

The Weekly *Farbrengens*

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CONFRONTING THE ENEMY

THE CITY'S INHABITANTS

In *Kohles*, Shlomo HaMelech gives a *moshol* to life: There is a little city with few inhabitants (that's the body and its faculties) and a powerful king surrounds it with traps (that's the *Yetzer HaRa* and his *aveiros*). In the city lives a poor, wise man who saves the city with his wisdom (the *Yetzer Tov* with his *teshuvah* and *mitzvos*). Yet later, no one recalls that man (they don't remember to consult the *Yetzer Tov* whenever the *Yetzer HaRa* confronts them).

(קהלת ט', י"ד-ט"ו, נדרים ל"ב ע"ב)

The Raza, Reb Zalman Aharon, elder brother of the Rebbe Rashab, told the following *mashal* to a young man he met who would struggle with his *Yetzer HaRa* by fasting:

There was once a *Rosh HaKahal* (community leader) who served his community for many years and then moved to another city. During a visit to his hometown, he was pleasantly surprised to find a new *mikve* built, though he wondered where they had found the funds to build it. When he met the new *Rosh HaKahal* he inquired about this and was told: "Very simple. We evaluated the financial ability of each townsman, and made a mandatory tax accordingly. Most of the rich paid the full required sum right away, but some of the poorer inhabitants were not able to, so they gave some belongings to be kept as collateral until they would be able to pay."

"You made a big mistake," said the former *Rosh HaKahal*. "The ones who have the means should have been told to give more, and you could have perhaps demanded some more from the average citizens as well. However, the poor should have been left alone, for you will never see their money, and now, all you've got is their belongings, with which you can't do much."

The Raza explained: "The body is likened to a little city where both the wealthy and the poor live. The eyes and ears, appointed to see and hear, and the brain and mouth, which control thought and speech, represent those who are rich. The poor members of the body are the digestive organs and the like. It is better to give up on the demands placed on the

poor, and instead, increase the demands put on the rich, namely, the eyes, ears, brain and mouth. The results will then be far greater, far more positive!"

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 271)

CONSIDER

Why is it easier to tax the 'poor inhabitants' (the stomach) than the 'rich' (the eyes and ears)?

What does it help to be troubled by one's own conduct if he anyway has no choice?

REALIZING THE CHALLENGE

When he was a child, Reb Eliezer of Dzikov was once scolded by his father, Reb Naftali of Ropshitz, for misbehaving.

"It's not my fault!" the little boy argued. "I have a *Yetzer HaRa* that tries to tempt me."

His father replied sharply, "That's no excuse! In fact, you should take a lesson from the way the *Yetzer HaRa* carries out his duty, getting people to commit *aveiros*, exactly as he was commanded to do."

The child countered, "True, but the *Yetzer HaRa* doesn't have a *Yetzer HaRa* to tempt him from not fulfilling his duty!"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 35)

The *tzaddik* Reb Yitzchok of Vorky once awoke in middle of the night and felt a desire to take a sniff of snuff. While in bed, he was unable to reach the box and debated with himself whether to get up for it or not. If he rose to get it, he would be giving the *Yetzer HaRa* the opportunity of being able to convince him to fulfill his desires. Yet, if he would not get out of bed, he would still be giving into his *Yetzer HaRa* by falling prey to laziness, a trait he might later possibly apply when serving *HaShem*. After weighing this, he decided: "I will get up and get the box, but I will not

fulfill my desire to smell it."

(ליקוט ספורים)

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Reb Shmuel Groinem, the revered *mashpia* in Lubavitch, once visited Reb Shmuel Ber Borisover and, standing behind the door, he overheard him telling a local butcher: "The *Mishna* says that whoever acts as if he is lame or blind will not die of old age until he becomes lame or blind. This can be understood positively, as follows: A person who pretends to be lame, meaning that he does not go to inappropriate places, or a person who pretends to be blind, not looking where a *ruchniusdiker* danger is involved, will not die until *HaShem* helps him become 'lame' or 'blind,' so that he will not even desire such things."

