

The Weekly *Farbrenngen*



545 • וישב תש"פ • לחמן ישמעו •
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

CHANUKAH

A LUMINOUS TIME

In the household of Reb Dovid of Tolna, *hadlokas haneiros* was a special event. His chassidim would gather excitedly in his house to take part in the lighting of his golden *menora*, which was an elaborate piece of artistic craftsmanship. One year, on the first night of Chanukah, when the *tzaddik* was ready to light it, he turned to one of his chassidim and said, "Your wife is short, isn't she? When you want to speak to her, what do you do? Do you bend over towards her, or does she raise herself up to your height?" Without waiting for an answer, he recited the *berachos* and lit the *menora*. Needless to say, the chossid and all those present were very puzzled.

During this time, Reb Dovid's great nephew, Reb Mordechai Dov of Hornisteipol, was staying at his home, and seeing the confusion of the chassidim, he explained: The *Gemara* says that "The Shechina does not descend lower than ten *tefachim* from the ground." However, there is an exception to this rule, for the Chanuka *menora* is ideally required to be lower than ten *tefachim*, and it brings the Shechina itself here below. Reb Mordechai concluded by quoting from the *AriZal* that this is the deeper meaning of the words of the *Gemara*, 'If your wife is short, you should bend over and whisper to her.'

The following evening, at the time of *hadlokas haneiros*, Reb Dovid again made some puzzling comment to one of his chassidim. Immediately, though he had not been told of the previous night's explanation, he turned to Reb Mordechai and said, "This time, you will not understand as you did yesterday!"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 281)

In *Haneiros Halalu* we say that we have no permission to use the lights, only to look at them ("elo lir'oison bilvad"). This can mean that gazing at the lights is actually a benefit, healing any damage the eyes have incurred from seeing improper images, and protects one for the future. In fact many *tzaddikim* would sit and gaze at the *licht* as they burned.

(שו"ת שב יעקב סי' כב, זרע קודש - ראפשיץ)

After kindling the Chanukah *licht*, the Rebbe Rashab would sit near them for half an hour and learn, though at a slight distance, in order not to benefit from its light. He would learn *Gemara*, wherever he was holding in his learning of Shas.

The Rebbe explained that this practice highlights the special connection of Torah to light, and is a lesson for everyone - Chanukah is a time to increase one's learning. Furthermore, since the *Yevanim* wished to prevent us from studying Torah, we respond by increasing our study.

(רשימות היומן ע' שכג, תר"מ תשמ"ב ח"ב ע' 618)

CONSIDER

Why is it specifically the light of Chanukah that draws the Shechinah below ten *tefachim*?

How do we distinguish between "pure *Yiddishe* light" and "contaminated *goyishkeit*" when they both incorporate the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvos*?

The Rebbe explained that Chanukah is an opportune time to increase one's Torah study and *shemiras hamitzvos*, since the *nes* was related to those *ruchniyusdike* matters. One should especially upgrade one's *yiras Shomayim*, for that is the purpose of Torah and *mitzvos*, and that was what the *Yevanim* were particularly opposed to.

This we can learn from the way in which we light an additional candle every night. During Chanukah, one should increase one's contributions to *tzedaka* and study more Torah than usual.

Through the *mitzva* of *neiros* Chanukah, one is granted the light of Torah.

(התועודיות תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 67, התועודיות תשמ"ד ח"ב ע' 596)

THE WAR OF THE YEVANIM

The goal of the *Yevanim* was "*lehashkicham torasecha*

uleha'aviram meichukei retzonecha" ("to make them forget Your Torah and transgress the decrees of Your will"). As the *Midrash* says, the *Yevanim* demanded the *Yidden* write that they have no part in *HaShem*. This was a war against *HaShem*. "Let them study Torah," said the Greeks. "Let them practice the *mitzvos*, *mishpatim*, and *eiduyos*, but they must not mention that the Torah is *HaShem's* and that the *mitzvos* are the decrees of His will. Torah and *mitzvos* must be severed from *HaShem*."

(היום יום ב' טבח)

The Rebbe explained how the goal of the *Yevanim* and the *misyanim* was to remove the separation that exists between *Yidden* and *goyim*, and to educate children to be similar to the other nations. This is more severe than placing decrees against the observance of Torah and *mitzvos*, because its effect remains even after the decree is over. It begins with something 'small', through 'lighting up' the way for a child with 'oil' that is contaminated with *goyishkeit*, claiming that it produces the same light. When one educates children improperly, drawing 'light' from a source which is not pure, this leads a child to become a *Misyaven R"L*.

The lesson from Chanukah is: when lighting up *Yiddishe* homes, one must use only pure *Yiddishe* light, uncontaminated by any *goyishkeit*. By doing so, with *mesirus nefesh* (not giving in to the majority, who also appear to be stronger), we will be victorious, for *HaShem* is on our side.

(לקורש ח"כ ע' 438)

At a children's rally the Rebbe pointed out the war against the *Yevanim* in our times. During the time of Chanukah, the *Chashmona'im* withstood a tremendous challenge, battling a mighty army with *mesirus nefesh*. Today's *nisyonos* are not as formidable, but are of a different nature. The *Yetzer hara* comes to a child and tells him to spend his time playing games like others around him, thus causing him to forget to learn Torah. Or he will try to convince him to eat a candy which others are eating, even though its *kashrus* is uncertain. In such a situation, the child must act strongly, with *mesirus nefesh*, no matter how exciting or enticing the challenge is, and then he will certainly be victorious.

