

The Weekly Farbrengens


MERKAZ ANASH
 מרכז אנאש
 707 • בא תשפ"ג • לחמן ישמעו
 EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

FAITH IN TZADDIKIM (II)

THE POWER OF FAITH

The great student of the Maggid and mentor of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Mendel Horodoker, had a chossid who repeatedly requested a *bracha* for children, but without success. Finally one time, he pleaded so much that the *tzaddik* told him, "I cannot help you. However, because of your *emunas chachomim*, you fully deserve that *HaShem* should grant your request."

And indeed, that chossid merited having children.

(טה"ש תש"ב ע' 95)

A certain villager fell ill, and begged his wife to ask a *tzaddik* to *daven* for him. She did not believe in the powers of *tzaddikim*, but since her husband desired it, she hired a wagon and set out to see Reb Yisroel of Ruzhin. Passing through the neighboring village, she heard that the local innkeeper was in dire straits as well, having no money with which to pay the rent to his landowner. The innkeeper's wife, who had a strong faith in *tzaddikim*, joined her, and together they traveled to Ruzhin.

As soon as they arrived, they had their requests written down by the *gabbai*, but in their excitement, each one took the other's paper. When their turn came to see the Rebbe, the sick man's wife handed him the note about the lease, and the *tzaddik* gave her a *bracha*. The leaseholder's wife then gave the *tzaddik* the note about the illness, and the *tzaddik* advised the application of hot cupping glasses and leeches...

This woman's *emuna* was so strong that she returned home with the firm belief that *HaShem's* salvation would come through this prescription. When she told her husband what the Rebbe had said, he was quite surprised by this strange *segula*, but the day for payment was fast approaching and he had no other option. What could he lose by trying? He lay down in bed, covered himself with blood-sucking leeches, and dutifully applied the heated cupping glasses to his body. While he was lying there, bloody on all sides, the *poritz's* henchmen came to warn him that if the money was not paid, he would be evicted. They then returned to the *poritz* and reported that the Yid was lying in bed, bleeding profusely. Not quite believing this, the *poritz* ordered that the leaseholder be brought to him.

When the Yid was carried in, the *poritz's* wife saw him, and sympathetically asked him what had caused

his suffering. In desperation, he came up with a tale of how he'd taken a journey to try to collect the money he needed, and after much effort, he'd finally put the sum together. Unfortunately, on his return trip home, a wild gang beat him and robbed him... Deeply moved, the *poritz's* wife promised that they would pay the doctor's fees, and because he was now in great debt, for the coming three years he could operate the inn for free.

When the *tzaddik* of Ruzhin related this story to Reb Aharon of Karlin he added, "Believe me, when that woman stood before me, I knew no way of drawing down help for her. She alone, through the intensity of her faith, drew her salvation down from *Shamayim*."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 208)

CONSIDER

How could *emunah* bring a person a *bracha* that was beyond the *tzaddik*? Who brought the *bracha*?

If *Chassidus Chabad* demands personal *avoda*, where does *emunas tzaddikim* fit in?

JUST WITH EMUNAH

In the year תשמ"ט (1989), when critical elections were being held in *Eretz Yisroel*, the Rebbe stated that it was important for a certain side to win. Many *chassidim* in *Eretz Yisroel* campaigned that people should vote for that party, and some went so far as to promise *brachos* to those who would.

A certain couple from Meah She'arim did not have children, and would go every night to the Kosel to recite the entire *Tehillim*. One day, the woman was home alone and someone came by and promised all kinds of *brachos* to those who would vote. She was very excited, but her husband would not hear of it. After all, they belonged to a group that did not participate in the elections. At last she persuaded him to go and they made a special effort on election day to sneak out and vote.

When time passed and the couple had not yet been blessed with children, the husband complained that his concession had all been for nothing. The wife suggested that they write to the Rebbe, asking for a *bracha*.

In his response, the Rebbe clarified that he had never promised any *bracha* concerning the elections, yet so great is the power of *emunas chachomim* that they should be helped from Above.

Sure enough, they were soon blessed with children.

