

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

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."

(סה"ש 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."

(תר"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 יהודיע, 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*.

(סה"ש 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 זוין תורה ע' 527)

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, ו', 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*.

(תר"מ חכ"ז ע' 103)

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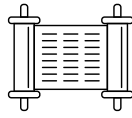
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FRIDAY CELEBRATIONS

May I arrange a business brunch on Friday morning?

One of the highlights of Shabbos is the Friday night *seuda*. To ensure that a person will enter Shabbos with an appetite and enjoy the *seuda*, Chazal prohibit making a large celebratory meal anytime on Friday, even in the morning.¹ Another reason given is that one should have ample time on Friday to prepare for Shabbos.²

An ordinary weekday meal (i.e. your average lunch) is permitted until sunset, yet it is a *mitzva* to refrain from beginning any meal involving more than two ounces of bread or pastries when less than three seasonal hours are left to sunset, so that you enter Shabbos with a desire to eat.³ This doesn't apply to snacks, though whenever you eat throughout the day, you should keep the night *seuda* in mind and make sure to leave an ample appetite for the *seuda*.⁴

Even a *seudas mitzva* may not be scheduled for Friday if it is not intrinsically associated with that day. For example, a *sheva brachos* meal or a *siyum masechta* may not be held on Friday,⁵ and a delayed *pidyon haben* should be performed without a meal.⁶

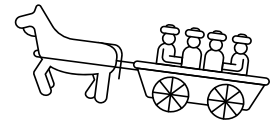
A *seudas mitzva* whose proper time is on Friday may be held. Examples include a *bris* (even a late one, since it may not be postponed unnecessarily), a *pidyon haben* on the thirty first day, and a *bar mitzva* celebration on the birthday. These meals are permitted even if they will impact the night *seuda*, since this feast is also a *mitzva* and its time is on Friday. (If he cannot eat on Friday night, he must have an extra meal on Shabbos day.) Yet, it is preferable to start these meals at least three seasonal hours before sunset.⁷

While the Alter Rebbe mentions limiting invitations to ten people besides immediate relatives, the prevalent custom is to be lenient provided that the meal begins before midday or at least before the tenth hour.⁸

Therefore, a business brunch may be held on Friday morning or early afternoon, as long as it is not a lavish meal and one will still have an appetite in the evening.

1. שוע"ר או"ח סי' רמ"ט ס"ה.
2. ראה מג"א או"ח סי' רמ"ט סק"ד.
3. שוע"ר שם ס"ט, ובקצוה"ש סי' ס"ט סק"א (פת ומזונות יותר מכביצה).
4. ראה משנ"ב שם סק"ז.
5. ראה קצוה"ש סי' ס"ט הע' ז'.
6. ראה שוע"ר שם ס"ח.
7. שוע"ר שם ס"ז-ח. ובקצוה"ש סי' ס"ט הע' ג' (בר מצוה).
8. שוע"ר שם ס"ז וקו"א סק"א וראה שם בסוף דבריו ש"ל שכל המוזמנים יכולים להגיע. ובפרט בסעודת ברית שבד"כ אינה שונה כ"כ מסעודת חול רגילה. וראה שלחן הטהור סי' רמ"ט ו"ז ופסק"ת סי' רמ"ט שיתחיל קודם חצות.

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



REB AVRAHAM BER YIRMIYA'S OF BABROISK

Reb Avraham Ber Yirmiya's was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash and primarily the Rebbe Rashab. The Frierdiker Rebbe spent much time with him and writes very highly of him. He was a great *maskil* in *Chassidus*, a *baki be'Shas*, and fluent in *Kabbala* and *Chakira*. He was also a great *ba'al midos tovos*. Reb Avraham Ber earned his livelihood from bookkeeping.

From a young age, Reb Avraham Ber was very inquisitive and would frequently ask his father questions about Hashem's existence. His father was worried that his inquisitive mind might bring him to doubts in *emuna r"l*, so he took him to the Rebbe. He wanted the Rebbe to *bentch* him in this regard.

When they came into *yechidus*, the Tzemach Tzedek took out his handkerchief and wrapped it over his hand, and moved his hand back and forth. He asked the boy, "What do you see?" "I see a handkerchief moving from side to side," the boy answered. "And who is moving the handkerchief?" the Rebbe continued. "The Rebbe's Hand," the boy answered. "But you do not see the hand?" the Rebbe asked and continued, "Which means, that things that cannot be seen with the human eye are also true and correct..."

From then on, the questions of

Avraham Ber disappeared. He grew up a great *maskil* and a chossid. Here is an excerpt of the fascinating and moving recount of Reb Avraham Ber's impressions of his visit to Lubavitch as a child:

"...'Remember well,' my father tells me, 'the *bracha* that the Rebbe gave you. *Im Yirtzeh Hashem*, when we come home you will tell your mother everything in detail.' I did not get a chance to prove to my father and show him that I remembered the Rebbe's words, for at that moment Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther- Dishe's came to my father and took him to the table to partake in the *marshke* and cookies that were brought.

"My father handed me a cookie as well. I loudly made a *bracha 'borei minei mezonos'*, and my father and those who stood nearby answered 'amen'. Reb Aba Dovid the Chazan and Reb Boruch Shimon the Bookbinder praised my father for bringing me to Lubavitch. "You are very wise," Abba Dovid the Chazan said to my father, "for taking your Avraham Berel to Lubavitch. In this day and age, one has to train the children in *Chassidus* from the day they stand on their feet."

"In my opinion," added Reb Boruch Shimon, "the wisdom is more with *her* than with *him* (referring to my mother). She is truly wise. She brings in guests and she is a *Chassidische* women."

(התמים כרך א' ע' 214)

A Moment with The Rebbe



BETTER BRING THEM TO FARBRENGENS...

Reb Dovid Weitman relates a scene he witnessed:

A Lubavitcher lawyer in S. Paulo Brazil was involved in translating the Rebbe's letters on matters of Torah and science to Portuguese. We planned on publishing the letters in a book, geared for university students.

When he traveled to the Rebbe for 10 Shevat 5740 (1980), he proudly presented the proofs to the Rebbe at a group *yechidus*, and said that he hopes

to have a published version ready for the upcoming 11 Nissan.

The Rebbe accepted the package, but was not satisfied.

"I would rather you bring the scientific students, to whom this book is geared, to *farbrengens*. At a *farbrengen* they will learn that the Torah's truth is not dependent on science: it surpasses it by far."

(Weitman Teshurah, Elul 5766)