

Parashas
Tazria-
Metzora

• 730 •

א' אייר תשפ"ו 5786

י"ז ע"י

קהילת שבתי בבית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו ורבנו הרה"צ
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רבינוביץ שליט"א

טיב הקהילה

English edition

באנגלית

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טיב המערכת

המצורע ביום טהרתו

The metzora on the day of his purification

A certain man came to the Rashash to complain about the magnitude of his suffering and the abundance of his afflictions, and that his capacity to endure had already failed. When he arrived, he saw that there was a long line of people waiting to enter to the Rav. In the meantime, he sat in the waiting room and a deep sleep fell upon him. And behold, he saw himself in the upper world, standing before the Heavenly Court. There they showed him his previous reincarnations and the reason for which he had come to this world. Then they brought all of his deeds and placed them on the scale. The scale tilted heavily to the side of guilt, and the shame was great.

But then they began to bring bundles upon bundles of suffering that he had endured, and the scale began to tilt toward the side of merit. Each bundle that was placed tipped the scale more and more, until the bundles stopped and the scale stood very close to the side of merit—only a little more was lacking for the scale to incline to the side of merit. The man cried out, "Bring me a little more suffering!" And at that moment he awoke from his sleep. He understood that the suffering was for his benefit, and he left the house of the Rav.

Our parashah says (14:2), 'זאת תהיה תורת המצורע ביום טהרתו' - "This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification." The righteous expounded on this that when a person is in "the day of his purification," when he is trying to purify himself from his deeds, he wants to return in complete repentance, and suddenly he feels like an actual metzora—as if from Heaven he has been ostracized, and chas v'shalom, his repentance is not desired. And not only are the gates of Heaven not opened before him, but he feels as though all the gates are being closed, and he does not understand: Is my repentance not desired before the Creator Yisbarach?! And the question is a good question.

And then his old acquaintance arrives—the yetzer hara—and it begins to rebuke him for the transgressions he committed in the days of his life. And it remembers everything—nothing does it forget. And what shame he feels. And the yetzer continues its rebuke: How can you think that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will desire your repentance? Is there any repentance that can atone for the majority of your sins, chas v'shalom? And a person may break, and perhaps even come to believe it.

For this, the holy Torah warns us: "This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification." Know that if you feel upon yourself the "law of the metzora," it is a sign that you are in "the day of his purification." Do not be alarmed by this state, for "a little more suffering," and then all the gates will be opened before you.

Tiv HaTorah – Tazria-Metzora

וְצִוָּה הַכֹּהֵן וְלָקַח לַמִּטְהָר שְׁתֵּי צִפְרִים חַיִּוֹת טְהוֹרוֹת וְעֵץ אֶרֶז וְשָׁנִי תוֹלַעַת וְאַזְבֵּי: (יד, ד)

The Kohen shall command, and he shall take for the one being purified two live, pure birds, cedar wood, scarlet wool, and hyssop. (14:4)

And Rashi explains: Pure—because the afflictions come on account of lashon hara, which is an act of chatter, therefore for his purification birds are required, which constantly chatter with a chirping sound. Cedar wood—because the afflictions come on account of haughtiness of spirit. Scarlet wool and hyssop—what is his remedy so that he will be healed? He should humble himself from his arrogance, like a worm and like hyssop.

When we contemplate how the metzora is required to deal with his condition during the days of his confirmed affliction, we will be able to understand quite well the great benefit that exists in the conduct of HaKadosh Baruch Hu with a person in a measure for measure manner.

For behold, as we see in the words of Rashi here, the metzora is punished with his affliction for the sin of "evil speech" [lashon hara] and for the sin of "haughtiness of spirit." Because of these two sins, they imposed upon him from Heaven the most severe impurity of all impurities. And this is because from Heaven they saw that specifically through this he would understand his foolishness and correct it.

