

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • חוקת תשפ"ב • 678
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

PREPARING FOR SHABBOS

PLANNING FOR THE QUEEN

It is a *mitzva* to honor the *Shabbos* by personally shopping, preparing food and preparing one's home for *Shabbos*. Even a person who has many servants to do this work should endeavor to fulfill the *mitzva* himself. One who never does such work, or who dedicates all of his time to studying Torah, should nevertheless personally do at least one activity in honor of *Shabbos*.

Even the Great *amoraim* devoted time every week to prepare their homes for *Shabbos*. Rabbi Avahu would sit on an costly ivory stool and fan the fire for *Shabbos*; Rav Safra would singe the head of an animal that had been slaughtered for *Shabbos*; Rava would salt a fish; Rav Papa would plait the wicks; Rav Chisda would slice vegetables; Rabba and Rav Yosef would chop wood; and Rav Zeira would kindle the fire.

Rav Nachman ben Yitzchok would organize his house. He would take out the weekday things, and in honor of *Shabbos* would bring in fancier items, clothing and food. In this way he showed that *Shabbos* was important to him, and was worthy of much effort.

The Alter Rebbe, upon quoting this in Shulchan Aruch, concludes:

"Everyone should take a lesson from them. No one should say, 'How can I compromise my honored status?' For it is an *honor* to show honor to *Shabbos*."

(שבת קיט ע"א, שו"ע ר"ס רנ"א ובקו"א שם סק"ב)

As a young man, Reb Yaakov Yitzchak, later to become the Chozeh of Lublin, arrived in Mezritch on a Friday afternoon. He went into the kitchen and told those who were cooking the *Shabbos* food: "If you don't mind, I am accustomed to personally taking some part in the preparation of the fish that I am to eat on *Shabbos*." He then took up a piece of fish, salted it, put it down, and went his way.

The *talmidim* of the Maggid who saw this were somewhat surprised, and asked each other: "What makes this young man think that precisely this piece of fish is going to be served to him? They are all being cooked together, and it will all be served by the waiters!" And so they laughed off the newcomer's action.

One of those *talmidim*, the Alter Rebbe, decided to quietly tie a short piece of thread to that piece of fish, in order to be able to track it.

At the *Shabbos* table, he watched the waiters closely, and sure enough, the marked piece was being served to some stranger who was seated next to the Chozeh. But no sooner did he take it up than he was overcome by a feverish trembling, and was unable to eat. He pushed his plate aside—right in front of the Chozeh, who duly ate it.

And that is how the Alter Rebbe removed all doubts as to the stature of his new colleague.

(סיפ"ח זוין תורה ע' 220)

CONSIDER

*Why do we clean and dress
up for Shabbos?
Does the Shabbos need it?*

Interestingly, it was also the practice of the Maggid to prepare his own piece of fish.

(לקו"ד ח"ג ע' תקכח)

On *erev Shabbos* one should set his table and tidy the entire home so that it will be organized and neat when he returns from *shul*. This is regarded as honoring *Shabbos*. We have a custom of keeping the table with a tablecloth the entire *Shabbos* day.

(שו"ע ר"ס רכ"ב ס"א)

DRESSING FOR THE OCCASION

Everyone is obligated to have nice *Shabbos* clothing, according to his means. There is a *possuk* that instructs us to honor *Shabbos*, and Chazal explain that this refers to respectable clothing, which honor a person.

Even if someone is alone he should wear his *Shabbos* clothes, because they are worn not for the sake of other people but in honor of *Shabbos*.

(שו"ע ר"ס רכ"ב ס"ג, קיצו"ש ע"י עב סט"ז)

It's also a *mitzvah* to wash oneself in hot water and to cut one's nails in honor of *Shabbos*. If one's hair is long he should cut it, so that he will not enter *Shabbos* unkempt.

(שו"ע ר"ס רכ"ב ס"א)

Even in prison the Alter Rebbe made a point of wearing special clothes for *Shabbos*. How did he manage that? He would tear two thin strips off his handkerchief and tie them around his socks, to serve as garters.

(ס' התולדות אד"ר ע' קמז)

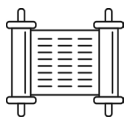
The Rebbe Maharash had a specific *niggun* for every occasion. When putting on his *Shabbos* clothes he would sing a particular *niggun*, and when he took them off after *Shabbos* he sang another.

(ליקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' קג)

One Friday, shortly after the Alter Rebbe moved to Liozna, chassidim found the Alter Rebbe lying on the floor, his hands and feet spread out. While he was in that rapturous state of *dveikus*, they heard him utter words from *Shir HaShirim*: *Moshcheini, acharecha narutza* – "Draw me to You; we will run toward You!"

The following evening, on *Motzaei Shabbos*, they again found him on the floor. This time he said other words from *Shir HaShirim*: *Pashateti kutonti, eichacha elbashena* "I took off my weekday garb; [now that *Shabbos* is over,] how can I put it on again?"

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"ב ע' 37)



ABORTION IN HALACHA

What is the Torah approach to abortion?

