

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 49

פרשת נצבים תשע"ה

Heartfelt Pleading (II)

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

From the Heart

At the young age of twenty-seven, the **Rebbe Rashab of Lubavitch** was elected *gabbai* of the local *Chevra Kaddisha*. Following the local *minhag*, the townsfolk ceremoniously escorted him under a *chuppah* amidst great *kavod* to his place. The teaching which he then delivered spoke of the superiority of simple *Yidden*, who follow directives more obediently than their learned brethren. Just as the foot can be more easily placed in hot water than the head, so too the simple *Yidden* would bend to the yoke of heaven with greater ease. When he finished, a group of simple *Yidden* approached him and exclaimed: "*Gabbai!* If you will give the command, we will even go into fire!"

"Yes," the *tzaddik* replied, "one must go into fire! One must recite *Tehillim* with fire (*mit a brenn*)."

(ס"ה ש תרצ"ו ע' 165)

It is said that reciting the book of *Tehillim* "without a break" is a *segula* for all kinds of good things. The *tzaddik* **Reb Moshe of Savran** would interpret this to mean that one should say the *Tehillim* with feeling, with no break separating his mouth from his heart. This is indeed the best *segula*.

(תהלה לדוד ע' לג)

Seforim write that it is better to say fewer *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* with more *kavana* rather than to say many more without *kavana*.

(שו"ע הרב מהדו"ב סי' א ס"ב)

Tehillim with Tears

When the **Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch** visited Petersburg, many *Yiddishe* soldiers stationed in nearby Kronshtat requested to meet with him.

At the parade that they organized in his honor, they told him, "We put in lots of effort to shine the buttons of our uniform to prepare for your

visit. Now, you please work for us, and polish our *neshamos* which have become so soiled..." And they broke off in tears.

Many of these soldiers knew some *pesukim* of *Tehillim* by heart and would recite them while polishing their buttons. The Rebbe delivered a *maamar* for them in *Yiddish*, beginning with HaShem's promise, *Machisi ka'av pesh'a'echa* – "I have erased your sins like a cloud." He then told them, "In order to polish buttons, one needs to use oil and water, oil is like the letters of the *Tehillim*, water like the tears that cleanse."

(ס"ה ש תש"ה ע' 3)

On one occasion the **Tzemach Tzedek** told a *chossid*, "*Zohar* uplifts the *nefesh*, *Medrash* arouses the heart, and *Tehillim* recited with tears washes out the vessel."

(היום יום ט"ז טבת)

Sweet Singing

The **Tzemach Tzedek** would often recite *Tehillim* early in the morning in order to join the simple *Yidden* in their *avodas HaShem*. Once, Reb Chaim Ber the *gabbai* invited one of the *chassidim* to listen in. As the *chossid* stood in a nearby room, the *dveikus* of the Rebbe's *Tehillim* as he poured out his *neshama* brought him to tears.

At one stage Reb Pesach, the *melamed* of the Rebbe's youngest son, would sleep in a room near the room of the **Tzemach Tzedek**. One morning, around 3:00 a.m., he heard the Rebbe reading *kapitel pei-daled* of *Tehillim* and then exclaim: "Even the smallest bird that You created has a place – yet You, the greatest of all the great, have no place..."

At this, the Rebbe sang the famous *niggun* of his grandfather the **Baal HaTanya**, and then sat down to learn *Gemara* for two hours.

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ח ע' תצב, לקו"ד ח"ג ע' 1056)

A *chossid* of the **Tzemach Tzedek** once related

what he witnessed as a young man of twenty:

One morning, while in the Rebbe's courtyard, I noticed the chimney-cleaner's ladder leaning against his house. I realized that by climbing it I would be able to peer into the Rebbe's room and watch him daven.

It was after *Shacharis*. The Rebbe was sitting in his *tallis* and *tefillin* and reading *Tehillim* sweetly. When he came to the *possuk* in *kapitel lamed-tes* that begins *Hoidi'eini HaShem*, he sang it to a particularly sweet melody, which he repeated several times. (That melody is known to this day.)

