

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

HEARTFELT PLEADING (I)

TEHILLIM WITH TEARS

When the *Tzemach Tzedek* was in Petersburg, many Yiddishe soldiers stationed in nearby Kronshtat asked to meet with him, so he traveled there.

At the parade that they organized in his honor, they told him, "We put in lots of effort to shine the buttons of our uniform to prepare for your visit. Now, you please work for us, and polish our *neshamos* which have become so soiled..." And they broke off in tears.

Many of these soldiers knew some *pesukim* of *Tehillim* by heart and would recite them while polishing their buttons. The *Tzemach Tzedek* delivered a *maamar* for them in Yiddish, beginning with *HaShem's* promise, *Machisi ka'av pasha'echa* - "I have erased your sins like a cloud." He then told them, "In order to polish buttons, one needs to use soil and water. Soil is like the letters of *Tehillim*, and water is like the tears that cleanse."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 3)

The *Tzemach Tzedek* told Reb Hendel at *yechidus*, "Zohar uplifts the *nefesh*, *Medrash* arouses the heart, and *Tehillim* recited with tears washes out the *keli*."

(היום יום ט"ז טבת)

FROM THE HEART

In the year תרמ"ח (1888) the Rebbe Rashab was elected *gabbai* of the local *Chevra Kaddisha* and, following the local *minhag*, the townsfolk escorted him under a *chuppah*. The *maamar* which he then delivered spoke of the superiority of simple Yidden, who follow directives more fully than the learned - just as the foot can be more easily placed in hot water than the head. When he finished, a group of simple Yidden approached him and exclaimed: "*Gabbai!* If you will give the command, we will even go into fire!"

"Yes," the Rebbe replied, "one must go into fire! One must recite *Tehillim* with fire (*mit a brenn*)."

(סה"ש תרצ"ו ע' 165)

The Alter Rebbe writes in his *Shulchan Aruch* that it is better to say fewer *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* with more *kavana* rather than to say many more without *kavana*.

(שו"ע אדה"ז מהדו"ב סי' א ס"ב)

It is written in *seforim* that reciting *Tehillim* "without a break" is a *segula* for all kinds of good things. Reb Moshe of Savran would interpret this to mean that one should say the *Tehillim* with feeling, with no break separating his mouth from his heart. This is indeed the best *segula*.

(תהלה לדוד ע' לג)

The diary of *Rebbitzin* Chana describes the time she spent in Kazakhstan with her husband, Reb Levik. At one point she was seriously ill from an unknown cause, and Reb Levik sat at a little table saying *Tehillim*, with tears pouring from his eyes. She would lie in bed and watch him saying those *pesukim* with a broken heart, with a melody that could melt a stone. One night, however, as he said *Tehillim*, the sadness was missing, and instead he poured out his *neshama* with belief and trust in *HaShem*. After this, she recovered fully. She concludes in her diary, "I believed then, and believe today, that this is what helped me recover from that terrible situation."

(צדיק למלך ח"ד ע' 261)

of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. One morning, around 3:00 a.m., he heard the Rebbe reading *kapitel pei-daled* of *Tehillim* and then exclaim: "Even the smallest bird that You created has a place - yet You, the greatest of all the great, have no place..." The Rebbe sang the *Niggun Daled Bavos* of the Alter Rebbe, and then sat down to learn *Gemara Bava Kama* for two hours.

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ח ע' תצב, לקו"ד ח"ג ע' 1056)

The *chossid* Reb Avrohom Chaim Rosenbaum once related what he witnessed as a young man of twenty:

One morning, while in the Rebbe's *chotzer* in Lubavitch, I noticed the chimney-cleaner's ladder leaning against his house. I realized that by climbing it I would be able to peer into the Rebbe's room and watch him *daven*.

It was after *Shacharis*. The Rebbe was sitting in his *tallis* and *tefillin* and reading *Tehillim* sweetly. When he came to the *possuk* in *kapitel lamed-tes* that begins *Hoidi'eini HaShem*, he sang it to a particularly sweet melody, which he repeated several times. (That melody is known to this day.)

