

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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RELIVING THE PAST (III)

CHOOSING A STORY

The Rebbe taught: We should tell children stories from the *Tanach* and from *Chazal*, and true stories of *tzaddikim*, and not relate *bubeh maisehs*, as some people do. Every story should have a lesson of goodness and *kedusha*. Telling a story without a purpose is not the *Yiddishe way*.

(שיחור"ק תשמ"א ח"א ע' 246, תר"מ ח"ל ע' 52)

When at *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed Reb Abba Pliskin to *farbreng* with the *temimim* at 770, that quietly-spoken *chossid* asked what he should talk about. In reply, the Rebbe spoke of the need to repeat *sippurim* of *chassidische Yidden*. The Rebbe emphasized that he meant stories specifically about *chassidim*, for when hearing *sippurei tzaddikim*, people can think that they are too far removed from them.

(היכל מנחם ח"ב ע' רכא)

AUTHENTIC STORIES

When telling a story, the Frierdiker Rebbe was particular to record all the details, even those not directly related to the subject of the story. On one occasion he said, "The Alter Rebbe was very particular that a story should be told with exact details."

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע' סה, לקו"ד ח"א ק ע' א)

The *chossid* Reb Shlomo Yosef Zevin authored a rich collection of *chassidische* stories. Upon receiving the book, the Rebbe wrote him a lengthy reply about his responsibility to retell only reliable stories from trustworthy sources.

Particularly in our confused generation, the Rebbe pointed out, we must be exceedingly careful to transmit a story with precise details and not leave room for possible misunderstanding. Unfortunately, the circulation of inaccurate *chassidische* stories in recent times has led many to false conclusions about *Chassidus*. Such stories sometimes imply that the hero of the story conducted himself contrary to *halacha* or contrary to the principle of *lifnim mishuras hadin* – both of which are out of the question – and usually, by

correcting some detail, the difficulty falls away.

To highlight his points the Rebbe pointed out two such stories in Rabbi Zevin's book:

The first is a story about how the *tzaddik*, Reb Aharon Leib of Premishlan, was reprimanded by Reb Elimelech of Lyzhnsk for not wanting to learn Torah from Eliyahu HaNavi. Reb Aharon Leib excused himself by saying that he wished to toil in Torah. This implies, said the Rebbe, that Eliyahu came to the other *tzaddikim* to spare them effort, since they did *not* wish to toil in the study of Torah. The truth, the Rebbe explained, is that those *tzaddikim* also toiled; however, they saved their efforts for more advanced levels of study, beyond what Eliyahu HaNavi had taught them.

CONSIDER

What harm is there in telling:
an invented story? Or a true
story that carries no lesson?
Or an inaccurate story?
When should stories of
Rebbeim be told? And when
are stories of *chassidim*
preferable?

The second is a story of a man who, shortly after his father's passing, dreamt that his father ordered him to convert. When the dream repeated itself several times, he visited Reb Zusha of Hanipoli who instructed him to open the grave, since there was surely a *tzeilem* inside. They followed his instructions and found some coins with crosses that had mistakenly fallen inside during the burial. Now, concludes the Rebbe, since it is forbidden to open a grave, it must be that the coins were in the vicinity of the grave, and not in the grave itself.

(אג"ק ח"א ע' רסח, הסיפורים בסיפרי"ח זוין ע' 372, 118)

Every year on *Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, a *melava malka* would be held in support of the Crown Heights *gmach*. The custom developed that during the Rebbe's *Shabbos farbrengens* the head of that *gmach* would don a *shtreiml*, and before inviting all those present to the gathering, he would tell a story.

One year the *gabbai* Reb Shimon Goldman related a story about a *chossid* of Reb Nochum of Tchernobyl, who would always host the *tzaddik* when he visited his town. On one visit, the *tzaddik* sent him a message that he must bring him two thousand rubles, otherwise he would not stay at his home, and the *chossid* would even be forbidden to visit the Rebbe or participate in his *tefillos*. The *chossid* had no way of collecting such a sum, and so, to his terrible dismay, he was unable to see his Rebbe throughout his entire stay in his town. A short while later a miracle occurred to him, and he received exactly two thousand rubles. When he presented it to the Rebbe he was told to keep it, and the Rebbe added, "You were destined to be wealthy. However, the only way you could receive it was if you would plead for it. That is why I caused you all that pain."

The Rebbe questioned the viability of this story: Would Reb Nochum Tchernobyler cause his *chossid* to endure such suffering for such a long time?! Why, even a coarse person (*grobber yung*) would experience unbearable pain watching everyone going to hear the *tzaddik's* *davening* while he is forced to remain outside!

It must be, concluded the Rebbe, that the *chossid* was merely held back from joining one *tefilah*, and shortly afterwards the *tzaddik* returned to stay at his home. This pain was surely enough to arouse the *chossid* to *daven* to *HaShem* for the wealth.

The Rebbe then added, "It should not come as a surprise that a story could become so mistaken. We often see how when a story is transmitted from one person to another, each narrator tries to embellish it, at times at the cost of ruining it all ..."

(תר"מ תשמ"ז ח"ב ע' 501)

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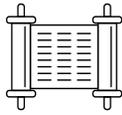
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GOOD NEWS.



APPROPRIATE DAVENING ATTIRE

If I am without a hat and a minyan is starting, should I wait until I get my hat or daven with the minyan?