Let us contemplate the condition of one upon whom this impurity was decreed because he exalted himself over others. This is like one to whom they say from Heaven: If you are arrogant, you will need to perform actions yourself in order to straighten your thinking and recognize the truth. Therefore, you must dress in torn garments and proclaim about yourself that you are impure. This will cause you an unbearable humiliation. And after you have left upon yourself an dishonorable impression, you must also separate from the inhabited area—you must go outside the camp, and there you shall sit alone, and feel yourself as expelled and ostracized from the inhabitants, and then it will also enter your mind that the inhabitants indeed ostracize you because you are lowly and impure in their eyes, and from now there is no one who desires your closeness...

After these matters, we no longer need to explain why these things will leave their mark upon one who is arrogant. For there is no state of humiliation greater than his condition. From now on, it will no longer enter his mind that he possesses any superiority over his fellows, for who is it that has felt and recognized his lowliness more than he...

Now let us also contemplate the condition of one who stumbles in the sin of "lashon hara." He too is punished in a manner that he will feel his failing, for this sin cannot be transgressed except when one is in the proximity of other people. And when this impurity is decreed upon him, they distance him from people, and he can no longer chatter with them and make his mouth profane. However, in addition, he must perform actions so that he will not return again to his folly. Therefore, this task is also imposed upon him: he must go in torn garments and present himself as a strange person, and he shall proclaim about himself that he is impure and that others must separate from him, and afterward he shall leave the settlement and sit outside the camp.

Then, when he sits alone, he will suffer doubly: both from his inability to enjoy being in the company of people, and from what enters his mind—that after he has become publicized as a metzora and as impure, surely people speak about him. And when he reflects upon why Hashem has done this to him, he will become wise and

understand that it is because he abandoned his tongue and cast aspersions upon others. And now from Heaven they intend to say to him: If your being in proximity to people brings you to sin, we will first distance you from people. And during this time we will also demonstrate to you the immense pain that you caused your fellow when you gave freedom to your lips. For now you are only in doubt—perhaps people are speaking about you—and you are very pained by this. And if so it is with mere doubt, you can already imagine how great is the pain of one who knows with certainty that you mocked him...

And if he even dared to cast aspersions upon people in their presence, certainly they also intend to say to him from Heaven as follows: Now even if people speak about you, it is not in your presence, and you do not see with your own eyes how you are a mockery in the eyes of people, and nevertheless you are very distressed. Whereas you, aside from the fact that you brazenly cast aspersions upon your fellow, you added sin upon transgression to disgrace him also in his presence. Therefore, understand well the severity of your deeds.

It is self-understood that a condition such as this arouses the sinner's recognition of his foolishness, and from here onward he will desire to change his ways and to guard what comes out of his mouth.

However, HaKadosh Baruch Hu knows that even

after the sinner takes all of this to heart, and from Heaven they will already agree to purify him, it is still not guaranteed that his acceptance to improve will endure over time. There is concern lest, with time, he will forget his miserable previous condition and return again to his wayward path. Unless immediately after he accepts upon himself to improve his ways, they will also testify before him that indeed, just as he thought, so it is—and these sins are what brought about his humiliation. Through the power of this testimony, the matters will be engraved in his heart quite well, and he will no longer come to stumble.

This is what we learned in these words of Rashi: that the order of his purification is through things that testify to the sins that brought him to his miserable condition. The birds testify to the sin of lashon hara, and through them they also warn him to be careful from now on regarding this sin. And the "cedar wood" and the "hyssop" and the "scarlet wool"—all three testify and warn regarding the sin of arrogance. You should know that this is so, for so our Sages revealed to us (Sifra Metzora, Parashah 5), that the Kohen who purifies says before the metzora words of subjugation: "My son, the afflictions come only on account of lashon hara, as it is said (Devarim 24:8): 'שמור בנגע הצרעת לשמור' - 'Guard yourself regarding the affliction of tzaraas, to observe very carefully and to do.'"

From here we understand the goodness that HaKadosh Baruch Hu bestows even upon sinners, for when He punishes them, He rebukes them within the punishment itself regarding for what and why He is punishing them. And this is so that one will become wise and recognize his foolishness, and then the blow itself will serve as a remedy, for through it he will come to repentance and the correction of his deeds.

This matter must teach us how to conduct ourselves in times when we are dealing with difficulties and distress—that we must always contemplate what the Creator Yisbarach intends to arouse within us through this? Toward which matter is our attention being directed in our present situation? And then indeed we will find the particular aspect whose rectification is being demanded from Heaven.