Abortion is a serious prohibition which can be a degree of murder and depriving the life of the fetus. According to majority of poskim it is a Torah prohibition.¹

According to all poskim, it is absolutely forbidden to perform an abortion due to financial circumstances, age of the mother or research purposes.²

If the mother's life is in danger – even a *safek sakana* – all agree that the life of the mother comes first,³ since the life of the fetus is still incomplete.⁴ This is also applicable if the danger is a result of the mother's poor physical health or poor emotional health (e.g. suicidal).⁵ Obviously, whenever treatment is available, that allowance does not apply.

May the mother put her life in danger to carry the baby to term? Poskim say that if the mother wishes to risk her life for her baby, she may do so.⁶

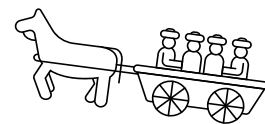
While abortion is prohibited at all stages of gestation, there are differences in the severity according to the development of the fetus. Generally, the categories are: up to 72 hours, until 40 days, and after that. In certain extreme situations, some poskim will allow aborting the developing fetus before 40 days – end of the 7th week – when it hasn't fully developed into a fetus.⁷ Therefore, if doctors rule that an abortion is necessary, it should be done before then.

If the baby will not survive the pregnancy or live for only a few hours, some halachic authorities allow aborting the fetus.⁸ Yet, if it will live a short life or it will have a health defect or down syndrome, it is nonetheless considered a full "life" and may not be aborted.⁹

In all cases, it is critical to discuss the particular circumstances with a local rov who is familiar with the halachos and sensitive to the family's situation.

1. ראה סנהדרין נ"ט ע"א, תורה ליכא, ותוס' חולין ל"ג ע"א ד"ה אחד. וראה שו"ת צ"א ח"ז סי' מ"ח פ"א.
2. שיעורי תורה לרופאים ח"ד ע' 260, צ"א ח"ז סי' מ"ח.
3. ראה רמב"ם הל' רוצח פ"א ה"ט. שו"ע חו"מ סי' תכ"ה ס"ב.
4. רש"י סנהדרין ע"ב ע"ב ד"ה ניתן.
5. ראה לדוג' שו"ת בית שלמה חו"מ סי' קל"ב, תש"ו ח"ב סי' תשל"ד.
6. תורת היולדת פ"ה סי"ז. צ"א ח"ט סי' נ"א.
7. ראה נשמה לחי' חו"מ סי' תכ"ה סק"א 27.
8. ראה שבה"ל ח"י סי' רנ"ט אות א'.
9. תורת היולדת פס"ו אות ו'.

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



R. SHMUEL GURARY OF CHOROL

R. Shmuel Gurary was a member of the famous Gurary family, descended from R. Nosson, a chossid of the Alter Rebbe. He served as a dayan in the town of Chorol (in the Poltava region) and was known for his incredible powers of concentration in Chassidus and absolute detachment from the material world. (He should not be confused with his cousin, R. Shmuel Gurary of Kremenchug, a *gvir* and fellow chossid of the Rebbe Rashab.)

When he exited his first *yechidus* with the Rebbe Rashab, who was still in his young 20s, R. Gronem met R. Shmuel Gurary of Chorol. R. Shmuel asked R. Gronem if he had come out of *yechidus* happier, and R. Gronem confirmed that he did. R. Shmuel told him, "That's the point of *yechidus*!"

(ניצוצי אור - וויינגארטען ע' 176)

In Chorol, there was a chossid named R.

Koppel who had a store where chassidim would often gather to *farbreng*.

One Motzaei Shabbos, the chassidim *farbrenged* there, and R. Shmuel joined them, deep in thought. At midnight, when the *farbrengen* ended, R. Koppel locked up and the chassidim went home.

R. Shmuel had been oblivious to everything and remained in his place engrossed in his thoughts. His family began searching for him all over. R. Koppel remembered seeing him at the *farbrengen*, and decided to check the store. Indeed, R. Shmuel was sitting in the same position deep in thought.

R. Shmuel would daven at great length, particularly *maariv*. Once, when he had *yahrzeit*, he davened at the *amud*, and as the whole minyan waited for him to finish Shema, he suddenly blurted out "Ve'ahavta..." [He had been meditating on the first *possuk* all that time.]

(ניצוצי אור - וויינגארטען ע' 199)

A Moment with The Rebbe



HE CAN SEE YOU

Reb Mordechai Sufrin served as a teacher for many years in Manchester and in London. One day, tragedy struck. His seventh child, Sholom Naftali, passed away when only nine months old.

After some time passed, a most dejected Reb Mordechai and his wife Fraida traveled to 770 to spend Purim with the Rebbe and to gather some inspiration.

In the middle of the Purim *farbrengen*, the Rebbe called out, "Is Sufrin here from London?"

Reb Mordechai immediately rushed over and received from the Rebbe a bottle of vodka for *l'chaim*. The Rebbe said to him, "May you only have joyous occasions from now on."

Following the *farbrengen*, at their *yechidus*, the Rebbe spoke to them about their deceased child in direct terms. "Although you are frustrated because you can't see him, he can see you," the Rebbe said softly. "Please remember that."

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