(כפ"ח גליין 1128)

In highlighting the power of simple trust in a Rebbe, the Rebbe related this story:

During the *yechidus* of a certain businessman, the Frierdiker Rebbe asked him to sponsor the printing of the *Tzemach Tzedek's seforim*, naming an enormous sum. The man did not own such a sum, but hearing the Rebbe's request, he immediately obliged.

When he returned to his hometown, someone approached him to buy merchandise which he had despaired of selling, and even offered an excellent price. With this transaction, he made enough money to pay up his pledge and also made an additional profit for himself. Some time later, he met the buyer who commented, "I have no idea why I decided to pay such a large sum for some old goods..." Excited, the donor hurried to tell the Frierdiker Rebbe, but the Rebbe was not surprised. He was used to *nissim*.

(תרי"מ חל"ד ע' 55)

SECURING THE BRACHA

Amongst the students of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid, there was a difference of opinion concerning *emuna* in *tzaddikim*. Some held that it was enough for a chossid to have faith in his Rebbe and fulfill Torah and *mitzvos*, but he himself need not study *Chassidus* and ascend its various levels. But others, including the Alter Rebbe, held that every individual must learn *Chassidus* and implement it in his own *avodas HaShem*.

The Rebbe explained that although this path is more difficult, it is more effective in transforming the selfish part of a person to *kedusha*. It is particularly relevant today, as we approach the time of *Moshiach*, when everyone will understand *HaShem*.

(תרי"מ חל"ד ע' 270, לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 475)


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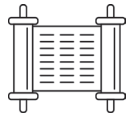

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GARTEL RULES

When and how should a gartel be worn?

Halacha mentions two reasons for wearing a gartel for davening. Besides for the requirement to separate between one's heart and one's private area — which is already the case by default with contemporary clothing — there is an obligation for men to “prepare (hikon) to greet Hashem” by girding their loins.¹

Poskim rule that one who goes about the entire day without a belt or sash does not need to wear one for davening. Thus, in contemporary society where a girdle isn't considered a sign of respect, a gartel isn't considered a halachic obligation. Yet, it still is midas Chassidus to uphold this age-old hanhaga, and chassidim are particular about it.²

Unlike the custom of other chassidic circles, the Chabad custom is that bochorim don't wear a gartel outwardly until marriage, as the Rebbe Rashab instructed bochorim who arrived in Tomchei Temimim. The Rebbe explains that a gartel, like a tallis, is connected with makifim, which is more relevant to the avoda after marriage. Still, a bendel or gartel worn to keep tzitzis from crumpling is somewhat of a substitute. In the early years, the Rebbe reportedly instructed bochorim to wear a gartel inconspicuously under their clothing when entering for yechidus.³

Halacha specifies a gartel for davening — Shmoneh Esrei — and rules that it isn't necessary for other brachos, as long as one's heart and private area are separated. Still, Chabad custom is for married men to wear a gartel for several mitzvos and special occasions, including havdala, kiddush levana, lighting the menorah, Tehillim on the night of Hoshana Rabba, and more.⁴

The gartel is meant to display respect for Hashem and should be dignified (i.e., not a scarf tied around one's waist). In Chabad, the gartel is traditionally worn over the outer garment at the height of the elbows, similar to how the Kohanim would wear their avnet.⁵

Some have the custom al pi kabbala to specifically tuck the retzuos of the tefillin into the gartel, though Chabad isn't particular about this.⁶ Some quote a tradition from the Baal Shem Tov that the unused sleeve when wearing tefillin should not be under the gartel, rather should left hanging loose.⁷

It would seem that one who doesn't have a gartel on hand should not miss davening with a minyan on account of this.

1. שו"ע ושוע"ר אור"ח סי' צ"א ס"ב.
2. שו"ע"ר שם ומשנ"ב שם סק"ד.
3. ראה אג"ק ח"י" ע"י שצג (מקיפים כמו סלית אבל מי שכבר נוהג למה לבטלו וצריך התרת נדר). וראה הוראת רבינו בימי בראשית ע"י 55. שמ"ס ח"ג ע"י 240 (הוראת אדוהרש"ב). וראה תשו"ה ראסקין תשנ"ח ע"י 21 ועוד.
4. ראה ספר המנהגים - חב"ד ע"י 8. וראה הנלקט בתשורת צייטלין כ"א סיון תשע"ה.
5. ראה זבחים יח ע"ב. וראה רשימות דב' רים ח"ב ע"י סג החילוק בין אזור על המתנים (חסידים פולין) חגורה על הבטן (יראי אשכ"ז) וזבנט על הלב (חב"ד).
6. ראה פע"ח שער ד שער התפילין פ"י, אבל ראה נתיבים בשדה השליחות ח"א ע"י קסד לגבי מנהג רבינו וא"ש.
7. ראה התקשרות גל' תש"ב ע"י 19 בשם הרה"ח ר' דובער חן. וראה גם אוצר החסידים אה"ק ע"י 311 בשם הרב אברהם מיכאל הלפרין התייחסות רבינו.