And indeed, so I heard from my teacher and master, HaGaon HaTzaddik Rebbe Binyamin Rabinovitz zy"א, that in our times the concealments have greatly increased, and we almost do not sense the supernal light. However, in one matter the concealment does not rule even in our times, and that is the matter of "measure for measure." This is the kindness of Hashem with His creations, that He conducts Himself with them in this manner in order to incline them toward the correct path through the correction and purification of their traits.

‘Seemingly unnecessary’ ‘מיותרים לכאורה’

I prepared a shopping list for Pesach in advance and sent a detailed order to the supermarket. The large purchase was delivered to me by a messenger. When we unpacked the boxes, I saw several inaccuracies in the items that had arrived—not according to the order, but rather they had added things on their own initiative.

One thing bothered me more than anything else, and that was that instead of 12 bottles of walnut oil, they sent me 15 bottles. And why did they send 15 instead of 12? Because it was convenient for them to send a closed box with 15 bottles, as contained in the original box from the factory, rather than to open it and reduce the amount. This bothered me on a fundamental level, for I know how much oil the household uses on Pesach, and after Pesach I have no use for this oil.

It bothered me, but I decided not to make an issue out of it, and I remained silent.

On Chol HaMoed Pesach, a close friend approached me and asked if I had enough walnut oil for the festival. I answered, "I have, Baruch Hashem, more than enough!" Then he told me that he had run around to all the stores in the city and to all the neighbors, and it turned out that there was a nationwide shortage of walnut oil. Then he asked hesitantly if I had a bottle to sell him. I asked how many bottles he needed; he answered that if he could obtain three bottles, it would be a tremendous achievement. I told him what now became clear as Divine Providence—that the supermarket had sent me three seemingly unnecessary bottles, and now it became clear that this was true providence.

The joy of Yom Tov returned to dwell in their home with even greater intensity.

ד.צ.ד.

טיב ההשגרה

‘To bypass the traffic jams’ ‘לפסוח על הפקקים’

One day before Pesach, I left the shul after Mincha and spoke with a good friend about a matter for which I needed advice. It turned out that he needed to go with his daughter to a dental appointment in a shopping center a five-minute drive away. I suggested that instead of speaking outside, we should talk in the car on the way to the center, and thus he would easily reach the dental clinic without needing to travel by buses, which would take a long time. He initially tried to refuse, but upon further thought he agreed, since it was a time of war and bus traffic was sparse according to regulations. He accepted the offer gladly, and we set out on our way.

On the way, my wife called and said that she was at a shopping center and had forgotten to take her credit card for payment, and she had no way to pay. I asked where exactly she was located and told her that within a few minutes I would be with her. However, at the last intersection leading up to the shopping center, it became clear that everything was congested and it was impossible to advance. This small traffic jam, which on foot is a five-minute walk, on the eve of the festival could mean a delay of twenty minutes.

My friend immediately suggested that he would go on foot with his daughter, and his daughter gave the card to my wife right next to the clinic. I made a U-turn and understood that I had not done a favor for my friend, but rather HaKadosh Baruch Hu had arranged the hand of providence in order to help me.

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כ.ה.

טיב המעשיות

Who Comes to Whom?

זאת תהיה תורת המצורע ביום טהרתו,
והובא אל הכהן" (יד, ב)

This shall be the law of the metzora on the day of his purification: he shall be brought to the kohen (14:2).

The commentators pause here to explain the wording of the pasuk, "and he shall be brought to the Kohen," which is stated in a passive form (והובא), rather than, ובא - "and he shall come..." or יובאו - "and he shall go..." in an active or imperative formulation. See the explanations of Ibn Ezra, Ramban, and other commentators.

What is even more puzzling is that immediately afterward, in the following pasuk (v. 3), it states, וּיֵצֵא הַכֹּהֵן אֶל מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וּגו' - And the kohen shall go out to the outside of the camp, and the kohen shall see... Since the kohen goes out to the metzora, what, then, is the meaning of, he shall be brought to the Kohen? Is it not the kohen who goes out to him?

