

The Weekly *Farbrenngen*


MERKAZ ANASH
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SHAVUOS

AN AUSPICIOUS DAY

What happens when two *tzaddikim* and *mekubalim* of the stature of Reb Shlomo Alkabetz and Rav Yosef Caro spend the awesome night of Shavuos together?

The answer is recorded in a 16th-century manuscript written by R. Shlomo Alkabetz: "The *Beis Yosef* and I decided to stay awake on the night of Shavuos and read passages of the Torah. [These passages are the basis of what later became the *Tikkun Leil Shavuos*.] After *chatzos*, as we reached the section of *Mishnayos*, a sweet voice was heard aloud from the mouth of the *Beis Yosef*. We all fell on our faces from sheer fright. The voice grew ever louder, until even the neighbors were able hear it, though they were unable to understand it. The voice, having been created by the *Mishna* we had learnt, told us of the pain suffered by the *Shechina* [in exile], and the great impact our learning this night had, silencing all the *Malochim* and piercing all the heavens. It then spoke of our great *zechus* of staying awake this night, and the greater effect it would have had with a *minyan*. The voice then encouraged us to continue learning throughout the night, not wasting even a moment. Finally, the *Shechina* instructed us to stand up and say *Boruch Shem*... aloud, as is done on Yom Kippur.

We wept profusely, from the joy of our experience and for the pain of the *Shechina*. "When we met three other *chachomim* in the *mikve* the next morning, we related to them what had happened that night. They were understandably distressed, and we resolved to gather again on the second night, this time with a *minyan*.

"That night, because of our joy at having a *minyan*, the voice of the *Shechina* began speaking as soon as we started reading the *Aseres HaDibros* of *Devarim*. The voice praised our attainment, told us of the *ruchnius'dike* fire surrounding the house, and then directed us to say *Boruch Shem*. As the time of *chatzos* drew near, the *Shechina* spoke again and told us that for hundreds of years no such accomplishment had been attained."

The Shaloh HaKadosh copied this story from the manuscript of Reb Shlomo Alkabetz and concluded: "It is apparent in his writing that there was much more that he was not allowed to reveal. From this story we must learn how important it is to conduct ourselves with a special *kedusha* on this night."

(של"ה הקדוש מס' שבועות נר מצוה ה')

The Friediker Rebbe said:

Shavuos is an *eis ratzon*, when *HaShem* confuses the one who accuses Yidden, just as He confuses him during the sounding of the *shofar* on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.

Shavuos is an opportune time to make every effort to improve one's Torah learning and *avoda* in *yiras shamayim*, and to strive to do *teshuvah* concerning one's Torah study, without Satan's interference.

(היום יום, ג' וד' סיון)

CONSIDER

What brought the revelation of the *Shechina* in the *beis medrash* of the *Beis Yosef*: their learning or the auspicious night?
What should one do to receive the revelation of *Matan Torah*?

RECEIVING THE TORAH

The Friediker Rebbe said: Every year on Shavuos, the same revelation of *HaShem* that was revealed at the time of *matan Torah* is revealed anew, and a Yid who at this time arouses himself to establish set times for studying Torah is successful in his *avoda*.

(סה"ש קיץ ה"ח ע' 116, תש"ג ע' 129)

"Once," related the Rebbe Maharash, "on the first night of Shavuos, I went to say *Gut Yom-Tov* to my great-uncle Reb Chaim Avraham, son of the Alter Rebbe. I found him sitting with his hands covering his tear-stained face. I asked him why he was crying on *Yom-Tov*. He explained that the Baal Shem Tov said that when one prepares himself properly during *Sefiras HaOmer*, he is found worthy on Shavuos of being admitted to the Fiftieth Gate of *kedusha* - "and I can't feel it," concluded Reb Chaim Avraham."

The Rebbe Maharash concluded, "My great uncle Reb Chaim Avraham was then seventy seven years old and

was completely removed from all worldly matters. Yet on the night of Shavuos, he wept for the revelation of the Fiftieth Gate. This left me with a deep impression."

(ספר התולדות אדמו"ר מהר"ש ע' 73)

The eminent chossid, Reb Aizik Homiler, recalled that once before Shavuos, a number of chassidim discussed what they should ask of *HaShem* on the night of Shavuos. They decided to ask the Mitteler Rebbe, and assumed that he would surely speak of the study and understanding of *primiyus haTorah*.