(למען ידעו ע' 311)

Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev warned his chassidim never to wear hats with visors. He explained that when a Yid looks toward *Shamayim* it reminds him of *HaShem* and is therefore a tremendous *segula* for *yiras Shamayim*. However, if one's hat has a visor, his gaze toward Heaven is blocked, and he misses out on a *hisorerus* of *yiras Shamayim*.

A time came when Czar Nicholas decreed that only hats with visors could be worn. Yidden would therefore hide their *shtreimelach* and walk outside wearing hats with visors, and when they reached a secure place they would take out their *shtreimelach* and put them on.

When this decree reached Berditchev, people there too began to wear hats with visors. One day Reb Levi Yitzchok saw a chassid wearing a hat with a visor, and it was apparent to him that this individual was quite comfortable with his new look.

The *tzaddik* approached him and asked: "Why in the middle of the *Tochacha* (the stern warnings to the Yidden) is it stated that they will be punished for leaving *HaShem* 'with joy'? These words come to teach us that even if one is *chas veshalom* forced to stray from the path of *Avodas HaShem* for reasons beyond his control, he should at least not be *happy* about it..."

(סה"ש תרפ"ו ע' 96)

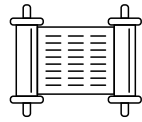


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WORKING BEFORE MENORAH LIGHTING

May I stay at work even after nightfall and light when I get home later?

The opportune time for lighting the menorah is immediately when it gets dark. Some define this as *tzeis* (nightfall), while others define it as *shkia* (sunset). The Chabad custom is to light by *shkia* and ensure the lights burn until half an hour after *tzeis*. Only when this isn't possible, is one allowed to light later, until midnight or in the presence of wake family members.¹

Chazal prohibited initiating various activities within half an hour before the time when one is supposed to light the menorah, lest one become engrossed and miss lighting the menorah in the appropriate time.² According to the Chabad custom mentioned above, these prohibitions begin half an hour before *shkia*.³

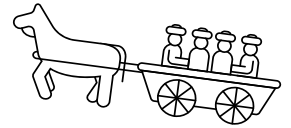
During this time, one may not eat more than a *kebeitza* (egg size) of bread or cake. However, drinking non-alcoholic beverages and snacking on fruit and other food is permitted.⁴ It is likewise forbidden to begin "working" during this time. This includes any form of activity that may cause a person to lose sight of the *mitzva* at hand, including any form of business, manual labor, or paperwork which can extend into the time for lighting.⁵

If one began any of these activities before this time, he may continue until the actual time to light the menorah, at which point it is preferable to stop and light. With regards to Torah study, one may even begin during this half hour, but once the time to light arrives, one should stop and light.⁶

One should endeavor to light the menorah as soon as the time arrives, but nowadays when we light inside, waiting for the entire family to be present takes precedence over lighting on time.⁷ In a situation when one is waiting for a while to light the menorah, he should appoint a *shomer* (or an alarm) to remind him to light and that way he can learn Torah in the meantime.⁸ (See issue 381 regarding a *shomer* for *maariv*.)

An employee who can't leave work early enough to light on time, may continue working as long as he began when it was permissible. In this case, he should appoint a *shomer*, and he could rely on the fact that nowadays the time for lighting extends later in the night, and the obligation of menorah is *midrabanan*.⁹ A wife who is waiting for her husband to come home and light, may do work during the time she is waiting, since her obligation is intertwined with his.¹⁰

