

The Weekly Farbrengens



850 • לחמן ישמעו • נח תשפ"ו
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

DEALING HONESTLY (II)

MAKING A KIDDUSH HASHEM

Chazal explain that the *mitzva* to love *HaShem* requires that a Yid should act in a way that makes Him beloved by others. When a person learns Torah and deals honestly in business, people will say, "How great is he who learns Torah; how wonderful are his ways! Woe to one who does not learn Torah! We promise that we too will now learn and teach our children Torah as well." But when (*chas veshalom*) a person who learns Torah does not act honestly, people will say the opposite, causing a *chillul HaShem*.

The Rebbe explained that dealing honestly means going even *beyond* the requirements of *halacha*. One should do so also when dealing with *goyim*, thus creating a *kiddush HaShem*.

(יומא פו ע"א, תי"מ תשמ"ד ח"ב ע' 612)

The *tanna*, Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach, used to sell flax, which he would carry from place to place. Seeking to ease his work, his *talmidim* went off to the marketplace and bought him a donkey from an Arab merchant. On their way home they noticed that he had accidentally left a valuable jewel hanging on the donkey's neck. Excitedly, they hurried to Rabbi Shimon and told him that *HaShem* had sent a *bracha* and he would no longer have to work.

Rabbi Shimon asked, "Did the owner know about it?" "No," they replied.

"If so," he told them, "you must return it immediately, for he sold you a donkey and not a jewel."

When the *goy* received the gem, he exclaimed, "Blessed is the G-d of Rabbi Shimon ben Shetach!"

(דברים רבה ג, בשי"ב ירושלמי בבא מציעא פ"ב ע"ה)

AT ALL COSTS

Alexander the Great once visited the King of Katzia to observe that country's laws and customs. Just then, two citizens were admitted to have their judgment rendered by the king.

"My master, the King!" called out the plaintiff. "I bought a desolate piece of land from this man here, dug it up, and discovered a buried treasure. So I told him to take the treasure; I bought a ruin, not a treasure!"

"Just as you are afraid of being punished for stealing, so am I!" responded the other. "I sold the ruin to you, including everything in it, from the depths of the earth, until the sky!"

The king asked one man if he had a son, and the other, if he had a daughter. He advised that their children get married and the treasure be given to the new couple. Alexander looked on in amazement.

"Didn't I judge well?" queried the King of Katzia. "Sure!" replied Alexander the Great. "But if I had been the arbitrator, I would have killed them both, and taken the treasure for the kingdom's coffers..."

The King of Katzia then asked, "Does the sun shine in your country?" "Yes," replied Alexander.

"Does it rain?" He nodded affirmatively.

"Do you have animals?" "Yes," he said.

"Well, then," declared the King of Katzia, "the sun shines and the rain falls in the merit of those animals."

(ויקרא רבה כז, א)

CONSIDER

Why is a kiddush HaShem specifically related to going beyond the requirements of halacha?

Is a kiddush HaShem more important than the loss of money, or will no loss be incurred?

When he was a lad of fourteen, Reb Baruch, the Alter Rebbe's father, left his hometown, Vitebsk, and traveled through many villages. Arriving in Dobromysl, he settled down to learn in the *beis medrash*. One day, a man came over to him and introduced himself, "My name is Eliezer Reuven, and I have a smithy on the outskirts of town. I live nearby, and I could use some help, so if you would care for such a job, I would provide you with food

and drink and a place to sleep."

Baruch was overjoyed, for this was exactly what he had wanted. He was prepared to do the hardest labor as long as he would earn his own piece of bread, without having to rely on anyone's *tzedaka*, but asked to be paid with money, so he would not have to eat and sleep in the homes of strangers.

He worked conscientiously at the smithy throughout the day, and in the evening, he would go to the *beis medrash* to learn. And the more he observed Eliezer Reuven, the more did he respect him, for all day, as he stood hammering the red-hot iron, he would recite *Tehillim* by heart, *kapitl* after *kapitl*.

