

# The Weekly *Farbrengens*



למען ישמעו • בהעלותך תשע"ז • 413  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELINGER

## THE BEAUTY OF MODESTY (II)

### A LASTING IMPACT

One woman in history had the unique merit of having seven sons become *Kohanim Gedolim*. When the *Chachomim* asked her why she had earned this great *zechus*, she replied, "Because I was careful that even the beams of my home should never see my hair."

The Rebbe highlights how this practice of hers impacted the *avoda* of the *Kohen Gadol* in the *Kodesh HaKadoshim* on Yom Kippur for many further generations, because the position of *Kohen Gadol*, being hereditary, stays within the family.

(יומא מ"ז ע"א. תו"מ תשמ"ב ח"ד ע' 2190)

The *Zohar* uses remarkable terms to describe the importance of *tznius*, and promises generous *brachos* to a woman who does so and to her family as well. Based on this, the Rebbe promised many *brachos* for *tznius* including health, *parnasa*, having children, having *nachas* from children and grandchildren, and finding a *shidduch*. The Rebbe contrasts any temporary discomfort involved to the everlasting *brachos* a woman will receive for generations to come, and question how anyone can act otherwise.

(זהר ח"א קטו, ב. ס' בת מלך פנימה פ"ג ופ"ד)

On his way to *Eretz Yisroel*, the Baal Shem Tov passed through Istanbul, Turkey, and saw young men whose *neshamos* were the *neshamos* of the *tanno'im*. The Baal Shem Tov explained that their mothers merited having sons with such *neshamos* because of their modesty. He added that in their merit, the *tefilos* that were *davened* in that city are accepted Above.

(שו"ת הגרש"א אלפנדרי, סוף ח"ב)

In the year תר"ד (1854), a decree in Russia forbade women to wear head coverings. Twenty years later, a draft law required *all* men to join the army, whereas in previous years only a certain quota had to be provided from each city. The Rebbe Maharash recalled that the sons of those women who had staunchly kept their head covering despite the decree were able to evade the draft, and who knows what troubles befell the women who had not withstood the trial...

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 74, וראו סה"ש תר"ש ע' 188)

### A PRIME SEGULAH

A young woman requested a *bracha* for a *shidduch*. The Rebbe responded in his handwriting:

"I confirm receipt of your letter of 11/13 concerning a *shidduch* and marriage. The source of *brachos* is *HaShem*, Who gives the Torah and commands us to observe the *mitzvos*. The way to receive His *brachos* is by the daily observance [of the *Shulchan Aruch*]. And concerning a *shidduch*: First and foremost – a life of *tznius*, exactly as described in our Torah, the Torah of Life."

(מצילום המכתב)

### CONSIDER

*Why is tznius a source for so many brachos?  
Why are the benefits of the mitzvah highlighted by tznius more than by other mitzvos?*

In a handwritten note, the Rebbe emphasized the effect of *tznius* on the spiritual future of children:

"This reply is based on the words of my father-in-law, the [Frierdiker] Rebbe, in similar instances – that today's problem with young people, *Rachmana litzlan*, stems from laxities in family purity and *tznius*. From a positive statement about *Kimchis* we can deduce the opposite: Just as her *tznius* blessed her with *seven kohanim gedolim*, we can understand that..."

(מצילום המענה)

To the claim that *tznius* is inconvenient the Rebbe responded:

"How is it possible, after reading the Mishna Berura

about the blessings everyone in the family receives through *tznius*, that the "inconvenience" still plays a role?!

"By the way, when those who dictate fashion recently decided that wigs were in style, tens of thousands followed suit with *zerizus* and *simcha*..."

(מצילום המענה)

### TO DESERVE THE REBBE'S BRACHA

The Rebbe Maharash was not present at the wedding of his son, the Rebbe Rashab, which took place in Ovrutch, the hometown of the *kalla*, *Rebbetzin Shterna Sara*. After the wedding, when the new couple traveled to Lubavitch, the *chossan* suggested to his *kalla* that she ask her father-in-law to give her the *brachos* she deserved, for had he been at the wedding, he would of course have *bensched* them under the *chuppa*. In response to her request, the Rebbe Maharash replied, "Of course – on condition that you cut off that feather."

She was wearing a hat decorated by a prominent feather, as was the style at the time. She cut it off, and the Rebbe *bensched* her.

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 78)

A young girl, who was not *frum* at the time, passed by the Rebbe one Sunday for dollars. She was dressed in her usual style, which was not particularly modest. As she received her dollar, the Rebbe assured her that if she was dressed differently on her next visit, he would give her two dollars. When she asked her parents to buy her new clothing, they brushed her off – until they saw that this was affecting her health, so they agreed.

The following Sunday, she went once again to receive a dollar from the Rebbe, this time dressed in modest fashion. She passed by the Rebbe, but was disappointed to be given only one dollar. She continued walking, when she was suddenly summoned back. The Rebbe said, "I was sure you would remind me about what I had said, but seeing that you didn't, I had to remind you myself. Here's your extra dollar!"

(התן החסידי ע' 129)

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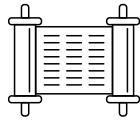


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BUYING A STOLEN BIKE

May I buy a bike from a used bike shop of which many bikes are stolen?

Halacha rules that one is prohibited from buying stolen items from a thief - Jewish or not - since one is like an accomplice to the thievery. In the metaphor used by Chazal: mice would not come for the food if they had nowhere to run afterwards. One may also be in transgression of lifnei iver, causing the thief to steal more in the future.

What if we only suspect that the item is stolen, (we are not certain)? If there is reason to believe that the item is stolen - such as if the price is unreasonably discounted or the seller is making sure to keep the deal quiet - one may not buy.

