



# HEARING GOOD

## SOUND WAVES CONTINUE TO RESONATE

One of the first chassidim who came to Lubavitch after the Mittlerer Rebbe settled there in 1813 was the eminent chossid, Reb Hillel Paritcher. The Mittlerer Rebbe had instructed his chassidim that whenever they were traveling home, they should stay over in every town through which they passed, and *chazer* a *maamar* that they had recently heard.

Once, when Reb Hillel was about to return home, he asked the Rebbe what he should do about this directive, because the villagers whom he would meet on his way were simple folk who could not grasp the abstract concepts of *Chassidus*.

The Rebbe went into deep thought for a moment and then assured him, *Di neshama herb* – "The teachings of *Chassidus* are heard by the *neshama*, which is identical in everyone. Those words then trickle down into the body and give the listener the strength to fulfill the 248 *mitzvos-aseh*, and to abstain from transgressing the 365 *mitzvos lo-sa'aseh*."

(אג"ק הרי"צ ח"ג ע' שלא, היום יום כד אדר א')

Upon seeing his younger colleague, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, the *tanna* Rabbi Dosa exclaimed, "I remember that when he was infant, his mother would take him in his carriage to the *beis midrash* so that his ears would absorb the words of Torah!"

(תלמוד ירושלמי יבמות פ"א ה"ו)

The Rebbe often mentioned that mothers used to rock their little ones to sleep with rhyming lullabies of Yiddishe content, such as "Torah is the best *sechorah* (merchandise)." The Rebbe said, "Some people think that it makes no difference what one sings to a young child, since anyway he does not understand. The truth is that everything that enters a child's ears affects his *neshama* in the years ahead." A mother must therefore not only know about the importance of Torah: she should sing about it to her child.

(שיח"ק תשל"ט ח"א ע' 616, תשל"ז ח"א ע' 112)

## HEARING ONLY GOOD

Rabbeinu Yonah writes that just as speaking indecently harms a Yid's *neshama*, so too listening to indecent talk tarnishes one's *neshama*. The Shaloh writes that a child who hears *goyishe* songs will develop a negative nature.

(ס' היראה לרבינו יונה, [שבת נט ע"א], משנ"ב ס' תקס שעה"צ כה)

The *Tzemach Tzedek* said, "The bell in Petersburg brought forgetfulness upon me." Until he visited Petersburg in the year תר"ג (1843), he forgot nothing, but hearing the church bells caused him to forget.

(לקוטי סיפורים ע' קלח)

Imagine the surprise of the *talmid* who entered the home of the *Chasam Sofer* and found him with his fingers in his ears.

He stood perplexed until the *Chasam Sofer* asked him, "Is it still chiming?"

He then understood that his mentor wanted to avoid hearing the sound of the bells.

(קדושת עיניים ע' 331)

When a certain chossid complained that he was having doubts in *emunah*, the Rebbe instructed him to discontinue setting his clock by the chimes of the local church.

(כפר חב"ד 672 ע' 20)

The *tzaddik*, Reb Nachman of Breslov, said that hearing a *rasha* speak has a negative influence on the listener.

(לקוטי עצות דיבור סק"ח)

## PROTECTING ONESELF

*HaShem* created man's fingertips narrow enough to enable him to obstruct his ears from hearing improper things. The soft earlobe was created for the same purpose.

(כתובות ח ע"ב)

The Rebbe points out that unlike the other

senses, hearing does not require the cooperation of the listener. One will hear a nearby conversation unless he makes an effort to avoid hearing it.

(התועדויות תשמ"ח ח"ד ע' 15)

The Rebbe Rashab once mentioned that he had lost his hearing in one ear. Seeking the cause of the problem, some of the chassidim recalled that the previous *Shabbos*, the conversation of people in the adjoining room had disturbed him while he was delivering a *maamar* of *Chassidus*. He had therefore weakened his sense of hearing in the ear closest to that disturbance.

(תר"מ ח"ז ע' 156, התועדויות תשמ"ח ח"ד ע' 15 הע' 65)

Reb Shlomo Leib of Linchna, a chossid of the Chozeh of Lublin and the Yid HaKadosh of Pshischa, made every effort not to listen to idle talk, and for his part, he was careful to speak only when necessary. When he was young, he rented a room together with some others in the home of a tailor, but would always return there only after they had already gone to sleep.

It once happened that the *beis midrash* closed earlier than usual, and as Reb Shlomo neared his boarding home, he noticed that the tailor was still wide awake and was sitting and chatting with his friends. True to his principle, he kept at a distance, but due to the freezing temperature, he walked to and fro to keep himself warm. This did not help much, but he refused to go inside, though he knew this might cost him his life. With the help of *HaShem*, the lamp suddenly went out, and the renters retired for the night. Only then did Reb Shlomo go inside.

"From then on, in order to avoid such a situation again," he later said, "I learned to give myself a forewarning, by honing my listening abilities and being able to hear whispering even at a distance."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 488)

## CONSIDER THIS!

How can hearing words of *Torah* affect a person if he doesn't understand them at all?

