

רבי יוסף דוב הלוי סולובייצ'יק זצ"ל
בוסטון

היכל הבעש"ט • לב

שאיבת מים בחג ומהות החסידות:

על מהות החסידות, משמעתה והשפעתה בפני הגאון הליטאי ר' יוסף דוב סולובייצ'יק זצ"ל בהספד על הגאון החב"די רבי משה דובער ריבקיין זצ"ל

רמב"ן האבות, שו"ת, זוטא, פרק א

2)

מִצְוַת לְהִרְבּוֹת בְּשִׂמְחָה זוּ. וְלֹא הָיוּ עוֹשִׂין אוֹתָהּ עִמִּי הָאָרֶץ וְכָל מִי שִׁירְצָהּ. אֲלֵא גְדוּלֵי חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְרֵאשֵׁי הַיְּשִׁיבוֹת וְהַסְּנֵהֲדָרִין וְהַחֲסִידִים וְהַזְּקֵנִים וְאֲנָשֵׁי מַעֲשֵׂה הֵם שֶׁהָיוּ מְרַקְדִין וּמְסַפְּקִין וּמְגַנְגְּנִין וּמְשַׁמְחִין בְּמַקְדָּשׁ בִּימֵי חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת. אֲכָל כָּל הָעָם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנְּשִׁים כָּלֹן בָּאִין לְרֵאוֹת וּלְשִׁמְעַ

It is a great mitzvah to maximize this celebration. The common people and anyone who desired would not perform [in these celebrations]; only the greatest of Israel's wise men: the *Rashei Yeshivot*, the members of the high court, the pious, the elders, and the men of stature. They were those who would dance, clap their hands, sing, and rejoice in the Temple on the days of the festival of Sukkot. However, the entire people - the men and the women - would come to see and hear.

3)

מֵאן דְתַנִּי שׁוֹאֵבָה לֹא מִשְׁתַּבֵּשׁ, דְּכַתִּיב: "וּשְׂאֲבָתֶם מִיָּמִים בְּשִׂשׁוֹן". וּמֵאן דְתַנִּי חֲשׁוּבָה לֹא מִשְׁתַּבֵּשׁ, דְּאָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן: מִצְוַת חֲשׁוּבָה הִיא,

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Talmud Yerushalmi (Sukkah 5:1)

[Why is the celebration called] *bet ha-sho'evah* [the place of drawing]? From there one draws the spirit of holiness. The Talmud (ibid.) adds: Yonah ben Amitai was one of the pilgrims [who ascended to Jerusalem on the Festival]. He went to the *simchat bet ha-sho'evah* and the spirit of holiness rested upon him [and he became a prophet]. This teaches us that the spirit of holiness rests upon a person only when his heart is filled with joy.

19.02 The Baltic Sea

Related by the Rav in his eulogy for Rabbi Moshe Dovber Rivkin¹ at Congregation Moriya, New York, N.Y., December 14, 1976. (Yiddish).

I remember how enthused I was the first time I saw the Baltic Sea. I was born in Russia and never saw a major body of water in my youth. It was a beautiful sunny day in the month of Iyar [April-May], after Pesach, when I went with a cousin to the Baltic Sea in Danzig [Gdansk, Poland].

I remember that the water was blue, deeply blue. From afar it looked like a blue forest. It resembled the aboriginal forests near Pruzhana, where I was born. When I came close and realized it was the Baltic Sea, I was overwhelmed by its beauty. Spontaneously, I began to recite the Psalm [104] of "Bless the Lord, O my soul." I did not plan to do this. Yet the words flowed from my lips. "O Lord, my God, Thou art very great; Thou art clothed with glory and majesty" [Psalm 104:1]. "There is the sea, vast and wide" [Psalm 104:25]. It was a religious reaction to viewing the majesty of God's creation. When I recited the blessing upon seeing the sea, I did so with emotion and deep feeling. I deeply experienced the words of the benediction: "Blessed be He who wrought

creation" [Berakhot 9:1]. Not all the blessings that I recite are said with such concentration. It was more than simply a blessing, it was an encounter with the Creator. I felt that the Shekhinah [Divine Presence] was hidden in the darkness and vastness of the sea. The experience was unique and unforgettable; the blessing welled out of me.

