

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנש

לחצן ישמעו • נשא תשע"ח • 463
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

BEING CONNECTED (I)

DIRECT LINE

The Torah repeatedly commands us to connect ourselves to *HaShem*.

Chazal ask: How is this possible? How can a mortal attach himself to *HaShem*?

They answer that this can be accomplished – by connecting to such *talmidei chachomim* who are constantly attached to the *Shechina*. When we bond with them, we are thereby connected to *HaShem*.

(כתובות ק"א ע"ב, ס' המצוות להרמב"ם מ"ע ו')

The *Midrash* says that when a person is connected to a *tzaddik*, he is helped and saved in the merit of that *tzaddik*, just as Lot was saved in the merit of Avrohom Avinu.

(מדרש תנחומא וירא פ"ט)

The Rebbe once explained that we connect to a Rebbe only because of his direct connection to *HaShem*, and not because of his qualities. In this context the Rebbe related:

Someone once asked the venerable chossid, the Rashbatz, whether the Rebbe Rashab had *ruach hakodesh*. The Rashbatz replied, "To me it makes no difference! I know that he is a Rebbe. If a Rebbe needs *ruach hakodesh*, then he surely has it, and if not, then what is there to be excited about...?"

To this the Rebbe added: "Someone once came and told me that the Frierdiker Rebbe had told him, 'Connect to me, and you will be connected to whom I am connected to.' This person was very excited, thinking that the Rebbe had meant his father, the Rebbe Rashab. I did not want to disappoint him, but in truth, the Rebbe had meant that he would be connected to *HaShem*. In truth, that is what matters to us."

(תו"מ ח"א ע' 94)

HOW TO CONNECT

When asked, "How can I connect to the Rebbe if I never met him personally?" the Frierdiker Rebbe replied:

"True *hiskashrus* is achieved by studying Torah. Studying my *Chassidus*, reading my *sichos*, joining *Anash* and the *temimim* in study and *farbrengens*, fulfilling my request of reciting *Tehillim* and keeping set times for Torah study – this is *hiskashrus*."

(היום יום כ"ד סיון)

CONSIDER

What does it mean to connect to the *Shechina* through the *tzaddik*? How does this show in the chossid?

Why must *hiskashrus* comprise of Torah and *avoda*? What does it mean to be "*mekushar*"?

In a letter to some young students the Frierdiker Rebbe wrote:

"I was pleased to hear you thanking *HaShem* for your connection with me. However, you must consider whether you are truly connected with me, or whether it is all imaginary, or perhaps it is just an empty slogan. True *hiskashrus* must bring one to action.

"You know that I demand from all *talmidim*, especially those connected with me, to bring the light of Torah and *mitzvos* into Yiddishe homes and to create there an atmosphere of Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. Have you fulfilled this? With

what are you connected to me? Until you take part in one of those activities, your words about *hiskashrus* are empty slogans."

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ח ע' רכ"ב)

FERTILE FIELD

The Frierdiker Rebbe once compared a *bracha* from a Rebbe to rain falling on a field. If the field is plowed and planted, the rain will promote growth, but not if the field lies fallow. Similarly, for the Rebbe's *brachos* to be fully effective, one must make due preparations – by connecting with the Rebbe through studying *Chassidus* and observing its customs.

(אג"ק ריי"צ ח"ד ע' רע"ט)

Reb Yankel Landau related:

At the *farbrengens* of *Yud-Tes Kislev* (1918), the Rebbe Rashab said that in the World to Come, too, one should ask to be with the Rebbe.

Fired with emotion, Reb Zalman Havlin jumped to his feet and said, "Who knows if we will be able to find the Rebbe's door?"

The Rebbe assured him, "Don't worry, you will find the door..."

At this point, I asked the Rebbe what will be when they ask me, "What connection do you have with the Rebbe? Did you do what the Rebbe told you?" And the Rebbe replied, "Indeed! One must heed the directives," but immediately added, "Yet, we have a Rebbe. [One can say:] I was together with him; I heard Torah from him, and I learned his *Chassidus*."

Reb Yankel Landau later added:

It seems to me that 'I heard Torah from him' refers to the teachings we heard from the Rebbe during his lifetime in This World, and 'I learned his *Chassidus*' refers to our ongoing study of his teachings after his *histalkus*.

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 184)

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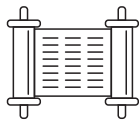
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MECHITZA AT A SHEVA BRACHOS

When is a mechitza required at a sheva brachos?

Halacha rules that at a *sheva brachos* meal with mixed seating, one may not add to the *zimun* the customary words “*shehasimcha bem’ono*” (in Whose abode there is joy), since there is no joy before Hashem when there is mingling of the genders and the *yetzer hara* is given control.¹ While some have tried to interpret this to mean that the act is permissible only that these words should be omitted,² the consensus of *poskim* is that it is halachically forbidden to have mixed seating at these meals.³ As the Rebbe put it succinctly, “Is it permissible for a Jew to, *chas veshalom*, allow the *yetzer hara* to rule?”⁴

Some *poskim* in earlier centuries have suggested that people have become more accustomed to interacting with the other gender and therefore it doesn’t lead to sinful thoughts.⁵ However, the Rebbe pointed out that this is clearly not true of the present age and this *heter* is therefore irrelevant.⁶

