

The Weekly Farbrenge



למען יושבעו • בא תשפ"א
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

FACING THE KING (II)

ENSURING RESPECT

In the summer of תקף'ג (1823), the community of Paritch asked the Mitteler Rebbe to visit them for a few weeks during the upcoming winter, as was the custom. He replied by letter that although he was not in perfect health, he would fulfill their request, on condition that they resolve an issue about which he was extremely bitter – talking in *shul*. In his letter, he recalled the numerous warnings given by his father, the Alter Rebbe, but unfortunately had gone unheeded.

He then wrote: "Therefore let it be known in my name, in every town and *minyan*, that they should make a firm resolve, enforced by a vow, not to speak during *davening*, from the moment that the *sheliach tzibbur* stands before the *amud*. They should also appoint a trustworthy supervisor who will favor no one, and who will be willing to disgrace any person who violates the vow. This will literally revive me from the intense pain that this matter is causing me."

The Mitteler Rebbe then went on to explain how, in his view, the many tragedies that had befallen the Yidden during that time resulted from the habit of conversing in *shul*. He added that due to the talking, even the *tefilos* of the other *mispalelim* in that *shul* are not accepted Above. He concluded that he was waiting for the townsmen of Paritch to notify him that they had begun to implement the above-mentioned proposals, and then he would visit them.

(אג"ק אדרהאמ"צ ח"א ע' רעה)

Reb Eliezer Papo writes in his famous work *Peleh Yoetz*:

Some people, who would prefer not to converse in *shul*, feel intimidated by others who might mock their "excessive holiness." So they respond to the talkers, until they too become insensitive to small talk in *shul*. Now, how would the same people react if they were threatened by a robber or a murderer, *r"l*? They would raise a commotion, regardless of embarrassment. So here, too, without being bashful, they should state, "Sorry, I don't speak during *davening*."

(פלא יונץ ערך ביהכ' ג)

A SERIOUS MATTER

The Rebbe once said: "If a person chooses to talk during *davening*, that's his business. Let him go into another room and observe his '*minhag*' of talking during *davening*. But why should I be forced to *daven* in a *minyan* in which there is talking?!"

On another occasion the Rebbe said that it was not the children that needed to be silenced, but the adults. "A child knows that he comes to *shul* to *daven* to *HaShem*, and if he did not see adults talking there, he would not learn to do the same..."

(תשורה סיום הרמב"ם כפ"ח השנ"ו, התווועדיות תשמ"ג ח"ב ע' 1133)

The Rebbe once related that at one time he had challenged the *rov* of a certain *shul* in which people would walk around before *davening* was over, disturbing those who were still *davening*.

To this the *rov* replied: "Is that the only problem that we have?!"

The Rebbe was not impressed, and made it clear that the matter must be resolved.

(שיחון ק' חטמא"א ח"א ע' 463)

CONSIDER

Why should one disgrace those talking during *davening*?

Is that the way to influence another person?!

Would all these tragedies that occurred as a result of talking during *davening* have happened if people had not *davened* at all?

In the *shul* of the *Sfas Emes* of Ger, there were two daily *minyanim* for *Shacharis*, one after the other. While the second *minyan* began to *daven*, the *mispalelim* from the first would stay to talk. When word of this reached the *Sfas Emes*, he rescheduled the *minyanim* so that the first group would finish socializing before the second *minyan* began...

(שיחון קודש ח"ב ע' לב)

The Alter Rebbe records in *Shulchan Aruch* that young children should be trained to stand in *shul* with reverence and awe. Those children who run around in *shul* should not be brought at all.

The Chida adds that if someone converses during *davening*, it would be better that he not come at all,

because he is sinning and also causing others to sin.

(שורע אדרה ז סי' קכד ס"ז, פתח עיניים להחיד"א)

POWERFUL EFFECT

Eliyahu HaNavi was once seen together with 4000 laden camels. When he was asked what they were loaded with, he replied, "With fury and wrath."

"Why?" the people questioned.

"To wreak fury and wrath upon those who converse between *Amen*, *yehei shmei rabba* and *yisbareich*."

