

The Weekly *Farbrengens*


MERKAZ ANASH
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 EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

THE LUMINARIES OF HOMES (I)

COMMUNITY PILLARS

In his diary, the Friediker Rebbe records a trip with the Rebbe Rashab from Lubavitch to their vacation home in Serebrinka:

From far off, we can see two travelers sitting at the side of the road. As we come closer, I recognize Reb Peretz and Reb Menachem Mendel, the *melamdim* of Beshenkovitz. I told this to my father, and he instructed the wagon driver to slow down and drive close to where they were sitting.

As we passed them, we beheld a beautiful sight: Under a shady tree, the two chassidim sat with their *tallis katan* and *yarmulkes* showing, and their jackets, hats, shoes and walking sticks beside them. Reb Menachem Mendel, his eyes closed, was leaning on his elbows which he supported with his thighs. He was listening as Reb Peretz, whose eyes were also closed, repeated a *maamar* in the distinctive singsong of *Chassidus*. And like any scholar deeply engrossed in Talmudic debate, he highlighted certain phrases by gesturing freely.

My father instructed the driver to stop for a few minutes, and the chassidim did not notice us. When we continued, my father told me that they were reviewing the *maamar* that begins, *Mi madad beshaalo mayim* that he had delivered on the second day of Shavuos.

The sight of the two chassidim apparently made a strong impression on my father. As we passed the town of Rudnya, he said to me:

"Five thousand, six hundred and sixty years, nine months, thirteen days, fifteen hours and so many minutes, that little plot of land has been waiting for Peretz and Mendel to come along and share words of Torah. And by doing that, they fulfilled the sublime will of *HaShem*.

"It is hard to assess the pleasure that this elicits On High, or to describe how envious the *malochim* are of these *Beshenkovitzer melamdim*. The Rebbeim in Gan Eden are rejoicing with such grandchildren.

"*Chassidische melamdim* are the true luminaries of *Yiddishe* homes. They are the Avraham Avinu's

of every generation who diffuse *Elokus* into every home. The Mittlerer Rebbe would show more affection to the *melamdim* than to the *rabbonim*, and would say: 'It is the *melamdim* who turn *Yidden* into vessels to absorb G-dliness!'"

(קרו' ומעיין ע' 35)

The Mittlerer Rebbe held *melamdim* in high esteem and often related to them with deference. Nevl was always known as a *chassidische* town, the home of many chassidim who were dedicated to *Chassidus* and *avoda*, and on this the Mittlerer Rebbe once said, "Who turned Nevl into a *chassidische* town? Not its *rabbonim* not its other scholars, but its *melamdim*!"

(לקו"ם פרלוב, אדהאמ"צ יח)

CONSIDER

Why were the chassidische melamdim shown more affection than the rabbonim? Were they greater?

At one of the first *farbrengens* of Reb Aizil Homiler in Homil, he told the townspeople:

"You must know that the *shul's* real '*mizrach*' is at the back of the *shul*, near the oven, where the *melamed* stands. Pay attention and study a *vort* of the *melamed* as you would study a *vort* spoken by the Rebbe."

As a result of that statement, the feet of the respected *baalei-batim* who sat in the *mizrach* "burned" for an entire year, and Homil became brighter.

(סה"ש תד"ש ע' 96)

SINCERE ADMIRATION

The *Tzemach Tzedek* once said, "The level of *chassidishkeit* has gone down."

He went on to explain that in the days of the Mittlerer Rebbe, first the *melamdim* were admitted for *yechidus*, then the *rabbonim*, and finally the *baalei-batim* would take their turn. Now, he said, the *baalei-batim* enter first. (After all, they have important matters to discuss; besides, they are the ones who support the *melamdim* and *rabbonim*....) Only afterwards are the *rabbonim* and *melamdim* admitted.

