

The Weekly Farbrengens



858 • לחמן ישמעו • מקץ תשפ"ו
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

RELIVING THE PAST (I)

CONNECTING WITH THE PAST

The Torah urges us to remember the past and learn from it, and to learn from the older generation on how to conduct oneself.

(האדינו לבז)

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes: The *avoda* of learning from the ways of *talmidei chachomim* used to be accomplished at *chassidishe farbrengens*, where *eltere* chassidim would relate *sippurim* (stories and recollections) about *tzaddikim* and chassidim. They would discuss the lesson to be learnt and arouse their listeners appropriately, ensuring that the arousal would be translated into action. Telling *sippurim* was therefore cherished by our Rebbeim and by other great *tzaddikim* of Chassidus.

On one occasion the Frierdiker Rebbe said: Remembering 'the days of old' was always precious to *chassidim*. Homes used to be saturated with *middos tovos* and *ahavas HaShem*, *ahavas haTorah* and *ahavas Yisroel*, and no matter whether people were rich or poor, their doors were always open for *chachomim*.

In the past, he added, *eltere chassidim* would speak on their own without being asked. This was not mere storytelling; rather, a way of life was shared.

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ו ע"ה, לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 234)

In the year תש"ב (1942), the Frierdiker Rebbe once said, "Today, when the present is unpleasant, we must live with the past."

The *meshpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin asked, "Is this the same as learning from the past?"

The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "This is something different – to live with the past means to relive an incident which has once been experienced. The chossid Reb Dovid Tzvi Chein once cried out, 'Oy Rebbe!' and fainted. When roused, he related that he had recalled a certain *yechidus* with the *Tzemach Tzedek*."

The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded, "If a negative experience impacts a person, surely so with a positive experience."

(סד"ה תש"ב ע' 92)

THE FOCUS OF THE STORY

Once, after returning from the *kever* of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Mendele of Rimanov prided himself – the Baal Shem Tov had appeared to him. When word about this reached the *Degel Machane Efrayim*, who was the Baal Shem Tov's grandson, he was disturbed by it. Reb Mendele therefore set out to make a reconciliation.

CONSIDER

What's the difference between storytelling and sharing a way of life? Or between learning from the past and living with it?

Why is it necessary to analyze a chassidishe maiseh? Why isn't it enough just to get inspired?

When he arrived, the *Degel Machane Efrayim*, without inviting him to sit, turned to him and asked, "Where am I now?"

Referring to where the *tzaddik* was then situated in his thoughts, Reb Mendele said, "In Yerushalayim."

"And now?" the *Degel Machane Efrayim* continued to ask.

"In the *Beis HaMikdash*."

Impressed, the *Degel Machane Efrayim* then asked if he had truly seen the Baal Shem Tov. When Reb Mendele confirmed that he had, he inquired about what the Baal Shem Tov had said, and was told: "He is disturbed that people only recount his miracle stories and not the stories of *yiras Shamayim* from which lessons can be learned."

Hearing these words, the *Degel Machane Efrayim* invited Reb Mendele to sit down at his side.

(ילקוט חדש ע' קעח)

UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON

The Frierdiker Rebbe said, "All matters of Chassidus are reached through hard work. Even a *chassidishe* story requires toiling to derive the lesson in understanding and *avoda*."

(לקו"ד ח"ב ע' 706)

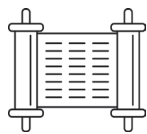
The *Tzemach Tzedek* would often send *yungeleit* to the esteemed chossid Reb Hillel Paritcher to be directed in the ways of Chassidus. Reb Hillel would entrust the guidance of each newly-arrived *yungerman* to two senior *yungeleit*, who in addition to explaining the basics of Chassidus, would most importantly tell them stories about the Rebbeim and about chassidim of former generations. In fact, they would retell each story several times until it penetrated the *yungerman* and he knew its details perfectly. They would then ask what lessons – in correcting one's *middos*, in *yiras Shamayim* and in *hashgacha peratis* – could be learned from the story. They would urge the *yungerman* to toil, as one does in serious study, in order to discover the lesson, and they would help him in this. Finally, they would tell him what lessons they had been told by their own *madrich*, Reb Hillel.

On the first three *Shabbosim* of each newly-arrived *yungerman*, Reb Hillel would relate a story in addition to the Chassidus that he delivered. After the story they would sing *niggunim*, and then discuss the lessons to be taken in *avoda* of the heart and the mind.

Reb Hillel explained the reason for this procedure: "The beginning of *avoda* is 'Adam ki yakriv mikem,' – a person has to offer something of himself to *HaShem*. However, in order to enable a person to know he is an Adam and how an Adam should conduct himself, the above *avoda*, in *Sefer Vayikra*, is preceded in the Torah by the *sippurim* of *Bereishis* and *Shmos*."

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע' נ"א)





HANOCHAS TEFILLIN DATE

Can I adjust the date of *hanochas tefillin* according to our schedule?

