

The Weekly Farbrengens



RELIVING THE PAST (I)

CONNECTING WITH THE PAST

The Torah urges us to remember the past and learn from it, and to learn from the older generation on how to conduct oneself.

(האזינו לב,ז)

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes: The *avoda* of learning from the ways of *talmidei chachomim* used to be accomplished at *chassidische farbrengens*, where *eltere* chassidim would relate *sippurim* (stories and recollections) about *tzaddikim* and chassidim. They would discuss the lesson to be learnt and arouse their listeners appropriately, ensuring that the arousal would be translated into action. Telling *sippurim* was therefore cherished by our Rebbeim and by other great *tzaddikim* of *Chassidus*.

On one occasion the Frierdiker Rebbe said: Remembering 'the days of old' was always precious to *chassidim*. Homes used to be saturated with *middos tovos* and *ahavas HaShem*, *ahavas haTorah* and *ahavas Yisroel*, and no matter whether people were rich or poor, their doors were always open for *chachomim*.

In the past, he added, *eltere chassidim* would speak on their own without being asked. This was not mere storytelling; rather, a way of life was shared.

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ו ע"ה, לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 234)

In the year תש"ב (1942), the Frierdiker Rebbe once said, "Today, when the present is unpleasant, we must live with the past."

The *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin asked, "Is this the same as learning from the past?"

The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "This is something different – to live with the past means to relive an incident which has once been experienced. The chossid Reb Dovid Tzvi Chein once cried out, 'Oy Rebbe!' and fainted. When roused, he related that he had recalled a certain *yechidus* with the *Tzemach Tzedek*."

The Frierdiker Rebbe concluded, "If a negative experience impacts a person, surely so with a positive experience."

(סה"ש תש"ב ע' 92)

THE FOCUS OF THE STORY

Once, after returning from the *kever* of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Mendele of Rimanov prided himself – the Baal Shem Tov had appeared to him. When word about this reached the *Degel Machane Efrayim*, who was the Baal Shem Tov's grandson, he was disturbed by it. Reb Mendele therefore set out to make a reconciliation.

CONSIDER

What's the difference between storytelling and sharing a way of life? Or between learning from the past and living with it? Why is it necessary to analyze a *chassidische maiseh*? Why isn't it enough just to get inspired?

When he arrived, the *Degel Machane Efrayim*, without inviting him to sit, turned to him and asked, "Where am I now?"

Referring to where the *tzaddik* was then situated in his thoughts, Reb Mendele said, "In Yerushalayim."

"And now?" the *Degel Machane Efrayim* continued to ask.

"In the *Beis HaMikdosh*."

Impressed, the *Degel Machane Efrayim* then asked if he had truly seen the Baal Shem Tov. When Reb Mendele confirmed that he had, he inquired about what the Baal Shem Tov had said, and was told: "He is disturbed that people only recount his miracle stories and not the stories of *yiras Shamayim* from which lessons can be learned."

Hearing these words, the *Degel Machane Efrayim* invited Reb Mendele to sit down at his side.

(ליקוט חדש ע' קעח)

UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON

The Frierdiker Rebbe said, "All matters of *Chassidus* are reached through hard work. Even a *chassidische* story requires toiling to derive the lesson in understanding and *avoda*."

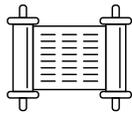
(לקו"ד ח"ב ע' 706)

The *Tzemach Tzedek* would often send *yungeleit* to the esteemed chossid Reb Hillel Paritcher to be directed in the ways of *Chassidus*. Reb Hillel would entrust the guidance of each newly-arrived *yungerman* to two senior *yungeleit*, who in addition to explaining the basics of *Chassidus*, would most importantly tell them stories about the Rebbeim and about chassidim of former generations. In fact, they would retell each story several times until it penetrated the *yungerman* and he knew its details perfectly. They would then ask what lessons – in correcting one's *middos*, in *yiras Shamayim* and in *hashgacha peratis* – could be learned from the story. They would urge the *yungerman* to toil, as one does in serious study, in order to discover the lesson, and they would help him in this. Finally, they would tell him what lessons they had been told by their own *madrach*, Reb Hillel.

On the first three *Shabbosim* of each newly-arrived *yungerman*, Reb Hillel would relate a story in addition to the *Chassidus* that he delivered. After the story they would sing *niggunim*, and then discuss the lessons to be taken in *avoda* of the heart and the mind.

Reb Hillel explained the reason for this procedure: "The beginning of *avoda* is 'Adam ki yakriv mikem,' – a person has to offer something of himself to *HaShem*. However, in order to enable a person to know he is an *Adam* and how an *Adam* should conduct himself, the above *avoda*, in *Sefer Vayikra*, is preceded in the Torah by the *sippurim* of *Bereishis* and *Shmos*."

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע' נ"א)



DEFINING A TREE

What bracha do we make on a pineapple, banana, or papaya?

A tree is usually easy to identify, but sometimes its halachic status as a tree, to determine the bracha of its produce, is not as clear. Within the category of perennials – plants which produce fruit yearly without needing to be replanted – some lose only their leaves during the winter but their branches and trunk remain, while others lose their branches, and some even their trunk.

According to one view in *rishonim*, all that matters is for the root to remain from year to year. Others require the trunk to remain, while a third view maintains that if the branches don't last from year to year, it's a bush and not a "tree."

