

# ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 12

פרשת ויגש תשע"ה

## Simple Faith

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

### In All Times

It had been a long, long ride, and the *tzaddik*, **Reb Mendel of Bar**, who was traveling together with the **Baal Shem Tov**, felt really thirsty.

The Baal Shem Tov told him, "If you will have true *bitachon* in HaShem, you will definitely find water."

Shortly afterwards a *goy* approached them and asked if they had seen horses roaming around, for he had lost his horses three days earlier and had been desperately searching for them. They replied in the negative and then asked him if he had some water.

"Sure I have!" the *goy* answered, and he gave Reb Mendel a drink.

Reb Mendel asked the Baal Shem Tov, "If the purpose of the *goy's* wanderings was just for my sake, to relieve me of my thirst, why did he have to travel for three days?"

The Baal Shem Tov replied, "Actually, HaShem prepared him earlier, in case you would exhibit true *bitachon*, because then your desire would have been granted immediately!"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 379)

Faithful to the instructions he had received from *Shamayim*, the **Baal Shem Tov** once invited a group of his *talmidim* to accompany him in a wagon to a certain town, so that they could learn the middah of *bitachon*. The local innkeeper was pleased to see them and welcomed them graciously. The next morning, while they were *davening*, a police officer walked in with a stick in hand, banged the table three times and left. The *talmidim*, baffled, froze in their places, but their host remained as cheerful as he had been before. Half an hour later the same man returned, banged the table three times, and left.

When the Baal Shem Tov asked the innkeeper to explain these strange events, he said, "This is a warning. He's reminding me to bring the rental payment to the *poritz*. It is repeated three times, and if I do not bring the money at that point, my family and I will be thrown into the dungeon."

Hearing this, the Baal Shem Tov told him, "Judging from your calmness, you have the money ready, so why don't you go and pay your rent? We will await your return, and then we will be able to take our places at your table peacefully."

The innkeeper answered, "Truthfully, at the

moment I don't have a single coin, but HaShem will surely not forsake me. He will provide the money. Let us eat without haste, because three hours still remain to the time limit."

They ate together unhurriedly, and the innkeeper's face disclosed no sign of his dangerous plight. At the end of the meal, the officer strode in for the third time and once again banged on the table, but the innkeeper, unruffled, remained calmly in his place. After *benching* with *kavana*, the innkeeper went off to get dressed in his Shabbos clothing. When he rejoined them and announced that he would now go pay and his dues, the Baal Shem Tov asked him again if he had the money he needed.

Shaking his head, the host answered, "I haven't got a single penny yet, but I am sure HaShem will take care of me!"

He took his leave and the Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim* went out to the porch overlooking the road that stretched out before them, to see him off as he set out on his mission by foot.

From the distance they saw a wagon driving towards the innkeeper, which slowed down as he exchanged a few words with the wagon driver. The wagon then continued on its way. After a few moments, its driver backtracked, called out to the innkeeper, and then handed him some money. The wagon then resumed its route towards the inn, where the curious onlookers asked the driver what had transpired.

"I had proposed a deal to the innkeeper," he said, "and offered to buy all the liquor he is due to make this winter, but he didn't agree to my price and continued on his way. Seeing his stubbornness, but knowing his honesty, I decided to give him the amount he had asked for. He then excused himself and hurried ahead, explaining that he was on his way to pay his rent."

The Baal Shem Tov turned to his *talmidim* and said, "Look how powerful is the *middah* of *bitachon*!"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 379)

### Complete Trust

The *tzaddik*, **Reb Noach of Lechovitch**, shared the following story with his chassidim:

Hirshke, a simple Jew, earned his *parnasa*

by selling merchandise in the market. Before daybreak he would go out to the countryside to meet the *goyishe* farmers before they arrived in town, and bargain with them over their goods.

One day a visiting *maggid* came to town and spoke of the intrinsic value of living with *bitachon*, and explained that no man ever earns a *kopke* more than what HaShem has ordained for him. Hirshke took those words to heart. On the following market day he decided not to rush out early to try and reach the farmers before his competitors did. His anxious wife, seeing him lying in bed, urged him to get up. He told her what he had heard from the *maggid*, concluding that whatever HaShem had planned for him, he would be able to buy at home. She did her eloquent best to convince him otherwise, but Hirshke refused to leave the house.

A while later, when they heard the other buyers outside clinching their deals with the *goyim*, she pleaded with him again, but to no avail. Then one of the farmers called out, "We're not selling any more stuff until Hirshke shows up!"

The *goyim* began banging on his shutters, shouting for him to get up. Hirshke got dressed, brought the farmers inside and bought everything at a discounted rate without having to bargain. From that day on, he never had to leave his house, for the *goyim* would come to him, and he made a respectable *parnasa* till the end of his days.

Reb Noach finished the story and added, "This worked for him, because he was a simple fellow whose faith was whole and uncomplicated. It wouldn't be the same for someone else who tried to upgrade his *bitachon* by adding the sophistication of reason..."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 381)

## Consider This

Where does one get such pure *bitachon* from?

Why can't anyone just follow Hirshke's form of *bitachon*? What then must they do?