Since then I have seen the ocean many times. I still recite the benediction if thirty days have elapsed since I last saw it. Nevertheless, since that first time it has become a routine blessing; a cold blessing [mitnagdisher brachah] like those recited by the mitnagdim who were opposed to the hasidic movement.

1. Rabbi Rivkin, a leading disciple of Lubavitch, was rosh yeshiva in Brooklyn's Mesivta Torah Vodaath for close to fifty years.

אֲחֵרֵי שֶׁלַשׁ בְּרָכוֹת. הַשּׁוֹתֵה מַיִם לְצִמָּאוֹ, אוֹמֵר
"שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ". רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן אוֹמֵר: "בוֹרֵא
נִפְשוֹת רַבּוֹת".

משניות פרק ו משנה ח

בורא נפשות

After food or drink that does not require ברכת המזון or מעין שלוש - such as vegetables, beverages, or fruit other than grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives or dates - say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. בּוֹרֵא נִפְשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחַסְדּוֹן עַל
כָּל מַה שֶּׁבְּרָאתָ לְהַחְיֹת בָּהֶם נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי. בְּרוּךְ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים.

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who creates the many forms of life and their needs. For all You have created to sustain the life of all that lives, blessed be He, the life of worlds.

ג. א. ק. א. ע.

אמר רב יהודה האי מאן דבעי למהוי חסידא לקיים מילי דחזיקין רבא אמר מילי דאבות ואמרי לה

מילי דברכות:

1) Once, however, when I accompanied my father to a wedding in Brisk, my grandfather Reb Chaim tested me. Instead of reciting portions of Merubah [the seventh chapter of Baba Kama] which we were supposedly studying, I recited sections of the *Tanya* by heart.

My father and grandfather may have been angry, but I am in debt to the melamed. His teachings broadened my horizons in Judaism. The melamed inspired me with his descriptions of the Kingship of God and of the sefirot, or emanations, from the Divine Presence. The melamed had studied in the Yeshiva in Lubavitch, and his method of speech uplifted and transformed me. At the time I was too young to truly comprehend many of his teachings. Only later did I understand and appreciate the lessons in their full depth. He taught me how to pray with emotion and ecstasy, and gave me an appreciation for the High Holy Day prayers. I often think of him on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

"Do something simple," he would say, "but do it with emotion and feeling." That is the basic message of Habad. Do something mundane and simple; but do it with divine inspiration and meaning! That is the general message of hasidut and certainly the touchstone of Habad.

I would like to illustrate the influence of Habad on me by citing another childhood experience. This too happened in the old hasidic bet medrash where the Rav [the founder of Habad, R. Shneur Zalman of Ladi, 1745-1813] once prayed. There was an alcove in the northern wall where I would find a place on Friday night before the Minhah prayer. Most people congregated at the eastern wall, but something drew me to the northern wall. The hasidim in Khaslavichy were generally very poor. They were peddlers who barely eked out a living going from door to door and hamlet to hamlet. They came to shul on Friday evening still dripping water from the mikveh. I observed their intense devotion as they recited Psalms, running up and down the bet medrash. They could not stand still because they were overwhelmed with emotion and inspiration. While observing them, I felt, not only that they

were reciting Psalms in preparation for the prayers, but that the redemption was actually happening at that moment. All their weekday tribulations were behind them, and they were entering a world that was entirely good—"a world that shall be altogether Sabbath with repose in eternal life" [Grace After Meals]. As a child I was convinced that the presence of God rested upon them in their every movement in the hasidic bet medrash.

2) "To believe is necessary, but it is not enough; one must feel and sense the existence of God. The presence of the Almighty must be a personal, intimate experience. And if this experience is not common, and if it proves impossible to achieve that *devekut* in Him, blessed be He, and if one feels not the touch of His hand, one cannot be a complete Jew." (Exploring the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Angel, p. 239).

