arrived at R. Yosef's home, he saw R. Yosef pacing the room back and forth in a trance, clearly not noticing him. When he finally realized that the *chossid* was sitting there, he asked what he was waiting for, and the *chossid* replied that R. Yosef had invited him for a tea. R. Yosef, still in his state of *dveikus*, replied: "My eyes are popping out of my head trying

to leave my weekday mindset and enter a Shabbos mindset, and you speak to me of tea!"

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 232)

R. Yosef was once travelling in the wintery weather on a sled on his way to Lubavitch. The sled made a sharp turn and R. Yosef tumbled out of the carriage onto the snow. Being in a state of *dveikus*, he didn't realize what had happened, and neither did the driver.

When other *chassidim* passed by and noticed him lying on the snow, they asked him what he was doing there. He answered, "I'm on my way to Lubavitch!"

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 233)

There was once a big rainstorm and the streets had filled with mud. A man entered *shul* and complained about the terrible weather. R. Yosef turned to him in astonishment: "And you can do better?!"

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 233)

A Moment with The Rebbe



LEARN WITH YOUR HEART

The venerable *chossid* Reb Zalman Butman of Montreal faced a dilemma. He wanted to learn *Chassidus* for an hour before *davening shacharis* every day. However, the local early *minyan* started too early to manage to fit in the learning beforehand, and the second *minyan* in Montreal was too late for him.

When he presented his problem to the Rebbe, the Rebbe advised him to *daven* in the early *minyan*, and

learn *Chassidus* in the evening instead.

However, Reb Zalman felt that this would not work for him either. "After a long day at work, my head just wouldn't function as well," he said to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe responded, "So don't learn with your head; learn with your heart."

(As heard from Reb Pinye Korf)