WIELDING WORDS (II)

SPIRITUAL EFFECTS

The Alter Rebbe records how his teacher, the Maggid, would speak out any spiritual revelation that came to his mind, even when his listeners were unable to understand it. When a concept is spoken it is drawn down to the world, enabling anyone to reach that concept on his own.

Once, while in the Baal Shem Tov’s shul in Mezhibuzh, someone had an argument with another fellow and shouted that he would tear him to pieces like a fish. The Baal Shem Tov told him his talmidim to hold hands, and to stand near him with their eyes closed. Then, he placed his holy hands on the shoulders of the two talmidim standing next to him. Suddenly, the talmidim began to scream in terror, for they saw this fellow actually tearing apart the other man.

It is paskened in Shulchan Aruch that one should not tell a child that a dog or cat “will come to take them,” for this can chv bring upon the child evil forces with those names, which can harm their body or their neshama.

POWERFUL WORDS

In the city of Posen, Reb Boruch Batlan, the Alter Rebbe’s great-grandfather, lived as a tenant of the goldsmith Avigdor Tuvia and his wife Gittel. Though this couple gave tzedaka generously to many people, they were not refined people; he played cards, drank tzedaka this couple gave Rebbe’s great-grandfather, lived as a tenant of the powerful words

Before the Baal Shem called out for the sheidim to appear, warning them to appear, warning

CONSIDE

How did the Baal Shem Tov’s talmidim perceive the man’s threat before their vision? How did they understand it afterwards?

Are forces created through speech or are they the energy of the speech itself?

Meanwhile, the mayor of Posen came one evening to see the situation for himself. When he heard the sounds of screaming, yelling, and clapping of hands, he hurried to ask the local bishop for a special prayer to remove the sheidim from the town. The bishop called together his priests, and they walked in a procession, carrying their tzamim, until they reached the house where they sprinkled water on the walls and closed their eyes, mumbling a prayer. The apartment was on the first floor and had four windows facing the street, where the priests were standing. Suddenly, the windows were flung open and terrible faces popped out, so frightening that some priests fainted and many of the onlookers jumped the most frightening creature they had ever seen. The customer went white, the son became crazy, and they both ran screaming into the street, eventually fainting from fright. When they came to, the son had to be tied with rope to be kept under control. Now, even the misnaged did not object to have the Baal Shem come and rid them of the sheidim.

The Baal Shem traveled to Posen and arranged for the Beis Din to hold a din Torah with the sheidim. The newly-established Beis midrash in the apartment was prepared, with a special area sectioned off by mechitzos, and the Baal Shem called out for the sheidim to appear, warning them not to hurt anyone. As soon as sheidim made their presence felt, the Baal Shem began, “I have called you to a din Torah, for you have exceeded the limits HaShem has set, by coming among mortals.” Strange incomprehensible sounds were heard. At the instructions of the Baal Shem, the head of the Beis Din stood up and decreed that one of the sheidim be able to speak clearly. “We have every right to come here,” the sheid countered. “We were created by the curses of Avigdor Tuvia and his wife, Gittel, so we are the lawful heirs, and their house rightfully belongs to us. We left the apartment only because the light of the Beis Din called you to a din, and we are unable to be present.”

That Sunday, the talmidim did as the Baal Shem had instructed. Hundreds of men and women, both Yidden and goyim, crowded outside, waiting to see what would happen. Unafraid, the talmidim called out three times for the sheidim to leave, and when the noises from the house did not stop, they broke down the door and entered. At that moment, every window pane was shattered, as the weirdest collection of creatures flew out, escaping for their lives.

For six weeks, everything went smoothly, but then sounds were heard once again, this time coming from the cellar. The neighbors, who had been enjoying the relief, were horrified to once again hear loud barks and noises, giving them no peace by day or night. One tenant, a dealer in furs, was a misnaged to the Baal Shem, and denied the miracle, so when the sheidim returned, he was delighted. When the neighbors suggested inviting the Baal Shem himself to resolve the matter, this man was furious and declared he would fight to prevent this from happening. One day, a customer came to see some fur skins, so the dealer sent his son down to the cellar with the customer. As soon as they moved to open the cellar door, it flew open on its own, and out jumped the most frightening creature they had ever seen. The customer went white, the son became crazy, and they both ran screaming into the street, eventually fainting from fright. When they came to, the son had to be tied with rope to be kept under control. Now, even the misnaged did not object to have the Baal Shem come and rid them of the sheidim.

The shul became perfectly silent and they disappeared. The Beis Din immediately paskened that they had no right to the inheritance, and they were never heard of again.

(ס سبحان עתרדיא ז’תר עו 106)
MISTAKEN CARRYING

While walking outside on Shabbos, I found something valuable in my pocket. What should I do?

There are two Shabbos prohibitions at hand that must be avoided: (1) Carrying more than 4 amos (approx. 6 ft.) in a public domain; and (2) transferring between a public domain and private domain.