3) one who recites the Hallel on a daily basis "is committing blasphemy." (Shabbat 118b).

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"Defying Laws of Nature"

Yiddish Address by

**Rav Joseph B.
Soloveitchik zt"l**

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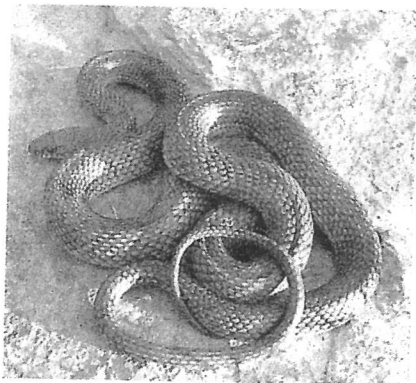
1) [R' Chanina] had a certain woman neighbor - who was building a house - but the beams did not reach from wall to wall. She came before [R' Chanina] and said to him, "I built my house but my beams do not reach from wall to wall." He asked her, "What is your name?" She replied to him, "Aiku." He said, "Aiku, may your beams elongate and reach from wall to wall." - A Tanna taught: [THE BEAMS] ELONGATED UNTIL THEY PROTRUDED A CUBIT ON EACH SIDE of the wall.

2) R' Chanina ben Dosa had some goats. [People] complained to him, "Your goats are damaging our fields!" He said to them, "If it is true that they are damaging other people's fields, may bears devour them. And if it is not true, may each goat bring home with it in the evening a bear on its horns!" - In the evening each and every goat brought back a bear on its horns.

3)

BACKGROUND

Arvad - ערוד: Based on the descriptions in the Gemara, apparently the *arvad* is a type of snake or perhaps a large, very dangerous reptile. In parallel discussions in the Jerusalem Talmud, the *arvad* is called a *havarbar*. Some identify this as the black snake or a snake of the *coluber* genus, which, although not poisonous, is very aggressive and bites.



Caspian whipsnake

תנו רבנן: מעשה במקום אחד שהיה ערוד והיה מזיק את הבריות, באו והודיעו לו לרבי חנינא בן דוסא. אמר להם: הראו לי את חורו! הראוהו את חורו, נתן עקבו על פי החור, יצא ונשכו וימת אותו ערוד.

With regard to the praise for one who prays and need not fear even a snake, the Sages taught: There was an incident in one place where an *arvad*^b was harming the people. They came and told Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa and asked for his help. He told them: Show me the hole of the *arvad*. They showed him its hole. He placed his heel over the mouth of the hole and the *arvad* came out and bit him, and died.

נטלו על כתפו והביאו לבית המדרש. אמר להם: ראו בני, אין ערוד ממית אלא החטא ממית.

Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa placed the *arvad* over his shoulder and brought it to the study hall. He said to those assembled there: See, my sons, it is not the *arvad* that kills a person, rather transgression kills a person. The *arvad* has no power over one who is free of transgression.

באותה שעה אמרו: אוי לו לאדם שפגע בו ערוד, ואוי לו לערוד שפגע בו רבי חנינא בן דוסא.

At that moment the Sages said: Woe unto the person who was attacked by an *arvad* and woe unto the *arvad* that was attacked by Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa.

4)

חזויה לברתיה - One Friday evening at twilight, he saw that his daughter was sad. He said to her, "My daughter, why are you sad?" She replied to him, "I mistook a container of vinegar for a container of oil, and I poured the vinegar into the lamp and lit the Sabbath light with it."⁹ He said to her, "My daughter, what does it matter to you? The One Who commanded oil to burn, He can command vinegar to burn as well." - A Tanna taught: [THE LAMP] CONTINUED TO BURN THE ENTIRE DAY of the Sabbath - UNTIL THEY TOOK FROM IT THE FLAME FOR HAVDALAH at the conclusion of the Sabbath.¹⁰