

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

WIELDING WORDS (I)

WORKING WONDERS

Chazal say that even the *bracha* of an ordinary person should not be considered insignificant, for Dovid HaMelech and Daniel, no less, were *bensched* by ordinary people and the *bracha* bore fruit. When Dovid HaMelech bought the land for the Beis HaMikdosh from a *goyishe* farmer, the farmer *bensched* him that the plague inflicting the Yidden should stop, and his *bracha* was fulfilled. Similarly, Daniel was *bensched* by King Daryavesh (Darius) that *HaShem* should protect him from the lions in the den, and so it came to be.

(מגילה טו ע"א)

Chassidim of Reb Mendel Horodoker, among them the Alter Rebbe, once sat together and *chazered* the Torah that they had recently heard from their Rebbe. After reviewing it numerous times, they discussed related matters in *kedusha*, and one of them brought out some *masheke*.

A chossid present, who had been suffering from a sickness for which the doctors had not found a cure, wept and asked those present to *bensch* him with a *refua shleima*. Some of the others queried: "Do we have the power to give a *bracha*?" Some even rebuked him for believing in simple chassidim like themselves, for *brachos*, they held, are only in the power of *tzaddikim*. Without relenting, the chossid continued to plead from the depths of his heart. Thinking there was nothing they could do, his friends began singing *niggunim*, in the hope that this would calm him.

"*Shal*" the Alter Rebbe called out. The *niggunim* stopped abruptly, and the chossid too fell silent. "My brothers and friends, have you forgotten the message that came down from *Shamayim* to the *Chevraya Kaddisha*?" (That is, the Holy Brotherhood, as the *talmidim* of the *Maggid* were known.) "That which a *farbrengen* can accomplish, even Malach Michael cannot accomplish."

The Alter Rebbe explained that when *HaShem* sees Yidden *bensching* each other lovingly, He fulfills their requests immediately. The chassidim were aroused, and with brotherly love they *bensched* their fellow chossid with a *refua shleima*.

(אב"ק מהור"י צ"ח ג' ע"ת"ב)

In Lieple there lived a well-to-do chossid of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, who would learn Chassidus in depth, *daven* at great length and would be among the first attendees at all *chassidishe farbrengens*. At one point, however, he

reconsidered the hours he spent at *farbrengens*. "They don't allow me to learn Chassidus in depth," he mused to himself. He decided to continue contributing towards the expenses of the *farbrengens*, but rather than attend, to stay home and learn Chassidus.

As time passed, one misfortune after another befell him. His business declined, his *shalom bayis* was disturbed, and members of his family fell ill with various illnesses. He realized that these were not mere coincidences, and went to seek the counsel of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. Pouring out his troubled heart to the Rebbe, he wondered why he was encountering so much hardship. "Tell me about your daily conduct," the Rebbe said.

The chossid described his everyday routine, mentioning also his decision to forgo the *farbrengens* in order to use the time more efficiently for learning.

"That is the reason for all your difficulties," said the Rebbe. "Participating in a *chassidische farbrengen* is very beneficial. When chassidim gather together, say *LeChayim*, and wish one another *Lechayim tovim uleshalom*, they are in fact showering vital *brachos* upon each other. *Lechayim*, life, contains the *bracha* for physical health; *tovim*, goodness, implies wealth, and *uleshalom*, peace, indicates harmony in the home. By avoiding the *farbrengen*, you are forgoing these *brachos*."

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' קל"ח, וע"ש להנוסח 'לחיים ולברכה')

CONSIDER

What is so powerful about a *bracha*: the words themselves or the good intentions behind them?

How can an unintended negative comment have such repercussions?

THE MISFORTUNE OF NEGATIVITY

Chazal say that "a covenant has been made with the lips" – the speech of a person has the power to make things happen. A person should not predict something bad, for then he is giving power to Satan.

The Torah forbids cursing another Yid. One reason is that speech has such a lofty source that it has the power to affect even outside occurrences. This power is heightened by the level of the person speaking.

