

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש
למען ישמעו • מקץ תשפ"ב • 647
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

HONORING SEFORIM

HOLY GARMENTS

Seforim are considered "the garments of *HaShem*," no less. Indeed, *Chazal* teach us that a person who treats them with respect will be respected by others; the reverse applies to a person who does not.

(אבות פ"ד מ"ו לפיה"ג, ס' חסידים סי' תתקטז)

Reb Shimon ben Tzemach, author of the *Tashbetz*, treated *seforim* with such loving care that he brushed the dust off them with a special silk cloth. In this merit, his reward was that the *seforim* which he authored would never be infested with bookworms.

In all the libraries that the Rebbe Rashab visited, he found that even when the *seforim* standing immediately near the *Tashbetz* were affected with bookworms, that *sefer* alone stood untouched.

(שנה בשנה תשכ"ג ע' 490)

Respect for *seforim* includes: placing them in a respectable bookcase, keeping them off the floor or a surface on which people are sitting, depositing torn pages in *sheimos*, setting them right side up, and keeping them at a distance from anything unclean.

(רש"י ור"י אבות ד,ו, ר"ח שער היראה פט"ו, א"ר סי' מ סק"ה, שוע"ר סי' מ"ה ס"ג, פסקי הסיידור סוף הל' תפילין)

The *Maharil* – a *Rishon* who is a major source for many current *minhagim* – used to show his respect for *seforim* by telling anyone carrying a *sefer* to pass through a doorway ahead of him. Whenever a *sefer* fell, he would lift it up and kiss it.

(ליקטי מהר"ל סי' צח, צט)

Reb Yehuda HaChossid, a contemporary of *Rambam*, gives us numerous instructions on caring for *seforim*. For example: If a *sefer* and other valuables fall to the ground, one should lift the *sefer* first. Similarly, if liquid spills on a *sefer* and on other items, one should dry the *sefer* first. A *sefer* should not be placed near the edge of a table where it is likely to fall, and when handing someone a *sefer*, one should do so with his right hand. Finally, a *sefer* should not be used for any mundane purpose.

(ס' חסידים סי' תתקכג, תתצד, תתקכב, קט)

LOVING REVERENCE

A *sefer* should of course be positioned on the shelf right side up, not upside down.

It once happened that a certain fellow took a *Gemara* down from its shelf for reference and unknowingly replaced it upside down. Suddenly it crashed to the ground. He picked it up and replaced it – once again upside down, and the same thing happened. After this repeated itself again, he realized that something was amiss. He checked how he had placed it, and once the *sefer* was positioned correctly, it remained in its place.

(קב הישר פנ"ד)

CONSIDER

To whom is one showing esteem when according respect to a *sefer*?

Why is closing a *sefer* and returning it to its place an act of respect towards the *sefer*?

The Rebbe related: I was once in the presence of the Friediker Rebbe when another person present got up to leave without closing his *sefer*. Though the Friediker Rebbe was always careful not to trouble others, he called the man back and gently reminded him to close his *sefer*. After the man left I asked the Friediker Rebbe, "I know how careful you are not to trouble others. Perhaps you could have instead asked me to close the *sefer*?"

The Friediker Rebbe answered that aside from the importance of closing the *sefer*, it is preferable that the learner close the *sefer* himself.

(שיח"ק תשכ"ד ע' 246)

Reb Yechiel Meir of Gostynin was a student of Reb Menachem Mendel of Kotzk and later a chassidic leader himself. While studying in Kotzk he had a stealthy custom: Late at night, under cover of

darkness, he would steal into the *beis midrash* unnoticed and return every *sefer* to its proper place.

(היהודי הקדוש ע' יב)

After recovering from an illness, Reb Elimelech of Lyzhensk related what he had then seen in the higher realms:

"As I approached the entrance to the heavenly *yeshiva* of Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg, I met Mordechai, the late *seforim*-binder of our town. Knowing him to be a simple, unlearned individual, I asked him how he had merited reaching such a lofty sphere.

He told me how at his judgment, the *Beis Din shel Maalah* brought all the torn pages that he had collected over the years from the damaged *seforim* and placed them on the scale. This had earned him a direct entrance to *Gan Eden*. However, since he was so lacking in learning, he first had to be taught Torah, beginning with *nigleh*, the revealed dimension of the Torah, and now he was ready to study *nistar*, the Torah's hidden dimension – at the *yeshiva* of Reb Shmelke."

(אוצר הסיפורים ח"ה ע' כט)

SEFORIM AS PROTECTORS

The Rebbe taught that in addition to their obvious benefits, *seforim* protect a home and those who live in it.

The elder chossid, Reb Foleh Kahn, related: In the year תרע"ו (1915), when the Rebbe Rashab left the village of Lubavitch, he left behind a full crate of valuable *kisvei yad* (manuscripts) written by many Rebbeim and *gedolei Yisroel* in the Moscow home of a chossid by the name of Reb Zelka Parsitz. When I once visited Reb Zelka with another few *temimim*, we opened the box and saw what it contained. Reb Zelka told us that his home had been searched by the dreaded Secret Police numerous times, yet its officers had never once opened the box.

He added, "This box saved me a number of times."

When he was eventually asked to return it to the Rebbe, he was saddened, and said, "Who will now protect me at home?"

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 213, שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 116)

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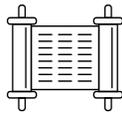
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MOVING THE MENORA

I lit my menorah by the front door and it's blocking the entrance. Can I move it right away?