When the legendary *mashpia*, Reb Groinem, related this story, the *temimim* in Lubavitch asked him why the *Tzemach Tzedek* did not reverse the order to the way it had been in the past. Reb Groinem, in true chassidic tradition, explained with a story:

"There was once a villager, a simple *yishuvnik*, who would occasionally visit the *rov* of the nearby town and ask him all his *shaylos*. One day he arrived at the home of the *rov* and found him at a meeting discussing a serious matter with his colleagues. When the meeting ended, the villager presented his *shaylos*, and then asked the *rov* if he could know what was the matter of such great concern.

"The *rov* explained that since it hadn't rained for a while, they were deliberating whether they should declare a day of fasting and *davening* for the much-needed rain, to save them from possible famine. The villager, astonished, offered his counsel.

"I have a far simpler solution,' he said. 'Whenever my cat runs into the house and crouches near the oven, rain begins to fall shortly after. All we must do is grab the cat, place it near the oven, and the rain will surely follow!'"

The *mashpia* concluded: "In the days of the Mittlerer Rebbe, the *baalei-batim* admired and respected the *melamdim* and *rabbonim* and gave them precedence. But now that the situation has declined and they no longer respect them, rearranging them in the correct order is no more helpful than putting the cat near the oven to bring the rain...."

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' 137)

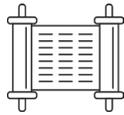

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PERMANENT MAKEUP

Is a tattoo of permanent makeup permissible?

In recent years, procedures have been developed to apply "semi-permanent makeup" by injecting colored pigments into the skin's dermal layer (under the constantly changing top layer). The technique is like a tattoo, yet it is not as deep and therefore will disintegrate after about 3 years.

The Torah prohibits etching a tattoo in one's skin. The Rambam explains that this is the way of the idolators, and he demonstrates that his body is his to do as he pleases and not what Hashem dictates.¹

Poskim debate whether a tattoo that doesn't contain letters is included in the Torah prohibition and many hold then it is only prohibited miderabanan.² There is further debate when the mark doesn't last forever, and most poskim hold that it is miderabanan.³

Chazal permit putting ashes on a wound — although it creates a mark that will last for some time — since the wound makes it clear why he's doing it, not for chukos haqoyim.⁴ Likewise, branding a slave (to prevent him from escaping) is permissible, since it's a non-idolatrourous purpose. Nevertheless, the Rama prohibits it due to maris ayin.⁵

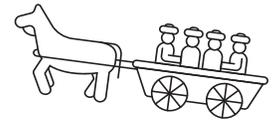
Contemporary poskim debate the status of semi-permanent makeup or fake eyebrows. Some argue that since there's no specific indicator (i.e. a wound) to make the reason clear, it is forbidden.⁶ Others opine that the obvious intent for beauty is enough to permit it, and since it looks like makeup and not like a tattoo, there is no maris ayin.⁷

In conclusion, it is the subject of debate amongst poskim, yet when the purpose is for "kavod habriyos" — e.g., one who is embarrassed of their looks — many poskim hold that the combination of mitigating factors can be relied upon.⁸ If the makeup is done by a gentile (without the Jew's assistance), that can mitigate the problem even more.⁹

1. ויקרא י"ט כ"ח. ספר המצוות שם סק"א.
2. ראה פת"ש סי' ק"פ סק"א.
3. מנחת חינוך מצווה רנ"ג אות א', ע"ז.
4. ראה תשובת הרב שמאי הכהן פירש"י על החומש שם, אבל מנגד ראה נמוק"י דף ד' מדפי הרי"ף במ"ז.
5. ראה שמשמע שאסור, כות שו"ע יו"ד סי' ס"ג וט"ז.
6. ראה דרכי"ת סי' ק"פ סק"א.
7. ראה שו"ע יו"ד סי' ק"פ סק"א.
8. ראה היכל הוראה ח"ה הוראה ע"ז.
9. ראה תשובת הרב שמאי הכהן פירש"י על החומש שם, אבל מנגד ראה נמוק"י דף ד' מדפי הרי"ף במ"ז.
10. ראה שו"ע יו"ד סי' ס"ג וט"ז.

