

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
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RECOGNIZING THE ENEMY (II)

ALWAYS ON GUARD

The *tzaddik* Reb Nochum of Chernobyl lived in acute poverty. Once a *chossid* brought him a gift of 300 gold rubles, and the *gabbai*, who also oversaw the needs of the home, was glad that the heavy debts would finally be paid up. When this *chossid* left Reb Nochum's room, tens of other *chassidim* had their turn, until they stopped in order to *daven Maariv*. After *Maariv* the *tzaddik* closeted himself in his room for a while and then opened the door, asking to see a certain *chossid* who had been at *yechidus* earlier. After the *chossid* left, the *tzaddik* continued receiving *chassidim* late into the night.

After all the *chassidim* had left, the *gabbai* entered the Rebbe's room to request some money, having already listed the amount he would pay each creditor. Reb Nochum opened the drawer in which he kept the money that had been given for his personal use, and the *gabbai* was stunned to see only a few silver and copper coins. There was no sign of the 300 rubles.

The *tzaddik* told him to take all the coins, a total of 300 rubles, but the *gabbai* remained rooted to his place, downcast but unable to say anything. The *tzaddik* asked him why he looked so sad. After all, *HaShem* had sent them money. At this point, the *gabbai* was no longer able to contain himself and asked about the 300 rubles. The Rebbe replied, "When I received the money I wondered why I had merited such a sum. So when one of the *chassidim* told me about his utter lack of funds for tuition, rent, and his daughter's wedding, it dawned on me that *HaShem* had given me the special *zechus* of supporting this *Yid*. In fact, the amount he needed totaled the exact amount that I had received. However, after I had decided to give the 300 rubles to this *chossid*, another thought came to my mind: 'Why give so much money to one person, when it can be divided between six families?'

"Faced with the dilemma of these two options, I closed myself in my room. After thinking it through, I came to the conclusion that the second idea, to divide the money among a number of families, did not come from the *yetzer tov*, for then it would have entered my mind immediately. Only after I had thought of the *mitzva*, did this thought come along to trick me." Reb Nochum concluded, "I fulfilled the advice of the *yetzer tov* and gave the *chossid* the entire 300 rubles."

Upon relating this story, the Frierdiker Rebbe added: "From this we see how important is discernment, always knowing from where a thought is coming. And this discernment can be acquired only by working on oneself."

(ס"ה תש"ג ע' 67)

The Rebbe applied this concept: "If one is aroused to help another or to spread *Yiddishkeit*, he must evaluate: if he had been conversing idly, then this inspiration is coming from the *yetzer tov*. However, if this arousal came to mind specifically during his learning, then it is not coming from *kedusha*... Likewise, if during *davening*, one is suddenly inspired to distribute *Siddurim* or to watch someone else *daven*, he should know that at that particular time this is an inappropriate activity."

(ת"מ חל"ו ע' 305)

Dovid HaMelech said to *HaShem*, "*Ribbono shel Olam!* Every morning upon awakening, I would plan aloud, 'Today I will visit some place or someone's home,' and then I would direct my feet to the *beis midrash*, thereby tricking the *yetzer hara* and not allowing him to distract me."

(ברכות י"ז ע"א, רש"י, בן יהוידע, ילקוט תהלים תת"ז)

The *tzaddik*, Reb Naftali of Ropshitz, was known for his quick wit. One day his Rebbe, the *Chozeh* of Lublin, challenged him: "Isn't it written in the Torah that one should be simple and straightforward (*tamim*) in his *avodas HaShem*?" The *talmid* replied, "To reach the level of *temimus*, one must first have wisdom, as our *chachomim* instructed - to be clever in *yiras Shamayim*."

(דור דעה ע' רל"ז)

The Frierdiker Rebbe once said that a person should use the cleverness of Torah, and especially of *Chassidus*, to recognize and counter the slyness of the *yetzer hara*.

