

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • מטות-חסעי תשפ"ד • 786
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

THE FINAL STRETCH (II)

THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOSHIACH

Why do *Chazal* tell us of the anticipated troubles of *ikvesa diMeshicha*? The Rebbe explains that obviously this is not to dishearten us, but to urge us to counter them by increasing our good deeds.

(ת"מ תשמ"ה ח"ה ע' 2764)

The Alter Rebbe contrasts the spiritual struggles of the earlier generations with the struggles of our times. In earlier times, people were usually completely good or completely evil. Having lofty *neshamos*, they could attain a fear of *HaShem* by simply considering His greatness for a short moment. Those who did sin, did so as an outright choice, to strengthen their evil side, and thus they were really evil.

In our times, most people are mediocre: not particularly good but not particularly bad. This is so because the *neshamos* today – in the era of *ikvesa diMeshicha* – stem from the level of *Elokus* which is called the “heel,” and thus they have a much more difficult time overcoming evil.

(תורה אור מא, א)

AMPLIFIED VALUE

Reb Chayim Vital once asked his Rebbe, the AriZal: “Why do you say that I am so great, if even an *ordinary* person in the earlier generations was a *tzaddik* or a *chossid*, and I don't reach his ankles?”

The AriZal replied: “The greatness of a *neshama* is not measured by a person's actions alone, but in accordance with the generation in which he lives. A small deed in this generation is equivalent to many great *mitzvos* in earlier generations, since in this generation the *kelipa* musters infinitely more strength than in earlier times.”

(שער הגלגולים הקדמה לח ע' קנו)

In this *maamar*, the Friediker Rebbe clearly describes the challenge – and the privilege – of living as a Yid in our days:

The Yidden at the time of the *Beis HaMikdash* recognized *Elokus* in a revealed manner, and took it for granted. A man would make his way up to Yerushalayim and leave his door unlocked, and would return to find a snake wrapped around his door handle, protecting his home. During *golus*, however, the nature of one's worldly environment is felt more intensely. Yidden are in a low state and are ridiculed

for their Torah and *avoda*. They are crushed by *parnasa* and other worries that block their minds and hearts from being receptive to wisdom and inspiration. Thus they observe *mitzvos* without enthusiasm, and this in turn leads to a general decline in their *Yiddishkeit*.

Golus is geared for our benefit. When in our era we overcome these difficulties and learn Torah, fulfill *mitzvos*, and conduct ourselves with love towards a fellow Yid, we become much closer to *HaShem* than those who lived in better times. The darkness of *golus* makes the light of our *avoda* brighter. The earlier generations served *HaShem* with their minds and hearts – an enjoyable experience, whereas the *avoda* demanded of us today is the less pleasurable yoke of *kabbalas ol* and *mesirus nefesh*.

(סה"מ קונטרסים ח"א ע' 104 ואילך)

CONSIDER

Whose avoda is loftier: that of the earlier generations or ours? Which is greater?

Why is it so important to recognize that we live in the final moments of golus? How will this realization affect us?

CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN

At a *farbrengen* in תרצ"ט (1939), the Friediker Rebbe provided us with a strategy with which to overcome the difficult challenges that accompany the final stage of *golus*:

“We are in the midst of a battle, and we have to climb a tall mountain. The paths leading up are unfamiliar. Many of the climbers stumble and fall, but many others clamber up as far as the final stretch, the final *daled amos*. However, the strength that they had at the outset is weakening. At this point, they must summon every last bit of energy. Now that they are only *daled amos* away from the summit, everything is precious – every stalk of grass, every twig, every pebble that they can somehow use to help them struggle ahead. Light is crucial – to enable them to see

those objects that can help them progress. Especially if they are not fully equipped, they must forge ahead with *mesirus nefesh*.

“We are nearing the tip of the mountain. *Moshiach* is close. A person with a superior level of spiritual sensitivity can – spiritually – hear and catch sight of his approaching presence. We must navigate the final stretch by cherishing every positive activity, and we must illuminate the steep upward path by learning Torah and teaching it to others.

“Just as at the very end of a wakeful night weariness sets in with a vengeance and threatens to overwhelm us, today, as the dark night of *golus* draws to an end, the *am haaratzus* in even basic *halacha* is tremendous. Giving *tzedaka* is a very worthy *mitzva*, but in addition every individual must ensure that no day passes without at least half an hour of learning. This is the way to remain awake and not to miss out on greeting the forthcoming ‘light of the day.’”

(ע"פ סה"ש תרצ"ט ע' 316)

In this pointed letter, the Rebbe alerts *Anash* in Eretz Yisroel to their urgent, historic responsibility:

“Whether we like it or not, we are the successors of the Chabad chassidim of all previous generations, starting from the eminent chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. They all paved the way for us and left us to deal with only the *pachim ketanim*, the minor remaining tasks in *avoda*. On the other hand, it is our responsibility to complete the final *beirurim*, to enable the latent *ruchniyus* of the world to surface, and to draw down the revelation of *Moshiach* into our physical world.