## Sparks of Greatness

### Reb Tzvi ben HaBaal Shem Tov

#### ז' טבת

**Reb Tzvi**, the son of the **Baal Shem Tov**, was a very holy but quiet and modest individual, and throughout his life, he lived in poverty. He was taught by his father and by **Reb Gershon Kitover**. After the passing of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Tzvi took over the mantle of leadership, but on the first yahrtzait of his father, he said that the Baal Shem Tov had revealed himself to him and said that the entire "*pamalya shel maalah*" (heavenly court) had accepted the Mezritcher. He then took off the shtraimel and white garment he was wearing and put it on the **Mezritcher Maggid**. He passed away in Pinsk on the 7th of Teves, 1780 (תק"מ).

Once, a young man came to Reb Tzvi and asked him how to attain the level of *avodas Hashem* that he, Reb Tzvi, has reached. Reb Tzvi answered him with a *marshal*:

"There was a man who owned 50 gold pieces, and he came the wealthy man of town asking him how he can prosper from this money. The

rich man answered that he cannot answer this question, for he had accumulated his wealth from an inheritance he had received from his father. He advised him to ask another rich man who had worked for his money."

"So too with me," concluded Reb Tzvi. "I have inherited much from my father. Better go to Reb Aharon of Karlin who has attained his levels by himself..."

(כתבי ר"י שו"ב ע' 16)

As mentioned, after one year of leadership Reb Tzvi gave over the mantle to the Mezritcher Maggid. The **Rashab of Lubavitch** commented on this, "One needs to have a lot of strength to do this. We find that many *Tanaaim* and *Amoraim* had no desire to accept leadership, but once they took on this position..."

(תורת שלום ע' 84)

## Library Sparks

*Parshas Vayigash* relates how Yehuda approached Yosef after Binyamin has been accused of theft, and Yosef wanted to retain him as a servant. The *passuk* states "*yedaber na avdecha davar*". Rashi explains that Yehuda addressed Yosef using very harsh language. His goal was to convince Yosef, who he took for an Egyptian, to release Binyamin immediately.

It is therefore ironic that he did not initially approach Yosef in a soft and pleading manner, which probably has a greater chance to succeed, rather than using stern and threatening words! And that, speaking to the viceroy of the nation!

Answer: as long as materialistic matters are at stake, one should conduct himself in a manner which will practically lead him to his desired goal. He should use fine, polished speech, prepare the proper phrases and fine points, and use well thought-out tactics to attain his goal.

However, when the issue on hand is related to *ruchnius*, this is not the time to be formal or make lengthy calculations. When a person

is seriously hurt he will instantly cry out in pain. At the height of emotional distress, one will instinctively respond with a strong and stormy reaction. He will not necessarily follow diplomatic guidelines, ponder and figure which approach will bring about success.

Such a reaction will prove to the listener that the issue on hand is of utmost and urgent importance. The recipient of this message will then naturally concede, yield, and come to a consensus.

Yehuda told Yosef "*ki avdecha arav es hana'ar*". Binyamin's well-being is my responsibility, and I risked my future and indeed my soul as a guarantee that I will return him to his father. Therefore, any harm that befalls Binyamin, affects the core of my heart.

So too, are we as parents responsible for the spiritual well-being of our children, and of ourselves. Hashem has entrusted us with this treasure, and no obstacle may stand in the way or hinder us from taking the right measures, to ensure that they reach their utmost, spiritual potential!

## Halacha Sparks

### Davening in a Room with a Tzeilem

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

**May one daven in a room which has a tzeilem (cross) displayed in it (such as a room in a Christian hospital or a non-denominational prayer room in an airport)?**

To preface: Essentially, a *tzeilem* is usually only a symbol and not an actual *avoda zara* (like an idol). However, according to *Halacha*, our assumption is not sufficient regarding *avoda zara*. We must be sure that no one treated it in the past as an *avoda zara*, (such as having bowed to it). Since we can't be sure, we have no choice but to treat it as an *avoda zara*.

Optimally, one should only daven in a city in where there is no *avoda zara*, as we see in the Torah that Moshe Rabeinu left the confines of the city to daven, because of the idols present in the city (Rashi to Shemos 12:1). However, since Jews have been in *golus*, it has not been practical to daven in a city without *avoda zara*.

Similarly, *poskim* permit davening in a room with *avoda zara* when there is a need. As in the abovementioned examples: in a hospital where all the rooms have *tzlomim* and it is not possible to leave the building, or in an airport where the rush of passengers doesn't allow for proper concentration. However, the *poskim* caution that one should face away from the *tzeilem* when davening.

While this is all true in a situation where the *tzeilem* is to the side of the person; when it is above the person, there is an additional problem mentioned in *poskim*, that it blocks the *tefilos* from ascending.

However, since we are talking about a case of *shas hadchak* (a situation of difficulty), there are two reasons to permit it: a) The prohibition of davening underneath *avoda zara* is not recorded in *Shulchan Aruch* as a consensus opinion. b) Some *poskim* limit the issue to a place set aside for davening on a long term basis, but not a temporary venue.

In summary: If one is able to leave the room, one should. If not, one should turn away from the *tzeilem* and daven.

רמ"א יו"ד סי' קמ"א סעי' א, ש"ך שם סי' ק"ו, רמ"א סי' צ"ד ומ"א שם בשם תרומת הדשן סי' נ, ט"ז סוס"י קנ"א, מ"ב שם סי' ס"ב, שו"ת עצי חיים או"ח סי' א, שו"ת חלקת יעקב או"ח סי' לג, משיב בהלכה יו"ד ח"א סי' פה

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Our new exciting shiurim program will be operating soon! Shiurim will be taking place weekly at our state of the art library for men. Lectures will be taking place for women as well on a variety interesting & important topics.