Instead, he shared his own wish: "I would wish to have the fiery flame of *matan Torah*."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 108)

Recollecting his experience of Shavuos in תרמ"ה (1885), when he was a child of five, the Friediker Rebbe once said:

"On *erev* Shavuos, our *melamed* told us how Moshe Rabbeinu led the Yidden to *matan Torah*. He then called to us, '*Kinderlach!* Come with me and I will take you to *matan Torah*.' He took all thirty of us to Reb Binyomin's *beis medrash* and told us that the next morning, the first day of Shavuos, we should wake up an hour earlier than usual and come to this *beis medrash* for *kabbalas haTorah*.

"On Shavuos morning I awoke at seven o'clock and prepared to go there. My mother [*Rebbetzin Shterna Sara*] wanted me to eat something before leaving, but I insisted that I wouldn't eat before *matan Torah*. I set out to the *beis midrash*, where I found all of my classmates, and after *davening* our *melamed* took us all on a walk."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 100)

It was the custom of the Friediker Rebbe, and also of the Rebbe, to wish all Yidden the *brocho* of *kabbalas haTorah besimcha uvipnimiyus* - that we receive the Torah with joy, and that it permeate us.

The Rebbe explained this dual blessing as follows: Appreciating that we are *HaShem's* holy nation and that we are able to connect to Him via the Torah and its *mitzvos*, we are joyful - and this joy will enable us to be permeated by the Torah and not regard it (*chas veshalom*) as a burden.

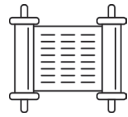
(לקי"ש ח"ח ע' 292)


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SORTING SEFORIM

How can I tidy the shul Shabbos afternoon and return the seforim to the shelves?

When dealing with a mixture of two types of food, the *melacha* of *borer* necessitates selecting specifically the one you want from the one you don't, by hand, and for immediate use. The same rules apply to a mixture of non-food items as well.¹ Sorting between two types of things to use both later is also prohibited (see issue 326).

If one of the types of foods or items is larger, making it distinct from the other type in the mixture, it is doubtful whether it constitutes a true mixture for *borer* purposes. Nevertheless, the Alter Rebbe rules stringently since it is a potential Torah transgression.²

Seforim standing upright on a shelf are not considered "mixed," and one may select a book even for later use.³ Some require the *sefer's* name to be recognizable on its binding and for there to be sufficient light in the room to see the titles.⁴ The same is true for *seforim* that are lying neatly on the table in a way that one could easily select the one he wants.⁵

Disorderly *seforim* on the table are considered mixed, and if they belong to different types—even *siddurim* of different *nuschaos* or styles—one may not sort them for later use. Yet, if a *sefer* you wish to use now is at the bottom of a pile, you may remove the top *seforim*, leaving the one you want accessible. This isn't considered separating a mixture, but instead removing an impediment, like peeling a fruit to eat.⁶

What about taking the top *sefer*, putting it on the shelf, and then continuing through the rest of the pile, one *sefer* at a time?

Some allow this, since you only take one *sefer* in your hand each time, and once you are holding it, you may put it wherever you want.⁷ However, most contemporary *poskim* forbid it since your overall activity is sorting the *seforim*,⁸ and one should be stringent. However, one may take the top *sefer* to learn a bit, put it in its correct place on the shelf, and proceed to learn the next one. Yet, it should not be obvious to onlookers that one is trying to circumvent the *borer* prohibition.⁹

1. שוע"ר אור"ח סי' ש"ט ס"ח.
2. שוע"ר שם סי' ע"פ תרמה"ד סי' נ"ז.
3. ס' מאור השבת ח"ד מכתבי הגר"י.
4. ש"כ פ"ג הע"ר ר"כ. אג"מ ח"ד סי' ע"ד אות י"ב.
5. ראה שבת כהלכה ח"ב פי"ב סק"ז.
6. ראה ס' קצוה"ש סי' קכ"ה בדה"ש.
7. וראה סי' פסק"ת סי' ש"ט.
8. ראה שבה"ל ח"א סי' צ"א שמיקל.
9. וראה מש"כ בס' מחזה אליהו סי' מט. וראה שו"ת או נדברו ח"א סי' ט'
10. ראה פסק"ת שם סק"ב וסק"ה. וראה שבת כהלכה פי"ב הע"ר ר"ד ור"כ.