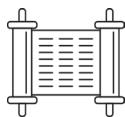
The smith's customers were the peasants of the surrounding villages, who would bring their wagons and tools to be repaired. Baruch noticed the exceptional honesty and devotion with which Eliezer Reuven treated his customers, never overcharging them even a fraction of a cent. One day in particular, Baruch noticed something which made a deep impression on him. A peasant from a nearby village had brought his horse to the smith for shoeing and at the same time he brought the wheel of his wagon to be fixed. Another peasant had brought his horse to have four new shoes put on. When the time came to ask for the money, Eliezer Reuven mistakenly charged the second peasant the amount he should have charged the first one, overcharging him six groshen.

Both peasants had already left when Eliezer Reuven realized his mistake. He was so upset about it that he immediately set off on foot to this peasant's village about three miles away, to give him back the tiny overcharged amount. Baruch was astounded. He had never seen such meticulousness on the part of an ordinary person. He asked the smith if he really thought it had been worthwhile to walk the six-mile distance for a matter of a mere six groshen.

Eliezer Reuven replied, "About the people who lived before the *maful*, it is written that they were so corrupt that they were not even bothered when robbing from someone less than a little *prutah*. Would you really want me to behave even worse than the people of that wicked generation and rob a man of six groshen?!"

(ספר הזכרונות ח"א ע' 75)





SELLING THE KOHEN'S ALIYA

Can a congregation sell the first *aliya* to a non-kohen and have the kohen leave?

The concept of selling *kibudim* is mentioned in the Rishonim in relation to the honor of *hotza'ah* and *hachnasa*.¹ The Shulchan Aruch also mentions that although an individual of great stature should be honored with *hagba* and *gelila*, people commonly pay high amounts for this honor, which displays their cherishment for the *mitzva*.²

Apparently, *aliyos* weren't commonly sold in those times — with the exception of the first *aliya* on Shabbos Bereishis — and they followed the order set by Chazal based on levels of Torah scholarship and communal leadership. However, the Levush (16th century) mentions the common practice of selling *aliyos* to raise *tzedaka* money, and in this case, the purchasers could choose who to honor, even when it differed from the standard order.³

The Maharik (15th century) discusses a congregation that always sold the first *aliya* of Shabbos Bereishis, and one year, the kohen didn't want to pay but didn't want to forgo his automatic right either. In this case, the congregation rightfully prevented the kohen from attending shul that Shabbos.⁴

What about forcing the kohen to leave shul when he's already there? The Magen Avraham uses the Maharik as proof that the kohen may be forced to leave, while the Teshuva Me'ahava argues that sending out a kohen already in shul is forbidden. Some contemporary *poskim* allow it before the congregation gets up to *krias hatorah*.⁵

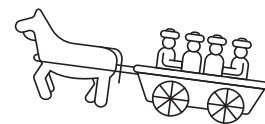
Some hold that the Torah obligation to sanctify and give precedence to kohanim ("v'*kidashto*") is only overridden by an age-old custom accepted by the kohanim for the purpose of raising important revenue for the shul, and it can't be extended to other cases.⁶ Others, however, are more lenient, arguing that *v'kidashto* is only an *asmachta* (rabbinic halacha with a hint in a possuk),⁷ or we can assume the kohanim are *mochel*,⁸ or it's sufficient if the kohen is honored at least on certain *yomim tovim*.⁹

In practice, a privately owned shul has the right to do such things (and we likewise saw in 770 how the kohen aliya was given away to bar mitzva bochurim when needed).¹⁰