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' תרע"ב ס"א וס"ב ומשנ"ב שם, וראה סהמ"נ חב"ד ע' 70-71 ולוח כולל חב"ד.
 2. שו"ת מהרש"ל סי' פ"ה. משנ"ב סי' תרע"ב ס"ק י'.
 3. ראה שעה"צ סי' תרע"ב סק"ד.
 4. שזה לא נק' אכילה.
 5. ראה פסק"ת סי' תרע"ב.
 6. ראה משנ"ב סי' תרע"ב ס"ק י' ושעה"צ שם.
 7. ראה משנ"ב שם.
 8. ולהעיר מהמשמע בשו"ע ר' סי' תל"א סי"א שהשומר מהני דווקא לפני הזמן, וי"ל ששם חייב לבדוק מיד בתחילת הזמן משא"כ כאן שיכול לחכות לכל בני הבית, ובנוסף כאן שמחכה לבני ביתו יש לדמות למש"כ שם בס"ט בנוגע חבורת לומדים שבוודאי לא ישכחו.
 9. בנוגע שומר בדבר הרשות נט"ג חנוכה פ"ד וראה שם הע' ז'.
 10. ס' מאי חנוכה ע' יז-יח.



RADATZ

The *gaon* and *Chossid* R. Dovid Tzvi Chein, known amongst *chassidim* as the Radatz, was a son of the great *Chossid* R. Peretz Chein of Chernigov. Radatz was one of the extraordinary *chassidim* of the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe. He was an unusual *gaon* in both *nigleh* and *Chassidus* and served as the *rov* in Chernigov. In the year תרפ"ה, he traveled to Eretz Yisroel and passed away about nine months later on the 24th of Kislev, תרפ"ו (1925).

There was one man who would always eat at the Radatz's Shabbos table. He was the man who no one would invite over. This simple fellow worked as a janitor in factories, and there was generally an unpleasant odor emanating from him.

When the Radatz was challenged that having such a person over at the Shabbos table was disrespectful to Shabbos, he replied that there was no greater respect for Shabbos than inviting over the downtrodden and forlorn. As Hashem says: With whom will I dwell? - The downtrodden and forlorn.

(למנחמי עני' 47)

During World War I, many town *rabbonim* were conscripted into the Russian army. One Pesach night, they were given leave to attend a seder, and a group of these *rabbonim* came to the home of the Radatz. He shared with them this novel thought:

"Dovid Hamelech says, *Gam ki eileich b'gei tzalmaves lo ira ra ki ata imadi* - 'even as I walk in the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You Hashem are with me.' This could also be read as follows: *Gam ki eileich b'gei tzalmaves lo ira* - even when I am in a deadly situation, I do not fear for my own sake, *ra ki ata imadi* - what is the tragedy? That Hashem is with me in this exile.

"This is like the son of a great and compassionate king who was taken captive. The noble prince loves his father more than he loves himself, and all his tribulations are nothing in comparison to the pain he feels knowing of the anguish it causes to his dear father, the king."

Suddenly, the Radatz pulled himself together, clapped his hands and exclaimed: "Nu nu! Pesach, Pesach!" And as his face shone with the light of Pesach, he began reciting *kiddush*.

(למנחמי עני' 28)

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE DOORS ARE OPEN

During one *yechidus* of the *hanholas hayeshiva*, on 5 Teves 5725 (1964), the *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin reported that *bochurim* were active in *hafotza*, hoping the Rebbe would derive *nachas* from it.

The Rebbe replied, "This is a way to comfort me?! Since 5715 the doors have been open for Moshiach through *hafotzas hamayonos*, yet there is a lack of vessels!"

Reb Shmuel didn't give up. "Hundreds of *yungelait* stand at the Rebbe's *farbrenge...*"

"If these two hundred *yungelait* would leave the *farbrenge* and spread *Chassidus*," the Rebbe responded, "Moshiach would certainly already have arrived! This is feasible, since today there are no true opponents to *Chassidus*; one simply must learn *Chassidus* himself and disseminate it *chutzah*..."

"The *niggun* 'Uforatzo' spread some years ago, but there is still work. The doors opened ten years ago - and they are still open!"

(*Otzar Hachassidim NY, page 230*)