Both only carry an issur d'oraisa if prefaced by “lifting” the object (akira) and ended by “placing” it down (hanacha). Starting to walk while holding the object is considered “lifting” it, and stopping to walk is considered “placing” it unless he stopped merely to adjust the load.

If you realize that something is in your pocket while walking, avoid making a short stop since this would constitute “placing” the item down in the public domain. If you need time to figure out what to do, keep walking, preferably circling within the same four amos.

To avoid a full-fledged “placement,” let the item drop in an irregular manner, such as turning your pocket inside out if it’s in your pocket.4

If no one else is available, Chazal permit this procedure if prefaced by “lifting” the object (akira) and ended by “placing” it down (hanacha). Starting to walk while holding the object is considered “lifting” it, and stopping to walk is considered “placing” it—unless he stopped merely to adjust the load.

If you realized while walking and didn’t stop yet, there is another—albeit less preferable—method: to continue running without stopping so there shouldn’t be any “hanacha.” To ensure you don’t mistakenly stop, Chazal require you to run and not walk at your usual pace.3

These solutions only apply to carrying within the public domain, but not transferring between domains. Therefore, when reaching a secure private domain, you should leave it outdoors until after Shabbos if possible, or let it fall into the private domain in an irregular manner (e.g., throw it backwards over your shoulder or turn the pocket inside out if it’s in your pocket).4

R. Moshe Der Chozер

R. Moshe Rosenblat ("Moshe der chozer") was chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. He was a talmud of R. Avrohnke Zebin, and a close friend of R. Shimuel Groinem, and worked as a melamed in Zhebin. He later became a chozer of the Rebbe Rashab, and a maspatch in Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch. He passed away on 28 Shvat, 5675.

R. Moshe was the lead chozer by the Rebbe Rashab. On Friday night, after the Rebbe would finish a maamar, the bochurim would surround R. Moshe, who would repeat it line by line. Sometimes a bochur would interject and correct him. If R. Moshe accepted his correction, he would tell him "gerech," and if not, he would say, "you don't recall exactly." He would sometimes visit the inns in Lubavitch where chassidim would stay and repeat the maamar for the guests.

As a maspatch, he had the practice of coming to the zal early and walking the bochurim who slept there. He would urge them to rise to serve Hashem and bring them neggel vasser.

At a Siyum Hashas, R. Moshe spoke about the teaching at the end of Masechta Kidushin, “R. Nehorai said, ‘I set aside all the forms of work in the world [and only teach my son Torah].’” R. Moshe read this teaching as follows: “Setting aside the ‘I’ by negating the egotistical sense of self, that is all the forms of work in the world.”

On the night before his passing, a Thursday night, there was a farbrengen of the yeshiva’s mashpiim and several tenimim at an inn with some respected guests.

After R. Groinem spoke for some time, a debate sprung up between him and R. Moshe about the Rebbe Rashab’s greatness. R. Moshe insisted that the Rebbe was on the level of the Baal Shem Tov, but R. Groinem countered, “What level of tzaddik gomur do you consider the Rebbe? I certainly agree with you and I even consider him greater than that. But there are infinite levels in serving Hashem. What’s wrong if I say that the previous Rebbeim were even higher?”

R. Moshe refused to accept his argument, and having drunk some mashke, he announced that was going home. Someone began a heartwarming niggun, and R. Moshe exclaimed, "Ah! In this niggun you can feel the shechina!" and he sat back down. This repeated itself several times until 2 am.

The next morning, after exiting the mikvah, R. Moshe didn’t feel well, and he entered Binyomin’s Shiteibel to rest, where he passed away some time later. It was candle lighting time when someone went to notify the Rebbe as they attempted to revive him.

Meanwhile, the bochurim had gathered in the Rebbe’s home to hear the maamar, when the Rebbe opened the door and asked for an update. When everyone remained silent, the Rebbe instructed them to check if more could be done, and if not, he won’t recite the maamar. Their efforts failed, and the body was laid in the cheder sheini until his levaya on Motzaei Shabbos.

ACCEPTING THE NESIUS

Reb Yoel Kahan relates:

10 Shevat 5711 (1951) was approaching. It was now almost a full year since the hiatalkus of the Friediker Rebbe, and the Rebbe was still refusing to formally accept the nesius. The Rebbe had agreed to be a messenger to take panim to the Ohel of the Friediker Rebbe but was still rejecting panim addressed to the Rebbe himself.

A few elder chassidim wrote a pan to the Friediker Rebbe, imploring him to influence his son-in-law, the Rebbe, to accept the nesius.

They then gave this pan to the Rebbe to take to the Ohel.

The Rebbe stood at the Ohel holding a large pile of panim, reading them one by one. When the Rebbe reached this pan, the Rebbe moved it lower in the pile. When the pan showed up again, again the Rebbe moved it back.

Until this was the only pan left.

The Rebbe opened it and began reading. As the Rebbe read it, the Rebbe cried profusely.

(Bedarkei Hachasidim, page 206)