1. מהרי"ל קריאת התורה ס"א. מרדכי סוף מסכת מגילה.
2. שו"ע או"ח סי' קמ"ז ס"א. משנ"ב שם סק"ח.
3. לבוש או"ח סי' קל"ו הובא במשנ"ב שם סק"ד. וראה איך שביארו במאמר מרדכי סק"א.
4. ב"י סי' קל"ה מהרי"ק שורש ט'.
5. מג"א סי' קל"ה סק"ז. תשובה מאהבה ח"א סי' צ"א. שבה"ל ח"ה סי' כ"ה.
6. ראה לדוגמא חת"ס או"ח סי' כ"ד.
7. תשובה מאהבה הנ"ל, מהר"ם שיק או"ח סי' נ"ט.
8. שו"ת שואל ומשיב ח"א סי' כ"ט.
9. ראה כף החיים סי' קל"ה סק"י.
10. מהרש"ם ח"א סי' רל"ד.
11. ראה חיי לוי או"ח סי' י"ג. דרכי חיים וחסד סי' ר"ה. שלחן הטהור סי' קל"ה ס"ט.

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

Our Heroes



R. MEIR PAHARER

R. Meir Paharer was a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. He demanded the highest standards of authenticity in Chassidus and Avodas Hashem, and was known for his sharp tongue.

R. Meir would daven quietly with deep concentration. Before *krias shema*, he would tie a handkerchief around his forehead to help him concentrate better. The Tzemach Tzedek was reported to have said about R. Meir, "Are there many 'Meirs'?"

His style was sharp and demanding. During one *farbrengen*, as R. Meir was speaking about the greatness of the *neschama*, as he often did. Suddenly, he stopped and turned to his son Nachman and asked, "Nachman, does Hirshel Volf have a goat?" R. Nachman answered that he doesn't know. "You chunk of meat!" R. Meir responded sharply. "Why don't you know if he has a goat? Why are you not concerned about his financial state?!"

R. Volf Levitin, the Mashgiach of the yeshiva in Lubavitch, was married to the

daughter of R. Gershon Ber Paharer, and he remembered R. Meir well.

R. Gershon Ber was sent to Pahar by R. Hillel Paritcher to serve as a mashpia while he was still a young man. Once, when R. Gershon Ber repeated a *maamar*, R. Meir commented that he says it as though he's playing notes from a musical box. He meant that R. Gershon Ber had not fully internalized the Chassidus he was repeating.

When R. Shmuel Levitin, the son of R. Volf and grandson of R. Gershon Ber, shared this story at the Frieddiker Rebbe's table, the Frieddiker Rebbe laughed hard, since he held R. Gershon Ber in high regard.

(ניצוצי אור - וייגארטען ע' 256)

On another occasion, soon after the chossid R. Bereh Volf Kozevnikov of Yaketrinaslav got married, Reb Meir rebuked him and said, "Have you already stopped learning?"

Soon afterwards, R. Bereh Volf injured his leg, and he attributed it to R. Meir's *kpeida* (displeasure).

(ניצוצי אור - וייגארטען)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמואל הכהן ע"ה



A PLURALISTIC CURRICULUM

From the very early years, the Rebbe demanded from his bochurim that they become proficient in the basic *halachos* of Yoreh Dei'ah before their chassuna, so that they are well equipped to run a kosher home. From some, the Rebbe also expected that they be tested on parts of Choshen Mishpat, as a preparation for *rabbonus*.

As the winter *zman* began in 5736, the Rosh Yeshiva Harav Piekarsky wrote in to the Rebbe a detailed curriculum. The Yoreh Dei'ah bochurim were to learn Basar Bechalav, Ta'aruvos, Melicha, and Treifos, with the Tur and Beis Yosef, as well as some

applicable Gemaros. The Choshen Mishpat study would include Hilchos Dayonim, Eidus, Toen-Venitan, Shutfin, Mekach-Umemkar, and part of Halva'ah. All of these were to be done during the afternoon only, because the morning schedule was dedicated to learning Gemara, Maseches Bava Basra.

The Rebbe replied in his holy handwriting, "If the *hanhala* estimate that the bochurim could manage all this, *yehi ratzon* it should be with *hatzlacha*.

"However," the Rebbe added, "if not, a choice should be given between two curricula."

לזכות הרה"ח ר' מרדכי צבי שי' בערקאוויטש
לרגל יום הולדתו - ג' חשוון - לשנת הצלחה בגור
נדבת משפחת בערקאוויטש