

# The Weekly *Farbrengens*

  
**MERKAZ ANASH**  
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 EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

## HELPING WITH DIGNITY (I)

### FULFILLING A RESPONSIBILITY

The Roman emperor Tornos Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva, "If *HaShem* truly loves the poor, why does He not provide them with *parnasa*?" "To save us from *gehinnom*," replied Rabbi Akiva. The emperor countered, "On the contrary, giving *tzedaka* should send you there! Suppose a king imprisons his servant and commands that he not be served food or drink. If someone would disregard the king's bidding and give the prisoner food, wouldn't he get angry?!"

Rabbi Akiva explained, "Imagine a king imprisons his own son and commands that no food or drink be given to him, but despite his command someone brings the prince some sustenance. When the king hears about this, wouldn't he send this man a gift? Similarly, we are *HaShem's* children..."

(בבא בתרא י"א)

The Rambam writes:

"We are obligated to be more careful with the *mitzva* of *tzedaka* than with all the other *mitzvos*, for it is a distinguishing mark of Avraham Avinu's descendants. The whole of *Yiddishkeit* is dependent on *tzedaka*. Indeed, the Yidden will be released from *galus* only because of their acts of *tzedaka*.

"Whoever has mercy on others, *HaShem* has mercy on him. If someone is mean and does not have mercy, there is reason to suspect his ancestry, for such a trait is only found among gentiles.. All Yidden are like brothers, as the Torah says, and if one brother will not have pity on another, then who will? Should needy Yidden turn to the *goyim*, who hate us and persecute us, as their source of help?!"

"Whoever avoids giving *tzedaka* is called 'lawless,' like a worshiper of *avoda zara*, and he is also called a *rasha* and sinner. *HaShem* listens closely to the outcry of the poor, so one must be careful not to cause them anguish."

(רמב"ם הל' מתנות עניים פ"ז הל' א-ג)

Once, at a *farbrengen*, the Rebbe Rashab discussed the negativity of giving *tzedaka* in a manner that makes the receiver feel that he is being given *tzedaka*. Indeed, the giver should feel his friend's need and this should cause him heartache. Yet, the satisfaction that his friend was helped through

him, and the coarse contentment from his being the provider, are inappropriate. This is completely contrary to the ideal effect of *tzedaka*, since, as the Alter Rebbe says, *tzedaka* refines one's mind and heart a thousandfold.

(סה"ש תש"ג ע' 10)

The Rebbe clarified that the common English translation for *tzedaka*, "charity," is misleading, for it implies that giving is a kindness. Truthfully, *tzedaka* is simply the proper thing to do – from the word *tzedek*, which means plain justice, because part of the money that is now in one's hands was originally intended for the pauper.

(לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 410)

### CONSIDER

Is any credit due to the giver for his kindness?  
 What is the connection between having natural *middos tovos* and understanding the explanations of *Chassidus*?

### TRUE KINDNESS

The Rambam writes:

We are obligated to fill the needs of every poor person according to his previous state. If he does not want to accept *tzedaka*, we need to find some other means, such as presenting it as a gift or a loan.

There are eight levels in giving *tzedaka*. In descending order, they are: Giving a man a job so that he is not reliant on others; giving without knowing who is the recipient and in such a way that the receiver does not know who is the giver; giving in such a way that only the receiver knows who the giver is; giving

in such a way that only the giver himself knows to whom he is giving; giving to the poor before being asked; giving after being asked; giving less than one is able to, yet with a smile; and giving in a cheerless manner.

(רמב"ם הל' מתנות עניים פ"ז הל' ה-ח-יד)

The Frierdiker Rebbe relates:

In the winter of תרנ"ח (1898), my father (the Rebbe Rashab) received a letter from a chossid in Borisov about his woeful state of affairs. The chossid's home and shop had been destroyed by fire, and he was living in a rented apartment with no source of income. Concerned for his *parnasa*, and not knowing how he would repay his debts, he was unable to focus on his learning.

My father instructed me to write a letter to a chossid in Minsk, asking him to lend this unfortunate man 300 rubles, and in addition, to offer that he come to Minsk where he would help him find *parnasa*.

About a month later, those two chassidim arrived in Lubavitch. The chossid from Minsk told me how immediately upon receiving the letter, he had sent a messenger to bring the chossid from Borisov to Minsk. He had helped the chossid in opening a store, and was currently offering him partnership in a forest business he owned. He also advised the Borisover's daughters to take over management of the store.

