

The Weekly Farbrengens



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

540 • וירא תש"פ • לחמן ישמעון
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

REMEMBERING HIM (V)

NATURAL PRESERVATIVE

A man once asked his servant to take up a large sack of wheat to the attic for storage. When the servant reported that he had completed the task, the master asked whether he had mixed into the sack a small measure of *chumtin*, salty earth with preserving qualities. When the servant replied that he hadn't, the master bemoaned his rotting wheat: "It would have been better had you not brought it in at all!"

Similarly, when a person enters the *Beis Din shel Maala* to be judged about his conduct in This World, they ask him questions such as: "Were you honest in business? Did you await salvation? Did you study Torah earnestly?" Yet before the person is allowed to proceed further, he is prompted to answer one final question: "Was fear of *HaShem* your 'storehouse'?"

In order for a person's Torah study and *mitzvos* to be preserved intact, he must have a Fear of Heaven.

(שבת לא ע"א)

The great student of the Vilna Gaon, Reb Chaim of Volozhin, once sent a messenger to the Alter Rebbe with the following question:

In describing the need for incorporating a Fear of Heaven in one's Torah study, the *Gemara* uses a parable of adding salty earth to preserve the wheat. Now, as the *Gemara* says there, the proportion of earth to wheat is about one in two-hundred. Why, then, do chassidim dedicate so many hours to studying *Chassidus* and heightening their Fear of Heaven?

The Alter Rebbe told the messenger to return with this answer: The *Gemara* quotes the master as saying, "Did you *mix* a measure of earth into the wheat?" - since in order for the earth to preserve the wheat it must be thoroughly mixed with the wheat. Similarly, in order for the study of *Chassidus* to preserve all of a person's study and actions there is a need to 'mix' it in, and

'mixing' can take a long time...

(למען ידעו ע' 246)

KNOWING HIM

Reb Eliyahu di Vidas, student of the *Ramak* and the *AriZal*, writes in his classic work *Reishis Chochma*, that a Fear of *HaShem* can be acquired only by understanding who He is. A servant who doesn't *know* his master will not serve him properly.

(ראשית חכמה שער היראה פ"א)

CONSIDER

What does mixing entail? And why does it take so much time?

How would Ibn Ezra serve *HaShem* differently if he knew *Hi* better? Didn't he already observe all the *mitzvos* as well as he could?

Reb Avraham Ibn Ezra was traveling incognito and a certain Yid invited him in. He gave his guest a nice room and fine food, and treated him well.

Somehow word got out that the visitor was none other than the famous Ibn Ezra, so all the scholars of the town lined up outside the house to meet the great *gaon* and bask in his teachings. When the host found out who his guest was, he fell before Ibn Ezra and asked forgiveness for not having treated him properly.

"Why are you begging forgiveness?" asked the *gaon*. "You treated me wonderfully!"

"Yes," said the host, "but had I known who you were, I would have treated you even better."

Hearing this, the Ibn Ezra raised his eyes

heavenward and said, "*Ribbono shel Olam*, I too must ask forgiveness for not having served You properly. Had I known Your true greatness, I would have served you *much* better."

(טללי תשובה ע' 533)

This, the Rebbe Rashab explains, was one of the reasons for the revelation of Kabbala and *Chassidus* in recent generations. Yidden of earlier times had lofty *neshamos* and they could bring themselves to love and fear *HaShem*, unaided. With the spiritual devaluation of successive generations, the potent spiritual revelation of the *Zohar* was revealed, to make people aware of *HaShem*. Later, due to a further descent, the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe were sent to introduce people to a deeper recognition and understanding of *HaShem*.

To use a parable: A person who is healthy needs only regular food and drink to thrive; a person whose health is impaired also needs medicines. Similarly, in earlier generations, when *klal Yisroel* was spiritually healthy, it thrived on the simple meaning of the Torah. The secrets of the Torah were reserved for the spiritual elite. However, as the spiritual health of our nation gradually deteriorated, a strong medicine was needed.

(קונ' עה"ח פ"ג, לקו"ש ח"ל ע' 170, אג"ק ח"ד ע' שע"ז)

A Yid living in the times of the Alter Rebbe could boost his *neshama* to withstand the challenges of *golus* with concise and potent chassidic teachings, such as those of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid. The thorough understanding of *Chassidus*, as introduced by the Alter Rebbe in Chabad *Chassidus*, was then a luxury, a foretaste of the revelations of *Moshiach*.

However, as the darkness of *golus* has deepened, the only way to withstand and survive its increasing challenges is to study and comprehend G-dliness.

(לקו"ש ח"ל ע' 170)



Perspectives
TWENTY THREE
FREE DOWNLOAD
CHASSIDICDIGEST.COM

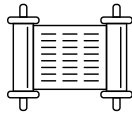
In merit of this publication's founder
ר' אהרן בן חנה
May the *zechus* of the thousands
of readers bring him a total and
immediate recovery



www.SELLMILESNOW.com
732-987-7765



Good News.
anash.org



CHECKING ON THE CHOLENT

May I lift the cover of the *cholent* on the *blech* to check on it and then close it again?