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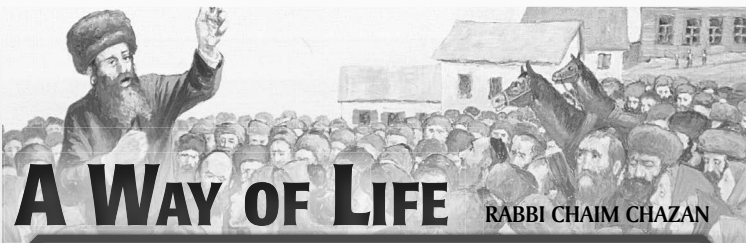
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# A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

## CURRENT EVENTS

י"ז אייר

### THE NODAH B'YEHUDAH

Reb Yechezkel Landau is known by his *sefer* the "Nodah B'yehudah". He was born on the 18th of Cheshvan, ה'תע"ד (1713), and eventually became the Rov of Prague, where he served till his last day. He wrote many other *seforim*, such as the "Tzlach" (Tziyon Lenefesh Chaya) and the "Dogul Mervava" on the Shulchan Aruch. He was very active in all Jewish and halachic affairs during his time and was a colossal distinguished figure in Jewish life of the time. He passed away on the 17<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, ה'תקנ"ג (1793).

When Reb Yechezkel was running for the position of Rov in Prague, there was another candidate, Reb Zarach Aidlitz. Reb Yechezkel had the majority of the masses behind him, while Reb Zarach had a small but very learned group of supporters. When the Noda B'yehuda won the election, he began befriending his previous opponents, the group of *lomdim*. This upset the simple people who protested, "They were your opponents! How do you give them such respect, without showing us any reverence at all!"

"Yes," answered the new Rov, "You are right. This is the way others behave when winning an election. They immediately raise their supporters to be important officials, and degrade their opponents. As Yidden, however, we behave differently. We show respect to those of great stature regardless of their political alignment."

In the Prague yeshiva, the bochurim would eat in the homes of *baalei-batim* (also known as *teg*), and they would leave over some food in their dishware. The *baal-habos* would then have the honor of finishing the plate of the bochur. There was once a bochur who was eat all the food in his plate without leaving any leftovers, so the *baal-habos* complained to the Noda B'yehuda.

The Rov advised him to ask the bochur the following: The Gemara tells us that the donkey of Reb Pinchas ben Yair would not touch food from which *maaser* had not been taken. Yet, if this donkey was able to learn, shouldn't it have known the halacha implemented by its own master Reb Meir? Namely, that one may look at one side of the non-*maaserd* food and eat the other side. The man asked the bochur the question, and he was unable to give the solution. He was so ashamed of this, that for the next few days, he did not show up to eat.

The Noda B'yehuda, noticing the bochur's distress, called him over and told him, "Go tell the *baal-habos* that the answer is like this: The donkey did know this halacha, but was scared that if it would leave some food over, its owner would think that it was not so hungry and would serve it less. The next day, this would reoccur until it would be given almost nothing! It therefore decided to simply not eat at all..." Hearing this, the *baal-habos* understood...

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

### SEFIRA BEFORE MAARIV

#### May one count *sefiras ho'omer* before davening *maariv*?

- When faced with the opportunity to perform two *mitzvos* and the question arises which one to do first, there is a general halachic principle "*todir vsheino todir – todir kodem*" – the *mitzvah* that is preformed on a more frequent basis should be done first. Therefore *maariv*, which is said every day of the year, should preferably be *davened* before *sefira*.
- However, when one is going to *daven maariv* without a *minyan* and is concerned lest he forget to count *sefira*, there are *poskim* who suggest that he should count when he remembers, even before *maariv*.
- In general, one should endeavor to *daven maariv* and count *sefira* at the earliest possible opportunity (to fulfill the *mitzvah* as soon as possible and, according to some, that the **complete** day should be counted). However, one who regularly *davens* at a *minyan* that takes place a while after *tzeis hakochovim*, should count *sefira* after *maariv* with a *minyan*, rather than count it alone immediately after *tzeis hakochovim*.
- It is forbidden to eat a meal consisting of more than a *kabeitza* of bread from half an hour before *shkiah*. It is a discussion amongst the *poskim* whether one can rely on those conditions set for eating before reciting *shema*, namely having a set time for *maariv* or appointing someone to remind oneself. Therefore, one who *davens* at a late hour and would like to eat first, can count *sefira* before eating.

חק יעקב סי' תפ"ט ס"ק ט"ז; שו"ע אדה"ש פ"ג ס"ג, טז, יז (ובביאור הדברי נחמ"י בשו"ת או"ח ע' סט); פמ"ג שם א"א ס"ק י"ד ועוד פוסקים; שו"ע או"ח סי' רל"ה ס"ג; דרך חיים קכ"ה ס"ז; שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"ד סי' צט; שבט הלוי ח"ו סי' נג; משנה הלכות ח"ח סי' קצ"ג ועוד פוסקים.

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## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### WHERE IS HASHEM?

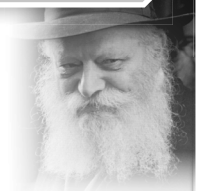
In the Pletzel area of Paris, there are two shuls where the Rebbe would daven during his stay there, one at number 17 and the other at number 25. During the week, the Rebbe would give a *shiur* at shul number 25.

When the Rebbe first began davening there, the members didn't know who he was, and he would unassumingly daven at the back of the shul. But when the Frierdiker Rebbe visited Paris in 5696, and came to the shul accompanied by the Rebbe, the word was out.

The *gabboim* of the '25 shul' approached the Rebbe, asking him to daven at the front, '*by mizrach*'. The Rebbe humbly refused, saying that he preferred his place in the back.

When they began insisting that the Rebbe belongs at the front, the Rebbe replied, "What do you think, that the *eibishter* is not in the back?!"

לזכות ר' אברהם קופול הלוי בן חנה וסימא ראניא בת איטא יהודית



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