

SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Volume 16

Chof Daled Teves (*Third Sicha of the week*)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

לזכות דבורה לאה בת חנה שתחי' לרגל יום הולדתה ט"ז טבת

In Seif Zayin it is brought from a Sicha of the Fridiker Rebbe, that the Alter Rebbe shared with the Mittler Rebbe, that his main effort and accomplishment was in bringing Baalei Teshuva. We bring here, from that very Sicha, the well-known story behind this.

We also bring a Chasidic story about the preciousness of a Mitzvah of action to a Tzadik, right before Hlstalkus. This is the starting point of our Sicha, which continues many levels beyond.

The Power of Inspiring Baalei Teshuvah!

From a Sicha on the Eve of Yud-Tes Kislev, 5692-1931: With his holy, radiant eyes, the Alter Rebbe was able to see the good in every Yid. And he found it everywhere. In this, he resembled the One Above, of Whom it is said, "He does not see the wrongdoing of Jacob."

The Alter Rebbe made thousands of people chassidim, and many thousands of people baalei teshuvah....

The Mitteler Rebbe once came to see the Alter Rebbe, alarmed and distraught. Weeping, he told his father that he was troubled by a strange dream.

In his dream, he had seen a broad river. Its clear waters flowed vigorously, and though they were constantly replenished, there were no waves. As it flowed afar it filled little ponds on all sides but continued flowing with quiet energy.

Two men wearing long garments were seen approaching; the taller man had one leg thicker than the other. At a little distance there were seen, though vaguely, two other men, and then the Alter Rebbe was seen to appear.

On the river lay a board. The shorter man instructed his taller colleague to step onto it, but as he did so it began to sink, and the water quickly rose to cover part of his body. The board rose again, but then so did the water. Thus, they alternated several times, until the shorter man finally instructed him to step off the board.

As this was happening, the two other figures had a few times approached from the distance and had receded. Throughout they remained blurred, and from this point on they were no longer observed.

The remaining three then walked away, their arms in firm embrace, the shorter man in the middle, the taller man to his left and the Alter Rebbe to his right.

They continued until they came upon a great river. Its many-colored waters flowed rapidly; on all sides, its waves rose and fell like the waves of the sea.

In the river, far away, he saw a wave rise and fall. Other waves then also made vigorous endeavors to rise up high, but they too fell upon the nearby banks. In no time, the little pool that each one formed was swallowed up in the ground and vanished, and fruit-bearing trees appeared there.

While this was happening, he heard the authoritative voice of the shorter man. He was pointing at the Alter Rebbe and ordering him to walk along the board. The Alter Rebbe walked straight along it until he reached the end, and then wanted to move it further along. However, the shorter man beckoned him to return, and said: "With the power of these waves of water one can pass intact even through waves of fire." And at this point, the Mittlerer Rebbe woke up.

...The Alter Rebbe then told him that the shorter personage was the Baal Shem Tov; the other was the Maggid of Mezritch, who suffered pain in his leg. And by instructing the Maggid to walk along the board, the Baal Shem Tov sought to indicate that within the teachings of the Maggid's disciples, it was still possible to sink.

The Alter Rebbe continued interpreting the dream to the Mittlerer Rebbe: "The second river is filled with the tears of Balei Teshuva. Twenty-five years ago, I heard from the Rebbe [i.e., the Maggid] the parable which likens tzaddikim and Baalei Teshuva to two sons of one king. Hearing this engraved in my mind that one should endeavor to bring every single Yid near [to Yiddishkeit]. Accordingly, I spent five years traveling from place to place, with my identity sometimes known and sometimes not, to rouse people to Teshuva." *(The Freidiker Rebbe then describes what each Rebbe commented on this story when they shared it with their successor).*

One Last Mitzvah...

Rabbi Elazar Rokay'ach, the first Rebbe of the Belz dynasty, was chief rabbi in Amsterdam. In his later years, he traveled to Eretz Yisrael, which in those days meant a long, dangerous trip by boat. He and his attendant set out on the journey shortly before Rosh Hashanah.

During the voyage, on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, a fierce storm broke out at sea, with high winds whipping the water into mountainous waves which threatened to capsize the ship. The passengers, white with terror, were desperately trying to keep themselves upright while they prayed for their lives. When the captain declared that it would not be long before the end came, the attendant had no choice but to interrupt Rabbi Elazar's intense study, which had not ceased since the storm began, and inform him of the grave danger, to which he had been oblivious.

Upon hearing of the captain's grim prediction, Rabbi Elazar told his attendant, "Bring my shofar, and tell me the moment dawn breaks, so that I can blow it." As soon as morning came, R' Elazar blew his shofar, and to the relief and amazement of all those on board, the storm ceased.

Rabbi Simcha-Bunim of Peshischa later explained, "Do not think for a moment that Rabbi Elazar performed Tekias Shofar to stop the storm; indeed, that is not what happened. He thought he had only a short time left to live, and he wished to 'seize' the mitzvah of shofar-blowing - to do the Mitzvah one more time. That is why he performed the mitzvah at the first possible moment! *(As told by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles)*