According to the straightforward interpretation, he shall be brought refers to the matter being brought before the kohen. For the metzora himself is unable to enter the camp to come before the kohen; rather, the issue is brought to, and reported to, the kohen, so that he may go out to him beyond the camp to see whether the affliction of tzara'as has been healed.

By way of allusion, the Torah's choice of the term והובא hints to a deeper idea. Onkelos translates: "This shall be the law of the one who is confined (segirah)", referring to the metzora as segirah, in contrast to Targum Yonasan, who translates simply metzora. Elsewhere as well, Onkelos consistently renders metzora in terms of segirus—confinement and closure; see below (pasuk 3): "the plague of confinement from the confined one," and similarly in other places.

This suggests that the metzora is entangled in a state of inner confinement—a confinement within confinement—such that, in his afflicted soul, he does not perceive his own deficiency. He is unable, of his own accord, to recognize that there is no remedy for his affliction except through the kohen. Therefore, from his aspect, he does not come of his own initiative. His inner confinement entraps him ever more deeply. Hence, what he truly requires is Divine compassion—that there be fulfilled in him and he shall be brought to the kohen. The Torah deliberately conceals who brings him, alluding to the Greatest Hidden One in the universe: the Borei Yisbarach, Who orchestrates all events. Thus, he shall be brought implies that from Heaven he is guided and led to the kohen in order to be rectified.

This is explicit in the pesukim of Parashas Tazria (13:2-5), where every stage in the process of the afflicted person depends upon the kohen, אָדָם כִּי יִהְיֶה בְעוֹר בְּשָׂרוֹ שָׂאֵת אוֹ סַפְתָּהּ, וְהוּבָא אֶל אַהֲרֹן הַכֹּהֵן, וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן אֶת הַנִּגְעַת וְרָאָה הַכֹּהֵן וְטָמְא אֹתוֹ, וְהִסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן - When a person has on the skin of his flesh a swelling or a scab... he shall be brought to Aharon the kohen; the kohen shall see the affliction... the kohen shall declare him impure... the kohen shall confine the affliction... and the kohen shall see him on the seventh day..."

From here we learn that all the changes and developments in the affliction are effected through the kohen's seeing it. When the righteous kohen looks upon him with the intent to rectify his soul, that very gaze brings about these transformations. At first, upon seeing him, the kohen declares him impure, in order to reveal to him his deficiency—this being the beginning of his path to rectification, once he is rendered impure and recognizes his

lack. At other times, through the kohen's gaze he sees that the appearance [of the affliction] is not deep and that the hair has not turned white, and through that very observation he places him under confinement, again for the purpose of rectification. Thus throughout the entire parashah.

This teaches us the power of the righteous to heal and rectify the souls of Klal Yisrael, to restore and draw their hearts close to their Father in Heaven. Our task, therefore, is to draw ourselves close to the righteous, and to fulfill וְהוּבָא אֶל הַכֹּהֵן - and he shall be brought to the kohen, so that the righteous and the chachamim—who are called "physicians of the soul" (Rambam, Hilchos De'os 2:1)—may teach us the good and upright path and lead us to proper rectification, to give satisfaction to the Borei Yisbarach.

I received a wondrous account from which we may learn the immense power of the influence of a righteous person, when a Jew is indeed brought to the kohen in order to return him to his Father in Heaven.

Once, the holy gaon, the author of Minchas Elazar of Munkatch zt"l, found himself on a long train journey. Not far from him, in the same carriage, sat a bareheaded man who appeared entirely non-Jewish in every respect. During the journey, the man removed his meal from his bag and spread it out on the table. He placed a slice of bread on a small napkin, then produced a piece of non-kosher sausage—utterly forbidden meat—and placed another slice of bread on top to "close" the sandwich. When all was ready, he began cutting the sandwich into pieces, preparing to partake of his hearty meal.

Suddenly, a spirit of holy zeal seized the Rebbe of Munkatch. Observing the man's actions, he turned to him and said: "Dear Jew! You are forbidden to eat this! How can you brazenly transgress so grave a prohibition of the Torah?"