I was perched up there delighting in my ploy, enjoying my good fortune at observing the Rebbe at such a moment, when a stern voice surprised me. It was the *Rebbitzin*: "What?! No embarrassment?! Have you never before seen a *Yid daven*?!"

Terrified, I escaped immediately, but that *niggun* I will never forget.

(תולדות אברהם חיים ע' יט)

The **Baal Shem Tov** said:

In order to recognize the lessons in *avoda* that may be learned from the vicissitudes of life, one has to say a *kapitel* of *Tehillim* with a fiery heart, acclimate himself to personally doing *Yidden* favors, and have *ahavas Yisroel* with *mesirus nefesh*. These are the keys that open the locks to the chambers of *rachamim*, *gezunt*, *yeshuahs* and *parnassa*.

(ס"ה ש קיין ת"ש ע' 73)

Consider This

What *kavana* should one have when reciting *Tehillim*?

If the words themselves have an effect, what does the *kavana* add?

Sparks of Greatness

Ben Ish Chai - י"ג אלול

Rabbi Yosef Chaim of Baghdad, one of the greatest Sephardic rabbanim in the last century, was a *posek*, *mekubal*, *darshan*, author and great leader. He wrote tens of *seforim* and is known as the title of one of his works, the "**Ben Ish Chai**." He passed away on the 13th of *Elul*, תרס"ט (1909).

One *Erev Shabbos* of Reb Yosef Chaim's childhood, a man came to tidy the courtyard of his home. Seeing the worker, Reb Yosef Chaim's mother hurried to bring him a bowl of food she had prepared for Shabbos, but the man declined. The rebbeztzin encouraged him to eat and not be ashamed, but he still refused. The woman continued to assure him of the *kashrus* standards, explaining that her husband is the chief rabbi of the city. At this point, the workman told the sincere rebbeztzin of his custom only to eat food prepared in his

own home. Hearing this, young Reb Yosef Chaim began crying profusely, pained that he had not yet attained the level of this simple workman.

Reb Yosef Chaim's *droshos* were renowned. On *Shabbos*, he would speak for four or five hours at a time, with thousands of people silence listening to his every word. Once, the *ezras nashim* gallery, supported by a series of pillars, began to give way under of the overcrowded section. Hysteria broke out, but Reb Yosef Chaim continued saying his *drasha*. He raised his eyes to the caving floor and, behold, the collapsing floor stopped in midair. He finished his *drasha* as scheduled. Forty minutes later, the miraculous suspension ended. The gallery fell in an empty *shul*.

Library Sparks

The Torah portion of *Nitzavim* is always read on the *Shabbos* before *Rosh Hashana*. Indeed, its very first verse reveals its appropriateness: "You are standing this day, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d." "This day" refers to the Day of Judgment, *Rosh Hashana*.

On *Rosh Hashana* every soul, great and small alike, stands before G-d, as it states, "Your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers...your little ones, your wives...from the hewer of wood to the drawer of water."

Why do we stand before G-d? "So that you may enter the covenant of the L-rd your G-d." When all Jews stand before Him as a complete and unified entity, we become worthy of entering into His covenant on *Rosh Hashana*.

A covenant is designed to preserve the feeling of love that exists between two people. They establish a covenant at a time when their love is strongest, so that it will never weaken. This bond connects them to each other and ensures that their love will last forever.

So too is it with G-d's love for the Jewish people. His love for us is strongest on *Rosh Hashana*, as the previous month was devoted to removing our sins.

Thus in order to arouse G-d's desire to establish an unbreakable covenant with us, we need to be united with one another. How are we to accomplish this, given the endless

differences between individuals? This can be understood by the following analogy:

The human body is composed of many different limbs and organs. Some are more important, like the head; others are simpler, like the foot. But the head, no matter how important, needs the feet in order to move. The body achieves perfection only when all its limbs act in harmony.

In the same way, even the most important Jews ("your heads") require the simplest ones ("the drawer of water") in order to comprise a complete entity. And it is this unity that arouses G-d's desire to make a covenant with His people.