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

Our Heroes



R. KOPPEL ZELIGSON

R. Yaakov Koppel Zeligson was the son of R. Avraham, the Rov of Lubavitch during the nesius of the Rebbe Maharash. R. Koppel was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab, and he served as a choizer for the Rebbe Rashab during 5652-53. He worked in Tomchei Temimim for some time as a mashgiach for Chassidus, and then as a secretary and bookkeeper in the Yeshivah's administrative office. As a resident of Lubavitch, R. Koppel had a close relationship with the Rebbeim, and he is one of the witnesses signed on the Frierdiker Rebbe's tenaim.

On a visit to Italy, the Rebbe Rashab was accompanied by R. Koppel and R. Avrohom Babroisker. Their host served them a new and unknown fruit, and they all recited a Shehecheyanu and ate from it. The taste was so repulsive that R. Koppel and R. Avrohom barely swallowed the first bite, but the Rebbe Rashab continued to eat from it, while deep in thought.

Suddenly, the Rebbe noticed that they weren't eating and asked if there was some halachic shaila with it. R. Avrohom, who was by nature a bittuldike person, did not have the courage to respond. But R. Koppel, who was quite comfortable, told the Rebbe that it was halachically okay, but "we simply can't put it in our mouths!"

The Rebbe then tasted some more, and

concluded with them, and stopped eating.

(תשורה ווילשאנסקי תש"ע ע' 63)

Ahead of Yud Tes Kislev 5662, the Rebbe Rashab wrote an incredible letter on the significance of the day. A colossal 4,750 copies were made of the letter, and they were mailed far and wide. In response, a huge number of letters came in with requests for more copies, feedback and complaints. At the Frierdiker Rebbe's request, R. Koppel, who served as secretary of the yeshiva, prepared a detailed report.

Among the feedback, writers described the impact the letter had and complained that it arrived so long after Yud Tes Kislev. Some were quite frustrated, blaming R. Koppel, who was always near the Rebbeim, for not appreciating it enough. They even berated him harshly: "Such maliciousness to withhold light and life from Anash can only be found in a resident of Lubavitch town. Koppel! Remember what the Rebbe said about the chassidische yungeleit of the town Lubavitch, 'Near the sea, the land is especially dry'..." or "Those who are sated cannot feel what it's like to be hungry..."

The summary also included many positive reports on the celebrations held in Anash communities, the glowing reactions by R. Chaim Brisker and R. Chaim Ozer Grodzhensky, and the influence it made on those who had become distanced from chassidish life.

(מבוא ליקו"ב ומעיון ע' 24)

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE REBBE'S LETTERS

In 5747 (1987), the Rebbe's written correspondence began to be published. Under the Rebbe's guidance, with strict privacy regulations in place, the editors worked intensively to produce them, and within three years nine volumes were published.

As preparations were underway for the tenth volume, as was protocol, the mazkir Reb Sholom Mendel Simpson handed a pile of letters from the archives in to the Rebbe and asked for authorization to deliver them to the editors.

The Rebbe suddenly turned to Reb Sholom Mendel and asked, "How is it going? Are people involved in learning the letters?"

Reb Sholom Mendel was quite startled and attempted to defend the chassidim by reporting that a group of bochorim in Morristown had set up a fixed time to study them.

But the Rebbe wasn't satisfied, "Nu, the bochorim I understand, but what about the yungeleit? I have yet to receive one question from a member of anash on the published letters!"

(Techayeinu Issue 8)

לע"נ דבורה לאה בת ר' מרדכי צבי ע"ה שטראקט
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