The man feigned indifference and, with a laugh, replied: Why does the rabbi assume that I am a Jew? He was about to continue eating. But the Rebbe, renowned for the sacred fire that burned within him, persisted in his protest, repeatedly warning him of the severity of his wrongdoing. He even explained why he continued to admonish him despite seeing no apparent effect—for so we are commanded in the holy Torah (Vayikra 19:17)—וְהוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ - You shall surely rebuke your fellow, even a hundred times (see Bava Metzia 31a).

The Rebbe did not relent. From the depths of his heart he exhorted him: You are a holy Jew! Know what Chazal taught (Sanhedrin 44a): "Yisrael, even though he has sinned, remains Yisrael." And the wisest of all men already admonished us (Kohel

11:9) - וְיָדַע כִּי עַל כָּל אֵלֶּה יְבִיאֶךָ הָאֱלֹקִים בְּמִשְׁפָּט, - For all these things, God will bring you to judgment.

These words, spoken with deep emotion and reflecting genuine concern and trembling for the man's soul, penetrated his heart. Suddenly his hardened heart broke; in a storm of emotion he threw his entire meal into the garbage can and burst into bitter tears. He rose, approached the holy Rebbe with trembling knees, and asked: How were you able, in a train full of non-Jews, to identify specifically me as a Jew—when for many long years I have been so distant from Judaism that none of my acquaintances even knows that I am Jewish?

The Rebbe embraced him and kissed him upon his head, and gently explained: When I observed how you prepared your meal, I noticed that you did not bite directly into the bread, nor did you hold the entire sandwich in your hands to bring it to your mouth, as non-Jews do. Rather, you cut it into small pieces with a knife. From this I concluded that you are a Jew, and that this practice comes from your ancestral home. For this conduct is found only among holy Jews, as ruled in the laws of proper conduct at a meal (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 170:10): "A person should not bite from a piece of bread and place it back on the table." This practice, the Rebbe continued, is not found among non-Jews. From this I understood that you are a Jew, and that this custom you retain comes from your parents—who must have been upright and worthy Jews and instilled this refined conduct within you.

The man was deeply moved by the wisdom and holy spirit of chachmei Yisrael. He confessed with great emotion that everything the Rebbe said was true. He had indeed been born and raised in a kosher Jewish home; his father and mother were faithful Jews devoted to Hashem and His Torah. Since his parents always cut bread at the table and never bit directly into it, he too had adopted this practice. But in the hardships and upheavals that befell Klal Yisrael during the First World War, he cast off the yoke of Torah and mitzvos in his youth and was swept into the free-thinking movements of that harsh generation, descending step by step to the lowest depths, until he became one who ate forbidden foods without restraint.

When the Rebbe saw that an opening for repentance had been created in his heart, like the eye of a needle, he drew him very close during that long journey. He seated him beside himself with warmth and affection, spoke with him at length words of rebuke and encouragement, and assured him faithfully that there is never reason for despair. For we are promised by the Most High (Shmuel II 14:14) - וְיֵשָׂא אֱלֹקִים כְּפָשׁ, וְחָשַׁב מַחְשָׁבוֹת לְבַלְתִּי יָדָח, - God does not take away a soul; He devises plans so that no one is banished from Him. The holy books explain the double expression "so that none be banished" to mean that even those who are already banished will not be banished completely, and a proper rectification can yet be found for them. In the end, that Jew did not leave the Rebbe until eventually he was brought to a complete repentance. He accepted upon himself to be meticulous in all matters, lenient and strict alike, in every detail of the Shulchan Aruch, and he became an ardent follower of the Rebbe of Munkatch.

From this faithful account we learn the power of the righteous to purify Klal Yisrael. When one is truly brought to the kohen, his soul

and spirit are cleansed and returned in complete repentance. And, incidentally, we gain an additional moral lesson: to appreciate how far the influence of careful adherence to ancestral customs extends. Even a Jew who has fallen to the lowest depths—by virtue of preserving, almost unconsciously, a small custom seen in his parents' home—finds in that very practice an opening and a vessel through which he can be returned in complete repentance to his Father in Heaven.