Our job is to achieve this unity between "head" and "foot." Every Jew must work on himself until he can recognize his fellow's unique qualities. It is beyond our capacity to judge a person's true worth. Even if one considers himself a "head" and the other fellow a "foot" (as it is human nature to inflate our own self-worth), the "head" still needs the "foot" in order to comprise a complete being.

Let us concern ourselves with correcting our own flaws and not perceived flaws in others. Doing so will ensure that there is no time to look at others' imperfections!

In this manner we will achieve both self-perfection and perfection as a nation, and G-d will grant the entire Jewish people a good and sweet year.

Halacha Sparks

Interrupting During *Tekios*

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

Is it permissible to say *Tehillim* or *asher yatzar* after the first set of *tekios*, but before one has heard all one hundred *kolos*?

It is forbidden¹ to talk from the beginning of the first set of *tekios*, known as the *tekios dimyushov*, until the end of the *tekios* blown during *musaf*, known as the *tekios dimeumad*.

The *Rif*² discusses whether one must make another *bracha* on the *tekios* during *musaf* if one mistakenly interrupted between the two sets of *tekios*. He writes that although in the case of when one interrupts between *tefilin shel yad* and *shel rosh* one does make a second *bracha*, it is because the two *tefilin* are two separate mitzvot, however, by the case of *shofar* one shouldn't make a second *bracha* because all the *tekios* are one long mitzvah. The *Rif* then adds that although one doesn't make another *bracha* it is still forbidden to talk just as it is forbidden between the two *tefilin*. That would mean³ that it is prohibited to interrupt even to say a *bracha* or *Tehillim* as the case is with regards to *tefilin*.

The *Ran*⁴ however argues that one is only prohibited to interrupt between the *bracha* and beginning the performance of a mitzvah, but once one has started the mitzvah there is no prohibition to talk. Therefore there is no prohibition to talk between the *tekios dimeyushav* and the *tekios dimeumad*. However he writes that one should still be stringent not to talk without a need taking in consideration the stringent opinion of the *Rif*.

In summary there are two opinions regarding the nature of the prohibition of speaking between the *tekios dimeyushav* and the *tekios dimeumad*. The *Rif* compares it to interrupting between *tefilin shel yad* and *shel rosh*, meaning that all interruptions including a *bracha* or *Tehillim* would be prohibited. Whereas according to the *Ran* in principle it is permissible to talk and it's only a stringency not to, hence saying a *bracha* or *Tehillim* is not an interruption without a purpose and is permissible.

The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*⁵ follows the opinion of the *Ran*, and thus only idle talk is prohibited but saying *Tehillim* or *Asher Yatzar* is permitted⁶. Moreover, saying *Tehillim* can be likened to the *piyutim* we say during *chazaras hashatz* of *mussaf* which do not constitute a *hefsek*⁷.

1. שו"ע תקצ"ב ס"ט ושו"ע ס"ז.

2. ר"ה יא, א.

3. פנ"י ר"ה לד ע"ב, וכמותו פסק המהרש"ם בדע"ת סוס"י תקצ"ב.

4. שם.

5. שם.

6. כ"פ לגבי ברכת אשר יצר בשו"ת מנח"י ח"ג סי' מד וח"ד סי' מז, צ"ץ אליעזר ח"א סי' מה, שבט הלוי ח"ה סי' סו וח"ז עט, קנין תורה ח"ה סי' נו, ולגבי אמירת תהילים בין סיום תפילת הלחש לתחילת חזרת הש"ץ או בשעת שהחזן מאריך בניגונים כ"פ להחזיר כמה פוסקים הובאו בנטעי גבריאל פס"ד הע' ד, וכן שמעתי בשם הגרש"ז דווארקיין זצ"ל להחזיר.

7. דרכי חיים ושולם אות תשכ"ה.

Come visit our library at 1709 Avenue J, Brooklyn NY. Call us at 718-677-9000.

www.thebaalshemtovlibrary.com. tbstlibrary@gmail.com

Library hours: Sunday : 1:30 pm - 9:30 pm. Monday - Thursday: 2:00 pm - 10:30 pm.

Come visit our unique Children's Library!

This week's issue is sponsored by:



800-273-5176