I was perched up there delighting in my ploy, enjoying my good fortune at observing the Rebbe at such a moment, when a stern voice surprised me. It was the *Rebbitzin*: "What?! No embarrassment?! Have you never before seen a *Yid daven*?!"

Terrified, I escaped immediately, but that *niggun* I will never forget.

(תולדות אברהם חיים ע' ט)

Rebbitzin Chana related how, in his youth, every *Shabbos* afternoon the Rebbe would pace back and forth in their home, saying *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* - "with a sweetness the like of which I have never heard."

(ימי מלך ח"ג ע' 988)

The Baal Shem Tov taught: In order to recognize the lessons in *avoda* that may be learned from life occurrences, one has to say a *kapitel* of *Tehillim* with a fiery heart, personally do a *Yid* a favor, and have *ahavas Yisroel* with *mesirus nefesh*. These are the keys that open the locks to the chambers of *rachamin*, *gezunt*, *yeshuah* and *parnassa*.

(סה"ש קיץ ת"ש ע' 73)

CONSIDER

What *kavana* should one have when reciting *Tehillim*?
If the words themselves have an effect, what does the *kavana* add?

SWEET SINGING

The *Tzemach Tzedek* would often recite *Tehillim* early in the morning in order to join the simple Yidden in their *avodas HaShem*. Once, Reb Chaim Ber the *meshares* invited one of the *chassidim* to listen in. As the *chossid* stood in a nearby room, the *dveikus* of the Rebbe's *Tehillim* as he poured out his *neshama* brought him to tears.

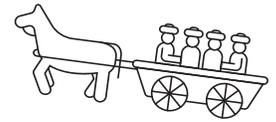
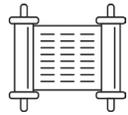
At one stage Reb Pesach, the *melamed* of the Rebbe Maharash, used to sleep in a room near the room

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SHABBOS FOODS

Is there a reason for eating certain special foods on Shabbos?

There is a mitzva to delight in Shabbos. While some hold it is a Torah obligation derived from the posuk "mikra kodesh," others hold it is miderabanan based on the posuk in Yeshaya, "v'karasa laShabbos oneg." Still, the Alter Rebbe warns about keeping it carefully since the Chachamim's words should be treated even weightier than the Torah's. One who honors Shabbos will have his sins forgiven and he will be spared the judgment of Gehinom.

What kinds of foods are included in oneg Shabbos?

Chazal speak of "large fish and a dish of cooked beets," yet, the Alter Rebbe notes that every place and era has their own criteria of pleasurable foods. Meat and wine aren't an obligation, but since these usually bring pleasure, halacha rules that one should try to have them in generous quantities according to what one can afford. At minimum, one should make a point of having two cooked dishes. The Alter Rebbe said that one should eat twenty-four kinds of food on Shabbos.

While there is a view that fish on Shabbos is a Torah obligation, the halacha isn't so. Still, Chazal mention fish specifically and it is a mitzvah min hamuvchar to have fish (unless one dislikes fish or they are detrimental to him, in which case they cause the opposite of pleasure). The Alter Rebbe, based on the Arizal, emphasizes the importance of eating fish, especially by seudah shlishis which is symbolized by the fish's open eye.

It is minhag Yisroel to have a hot dish at the meal to honor and delight in Shabbos, unless it is detrimental to the person. When Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbos, it is appropriate to add an extra dish for Rosh Chodesh.

Much has been written both in halacha and Kabbalah about the significance of traditional Shabbos foods and their specific forms, including challa, cholent, kugel, soup, and other foods. One should endeavor to uphold the traditional foods and community minhagim.