The Gemara lists various mitzvos in which a father must educate his son: once a boy knows how to wave a lulav, he is obligated in the *mitzva* of lulav; and once he's mature enough to maintain a state of *guf naki* (bodily purity) while wearing tefillin, his father is obligated to purchase tefillin for him as part of his *chinuch*.¹

The *rishonim* debate what age this is. Many understand this to be the age of *chinuch*, when the child is able to put on tefillin, which could be several years before his *bar mitzva*. However, Rashi writes that even at the average age of *chinuch* (i.e., age 6-9), a boy is not mature enough for tefillin, which require a high level of care to maintain purity. At the other extreme, the Ba'al Ha'itur limits it to age thirteen and onward.²

While the Shulchan Aruch applies it to a mature child, the Rama records the Ashkenazic custom to begin only at age thirteen. The Magen Avraham notes the later custom to begin training a boy 2-3 months before his *bar mitzva*, and this is the Alter Rebbe's conclusion.³

The minhag Chabad is to begin two months before the *bar mitzva*.⁴ The Rebbe explains that although there is reason to push it off until the day of the Bar Mitzvah, the Rebbeim chose the earlier date to increase in light, similar to spreading Chassidus in recent generations, based on the *meshal* of grinding the crown jewel.⁵

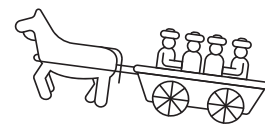
For the first while, the boy does not recite a bracha, until he's proficient to put them on in the correct manner and position, so the bracha shouldn't be in vain.⁶ There is no fixed timing for this.

If Chol Hamoed falls during the two preparatory months, resulting in fewer days of wearing tefillin, the Rebbe responded that the boy may begin a week earlier.⁷ However, the date should not be changed just for convenience reasons.

1. סוכה מב ע"א. וראה רש"י שם ד"ה לשמור ובברכות כ ע"ב ד"ה ומן התפילין.
2. ראה רש"י ותוס' ברכות כ ע"א. בעל העיטור הל' תפילין ח"ז - והחידוש אע"פ שאין לו סימנים.
3. שו"ע או"ח סי' ל"ז ס"ג. מ"א שם סק"ד. שו"ע"ר שם.
4. היום יום ב' מנ"א. ספה"מ חב"ד ע' 4. וראה השתלשלות קביעת ההוראה לרבים באג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ז ע' כד. וראה גליון 853 שנהגים להניח גם תפילין דר"ת.
5. אג"ק ח"ז ע' סא.
6. אג"ק ח"א ע' עו ובח"ד ע' סג שאין זמן קבוע לזה.
7. אג"ק חכ"ג ע' פט.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

Our Heroes



R. YAAKOV OF SHKLOV

R. Yaakov of Shklov was the son of R. Yosef of Shklov, one of the early Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. A chossid of the Alter Rebbe and the Mittlerer Rebbe, R. Yaakov was a businessman who was known for his *yiras shamayim* and *avodas hatefilah*.

When the Alter Rebbe visited Shklov, he stayed in R. Yaakov's home. R. Yaakov would daven at great length, and even after the Alter Rebbe finished davening, had the *seuda* and recited a *maamar*, he was still davening. When at last he came home, he was embarrassed to show his face, since he has such a guest in his home and yet he didn't show up.

When he came, the Rebbe told him lightheartedly, "The difference between you and others is that most people have a *yetzer hara* in eating and drinking, bad thoughts and vain words, whereas your '*yetzer hara*' is in davening and learning. It turns out that when they daven or learn

they are freed of their *yetzer hara*, whereas you remain attached to him then as well..."

(בית רבי מהדו"ח ע' 213)

R. Yaakov was once in a dire financial situation, after losing his own money in failed deals, and then losing some more money that he borrowed. When the Alter Rebbe visited Shklov, he went into *yechidus* and cried about his situation.

The Alter Rebbe then began to make a *cheshbon nefesh* about how R. Yaakov was doing *bruchnius*. At that, R. Yaakov began to wail intensely with a cry from the depths of his heart. The Alter Rebbe then told him to go in peace. As he turned to leave, the Alter Rebbe called him back and told him, "With that first crying, you would have remained in sorrow. But from this crying you will stop, and thus you have finished with the first crying too [allowing you to seek a solution]."

(תורת שלום ע' 275, וראה סה"מ תרפ"ב ע' 488)

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



LET OTHERS BE PHYSICAL DOCTORS

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky relates:

There was a rabbi at the Hillel house on campus at the University of Toronto, who was very successful with spreading Yiddishkeit. The students loved him.

This rabbi was close to my father Reb Avrohom Yaakov, and one day he asked my father to arrange for him a *yechidus* with the Rebbe.

He had a life question. He had long had a dream of becoming a doctor, and he had finally been accepted at the prestigious

medical school at the University of Western Ontario, in London, Ontario. He was deliberating whether he should proceed with his plan.

When he presented his question, the Rebbe responded, "There are many Americans, Canadians, Chinese, Indians and Japanese, who want to become doctors. But very few want to be spiritual doctors.

"You are successful as a spiritual doctor," the Rebbe concluded. "Let others be the physical doctors."

(As heard from Rabbi Gluckowsky)

לעילוי נשמת

מרת מוסיא בת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה שטראקס

נפטרה כ"ה אדר תשפ"ד