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

Our Heroes



R. SHNEUR ZALMAN SLONIM

Born in Chevron in 5622, R. Shneur Zalman Slonim was a grandson of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel, the Mitteler Rebbe's daughter. In 5645, he traveled to Lubavitch, and the Rebbe Rashab was *mekarev* him greatly, even taking him with the family to Yalta, where he served as the Frierdiker Rebbe's *melamed* for a period.

When R. Shneur returned to Eretz Yisrael the next year, the Rebbe Rashab arranged financial support for him to enable him to continue learning full-time, and wrote him many letters (later published in *Igros Kodesh*) responding to his question in Chassidus and *avodas Hashem*. In 5660, he was appointed as the Rov of the Chassidim in Yafo, and remained in that position until his passing on 11 Tammuz 5696.

After his father's *histalkus*, the Rebbe Rashab dedicated himself so intensely to learning Chassidus that he became physically weak. Under doctor's instructions, he traveled with his family to the port city of Yalta in the Crimea to relax and recover. Joining them was R. Shneur, who was visiting from Eretz Yisroel at the time, and came to teach the young Frierdiker Rebbe and learn with the Rebbe Rashab. Before leaving, he was warned by Rebbetzin Rivkah to not allow the Rebbe Rashab to think Chassidus deeply.

At the onset of the trip, the Rebbe Rashab stipulated with R. Shneur to treat him as an equal. When on one occasion R. Shneur stood up in his honor, the Rebbe reminded him of their arrangement. But when the Rebbe received a telegram requesting a *bracha* for a woman in labor, the Rebbe told him that he's not a true chossid, since he didn't record the exact time of the *bracha*. He did so immediately, and indeed it matched with the delivery time.

Throughout the trip, the Rebbe Rashab learned Chassidus with R. Shneur, adding his own explanations. Since he had no one to repeat it to, R. Shneur was afraid he would forget it all, so the Rebbe Rashab advised him to write it down, and sometimes reviewed the notes for accuracy. However, the Rebbe did not want the notes to be shared, and at the end of their journey burned them all.

Whenever R. Shneur would see the Rebbe beginning to think Chassidus deeply, he would distract him by sharing stories from Eretz Yisroel. Once, he wasn't paying attention and the Rebbe Rashab fell into deep thought. Seeking to rouse him, R. Shneur scratched himself noisily. Startled by the sound, the Rebbe asked what he was doing, and R. Shneur replied that he's trying to "scratch out another story." The Rebbe laughed at his clever ruse.

(הלקח והלבוש ע' רח)

In his prison diary, the Frierdiker Rebbe recalls his memories of R. Shneur on the Yalta trip:

At that time, we would all go for a stroll almost every day, from 1 pm until 7 or 8 pm. My father would find a seat and study a *sefer* he brought with him, thinking and writing. R. Shneur would teach me for an hour and tell me to review, and he would then join my father in learning that *sefer*. My father would speak, and R. Shneur would listen; R. Shneur would question and my father would answer; my father would clarify and R. Shneur's face would shine.

At a little distance, my mother sat and read a long letter. From time to time, she would offer me milk and cookies from the little bag that lay on the ground beside her and send refreshments with me to my father and R. Shneur.

(ליקוטי דיבורים ח"ד ע' 1376)

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE PLANS ARE NOT MINE

Before setting out on *shlichus* to South America in Cheshvan 5748 (1988), a *yungerman* wrote to the Rebbe asking for guidance:

"Since *iy"H* people will be seeking my advice, how will I know how to accurately execute the Rebbe's wish?"

The Rebbe responded: "Obviously by executing what is prescribed in *Shulchan Aruch*."

When the honorary president of Chabad of

Binghamton University came by the dollars distribution, on Rosh Chodesh Tammuz 5750 (1990), he asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* "that we succeed in implementing the Rebbe's plans for Binghamton."

"The plans are not mine," the Rebbe interjected, "they are the plans of the *Shulchan Aruch*. And since the *Shulchan Aruch* is on your side, you will surely have good news."

(*Slavaticki Teshurah Elul 5761; Zorea Tzedakos Matzmiach Yeshuos, Page 30*)