- 1. שו"ת רמ"ב ס"א. ושו"ת א"ח ס"י ר"נ ס"ב "ירבה כפי יכלתו".
2. שו"ת שם ס"ב.
3. שו"ת שם ס"ז ע"פ הזוהר ח"א דף מ"ח ע"ב. והטעם: בכה"ח סק"ט.
4. שמו"ס ח"ב ע"ב 156.
5. שו"ת רמ"ב ס"ז וק"א סק"ד. וס' תקט"ו ס"ח.
6. ספר מאמרי אדה"ז הקצרים ע"י ט', מגלה עמוקות אופן ל"ב, סדור אריז"ל סעודת מנחה, תקוני שבת למהר"א ברוכים, פסקי הסדור של אדה"ז סדר

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

R. MEIR MORDECHAI CHERNIN

R. Meir Mordechai Chernin was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. A native of Borisov, R. Meir Mordechai was a lamdan in both nigleh and Chassidus, and he served as a melamed in his hometown. He later moved to Lubavitch and worked for the Rebbe Rashab's brother the Raza. The Frieddiker Rebbe was very close to him as a child, and cherished his stories and the influence he had on him. He lived his later years in Vitebsk.

R. Meir Mordechai's father, R. Pinchas, was a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe and a poor melamed who had taught Chassidus to the famed chossid R. Shmuel Ber Borisover. Before his untimely passing, he had R. Shmuel Ber promise to direct his son Meir Mordechai in the ways of Chassidus.

When Meir Mordechai was sixteen years old, he attended the yeshiva in Minsk, and began to disassociate from chassidim. R. Pinchas then came to R. Shmuel Ber in a dream and reminded him of his promise. When Meir Mordechai next visited Borisov, R. Shmuel Ber handed him a note his father had written before his passing:

"I am now going in the way of the world. You, Shmuel Ber, remember your faithful promise that when my son grows older, you will repay my debt and learn with him divrei elokim chaim, Chassidus, and guide him in the ways of Chassidus as I taught and guided you. And you my son Meir Mordechai, when you start learning Chassidus, come to my grave and notify me."

Indeed, for the next ten years, Meir Mordechai learned Chassidus from R. Shmuel Ber and became a great chossid. R. Meir Mordechai held dearly onto the note, and the Rebbe Maharash said of it, "These few lines express the shining

countenance of a chassidisher melamed and guide." (רשימות דברים חדש ע' 251, התמים ח"ז ע' 102, ס' התולדות רי"צ ח"א ע' 100)

R. Hillel Chernin, R. Meir Mordechai's son, related to R. Foleh Kahn:

As a youngster, I strayed from the path of Torah. My father would rebuke me, but I didn't listen. During a yechidus with the Rebbe Maharash, my father bemoaned my conduct and remarked, "If Hashem caused him to break his leg or the like, maybe he'd change his ways."

A short time later, I was hit by a wagon and wounded my leg. The pain was intense, and puss poured from the wound. It got increasingly worse, and the doctors couldn't heal it.

"Nu! Will you improve yourself now?" my father said. "If you do, I will ask the Rebbe for a bracha and you will recover." I gave my word and changed my ways. My father traveled to Lubavitch and received the Rebbe's bracha, and I healed completely.

Time passed and the Rebbe Maharash passed away, and I began to stray again. After warning me first, my father went to the Rebbe's Ohel and wrote a pan notifying the Rebbe that I had strayed, and asking the Rebbe to retract his bracha.

Even before my father arrived in Vitebsk, the pain returned to my legs and puss again poured from that place. I committed to improve, and my father returned to the Ohel to daven for a bracha, after which I healed again.

Many decades later R. Hillel shared, "Ever since then, whenever I am strong in Yiddishkeit, I am perfectly healthy. But when I slide somewhat, I start to feel it in my legs."

(שמעונות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 74)

A Moment with The Rebbe



YOU HAVE NO CHOICE

In a sicha on the seder night 5713 (1963), the Rebbe stated, "Once one has a connection to the Rebbe, even if it is minimal - that only occasionally he learns a maamar, or supports the Rebbe's endeavors - his fate has been sealed. He will forever have a relationship with the Rebbe!"

On the 15th of Elul 5751 (1991), the day the original Tomchei Temimim yeshiva was established in Lubavitch in 5657 (1897), a man

approached the Rebbe on the dollars line.

Although he was not a chossid, he said to the Rebbe that in his youth he had once studied at a Tomchei Temimim yeshiva.

The Rebbe corrected his wording, "If you were once a tomim, you remain a tomim for life. You don't have a choice."

(Zorea Tzedakos Matzmiach Yeshuos, Page 136)