Likewise, Chazal say that one may not buy suspicious items from people who are notorious for stealing, such as wool from shepherds in Chazal's times. However, if we are certain that some of their wool is their own, one may purchase even if most of the wool is stolen. But if one knows that this bag of wool is stolen, one may not buy or use it.

What if it turns out that it was stolen and the rightful owner demands it back?

Chazal instituted that for stolen items that are bought unknowingly from a thief, the owner must compensate whatever the buyer paid for it (takonas hashuk). This was instituted so that people can buy without having to worry that the item is stolen and they will lose what they paid.

If one bought a suspicious item, there is no takonas hashuk since he chose to take a risk. He must therefore return the item to the owner without receiving pay, and demand the payment from the thief. Some say that this is true whenever buying from a known thief (or a seller of stolen items), while others hold that only if that particular item was presumed to be stolen.

Halacha says that if the original owner gave up hope of getting his item back (yi'ush), the buyer need not return it. However, a halachic practice developed that the buyer does return it and the owner refunds him for what he spent. Some say that since this practice is an added stringency, the buyer deserves payment even if he knew for certain that it was stolen. However, the Alter Rebbe writes that one who buys a certainly stolen item does not acquire it at all, and if he knows that it was stolen from a Jew, he is required to seek out the original owner. (Some add that he is not even entitled for a refund for what he paid.)

In practice: One may buy from the secondhand store if some of the bikes sold aren't stolen and there was nothing that indicated that this particular bike was stolen. If the original owner can prove later that the bike belonged to him, one must return it to him, but one can demand to be repaid for whatever he paid for it.

1. ראה שו"ת בלכות גולה ונגבה סכ"ג (שגם גוי מזהר לא לנגוב מגוי מצד שבע מצוות ב"ג).
2. ב"ק ק"ח ע"ב, שו"ת חור"מ סי' שו"ת חור"מ סי' ש"א.
3. שו"ת שם סי' ש"א.
4. ט"ו חור"מ סי' ש"א ע"פ שו"ת ריב"ש סי' ק"ח.
5. ראה חור"מ סי' ש"ח סי' א. וראה ספר משפט כהלכה סי' ש"ו סי' א.
6. שו"ת חור"מ סי' ש"ט סי' ד'.
7. שו"ת שם סי' ש"ט.
8. ובי"א חור"מ שם.
9. קצוה"ח סי' ש"ו סי' ק"ה.
10. שו"ת הל' גזילה סי' א' ע"פ ביאור ס' משפט כהלכה סי' ש"ו סי' ו' וע"ז.
11. ראה חור"מ סי' ש"ו סי' ד' (אושו ושינוי שו"ת שם סי' ש"ט סי' א.).



REB YONA POLTAVER

Reb Yona Kahn of Poltava came from a frum family, though they were not chassidim. As a young bochur, the local shochet Reb Pinye Rakshiker advised him to go learn in Lubavitch, where he studied diligently, especially the maamorim of the Rebbe Rashab. In 5696 (1936) he was appointed by the Friedliker Rebbe (then in Riga) to be in charge of all the underground branches of Tomchei Temimim in Russia. Where each bochur should learn, the teachers, the fundraising - everything was on his shoulders. He was arrested on 19 Kislev 5708 (1947), and a short time later he passed away in prison.

When people would complain to Reb Yona that the children refuse to or are scared to learn Torah, he would reply adamantly, "The children are not to blame. Their fears are very well understood. We must say Tehilim from the depths of our hearts, crying and asking Hashem to plant the desire to learn Torah in their hearts." Reb Yona was a fine example of this: Reb Berke Chein needed Reb Yona's opinion about a matter and visited him in his home. He found him crying and saying Tehilim, and when he asked Reb Yona what had happened, he responded, "I just received a letter from a cheder stating

that the children stopped coming to learn, and possibly will not continue. That is why I'm saying Tehilim."

(כפר חב"ד גליון 550)

Reb Mendel Futerfas was very involved in arranging the rescue of Lubavitcher chassidim from Russia after World War II using forged Polish passports. He once related:

During the escape of Lubavitcher chassidim from Russia after the war, we were in the city Lvov and the work was very hard. Things were tense and I had no more strength left physically. In addition, I feared for my safety and the safety of my family. Because of the situation, I decided to leave with my family on the next train, together with the big group that was planned to depart to Poland. I turned to my good friend Reb Yona Kahn and told him about my thoughts and my decision. Reb Yona listened and then said, "Look me in the eyes, Mendele, look at my eyes very well. Does that mean that mesirus nefesh also has a limit?" His words pierced my heart.

Reb Mendel ended up sending his family out, and he himself remained in Russia for another 17 years.

(ר' מענדל ע' 238)

A Moment with The Rebbe



HOW TO TELL A STORY

"It was 5720 (1960), when we were commemorating 200 years from the Baal Shem Tov's histalkus," Reb Zelig Pesach Oritz recalls. "Reb Alter Metzger and I decided to present a seminar on the Baal Shem Tov and his teachings at a college campus, geared to graduate students.

"And the Rebbe gave an example: There is a known story of the Baal Shem Tov on his travels, when the time for mincha had arrived and he had no water with which to wash his hands. The Baal Shem Tov got out of his carriage, and suddenly in the middle of the woods a stream of water appeared.

"When I asked for the Rebbe's permission, we got a green light. However, the Rebbe cautioned me that one must be careful how a story is told so that the moral is clear.

"Now," the Rebbe explained to me, "others would tell the story and marvel at the wonder. Our job is to expound upon the lesson - how important it is to wash ones hands before davening."

Sponsored in honor of the wedding of Baila Kracoff and Etan Friedman on 17 Sivan

By the Kracoff Family