(ס"ה תרצ"ו ע' 223)

Towards the end of one of his personal fasts, the *tzaddik*, Reb Dovid of Lelov, was out on the road and felt an extreme thirst. Suddenly, noticing a spring of cool bubbling water, his thirst intensified to the point that he was about to break his fast and drink. He stood still for a moment to consider the matter and found strength within himself to overcome his burning thirst. Continuing on his way, he felt a great rush of joy, for he had succeeded in subjugating his *yetzer hara*. However, a moment later he said to himself, "This joy is not coming from the *yetzer tov*, but from the *yetzer hara*. He's trying to get me to be filled with pride!" To avoid falling into the trap, Reb Dovid returned to the spring and drank his fill.

(סיפורי חסידים זיון תורה ע' 527)

When some people tried to bring proof from the Torah that children should be taught worldly matters at a young age, the Rebbe disputed their claim, explained their misunderstanding, and added, "One should not be fazed when someone quotes a Torah source to prove something which is known to be wrong. It must be recognized that within this pious 'silk cloak' hides the *yetzer hara*."

(ת"מ חכ"ז ע' 103)

CONSIDER

How can a positive inspiration be not good?

How can we identify it when it is presented with holy reasoning?

How does Chassidus and avoda make one more perceptive of the yetzer hara's tactics?

CLEVERLY COUNTERING

Shlomo HaMelech writes that one should use clever strategies when waging war against the *yetzer hara*. Some record this as a *mitzva midivrei kabbala*, that is, an obligation derived from *Nach*.

(משלי כ"ד, ס' חרדים פל"ה אות ב', ברכות י"ז ע"א ורש"י)

In this spirit, *Chazal* teach us to always use all kinds of sly tactics in order to attain a fear of *HaShem*.



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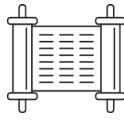
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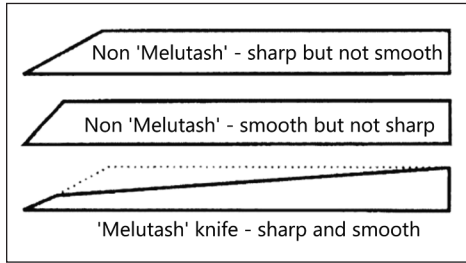


CHASSIDISHE CHALOFIM

What are *sakinim melutashim* adopted by chassidim and how is it relevant today?

In order to be kosher, the *shechita* knife must not have any nicks or blemishes, which can disqualify the *shechita*. At the same time, a *shochet* endeavors to keep the blade sharp so it can cut without any struggle and avoid *shailos*.

For many generations, the *shechita* knife was thick from back to front, and it was a great skill to keep it sharp without getting a nick. One of the *takanos* of the Mezritcher Maggid and his *talmidim* was that the *shechita* knife should be *melutash*, narrower toward the point, making it easy to sharpen and smoothen it. The Alter Rebbe considers this a great *mitzva* which his Rebbeim held onto.¹



Misnagdim at the time greatly opposed this *takana*, arguing that this was something new not found in the earlier sources, and they forbade eating meat *shechted* with these knives.² In a letter of response, the Alter Rebbe explained that although the regular knives can also be smoothed and sharpened, it is much more difficult, and not all *shochtim* will master that skill. With the *melutash* knives, on the other hand, it will be accessible for all *shochtim* to sharpen them easily and properly.³

Some explain the specialty of this type of knife is that it is less prone to get blemished and that even when sharpened, it remains straight and doesn't become rounded.⁴ Additionally, since the blade is thinner it is easier to feel if there is a nick.⁵

With time, the *takana* spread to other communities, until today, it is apparently unanimously accepted to use such knives.⁶ It is nevertheless important for the knife to be smooth without blemish and to be frequently and properly checked to be the case.