(מועד קטן יז ע"א, ס' החינוך מצוה רלא, ראשית חכמה שעה"ק פ"ג)

Once, the *amora* Shmuel went to console his brother Pinchas who had lost a child. Seeing that his fingernails had grown long, Shmuel encouraged him to trim them. Pinchas responded, "If you would lose a family member, would you still belittle this act of mourning?"

Soon after, Shmuel lost a family member, and when Pinchas came to visit, Shmuel said with frustration, "Do you not realize the power of words?!"

(מועד קטן יז ע"א)

Yehuda, the son of Rabbi Chiya and son-in-law of Rabbi Yannai, would learn all week in *yeshiva*, returning home on Friday night. As he approached his home, a pillar of fire could be seen leading the way. One week he was so engrossed in his learning that he stayed longer than usual, so his father-in-law said in jest, "Who knows if he is still alive?"

His words had an effect and the son-in-law passed away.

(כתובות טב ע"ב)

It is *parkened* in the *Shulchan Aruch* that one must be very careful with what he says. One should not jokingly comment about a living person, "If he would be alive, he surely would be here already," for this can *ch"v* harm that person.

(שו"ע אדה"ז הל' שמירת הגוף והנפש סי"ב)

R. Yehuda HaChossid writes: One should not say to someone behaving inappropriately, "You are acting like a *galach*," for this may cause this to actualize in this person or one of his descendants.

(ס' חסידים ס' תעט)

Even when reciting a *possuk* or *mishna* which includes a negative statement, one should change the wording so that it will not imply a curse.

Thus we learn that Rav Kahana sat before Rav Yehuda and repeated the words of the *mishna*, "May *HaShem* smite you." Rav Yehuda instructed him, "Say 'smite him' instead, and do not curse me."

(שבועות לו ע"א)

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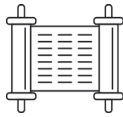


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NEIGHBORING STORE

A store next door to mine was sold to someone else. Can I object to the sale after the fact?

The Torah says, "You must do what is fair and good in the eyes of Hashem." Based on this, Chazal outlined the rules of bar metzra, principled on acting fairly with others. When a parcel of land goes for sale, the neighbor (bar metzra) has the first right to purchase it. His life will be much easier if his properties are together, while others can purchase elsewhere as well. Most poskim hold the same right applies to the sale of homes as well (see issue 517).

If someone else purchased the property without the neighbor's proper consent, the neighbor has the halachic right to oust him by compensating him the purchase price. The deed will be written in the neighbor's name since it's as if the original buyer bought it for the neighbor.

To activate his right, the neighbor must come to beis din soon after the sale, i.e., within the amount of time it takes to bring money and call the buyer to a din Torah. After that time, it isn't fair that the buyer will need to leave after getting established there.

If after the sale took place, the neighbor couldn't come by circumstances beyond his control or a mistaken assumption, he may activate his right later. But if at the time of the actual sale he wasn't able to buy it—e.g., he was a child, ill, or out of town—then he has no right to claim later. It isn't fair to prevent the seller from selling his field just because the bar metzra is not available at the time. (Yet, poskim write that he should ideally let the relatives know about the pending sale and give them the opportunity.)

When could the neighbor claim he wasn't aware of the sale?

Some rishonim hold that as long as the neighbor didn't see the buyer working the property, he can say he didn't know and activate his right. Others hold that he only has a claim if the sale was conducted in secret, but once it becomes public knowledge, the neighbor only has the above-mentioned window of time. Any sale finalized with a document and witnesses is considered public unless effort was made to conceal it. Some argue that if the neighbor must see the buyer using it, people may be afraid to buy any property as a bar metzra may show up later. In practice, the halacha rules that a normal sale is considered public.

If a property is auctioned off, the one who offers the highest bid has the right to the property and not the neighbor. If the neighbor only found out afterwards, he can activate his right if he is willing to match the highest bid.