(ז' חנוכה תשל"ח, לקורש ח"כ ע' 483)



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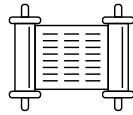
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DREIDEL FOR MONEY

Is playing dreidel for money considered gambling?

A gambler (mesachek bekuyva) is disqualified to be a witness in beis din. One opinion in the Gemara is that he is a thief, since each gambler bets money while relying on winning and doesn't intend on giving it wholeheartedly (asmachta).

Others, however, argue that gambling is not an asmachta and not stealing. An asmachta is only when the person can prevent the condition from actualizing and therefore hope to avoid paying. Gamblers, however, realize that each one has an equal chance of losing, and they concede to give the money, although they are unhappy about it after the fact.

According to the second opinion, the reason that a gambler cannot serve as a witness is because he isn't engaged in productive activity (yishuvo shel olam). One who earns his livelihood from gambling and not from a trade or business lacks a level of seriousness about life and doesn't appreciate how hard it is to earn money. Lacking appreciation for the value of money, he is subject to give false testimony.

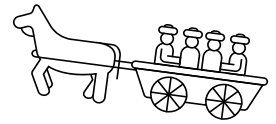
A practical difference between the two opinions is one who holds a regular job and gambles occasionally. If the issue is the lack of productivity, the gambling would be permitted, however if the issue is stealing, the gambling would still be prohibited.

The position of R. Yosef Karo in Shulchan Aruch is unclear and is understood by some as a blanket prohibition on gambling. The Rema rules like the second opinion, permitting gambling if it isn't one's primary occupation. Accordingly, Sefardim may not play dreidel for money, while Ashkenazim may do so occasionally.

To allow the custom of dreidel playing according to all opinions, some poskim recommend that all money be returned after the game, (and on Shabbos, this arrangement is required if playing with chanuka gelt or nuts). Others add that if players aren't interested in the money and are happy for the other winner, it is not considered gambling according to all opinions. Based on this idea, poskim allow playing with nominal amounts of money. Moreover, if the agreement is for all the awarded money to go to tzedaka, some poskim permit even with large amounts, since tzedaka acquires money even when donated with an asmachta.

Some are accustomed to play with items other than money (e.g. chocolates, almonds) to avoid introducing children to the notion of gambling.

- 1. משנה סנהדרין כד ע"ב.
2. כ"כ הטור בחו"מ סי' לד בביאור הא דאינו עוסק בשיבו של עולם. וראה רש"י על המשנה שם שאינו יכול להיות יר"ש.
3. י"א שכל הדיון רק אם נפסל לעדות ולכו"ע אסור - ראה תשובות ריב"ש סי' תלב ועוד. וי"א שכ"ה דעת הרמב"ם הל' גזילה פ"ו ה"א (בבירור דעתו שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ז חו"מ סי' 10).
4. ראה שו"ע חו"מ סי' ש"ע ס"ב-ג ובמקומות שנשמנו בנו"כ שם. וראה בשו"ת יביע אומר שם. ופוסקים אחרים ביאורו באופ"א שמתיר אפ"ל לכתחילה משחק בקוביא במקום שיש לו אומנות אחרת.



RASHBATZ

R. Shmuel Betzalel Sheptel, known among chassidim as Rashbatz, was one of the prominent chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek, Rebbe Maharash and Rebbe Rashab. In the publications "HaTomim", the Frierdiker Rebbe describes his incredible journey to Chassidus Chabad and the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe Maharash entrusted him with the education of his son, the Rebbe Rashab, who later entrusted him with the education of his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe. In the year תר"ס (1900), he was appointed as the leading mashpia of Tomchei Temimim, a position which he kept until his last day. He passed away on the 15th of Sivan, תרס"ה (1905) and was buried, according to his wish, within 50 amos of the ohel of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rashbatz once asked his mentor R. Michel Opotzker to show him klipah (impurity). At first R. Michel would not agree, but after much pestering R. Michel agreed to show him. The Rashbatz would later regret this and said that it would have been better had he not seen klipah.

(רשימו"ד החדש עמ' 239)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related that as a child he had the habit of looking out of the window. There was nothing essentially wrong with this, since there was nothing to wrong to see in the streets of Lubavitch. Yet, his mentor the Rashbatz would tell him: Rather than sitting in the home and looking out, it would be better for you to stand outside and look into the Rebbe's holy home.

The Rebbe applied this in practice: Being a "Torah yid" means not just to study Torah, but for the Torah to teach the person so that it becomes the person's identity. When one is fully engrossed in the study of Torah, he doesn't look at what is around him.

(ספה"ש תרצ"ו עמ' 10, תו"מ חמ"ה עמ' 117 ואילך)

The Rashbatz valued time exceedingly. During the time when he mentored the Frierdiker Rebbe (then a young bochur), he would sometimes wake him up at 1 am saying, "Wake up, wake up, vehinei Hashem nitzav alav", Hashem's presence is upon us.

(רשימות היומן עמ' ש"פ)

A Moment with The Rebbe



MINGLE AMONGST CHASSIDIM

Reb Mottel Altein a"h, a devoted shliach, rov, and educator in the Bronx, NY, was suffering from severe heart pains.

doctor's advice, and offered some of his own guidance, "You should mingle more amongst Chassidim."

The Rebbe had just officially accepted the nesius, and so after consulting the appropriate doctors, he turned to the Rebbe for a bracha.

The Rebbe explained the reasoning: "The Zohar states that the heart senses one's anxieties. Your heart is pained by your lack of spending time with Chassidim; it intensely feels the deficiency."

In a 7 Adar II letter, the Rebbe responded that he should follow the

(Schurder Teshurah, Adar 5767)