Poskim discuss what type of separation is required by a meal with women who are dressed modestly: Is it sufficient for the men and women to be at separate tables, is there required to be a clear barrier dividing between the tables, or is an actual *mechitza* required to prevent any visual contact?⁷

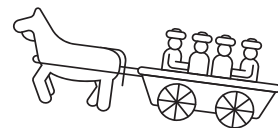
In practice, when there are only immediate family members of one of the sides by the *sheva brachos*, a *mechitza* is not required. When both sides are present, there is an issue, and one should arrange a proper *mechitza*.⁸ Some differentiate between a larger gathering where a full height *mechitza* is needed, vs. a very small one where a substantial barrier between the men and women would be sufficient to prevent interaction.⁹

Regardless, mixed seating is certainly prohibited and one may not say “*shehasimcha bem’ono*” at such a meal.

In these *halachos*, as in all areas of *tznius*, it is always incumbent not to be more lenient than the accepted custom in that location.¹⁰

1. ספר חסידים סי' שצ"ג, ב"ח אה"ע סי' ט"ב אות י"ב, ובשו"ת הב"ח (הח"י סי' נ"ה, ב"ש אה"ע סי' ט"ב סק"א).
2. שו"ת בני בנימין ח"א סי' ל"ה.
3. קיצור שו"ע סי' קמ"ט ס"א. ראה שו"ת משנה הלכות ח"ט סי' רע"ג, שו"ת אז נדברו ח"ב סי' מ"ו.
4. ממכתב ז' תשרי תשכ"ב הובא בשולחן מנחם ז"ו ע"ר כ"ד.
5. לבוש או"ח בסופו מנהגים אות ל"ו והובא בפת"ש אה"ע סי' ט"ב סק"ח.
6. אנ"ק ח"ט ע"א.
7. שו"ת ל"ח סי' רפ"א וראה שובע שמחות (הגר"י יוסף) פ"ז ה"א. וראה בס' תורת המחיצה שער ו' שאסף בטוב טעם הדעות בזה.
8. ראה אוצר הגאונים סוכה עמ' 70 וראה שו"ת ויען דוד ח"ז סי' כ"ו.
9. ראה פרדס חב"ד גל' ט"ז עמ' 74. אלא שיש להעיר על דבריו (וכמו שהעיר בתורת המחיצה עמ' קפ"ו), לכן כתבנו להקל רק בצירוף מש"כ בשו"ת שבה"ל שם.
10. ע"ד מש"כ באנ"ק ח"ט ע"ר ר"ג. וראה מכתב מו"ד הרב מ"מ שפרן שליט"א לספר תורת המחיצה, ומש"כ הרב ב. אובערלנאנדר שליט"א בעלון Compass תמוז ה'תשע"ה.

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



R. ZISKIND KURNITZER

R. Ziskind was a Rov in Kurenitz and the son of R. Zalman Kurnitzer, an outstanding *chossid* of the Alter Rebbe. He was great in *Torah* and *Chassidus* and was a devoted *chossid* of the Tzemach Tzedek. He was a *baal madreiga* and *chassidim* used to say that he had *ruach hakodesh*.

(בית רבי ח"ג הוצאה חדשה) עמ' 394, שמועות וסיפורים ח"א עמ' 263

There was once a terrible plague in Kurnitz and many children were passing away r"l. R. Ziskind asked that everyone come to the main shul on a given date to daven to Hashem to avert the decree.

The night before, he instructed his *shamash* to go to the cemetery and take a small stone from atop two different graves. The *shamash* said that he was afraid to go at night to the cemetery all alone, but R. Ziskind gave him his staff and encouraged him.

When the *shamash* returned, R. Ziskind instructed him to place one stone at

the entrance of the men’s section of the shul, and the other at the entrance of the women’s section. As people started pouring into shul the next day there was suddenly a tumult; a man had tripped over a stone and was badly hurt. When the doctor arrived the man was pronounced dead. The same thing happened to a woman in the woman’s section.

It later emerged that these two people had been sinning, and had caused the plague. R. Ziskind had seen this with *ruach hakodesh* and arranged for the sinners to be caught. This brought an end to the plague.

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א עמ' 263)

On the day R. Ziskind passed away, when no one else thought that his time had come, he asked that the doctor, a kohen (who may not be under the same roof as a deceased person), leave the house, sensing that he was about to pass away.

(חסידים הראשונים ח"א עמ' 58)

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE PREPARATION FOR SHLICHUS WORK

From the very beginning of the *nesius*, the Rebbe involved *yeshiva bochurim* in his holy work for *Yiddishkeit*: Released Time (“*mitvach sha’a*”), *mitvzoyim* and *Merkos shlichus*. However, the Rebbe consistently stipulated the rule that this participation shouldn’t be on the account of growth in learning.

There was once a *yeshiva bochur* who met outstanding success in various *mitvzoyim* projects, in which he invested his time. Seeing that his learning was suffering as a result, he

penned a letter to the Rebbe with the following question:

“Should I dedicate my time to *hafatza* initiatives, or should I devote myself entirely to *yeshiva* and rise in its levels?”

The Rebbe responded, “In order for you to be successful in *hafatza*, preparation is necessary – *Torah* knowledge, etc.”

(See the handwritten answer in *Klein-Lazar Teshura*, Sivan 5766)

