



Adapted from the sefer חמין במוצאי שבת and חדוותא דזעיר אנפין collections of
maamarim
given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Seuda Shlishis and Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Eikev 5761

Chasidim have the *minhag* of gathering in order to encourage and strengthen each other, as the *pasuk* says אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ יַעְזֹרוּ וְלִאֶחָיו יֹאמַר חֲזַק. Each person will help his friend and say to his brother “be strong”.

At these gatherings, they exchange the *bracha* לחיים טובים ולשלום! This is especially necessary in times of adversity.

This week, when so much Jewish blood has been spilled in the streets of Yerushalayim, is certainly one of those times. Among the victims who died *al kiddush Hashem* were Rav Mordechai Schijveschuurder, his wife, and three of their children hy”d. Rav Mordechai was a *talmid chacham* who was known for his *midos tovos* and *yiras shamayim*.

While this is certainly a time for introspection and *teshuva*, we must first fulfill the words of the *pasuk*, תַּנּוּ שֵׁכָר לְאוֹבֵד וַיֵּין לְמָרִי נָפֶשׁ (משלי ל”א ו’), - Give strong drink to one who is lost, and wine to those whose soul is bitter. We apply this *pasuk* by encouraging and strengthening each other with the *bracha* לחיים טובים ולשלום. This has been the way of *chasidus* from its inception. We must never allow ourselves to be overcome by sadness and depression.

Baruch Hashem, we have much to be thankful for. We should praise and thank Hashem for continuing to give us life despite our sins. As Yirmiyahu Hanavi said, מַה יִּתְאַוֵּן אָדָם חִי גִבֹּר עַל חַטָּאָיו, - Chazal read the *pasuk* as “What should a living man complain about? Has he overcome his sins? Is the life that I have given him not sufficient?”

The early generations of *chasidim* would often emphasize that simple existence isn’t sufficient. We should aspire to life that is full of *chiyus* - vitality and *simcha*. ס’זאל זיין געלעבט! - to truly live!



[1]

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I often share something very precious that I heard from Rav Shlomo Goldshtoff z"l, the son in law of the Tchebiner Rav zt"l. During *aseres yemei teshuva*, the *Geonim* added the words זכרנו לחיים מלך חפץ בחיים וכתבנו בספר החיים למענך to the first *bracha* of the *amida*. The *Tur* (סימן תקפ"ב והובא במשנ"ב) (סימן תקפ"ב) writes that Rav Meir of Rotenberg used to pronounce the word לחיים as l'chaim with a *shva* as opposed to *lachaim* with a *patach*. This is because the Gemara (נדרים י:) states that the prefix *la* with a *patach* means "not". Therefore, if someone declares that a certain item will be *la'chulin*, his intention is that it will be not *chulin* but rather *hekdes*.

The Maharam Mi'Rotenberg was therefore careful to say *Zachreinu l'chaim* - for life, because one who says *la'chaim* is asking to be remembered for "not life".

The Tchebiner Rav pointed out that if we apply this lesson of Maharam Mi'Rotenberg to another *tefilla*, we face a quandry. In *Tefilas Tal* and *Geshem* we say, *l'chaim v'lo la'mavess*. We certainly mean to say "for life and not for death". However, according to the Maharam, by pronouncing the word למוות as *la'mavess* we say, "for life, and not for "not death". The double negative would mean that we are *chas v'shalom* asking for death.

The Rav said in the name of elder *chasidim*, that by saying *lo la'mavess* we ask for a life that is full of *chiyus*, not life that is simply defined by the fact that we are "not dead". There are people who live and breathe, yet spend their time lying in bed, unable (or unwilling) to move. They are certainly alive, but the sum total of their "life" is simply that they "aren't dead". We ask for life that will be full of *chiyus* - vitality, ס'דאל זיין געלעבט, really living, rather than simply avoiding death.

In times of tragedy, we must ask Hashem to help us continue to live with *chiyus* and *simcha*. In such times, the way of *chasidim* has always been to strengthen and increase *emunah peshuta* and move forward not simply with life, but *davka* with a life of *simcha*!



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