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One of the chassidim of the holy Rebbe, our master the author of *Imrei Chaim* of Vizhnitz, zt"l, who was accustomed to participate every Shabbos at his tish, once approached him with the following question. Since he labored hard for his livelihood throughout the weekdays, by the time Shabbos arrived he was naturally very weary from all his toil. As a result, he would fall asleep at the tish every Shabbos. Now, he reasoned, if in any case he spends the tish dozing and sleeping, without actively participating with the Rebbe in the sacred service, perhaps there is no point in coming to the holy table in such a manner—after all, one sleeps in a bed, not at a tish...

In response, the Rebbe—renowned for his wisdom—related the following parable.

There was a distinguished and wealthy merchant of high standing who was accustomed to undertake long journeys for the sake of his business, traveling from the district of Bialystok in Russia to the famed commercial city of Leipzig in Germany.

At regular intervals, the merchant would arrive at the station in Bialystok, purchase at the counter an expensive travel ticket for a reserved seat on the express train, secure his designated place inside the carriage, and—once seated comfortably in the plush, well-upholstered seat—would sleep peacefully throughout the long journey.

Most of the many hours of travel passed for him in deep sleep, until at the end of the trip he arrived at his desired destination, disembarked at Leipzig's central station, and went straight to attend to his extensive business affairs.

Now imagine, continued the Rebbe, that this merchant was to say to himself: If in any case I spend the entire journey in deep sleep, why should I trouble myself to board the train at all? I will simply lie down and sleep in my comfortable bed at home, and wait until I arrive in Leipzig—for after all, one sleeps in a bed...

It is obvious that in this way he would arrive neither in Leipzig nor anywhere else. Even if he slept hour upon hour, upon awakening he would find himself in the very same bed and in the very same place. Only when one is already on the train—which proceeds and advances regardless—does one reach the desired destination, even while asleep.

So too, concluded the Rebbe, in our own case: one must come to the tish, in accordance with the custom to participate on Shabbos at the sacred tish conducted by the tzaddik and to attach oneself to them, as it is written, *וְהוֹבֵא אֶל הַבְּרָה* - and he shall be brought to the kohen. Even if you doze and fall asleep during the tish, in the end you will still reach your destination—to uplift and sanctify your soul. But if you remain asleep in your bed at home,

you will not reach anywhere at all.

The same applies to those who, from the burden and fatigue of their labor, fall asleep or doze during the shiur in the beis midrash. Even so, since they exerted themselves to come to the beis midrash and joined the circle of learners, in the end they too will attain the light of Torah, for “the light within it restores one to the good” (Midrash Eichah Rabbah, Pethichta 2). Not so those who keep their distance from the study hall and sleep in their beds—they will not arrive anywhere.

Indeed, even falling asleep over a Gemara brings satisfaction to the Ribbono Shel Olam. As written in the sefer *Ma'aseh Oreg*, a commentary on the machzor for the Yamim Nora'im, regarding a piyut recited in Musaf of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the author explains the words, “sealed ones to be revived with dew of sleep” as follows: “The ‘sealed ones’ are the unlearned, sealed off from Torah study. In the future, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, will ‘revive with dew of sleep’—for when students learn and fall asleep over the book, Hakadosh Baruch Hu preserves the saliva that issues from their mouths and turns it into dew with which He will revive the unlearned.” Thus, from that very saliva that emerges when they fall asleep over the book, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will yet revive Klal Yisrael.

Certainly, it is obvious that one should make every effort not to come into Shabbos, or into a shiur in the beis midrash, in a state of exhaustion and heaviness; one should do all that is possible to take a nap beforehand and arrive alert. Yet even if this was not possible, and one remains tired and weary, this should not be a reason to refrain from coming to the beis midrash.

On the contrary; sometimes when the evil inclination knows well the great positive influence that this holiness will have in refining and purifying the soul—as Chazal testify explicitly, “The light within it restores one to the good”—it therefore exerts all its strength to lull a person into sleep, again and again, in order to draw him outward and away.

But when one persists and forces oneself to come to the beis midrash regardless, the evil inclination will eventually see that it cannot deter him. Since, one way or another, he is brought to the kohen, in time it will leave him be; he will no longer feel such overwhelming fatigue, and he will merit to ascend and be elevated in holiness.