Since the bracha of *ha'adama* can cover *ha'etz* but not the other way around, the Alter Rebbe holds that *ha'adama* should be made on the produce of all three categories, reserving *ha'etz* for only when the trunk and the branches remain from year to year. Still, if one recited *ha'etz* on a plant when only the roots remained, they are *yotzei b'dieved*.¹

A second criterion for a "tree" is that the fruit grows from branches that extend from the main trunk. If the leaves and fruit grow directly from the trunk, the bracha is *ha'adama* and *ha'etz* would not be effective even *b'dieved*.² Additionally, many *poskim* hold that if a tree produces fruit in its first year of planting – unlike most fruit trees that take several years – it's not considered a tree for *brachos*.³

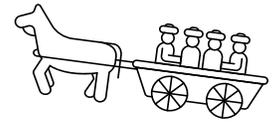
Banana plants mostly die each year and regrow from the root that remains in the ground. In addition, bananas grow directly from the trunk. Similarly, pineapple grows from the stalk and the original stalk doesn't produce fruit again the next year. Papayas grow in the first year of planting, and more importantly, grow directly from the base. Their bracha is therefore *ha'adama*.⁴

Some argue that the requirement for branches only applies to small bushes and not to a full-size tree like the banana or papaya plants, thus papayas would possibly be *ha'etz* and bananas would just depend on the first *machlokes* regarding trunks that regrow each year (and *b'dieved ha'etz* would be effective).⁵ Others dispute this distinction, and this seems to be the Alter Rebbe's opinion.⁶ Accordingly, *ha'etz* wouldn't work even *b'dieved*.

Strawberries plants mostly die in the winter and regrow the next year, thus they are *ha'adama*. Blueberries and blackberries, on the other hand, grow on branches that remain year-round and are therefore *ha'etz*.⁷

1. סדר ברכה"נ פ"ו ה"ו. וראה צ"צ חידושים ברכות פ"ו ע' 20.
2. סדר ברכה"נ פ"ו ה"ו.
3. רדב"ן.
4. ראה קצה"ש ס"ל מ"ט סק"ח. וראה שם שבדיעבד בך העץ יצא יד"ח. לגבי אננסים - ראה שערי ברכה ערך אננס.
5. קצה"ש שם.
6. ראה ערוה"ש סי' ר"ג ס"ד. הצמח צדק בחידושי לברכות (פ"ו דף י"ג, ג"ד"ה ועל פירות הארץ) כותב על דברי אדה"ז הנ"ל: "ומה שכתב רבינו ז"ל בסידור דביענין שיוציא פירות מענפיו ולא מהעיקר, זהו על פי התוספתא שכתב הרא"ש".
7. ראה סדר ברכה"נ פ"ו ה"ז, וראה ערך אוכמניות בשערי ברכה ובהערות שם.

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



REB PERETZ CHEIN

Reb Peretz Chein was a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe, and was among those who influenced the Tzemach Tzedek to accept the *nesius*, and he was also instrumental in the appointment of the Rebbe Maharash as Rebbe. He merited seeing six Rabbeim, from the Alter Rebbe, who he saw while still a baby, through the Frierdiker Rebbe, when the Rebbe was in his boyhood years. Reb Peretz was a rov in Nevel, then in Beshenkovitz and later in Tchernigov. He passed away 26th of Iyar תרי"ג (1883).

things: (1) 'I have been sent from shamayim to tell you that your *chazarah* of what you have already learned is more precious than the learning for the first time.' (2) '*Machshavos zaros* during *davening* is like *piggul*' (a *karban* which was brought with the incorrect intentions and therefore invalid). (3) She also revealed to me all major occurrences that would take place until the end of my life. Now, since the last of those occurrences has happened today, I know that my end is near."

Hearing this, Radatz left the room white and trembling.

The Mittlerer Rebbe once told Reb Peretz to perform "*Tikun Chatzos*." Later on, when he came for *Yechidus*, he told the Rebbe that he had stopped, and explained: "To say *Tikun Chatzos* with a truthful heart, I am incapable of, and to lie to myself and say it anyway, this I do not want to do..." The Rebbe accepted his argument.

On Shabbos, Reb Peretz *davened* for exceptionally long amount of time, and sent a message that the *seudah* should start without him. Everyone understood that something is about to happen, and they ate their *seudah* quickly.

During the weeks before his passing, Reb Peretz continued with his *avoda* as usual. Three days before he passed away he called his son Radatz and told him:

Having finished their *seudah*, many people gathered to hear the *davening* of Reb Peretz. The recitation of *Shema* and *Boruch Sheim* alone extended for an hour and a half. After finishing *davening* he inconspicuously sent Reb Shalom Reb Hillel's (the *talmid* of Reb Hillel Paritcher) to visit a nearby *shul* (since he was a *kohen*). As he finished *Shmoneh Esreh* of *mincha* his *neshama* departed.

"Many years ago my mother appeared to me and told me three

(שמרו"ס ח"א ע' 276)

A Moment with The Rebbe



LIKE A TREE

"A person is likened to a tree," the Rebbe told Reb Mottel Altein a"h in *yechidus*.

of a young sprout last forever – crooked for life.

"If a dent is made in an aged tree, it will heal. The trunk will straighten itself out and return to its original state.

"Similarly, for a child, even an experience in kindergarten leaves a lasting impression. Therefore, it is so imperative that boys and girls schools are separated, in different buildings, even from a young age."

"However, a young tree is different. An imprint on the roots

(Schurder Teshurah, Adar 5767)