(שורע אדרה ז סי' נו ס"ז)

It is related that a certain Yid dreamt of his deceased friend, whose face appeared to be jaundiced. He asked him why he was being punished so, and he answered, "Because I used to talk when the *sheliach tzibbur* was saying *Kaddish* and did not listen."

(שורע אדרה ז סי' רסח ס"ז)

After the widespread massacres during the years ט"מ (1648-1649), when tens of thousands of Yidden across Poland and the Ukraine were killed, the author of *Tosafos Yom-Tov* fasted and *davened* so that he be told why this had occurred. In a dream it was revealed to him that it was due to idle conversation during *davening*, for this deleted the letter ו from the word דבר (*dibbur* – "speech"), leaving דבר (*dever* – "plague"). The *Tosafos Yom-Tov* then composed a special *Mi SheBeirach* to be recited every *Shabbos* for all those who refrain from talking during *davening*, blessing them with health, with all the *brachos* listed in the *Tanach*, and plentiful *nachas* from their children.

(שי למורה ע' כה)

In the late 5730s (1970s), when a number of tragedies occurred in Crown Heights, many residents were left wondering what lesson they should take to heart. When Reb Yitzchok Ushpal, the head of the Chevrah Kaddisha at the time, asked the Rebbe what in particular should be changed, the Rebbe told him that the issue that needed correcting was the talking in *shul* during *davening*.

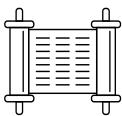
(מפני הרוחש"ב ליפסקר – גבאי חברה קידישא)

The *Zohar* teaches that one of the last obstacles delaying the *Geula* is conversation in *shul*, for this banishes the *Shechina*. By keeping a *shul* quiet, we invite the *Shechina* and hasten the coming of *Moshiach*.

(אגה"ק סי' כב)

Way of Life

RABBI CHAIM HILLEL RASKIN



ROV OF ANASH - PETACH TIKVA

COVID-19 VACCINE

May I take the newly released vaccinations for Covid-19?

A prevalent yardstick for measuring the risk of danger is how the masses view it. The Gemara teaches that if people commonly ignore the remote danger involved with a specific activity (*dashu bo rabim*), others may follow suit and rely on Hashem's protection.¹ This is provided that it doesn't present any imminent threat or clear danger.² Based on this principle, R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach forbade vaccinating on Shabbos, notwithstanding its importance, since the danger isn't imminent and people don't perceive it with that level of urgency. (For further discussion, see "Engaging in Risky Activities" in issue 569.)

Additionally, if a danger is so minute that it occurs less than one in a thousand cases, *poskim* hold that it isn't fully considered *pikuach nefesh*.³

When the Rebbe was asked regarding immunizing children in the mid '50s, the Rebbe often mentioned that (a) one shouldn't separate from the masses, rather follow the way the majority is acting; (b) that the vaccine should be from a reliable laboratory and that has been tested to be efficient.⁴

As contemporary *poskim* point out, vaccines today undergo more rigorous testing than back then. Thus, if the vaccine is manufactured by a reliable company, has been tested and the danger is minimal, it may be used.

Is one obligated to vaccinate if there are possible health risks?

In the 19th century, the *Tiferes Yisroel* ruled that the smallpox vaccine was permitted, despite its mortality rate of over one in a thousand, based on the following discussion:

Risking one's own life to save another is the subject of a *machlokes* amongst *rishonim*. One view is that one is required to go ahead, while another view is that it is not an obligation. In practice, one is seemingly not obligated, but he may choose to do so.⁵

The obligation to put oneself at the risk of injury to save another's life is also debated, and in practice, one who does so is praiseworthy and meritorious.⁶ To endure slight pain in order to save another is an obligation.⁷

These principles certainly apply when saving one's own life involves placing oneself at risk, and the usual allowance of "your life takes precedence" isn't pertinent, thus one should surely endure pain or slight risk to save one's own life.⁸

In these issues, a proper decision involves evaluating which option is a greater risk for themselves and those around them. In practice, one should consult their *rov* and doctor on what to do according to the guidelines listed above.