The posuk instructs us to prepare ourselves before greeting Hashem, "Hikon likras Elokecha Yisroel." Chazal apply this to properly preparing oneself before davening to Hashem. This includes dressing in a respectable manner and wearing a gartel (even if there is already a separation between one's heart and private area). Additionally, since davening is in the place of a korban, it is appropriate to wear fine clothes, resembling the bigdei kehuna.

Shulchan Aruch rules that one must dress for davening the same way one would for greeting an important person. Poskim specify the wearing of a hat and a jacket for men, either since that is how one dresses when in public or since that's the appropriate way to stand before a dignitary.

A practical difference between these two categories would be a casual hat (e.g. baseball cap), which one would wear in public but not in front of an honorable person. Moreover, in locales where people don't regularly wear hats outdoors, the first reason may fall away.

In the present age, many people don't wear a hat even in front of important people. Some poskim therefore write that a hat is not halachically required, while others argue that one cannot bring proof from people nowadays who lack self-respect.

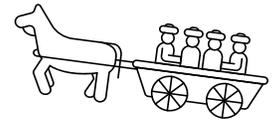
What about wearing the jacket on one's shoulders without inserting the arms in the sleeves? Some point to hilchos Shabbos where it says that one may walk outside wearing a jacket in this manner, demonstrating that this is considered "wearing" the jacket. Others argue that while it may be considered "worn," it doesn't satisfy the requirement of "Hikon," as one stands in front of important people.

The minhag of chassidim is to wear a respectable hat and jacket during davening, and a gartel from after marriage. Married men daven Shacharis with their tallis over their head. Besides for the halachic reasons, a hat and jacket correspond to the two levels of the neshama - Chaya and Yechida, and donning the gartel represents the initial step of entering davening mode. Minhag Chabad is that bochurim don't wear a gartel outwardly until marriage.

If one is without a hat and jacket and he usually davens with them, he should not daven without them unless he won't have a minyan later on.

- 1. ראה שו"ע אורח סי' צ"א ס"ב וס"ו וסי' צ"ח סי"ד.
2. ראה שו"ע אורח סי' צ"א ס"ה. בחיי אדם כלל כב ס"ח (כובע בראשו כדרך שהולך ברחוב), אבל במשנ"ב סי' צ"א סק"ב (ולא בכובע הקטן .. אין דרך לעמוד כן לפני אנשים חשובים).
3. ראה שו"ת ציץ אליעזר ח"ג סי"ג.
4. ראה משנ"ב שם, שו"ת דברי יציב, ושו"ת דעת נוטה שאלה ק"ב.
5. ראה שו"ע אורח סי' ש"א סל"ד ובס' תורת הישיבה פ"ה ס"ג הע' 4.
6. שו"ת אור לציון ח"ב פ"ג אות ג'. קובץ

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



REB YISROEL NOACH OF NIEZHIN

Reb Yisroel Noach, the fourth son of the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek, was born in the year 5575 (1815). In his first marriage, he was the son-in-law of Reb Yekusiel Zalman Valles, son-in-law of the Mitteler Rebbe. After his first wife passed away he married the daughter of Reb Nochum, son of the Mitteler Rebbe. He lived in Lubavitch where he served as the rosh yeshiva in his father's yeshiva (founded in 5602 (1842)). The Tzemach Tzedek also appointed him to respond to many of the halachic queries sent to him, leaving only the more difficult ones for the Rebbe to answer himself. In 5628 (1868), two years after his father's passing, he moved to Niezhin and became a rebbe. He passed away on the first day of Chol Hamoed Pesach 5643 (1883), and is buried in Niezhin. He was the last of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons to pass away.

Reb Yisroel Noach would cry a lot, especially during davening. Not even knowing why, those davening along with him would also cry uncontrollably.

He was once standing in the adjacent

room before going into yechidus with his father and noticed the sefer Chovas Halevovos on the table. When he opened the sefer, it opened to Shaar Haknihah (Gate of Submission) and tears flowed freely from his eyes. By the time he went into yechidus, the pages were soaked.

Reb Mordechai Yoel Duchman once asked Reb Yisroel Noach, "Since you are a leading tzaddik of the generation, when you cry, you draw down bitterness into the world. Why do you do so?" Reb Yisroel Noach replied, "But you know Mordechai Yoel, for us it's a different type of tears."

(רשימות דברים עמוד 149, לשמע און עמוד 62)

When Reb Yisroel Noach needed to build his house in Niezhin, he called together a few baalei batim to hear their opinion. After they offered their suggestions he explained, "My father the Tzemach Tzedek said that when one needs to do something and is unsure how to do it, he should ask the opinion of the baalei batim and do the opposite."

(לשמע און ע' 10)

A Moment with The Rebbe



BAR MITZVA IN AMERICA

In days bygone, when a boy became bar mitzva it was a time of growth. His family, rebbeim and elder chassidim would impress upon him the magnitude of accepting the yoke of mitzvos, and with chassidische warmth, at a festive farbrengen, a boy became a bochur.

Refusing to accept the status quo, the Rebbe expressed deep disappointment in how bar mitzva events had evolved, with American chassidim being influenced by local secular customs. The Rebbe writes in a note of 8 Nissan 5721 (1961):

"I am generally displeased with the bar mitzva celebration setup, for a number of reasons:

"(1) I am not happy with the custom that the bar mitzva bochur serves as a chazan and as the ba'al koreh.

"(2) Also, the waste of money on renting a hall and the like isn't appropriate.

"(3) It would be proper that the bar mitzva bochur shares divrei Torah, and not a speech, etc."

(Shmukler Teshura, Adar 5764)