After *shechita*, the knife not only by looking at it but by actually feeling it (with the nail).⁷ It is important to do the check slowly and thoroughly while standing.⁸

When *shechting* many chickens, the knife should be checked regularly to ensure that it did not contract a blemish and it is smooth. (If it is found to have a blemish, all the animals *shechted* since it was last checked are considered invalid.) For added *hiddur*, the knife should be checked more often to make sure it is perfectly smooth.⁹

1. שו"ת אדה"ז סי' מ"ז. וראה שארית יהודה סי' י"ט.
2. ראה "חסידים ומתנגדים" ח"א ע" 46.
3. שו"ת אדה"ז סי' ז'.
4. ראה שיעורי הלכה למעשה יו"ד סי' ב'.
5. ראה שארית יהודה שם ושיעורי הלכה למעשה שם.
6. שיעורי הל"מ שם.
7. שו"ת אדה"ז שער המילואים סי' ד.
8. יש לציין שמובא שה"י לנדא בזקנתו היה בודק בישיבה אבל לא היה מניח ידיו על משענת - שם משמעון יו"ד סי' א'.
9. שחיטת ליובאוויטש ע" 37.

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



REB GERSHON BER PAHARER

Reb Gershon Ber of Pahar was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and later of the Rebbe Maharash. Guided by Reb Hillel Paritcher, he became known as a great *maskil* and true *oived*.

as well as the way they interacted with the simple pure-emunah folk, followers of the ways of Chassidus...

"I look at the face of Reb Gershon Ber, the well-known *maskil*. He is distressed about his spiritual situation, which in his mind, leaves a lot to be desired.

"I write the following in order that it should be as a witness for days to come:

"On this past Motzoei Shabbos, I heard stories and talks of Reb Gershon Ber. Throughout my youth, I have seen many Chassidim. I have seen *maskilim*, *ovdim*, and *baalei middos tovos*. I have heard their stories and watched their conduct. For three years my father has been acquainting me with the wonderful and hidden gifts from the lives of great chassidim of the past, and (may they be separated for good and long life) of today. Of all the chassidim, Reb Gershon Ber is unique. In him I see the quality of a broken and crushed heart; broken like a shard of earthenware ("tzubrochen vi a kinenle") and 'botel' like the dust of the earth.

Reb Gershon Ber is quoted for his heartfelt resolve "*Morgen vet zain gor andersh!*" (Tomorrow will be very different!), which he would proclaim after *Krias Shma She'al Hamita*, while rubbing his head with his *yarmulke*.

Reb Gershon Ber was acclaimed for relating stories. During his visits in Lubavitch, the Frieddiker Rebbe, then a young boy, would spend time listening to him gush forth tales and teachings of elder chassidim.

After one such evening with Reb Gershon Ber, the 17 year-old Frieddiker Rebbe penned a diary entry:

"It is 2:00 A.M. Outside rain pours heavily. I pleaded with Reb Gershon Ber to stay in my home until morning. He agreed. I went to my room to contemplate what I had heard that night.

"Is there a pen and scribe who can adequately describe the profound impression I have from Reb Gershon Ber? From his stories of elder chassidim, both of their personal lives

and crushed heart; broken like a shard of earthenware ("tzubrochen vi a kinenle") and 'botel' like the dust of the earth.

"While still sunken in my thoughts, a deep cry reaches me. I listen as Reb Gershon Ber reads *Krias Shma She'al Hamita*. He is saying the "*ribono shel olam*"; "*shelo ashuv od lehachisecha, velo e'eseh hara be'einecha*"... May I not return to anger You anymore, nor do what is evil in Your eyes."

A Moment with The Rebbe



לזכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות

A GOOD SIGN

Shimon Halkin was a famous poet, novelist, and translator. As the head of the department for Modern Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he was considered by many the greatest Jewish poet of his day.

an encounter he had once with the Rebbe, at the wedding of his cousin, Reb Yisroel Jacobson's daughter.

"Why don't you come to visit me?" the Rebbe asked him.

"Please tell the Rebbe that there is no one like him in the world," Shimon once asked of the Lubavitcher poet Reb Tzvi Meir Steinmetz.

"I am embarrassed," Shimon explained.

"That's already a good sign!" the Rebbe responded.

Shimon then proceeded to share

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