1. שבת קמ"ב ע"ב. מנחת שלמה ח"ב סי' ל"ז, ושות"כ בפט"ש שם. שוע"ר או"ח ס"כ ט"ח, ובו ש"כ בפט"ש ס"כ. שמירת הגוף והנפש ס"ד. וואה לירוש חכ"ע י' 153 בע' 19 ומש בשוחה".
2. שור"ת צ"ץ א"ה ע"ס סי' י"א, אג"ק ח"ב ע' קמ"ד.
3. ראה שאיעור א"ז נ"ז ש"ל סי' א"ס. ואואה ס"י שיט"ס ס"כ.ג.
4. רואה אג"ק ח"א, ע' קלד-קלח: ח"ד י' ק"ט, ע' טמ"ר, ע' ש"ל. ל.ק"פ"ש הליל"י י' 332.
5. רואה ב"י ושי"ע ור"מ סי' קמ"נ ס"כ.ב. ובס"מ ע' שם ס"ק א'.
6. תפארת ישראל יומא פ"ח בזעג. g.
7. תפארת ישראל פ"ח בזעג. g.
8. תפארת ישראל פ"ח בזעג. g.

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

Our Heroes



REB MORDECHAI DUBIN

Reb Mordechai (Mottel) Dubin grew up and lived in Riga, Latvia. His father, Reb Zalmen Ber, was a Lubavitcher *chossid*, and when Reb Mordechai was a young boy, he took him to *yechidus* with the Rebbe Rashab. As a young man Reb Mottel was involved with helping others in an extraordinary manner and eventually assumed the position of *Rosh Hakohol* of Riga. His house and office were always filled with throngs of people seeking his help and together with his secretaries, he would tend to each ones needs. Reb Mordechai also served as a member of the Latvian parliament, which he ultimately used to pressure the Russian government to free the Frierdiker Rebbe from prison and allow him to leave Russia with his family and library. The Frierdike Rebbe referred to Reb Mottel as the "*sar hachesed*" (Minister of Kindness) for his outstanding kindness to others.

During World War II, the Russians conquered Riga and soon thereafter arrested Reb Mottel. Reb Mottel was held in jail in Saratov, until one evening he was unexpectedly released. Having nowhere to go, he walked to the nearby city of Kobishov, hoping to find a home with a *mezuzah* that might take him in. After many hours, a tired, hungry and sick Reb Mordechai finally arrived

in Kobishov and found a house with a *mezuzah*. After knocking on the door for a while, the door opened a crack but was immediately shut closed. Reb Mordechai, still wearing his prisoner uniform judged him favorably, "who would risk taking in such a person?"

But with no energy left to struggle to explain himself, Reb Mottel decided to lay down right there, and what will be, will be. He soon felt his end was near and starting saying *viduy*. Then, suddenly a thought entered his mind, "what will be tomorrow when the *yid* will find me dead on his doorstep?!" He will feel terrible guilt for the rest of his life!" This thought gave him strength to knock again and this time he managed to convince the *yid* to take him in. Reb Mordechai would say "because of my *ahavas yisroel* my life was saved."

Once when Reb Mordechai was in *shul* he realized that someone had walked off with his coat. His first reaction was that probably the man must have been really cold and did not have the means to purchase himself a coat. "Let him wear it in good health and I will buy another one." The broad smile on his face testified that the stolen coat did not bother him and he was happy knowing that someone would be warmer from it.

A Moment with The Rebbe



A BRACHA FROM A TZADIK

"What is the significance of a *bracha* that a Rebbe gives?" a group of college students once asked the Rebbe.

"The idea of a *bracha* from a tzadik exists from the times of our forefathers, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov," the Rebbe began, "and has since been continued throughout the ages.

"My father-in-law explained that a *bracha* is like rainwater, which makes the produce grow. The rain will only bring benefit to a field that has been properly treated, ploughed and sowed. Likewise, the recipient of a *bracha* must 'treat and plough'

his bodily desires, in order to be receptive to the *bracha*. A *bracha* cannot be accepted by a person without preparation."

The Rebbe then explained that sometimes a *tzadik* makes an exception to the rule. "If a person is in a very dire state, as in a coma, a good doctor will not give up on reviving him. He will invest every effort, sometimes even by causing the patient pain, to bring him back to life. If necessary, he may even use shock treatment to arouse him."

(Elul 5712, Teshurah Sandhaus, Shevat 5768)