Whenever there is a doubt after the sale, the buyer is at an advantage, since he has the chazaka. But at the time of the initial purchase, the neighbor is at an advantage.

6. ראה טור ושו"ע שם סל"ב וסל"ד. וראה סמ"ע ושי"ך שם.
7. ראה ט"ז שם.
8. ראה ספר משפט כהלכה ח"א ע"ק פ"ד.
9. ראה שו"ע ורמ"א שם סמ"ה.

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

R. AVROHOM YECHZKEL ARLOZOROV

R. Avrohom Yechezkel Arlozorov (5600-5660) was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, and later traveled to Kopust and Lubavitch, to the Rebbe Rashab. He served as Rov of Charkov for 30 years and was one of the prominent Rabbonim of his time. He wrote extensive notes on the margins of his seforim on all topics, and some of his teshuvos in halacha appear in seforim of his contemporaries and various journals.

The Friediker Rebbe recalled:

When I was with my parents in Yalta, at the age of 6, my father, the Rebbe Rashab, explained to me that being a chossid isn't just about davening in a particular nusach, but about one's conduct while eating, conversing, davening and learning.

On our return trip to Lubavitch, we stopped off in Charkov for Lag Baomer, and my father farbrenged before a large group of chassidim. They were all packed into one room, and R. Yechezkel's dignified appearance with his gold rimmed glasses made an impression upon me.

My father explained to them what a chossid is, and I was shocked that older people with white beards didn't know this yet... I couldn't contain myself, and when I danced afterwards with R. Yechezkel Arlozorov and R. Osher Grossman, I told them that my father had already explained it to me in the previous winter.

R. Arlozorov burst out laughing and said to me, "Your father told you what

a 'chossid' is, while to us he explained what a 'chossid' is." I couldn't fathom the difference between the two. On the train ride home, my father gave an analogy of a small bush and a large fruit tree, which I could comprehend.

Over the following years, my various melamidim and the chassidim I spoke to elaborated on what a chossid is. I developed a multifaceted image of a chossid: maskil, oved, baal midos tovos, who fasts and speaks little.

Nine years later, in Sivan 5656, while I was with my parents and my teacher the Rashbatz at the datche, R. Yechezkel Arlozorov visited. While sitting in the garden one day with the two chassidim, I reminded R. Arlozorov of that conversation, and with his incredible memory, he repeated it to Rashbatz. An extensive discussion ensued, and they told many stories that express what a chossid is.

Rashbatz, who was educated by elder chassidim and permeated with the ways of Chassidus, saw the essence of a chossid in even the ordinary and simple ones. R. Arlozorov, who excelled in pilpul and logic, analyzed and defined a chossid's character.

R. Arlozorov remembered the Lag Baomer farbrengen perfectly, and the next morning at 7 am, after Shachris and breakfast, he repeated it for me in detail, until lunch time. I asked Rashbatz for a few days off to write it all up.

(ס' השיחות ה'ש"ת ע' 28)

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE CERTIFICATE IS NOT THE ISSUE

In the year 5712 (1962), the Rebbe began encouraging older bochurim to study practical halacha and get a semicha ordination. At the 24 Teves farbrengen, the Rebbe explained why:

"In past generations one would only receive semicha if he were very proficient in Torah. However, these days it has become the custom to learn the basics and get semicha. This is the approach I want the bochurim to take.

"Knowing practical halacha is imperative for a Yid in order that he shouldn't blunder

in any area, for example the intricacies of Hilchos Shabbos.

"The paper certificate is not the issue, rather the knowledge. However, technically, in order to know that a bochur has done his work, he should get the paper."

The rosh yeshiva HaRav Piekarsky was present at the farbrengen. The Rebbe turned to him at one point and told him to make sure the bochurim learn the material well before they get the semicha. "Give it to them in the end, but make sure it doesn't come easy..."

(Toras Menachem, Vol. 4, Page 259)