Due to the *melacha* of cooking on Shabbos (*bishul*), one may not do anything that even quickens an existing cooking process, such as stirring (*meigis*). Although this concern should only apply to food that isn't fully cooked, Halacha states that one may not stir—or ladle out from—any pot on the fire (this safeguards against stirring food that isn't fully cooked). There is a further custom, which we abide by, not to stir even fully cooked food, even off the fire, as long as it is in a *kli rishon*—e.g. the original *cholent* pot—though one may ladle out from it.¹

Replacing a pot cover while on the *blech* causes the temperature of its contents to increase and it quickens its cooking. Thus, taking a peek at the *cholent* before it is fully cooked and replacing the cover would be prohibited.² But what if the food is already fully cooked? Do the stringencies of stirring apply to covering as well?

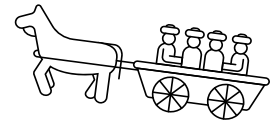
Some *poskim* hold that one may not cover any pot on the fire, as to prevent one from covering food that isn't yet fully cooked.³ Others, however, record a widespread custom to be lenient in lifting the cover of the *cholent* on Shabbos morning to check if it needs more water (see issue 374 on how water can be added). They differentiate between covering the pot and actively stirring the food, and they point out that earlier *poskim* did not mention a prohibition to cover a pot of already cooked food.⁴ In practice, it is permitted to replace the cover of a pot on a *blech* if the food is fully cooked (though there is room for personal stringency where the boiling subdued and covering it would cause it to boil again).⁵

An issue however could come up when the *cholent*, for example, contains chicken bones that people sometimes chew. The bones often remain inedible even after many hours of cooking, and covering the pot at that point will still facilitate them softening faster. (This issue would also apply if one temporarily removed the pot from the *blech* and wishes to return it in a permissible manner, ensuring all the conditions to permit *chazara* are met—one of them being that the contents are fully cooked.)

If either the local habit or his personal habit is to chew such bones, they are considered as food and it is forbidden to cause them to soften further. If neither of those apply, it is permitted. If one is unsure if the bones are already soft, one needn't be concerned unless one's personal habit is to chew them.⁶

1. שוע"ר סי' ש"ח ס"ל, ושם והעיקר כסברא הראשונה שאם נתבשרו כ"צ מותר להגיס כשהעבירן מעל האור אבל הרוצה להחמיר יחמיר בהגסה ממש (בכ"ד).
2. ראה שבת כהלכה פ"ה סי"ז ובמסומן שם.
3. שו"ת מנח"ש סי' ו', וכן הכריע בס' שבת כהלכה פ"ד ס"ד והע"ח עיי"ש.
4. ראה קצוה"ש סי' ככד בבדה"ש סק"י, ושבת כהלכה פ"ה הי' לא בשם הגר"ש וזנר ע"ה.
5. ראה פסק"ת סי' ש"ח סקנ"ח ובמסומן שם.
6. שו"ת מנח"ש סי' ו', וכן הכריע בס' שבת כהלכה פ"ד ס"ד והע"ח עיי"ש.

Our Heroes



REB MOSHE VILENKER

Reb Moshe Vilenker, a great *chossid* of the Alter Rebbe, was unique in his ability to grasp and discover depths in Chasidus. The Rebbeim spoke extremely highly of him, describing Reb Moshe as having attained very lofty levels in *avodas Hashem*. Eventually, he also became a *chossid* of the Mittlerer Rebbe.

The Rebbe writes in *Hayom Yom*: For three years, Reb Moshe Vilenker prepared himself for his first *yechidus* with the Alter Rebbe. Then he remained an additional seven years in Liozna to apply what he had discussed in *yechidus* into actual *avodah*.

Reb Aharon Strasheler told the Tzemach Tzedek, "After his first *yechidus* with the Alter Rebbe, Reb Moshe was so engrossed in thinking about the Rebbe's words, that he asked two young *chassidim*, Sholom Yanovitcher and Chaim Droier, to make sure he does not

miss any words in Maariv or Krias Shma Sheal Hamita due to his great ecstasy. He went around on such a high for about two weeks, until he returned to his regular self..."

The Frierdiker Rebbe quotes the following in the name of Reb Moshe Vilenker: One of the achievements of the Alter Rebbe was the *takana* of *mikvah*, which was widely accepted by all *chassidim*.

He then explained its application in the daily *avoda* of a *chossid*: The walls of a *mikvah* are essential to it, unlike a *sukkah* whose walls are only there to serve the *s'chach* (which is why it is not obligatory to have four complete walls). The walls of a *mikvah* must be complete; one crack creates a *shaala*. Similarly, every *chossid* must have 'walls', limiting how much he can express himself, and whom he can let in to his world.

A Moment with The Rebbe



A YID WANTS TO ACCEPT THE YOKE OF TORAH

As chief justice on the supreme court of Israel, Chaim Cohen was vehemently anti-religious in his rulings and conduct. As a *Kohen*, his marriage to a divorcee was a public desecration of *halacha*, and his name was vilified throughout the Jewish world.

In 5736 (1975), to the surprise of his friends and family, he attended the Rebbe's Simchas Torah *hakafos*. The Rebbe honored him with carrying a *sefer Torah*.

The *sefer Torah* he was given was heavy. When someone attempted to take it

from him, the Rebbe called out, "A *Yid* wants to accept the yoke of Torah upon himself!"

Although outwardly nothing had changed, his close friends noticed a transformation. He confided his feelings to them: how the 770 visit allowed him no peace of mind.

Shortly before he passed away, he wrote a will expressing his wish to be buried in a halachic manner. This came as a shock to the entire country, especially among the ardent left-wing circles.

(*Bedarkei Hachassidim*, page 228)