In the sacred courts descended from the Sanzer Chassidic lineage and its branches, there was, in earlier generations, a strict practice that young unmarried students (bachurim) should refrain from participating in the tishen and other events held in the holy court. This was in accordance with the instruction and educational path set forth by that venerable elder, the author of the *Divrei Chaim zy"l*.

The reason for this strictness was so that the young men would utilize all their time, in the prime years of youthful vigor and burning energy, exclusively for Torah study—Gemara, Rashi, Tosafos and deep analytical immersion in iyun and the depths of halachah. The overwhelming majority of gatherings, tishen, and other chassidic activities were intended primarily for married scholars (avreichim).

Likewise, the study and occupation with chassidic works were mainly designated for avreichim. Young men were not permitted to engage extensively in books of chassidus, lest this detract from their primary revealed Torah studies. Their minds were to remain settled and

devoted solely to penetrating the depth of the sugya and the clarification of halachah—this being the way of the House of Sanz throughout its generations.

The renowned gaon Rav David Klein zt"l, author of *Beis Arazim*, related to me that he had been a devoted disciple of his master, the holy gaon, the *Minchas Elazar* zt"l. He merited to cleave to him for many years, and in his youth and early manhood he “poured water upon his hands” and studied in his exalted yeshivah in great Munkacs.

(The Munkacser Rav mentions him in his work *Divrei Torah* (vol. 7, siman 85), where, while grappling with a formidable difficulty, the gaon Rav David—then a young student—offered a brilliant resolution. He writes there: “While I was distressed by this, the foremost of our yeshivah students—my dear friend, sharp and expert in the chambers of Torah, the wondrous Rav David Klein, may he be well, from here—responded with a splendid answer.”)

In accordance with the Sanzer tradition, the same strictness was observed in Munkacs: young students were not to involve themselves in chassidic matters. The *Minchas Elazar* strictly forbade the bachurim from neglecting their learning in order to attend tishen, and he was exceedingly stringent in this regard. It is well known how intensely he guarded anything he deemed of sacred importance, standing watch over it with great strength.

Rav David zt"l, related that, as a youth who was an outstanding student, bound with all his heart to his holy and pure Rebbe, it was extremely difficult for him to accept this decree not to attend the tish. He pleaded and implored the Rebbe to grant him permission to participate. It was well known that the tzaddik served Hashem at his holy tishen with awe and love, with great intensity and powerful voice, overflowing with wondrous and mighty words of Torah—and the soul of the young disciple yearned to behold holiness.

But the Rebbe would not agree under any circumstances to relax this stringency, which was evidently a firmly held tradition from his holy forebears. On one occasion he even exclaimed sharply, in Yiddish: “Duvid, oib du kimst, gei ich!” (David—if you come to the tish, I am leaving!)

Nevertheless, Rav David could not restrain his spirit. At times he would go to the tish, thus fulfilling *וְהוֹבֵא אֶל הַבְּרָה*, and he would conceal himself well beneath the table, listening to his master's holy service and drinking thirstily from the sacred words of Torah flowing abundantly from his mouth.

He had to hide himself exceedingly well, so that no one would sense his presence or even know that someone was there—since immediately the Rebbe would demand to know who it was hiding there.

Once, one of those seated at the table sensed a slight movement beneath it and bent his head to see what was happening. Rav David immediately motioned emphatically to ignore it. But the *Minchas Elazar*, with his blazing eyes, perceived at once that someone was beneath the table. He immediately demanded forcefully to know who it was and who was hiding there unter'n tish.

Rav David had no choice but to emerge, ashamed, from his hiding place, and stood in embarrassment before his holy Rebbe.

The tzaddik, aflame with sacred fire, reproached him sharply that young men should not involve themselves in chassidus. He demanded of him emphatically to return at once to the beis midrash and engage in Gemara study, rebuking him with immense love: when one merits to taste the wondrous sweetness of Torah, nothing else is needed, as it states, (Avos 5:22), *וְהַפְּרָה בְּהַפְּרָה בְּהַפְּרָה דְּכֻלָּא בְּהַ* - “Delve into it again and again because it contains everything.”