“Even a brief reflection upon this should cause one to tremble with awe, realizing that all the awesome revelations in the era of *Moshiach* that are found in the teachings of *Chazal*, especially as they are illuminated in *Chassidus*, are dependent on our *avoda* now. Yet despite all that, people simply fool around and are preoccupied with their own personal matters...

“Time now is precious, every moment of time. It would be a waste of your time and of mine to devote any further correspondence to debating and discussing who did not show someone else the kind of respect that was expected, or who is greater than whom in Torah, *avoda* and *gemilus chassidim*. I don't know if anyone can gain any benefit at all from such deliberations...”

(אג"ק ח"ה ע' רפ"א)



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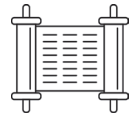
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TEFILLIN PLACEMENT

Where is the *tefillin shel rosh* to be placed?

Although the *possuk* specifies that the *tefillin* should be placed *bein einecha*, "between your eyes," Chazal learn from the *possuk* against making a bald patch when mourning that it refers to the top of the head where hair grows.

The entire surface of the head *tefillin* must be positioned in that area, so the lower edge of the *titura* (*tefillin* base) must be above the hairline. If the hairline recedes, the *tefillin* are placed according to the original hairline.¹ The upper edge of the *tefillin* can't extend further back than the end of where a baby's head is soft.²

With the words *bein einecha*, the Torah is telling us that the *tefillin* must be in the middle of the width of the head, so that it will be aligned with the space between the two eyes.³ While some *poskim* hold they don't need to be precisely between the eyes,⁴ the Alter Rebbe in his *siddur* adds the words "*mamosh*," adding that this is particularly relevant to Rashi *tefillin*.⁵

Why the difference?

In the *tefillin*, there are four *parshiyos*, and the Gemara teaches that the *parshiyos* of Kadesh and Vehaya Ki Yevi'acha should be on the right side, while Shema and Vehaya Im Shamo'a should be on the left side (when facing the one wearing the *tefillin*).

In Rashi *tefillin*, there is only a thin line between the two sets of compartments, and therefore, one must be extremely careful that the *tefillin* should be exactly in the middle, so that these two *parshiyos* are on the right and the others are on the left.

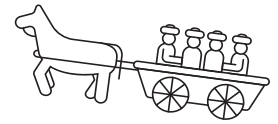
However, when it comes to Rabbeinu Tam *tefillin*, both sets of *parshiyos* begin from the outside towards the middle. Thus, right and left don't refer to the position but to the *direction*. It is therefore sufficient for those *tefillin* to be generally over the space between the eyes without the extra precision.

The Alter Rebbe had a shiny snuff box with which he would check that his *tefillin* were in the correct spot.⁶ The Rebbe notes that one can also ask someone else to ascertain the position of one's head *tefillin* and trust their judgment.⁷

1. ראה שו"ת ארץ צבי ח"א סי' י"ב. אות חיים ושלום סי' כ"ז סקט"ו. וראה מכתב כ"ק אדמו"ר הכי. למר דוב לענט כ"ח תמוז תשכ"ב (chabad.org/1973910).
2. שו"ת א"ח סי' כ"ז סי"ד.
3. שם סי"ח.
4. דברי חיים ח"ב סי' ו. וראה משנ"ב סי' ל"ב ס"ק קפ"ב שנראה שסב"ל ג"כ הכי.
5. ד"ה ואח"כ יניח.
6. ראה תורת מנחם חכ"ח ע' 25.
7. אגרות קודש ח"ד ע' שסד.

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

Our Heroes



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 Frierdiker 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 Frierdiker 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 Mitteler 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

לזכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות



ONLY A YIDISHE MEIDEL

A sixteen-year-old girl from the Balaclava suburb of Melbourne, Australia, wanted to convert to Yiddishkeit. Seeing her sincerity, Reb Chaim Gutnick brought her before a Beis Din, but they turned her down, reasoning that she was too young to make such a decision.

The girl became so anguished that she fell ill, and she wasn't eating or sleeping. Upon Reb Chaim's suggestion, she wrote a long letter to the Rebbe explaining why she felt she had to be Jewish, pleading her case for conversion.

But she received no response. Instead, the Rebbe wrote a postscript in an unrelated letter to Reb Chaim, asking, "What's

happening with the Yiddishe girl from Balaclava who wrote me that long letter?"

That was enough for Reb Chaim. Understanding the message, he immediately set out to see her parents. After much discussion, the mother admitted that she was hiding her Yiddishe identity because of the Holocaust...

Sometime later, Reb Chaim was in *yechidus*. "Among *chassidim* it's accepted that the Rebbe knows these things," he said. "I don't mean to be *chutzpadik*, but I want to ask for a rational explanation..."

The Rebbe smiled and said, "Only a *Yiddishe meidel* could have written such a letter."

לעילוי נשמת

מרת מוסיא בת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה שטראקס

נפטרה כ"ה אדר תשפ"ד