

SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Volume 22

Emor, Sicha 1 (Second Sicha of the week)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

The Sicha teaches that the mitzvah of Davening is unique in that although one must verbalize prayer, it is not a Mitzvah of speech that also needs Kavana, rather the actual Geder-definition of Davening are words with Kavana and feelings "that the person supplicates and prays daily." If our Davening is not expressed in our individual feelings, then our words of prayer are not considered Davening at all.

There is no end to the stories of Chasidim Davening with Kavana and feeling, here are but a few stories as a sample, stories that speak to me.

You might also appreciate this story by Yaakov Brawer on chabad.org https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/39916/jewish/The-Cabdriver.htm

What Changed?

I merited to hear this from the Rebbe, Vayikra 5742:

Over 30 years ago, I witnessed something, and I never imagined that it would become relevant so many years later. When my mother left Russia, I travelled to Paris to greet her and bring her back to America. During my time in Paris, I met Chassidim who had also recently left Russia.

When we davened together on Shabbos, I noticed some of them davening ba'arichus (meditatively and at length) while singing a chassidisher niggun and snapping their

fingers. True, I cannot know for sure what their motivations were but when you see someone learning Chassidus before davening, and after that he is davening ba'arichus with a chassidisher niggun, you can assume that it relates to avodas Hashem. Some of those Chassidim I saw davening ba'arichus in Paris are here with us now. And just this very day I saw them davening with no chayus and no shturem in avodas hatefilah!

In the state they were in then, recent immigrants were busy with avodas hatefilah. But after they came to the United States with Hashem's help, and were blessed with parnasa, healthy families, and even with wealth, suddenly there is no avodas hatefilah anymore!

When I saw this 30 years ago, I never imagined that this would become relevant in the year 5742 in 770...

Five Alarm Dveikus!

Reb Shilem Kuratin (Born: Circa 5645 Passed away: Elul 5679) was known for his powerful levels of concentration. He could sit for hours on end without being distracted by anything going on around him.

One winter evening in the year 5668, the small oven heating the zal in Lubavitch sent off sparks in all directions, starting a fire. Screaming, running and chaos ensued as bochurim began pouring bucket after bucket of water to try and battle the flames. The tumultuous noise reached the ears of the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe who came to see what the commotion was all about.

After the flames died down and they were able to re-enter the zal, they saw the most incredible scene. Standing in a corner, completely oblivious to everything that was going on, was Reb Shilem. When the fire broke out, he was in middle of Shema of Maariv and his concentration did not break for even a moment. The Rebbe Rashab turned to his son and exclaimed, "It was for such individuals that Tomchei Temimim was formed!"

Reb Shloma Chaim practiced and preached!

From "A Life Changing Mashpia" Chapter 14 (the entire chapter is about Avodas Ha'tefila)

True to the spirit that reigned in Lubavitch, Reb Shloma Chaim regarded Davening as the most wondrous spiritual delight that could be experienced by a Jew, especially by a Chassid, and even more so by a Tamim. In the words of Reb Hilel Paritcher “If all the pleasure seekers in the world only knew what wonderful delight there is in the Avodah of Davening, they would forsake all their physical lusts and indulge in the Avodah of Davening!”

And, indeed on the phrase Va’ani Tefila (lit., I am davening), Reb SC would say that the Ani – the “I,” the essential identity of a Tamim is Davening!

Reb Shabtai Slavaticki related that “One Friday, while still learning in Kol Torah, I arrived in Kfar Chabad, but the Zal was empty: the Bachurim had all gone on mitvza Tefilin. Someone told me where Reb Shloma Chaim lived, so I went off to visit him, but his wife said: You cannot see him now as he is Davening.

I was amazed, Friday midday, and he is still Davening?! This is something I must see for myself. I went around the house, climbed on a garbage pail under his window, and saw Reb SC strolling around the table. His Tallis was still on his shoulder, his tefillin were still on the table, and he was reading buoyantly, Ashreinu Mah Tov Chelkeinu, mah naim goraleinu...

After a minute or two I realized that though he was preparing for Davening for hours, he had not yet begun to Daven! When he reached the paragraph Ashreinu he had begun to sing them, alone in his dining room, exuberantly!

Oy, I am still considered Normal!

Reb Avrohom Pariz – related, “When I was a youngster I sat and learned in Yeshivas Toimchei Temimim in the town of Lubavitch. For Yom Tov, I returned to my home in the town of Babroisk.

One day I was walking in the street, and I was approached by a Jew who requested that I enter the Shul to complete a Minyan for Mincha. When I entered the Shul, I found my friend the HaTomim Aryeh-Leib Sheinin sitting, crowned in Tefilin and Davening at great

length. I realized that including Aryeh-Leib, there was already a complete Minyan without me.

I asked those present, 'Why did you not count my friend Aryeh Leib?' They answered that this Yeshiva student had been sitting in the same place since the morning and was completely oblivious to everything going on around him, therefore they thought that he was 'out of his mind' and unfit to be counted as part of the Minyan. It was then that I realized the significant difference between myself and Aryeh-Leib, the great Oveid. In the eyes of the laymen, I was still considered 'normal'...