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

Our Heroes



R. LEIZER CHECHERSKER

R. Leizer Dobuskin (5642-5702) of Chechersk was a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab and Friediker Rebbe. One of the early talmidim of Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch, he was a student of the famous mashpia Rashbatz, and was known for his great hasmada. He served as the Rov of Kamai, Lithuania, and later as a Rov in Kherson, Ukraine. In Kherson, he founded and headed a branch of Tomchei Temimim, and left a strong impression on his talmidim. He was killed by the Nazis in the Holocaust.

While still a student in Tomchei Temimim, he was called up for the Russian draft, and he approached the Rebbe Rashab for a bracha. The Rebbe told R. Leizer, "If you commit to learn the entire Shas over the next year, you will receive a 'white card' (a total exemption)." Though he was fully healthy, R. Leizer was completely freed from the dangerous draft.

During that time, the secular movements were rampant and countless young people were drawn after them. In Kherson, a shochet, who had previously been a tomim, began behaving unsuitably, and this was having a bad effect. When R. Moshe Charitonov mentioned this to the Rebbe Rashab in yechidus, the Rebbe Rashab noted, "Tomchei Temimim didn't take away anyone's free choice," and he sent R. Leizer to the city.

When he came to Kherson, R. Leizer spoke to the shochet and told him, "Ber! You need to give up shechting; you're sunken in all sorts of taivos!" and the man acquiesced. R. Leizer then proceeded to be mekarev the local youth to yiras Shomayim and Chassidus.

A year later, R. Moshe Charitonov was again in yechidus, and he gave the Rebbe a glowing update, praising R. Leizer's widespread impact. Elated, the Rebbe Rashab stood up and said, "He captured them with his sincerity!"

(אוצר החסידים בריה"מ, ר' מענדל ע' 128)

R. Eziel Zelig Slonim recounted his memories of R. Leizer in Kherson:

R. Leizer was an incredible masmid. On a winter Friday night, he could spend 7 hours straight learning Mitzvas Ha'amonas Elokus from Derech Mitzvosecha, pacing back and forth with the sefer in his hands.

He would daven at length with an exceptional sweetness that would delight the listeners. He told me that he used to daven with bitterness and tears, until the Rebbe Rashab instructed him to learn the maamar "Samach Tesamach," and that changed the mood of his davening.

His hiddurim in mitzvos were unbelievable, yet he did them without standing out (belitos). One such hiddur was pas Yisroel, even when bread was only available through Soviet ration cards. R. Leizer would barely eat all week long, and for Shabbos, he would, with mesirus nefesh, get a bit of flour from the black market.

He had five daughters, but no sons, but the Rebbe Rashab promised him "good shidduchim and sons-in-law that are better than others' sons." R. Leizer would not allow his daughters to attend communist schools, hiring instead a devoutly religious gentile woman to teach them general subjects. When half a year later he saw that they had mastered the subjects, he discontinued the classes.

(בטאון חב"ד גליון ע' 24, 20. גבורה יהודית במלכות הרשע ע' 48)

A Moment with The Rebbe



WHY TIMEKEEPING IS DIFFICULT TO EDUCATE

After escaping the Holocaust horrors, Reb Chayim Benyemini and his wife Rivka arrived in Brazil. With passion and warmth, they established the first Brazilian full-time yeshiva in history, Machne Yisroel of Petropolis. Through constant contact with the Rebbe, and remarkable dedication, the yeshiva flourishes to this day.

Reb Chayim's approach was old-school, with an emphasis on seder and timekeeping. In 5741 (1981), he wrote to the Rebbe that he endeavored to educate his students in this manner, but "it is difficult to educate these traits in today's age."

The Rebbe's response began with praising

the method, since "education for disorder is a vildkeit...and is obviously contrary to what I want, beg and demand."

The Rebbe then offered an enlightening explanation why this area of education is so challenging today:

"My father-in-law once said that the sitra achra (force of evil) is likened to a flame, which gives a great leap the moment before it snuffs out. Likewise, the sitra achra feels the coming of Moshiach, and is therefore leaping his dying leap."

(Yeshiva Shel Ma'ala, Page 414)