The Gemara discusses what is the primary component of the *mitzva*—setting the menorah in its place (*hanacha*) or kindling it (*hadlaka*)? If it's the former, it doesn't matter who lights it; the main thing is who places it. But the Gemara concludes that the *mitzva* is the kindling, as evidenced from the *bracha* we make, "*l'hadlik ner Chanuka*."¹

Since the *mitzva* is fulfilled at the time of lighting, it doesn't matter how the menorah ended up in its location; you needn't put it there yourself. But, on the other hand, it must already be in a proper location at the time of lighting, since that is when the *mitzva* is fulfilled.²

Before lighting, there must be enough oil in the menorah to last the required amount of time. If it was lit with insufficient oil, one must extinguish the flame and relight it without a *bracha* after adding more oil.³ Similarly, if one negligently lit his menorah in a place where the wind will surely blow it out, he doesn't fulfill the *mitzva* if the wind ends up blowing it out within the required time.⁴

If one lit the menorah inside and then placed it outside of his front entrance, he did not fulfill his obligation, since onlookers may think that he originally lit the candles for his personal needs. You must light it in the same place where you plan for the menorah to remain.⁵ If one lit the menorah while holding it and didn't put it down, he does not fulfill his obligation. If, however, he put it down soon after, some *poskim* hold that is fine, but many *acharonim* argue that here too it appears he originally lit it to use its light. In practice, he is *yotzei b'dieved*.⁶

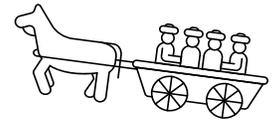
What about if one lit indoors and then moved it elsewhere in the home?

The consensus of the *poskim* is that *b'dieved*, since it is all considered the place to light, it doesn't appear like he lit in an improper place and the *mitzva* is fulfilled. Still, *l'chatchila* one should light the menorah in the exact location where it will stay, so that his intent behind lighting is abundantly clear. This applies to the menorah in shul as well.⁷

Sefer Haminhagim records that sometimes the menorah would be moved a *tefach* or two from its place to allow the Frieddiker Rebbe to light, and he nonetheless recited a *bracha*. This indicates that while one should endeavor not to move it all, when needed, minor movement is allowed.⁸

1. גמ' שבת כ"ג ע"א, שו"ע או"ח סי' תרע"ה ס"א.
 2. ועד"ו לגבי נרות שבת - ראה רמ"א א"ח סי' רס"ג ס"ו י'. וראה מג"א שם סק"ג.
 3. שו"ע או"ח סי' תרע"ה ס"ב ומשנ"ב שם סק"ח. ובסיבה למה אינו מברך - ראה חמד משה סי' תרע"ג סק"ט שתלוי בב' הטעמים, וראה תוס' שבת כ"א ע"ב ד"ה דאי לא.
 4. משנ"ב סי' תרע"ג ס"ק כ"ה. וראה שו"ת הר צבי ח"ב סי' ק"ד והמצויין בפסק"ת סי' תרע"ג.
 5. שו"ע או"ח סי' תרע"ה ס"א.
 6. פרמ"ג שם.
 7. משנ"ב סי' תרע"ה סק"ז ע"פ פרמ"ג א"א סק"ו.
 8. ספר המנהגים - חב"ד ע' 70, והדיוק בגליון התקשרות גל' 358 הע' 27.

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



R. BEREL KALISKER

A native of Kalisk, R. Berel was a *chozer* and a *shadar* for the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbeim considered his *hanachos* as particularly reliable. R. Berel lived in Lubavitch near the Tzemach Tzedek, and he learned with the Rebbe Maharash in his youth. In 5633, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and settled in Chevron, where he passed away on 7 Teves, 5660.

window was installed so they could ask the Rebbe whenever they had a question.

One Motzaei Shabbos, R. Berel visited the Tzemach Tzedek and they got involved in a deep discussion of Chasidus. Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka waited for a long while to serve her elderly husband *melava malka*, but when it got late and the conversation wasn't finishing, she retired for the night.

When the Tzemach Tzedek was looking for someone to learn with his son, the Rebbe Maharash, he tested several *yungerleit* but didn't find what he was looking for. R. Avrohom, the rov in Rudnia, recommended his brother R. Berel, who learned Gemara and *meforshim* with the Rebbe Maharash for 12 years. They sat in the next room from the Tzemach Tzedek where a

The next morning, she saw that the food was never served, and she asked her husband why he couldn't ask R. Berel to serve him the food. "Berel is a *talmid chochom*," the Tzemach Tzedek replied, "and one may not make use of a *talmid chochom*!"

(נודע בשיעורים ע' 52)

A Moment with The Rebbe



WHEN A MOTHER GIVES HER CHILDREN

When *mitzva* Chanukah first began in 5734 (1973), the Rebbe rewarded all the activists with Chanukah *gelt* if they showed a note from Tzeirei Chabad stating that they participated. Thus, two lines formed, one to Reb Dovid Raskin of Tzeirei Chabad for the note, and then another to the Rebbe.

him with a beautiful gaze of *nachas*.

Reb Moshe Yitzchok Hecht came with the group of *bochurim* that assisted him in New Haven. He told the Rebbe that the *bochurim* had worked with all their energy. The Rebbe said to him, "There is no need to exaggerate..."

Even when the *mazkirus* asked for Chanukah *gelt*, the Rebbe declined to give them until they produced the note.

His brother Reb Yaakov Yehudah Hecht was very active in orchestrating the *mitzva*. When he arrived, the Rebbe said to him, "In truth you deserve more than one dollar, but when a mother gives her children, she gives equally to all."

When one elder *chossid* approached, holding the note, the Rebbe beamed with delight. As he shuffled along, the Rebbe followed

(Diary of Reb Berel Shur a"h; Sipuro Shel Chag, Chanukah, page 234)

PHONE 347.471.1770

EMAIL INFO@MERKAZANASH.COM

WEB WWW.MERKAZANASH.COM