The chossid from Borisov related to me how that chossid had lent him 400 rubles and had helped him open a store, and how he was *Boruch HaShem* beginning to see solid *parnasa*. He expressed his amazement that the chossid from Minsk had come to his rescue with such a generous spirit, for they were only slightly acquainted, having seen each other a few times in Lubavitch. The chossid concluded, "My own relative from Vitebsk was unwilling to lend me money to begin a new business, and this man showed me such wonderful kindness!"

My father agreed to their new partnership and gave them his *bracha*.

Later my father told me, "The natural *middos tovos* of a Yid are a necessary preface to understanding the explanations of *Chassidus* about the *neshama*."

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ח ע' ק"ט)

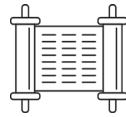
  
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GLASS COOKTOP

Can I use my fleishig glass-topped burner for my Shavuos milchig cooking?

The status of glass with regard to kashering is debated amongst the Rishonim: Some hold it doesn't absorb at all and doesn't require kashering; others maintain that it shares the status of metal, which can absorb and then be kashered with hagala (boiling water); while a third view considers it like earthenware, which absorbs but can't be kashered with hagala.

The Mechaber rules that glass doesn't absorb at all, while the Rama rules in Hilchos Pesach that glass is like earthenware and can't be kashered with hagala. What about year-round? While some understand the Rama's stringency to apply specifically to Pesach — but year-round, it can be kashered (or perhaps it isn't even needed) — others hold he is stringent year-round except in a case of b'dieved.

In order to withstand high temperatures without bursting, standard glass stovetops are made of glass mixed with other ingredients that shrink when heated to prevent the glass from exploding (similar to Pyrex bakeware and oven doors). Arguably, tempered glass may have a different halachic status since it may be less absorbent.

Earthenware can be kashered with libun chamur since, rather than extracting the forbidden flavor, it burns it out. While it is best to have a separate burner for milchig and fleishig, an electric burner can be kashered through libun by heating the coils until they are red hot.

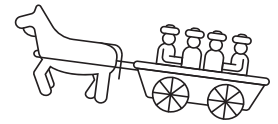
Even if the pot is then kept strictly on the coils, a spill during the cooking can form a connection between the un-kashered outer glass and the pot. Therefore, the glass surface around the burners should be covered with a thick layer of silver foil. (It is dangerous to cover the burners themselves with foil, though there are mats designed to cover the entire cooktop, which are optimal for this purpose.)

Alternatively, when needed — e.g., for Shavuos milchig cooking — there are grounds to permit kashering this surface with hagala since, as noted, many are lenient regarding glass year-round. Moreover, kashering for Shavuos is only purging kosher fleishigs ("heteira bala"), not a forbidden substance, for which the Alter Rebbe holds that hagala or libun kal is sufficient.

To kasher the surfaces around the burner, one must clean the glass well, not use it for 24 hours, and then turn on the burners to their highest heat. After the entire surface heats up, pour boiling water on the burners and have it splash over the rest of the glass, with the red hot coils acting as an even meluban. Finally, clean off the water and rinse the surface with cold water. Repeat this process when reverting to fleishigs after Shavuos.

1. ראה ראב"ה סי' תנ"ד. מרדכי פסחים סי' תקע"ד. וראה מג"א סי' תנ"א ס"ק מ"ט בביאור שיטת הר"ן.
2. ויש המספרדים הפוסקים שטעון הכשר רמב"ם מאכל"א פ"ז ה"ג, בן איש חי פר' צו הי"ד.
3. מובא בשם הגריש"א ע"ה, וראה דרכ"ת י"ד סי' קכ"א ס"ב (שבשאר איסורין לא חוששים).
4. שו"ת בה"ל ח"ב סי' מ"ג.
5. ראה שו"ע או"ח סי' תנ"א ס"ב.
6. שו"ע או"ח סי' תנ"א ס"ג בהגה"ה.
7. ראה בארוכה מנח"י ח"א סי' צ"ט.

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



REB AVREMKE ZHEMBINER

Reb Avrohom Halevi Landau, known as Reb Avremke Zhembiner, was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash. He was a grandson of Reb Zalmen Kurnitzer, who was the head of the city of Kurenitz and one of the great chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. At first, Reb Avremke was in business in Kurenitz and was quite a gvir. When things turned and he lost his fortune, the Rebbe Maharash appointed him to be the rov of the city Zhembin.

based on an excellent drasha he gave. However, there were some who felt that he was lacking in yiras shomayim. The townsmen were truly G-d fearing and turned to Reb Avremke of the nearby town. Reb Avremke instructed them to check and see if this man has a Zohar in his seforim collection, as this would be evidence as to whether or not he is truly G-d fearing and worthy enough to be their rov. After looking into the matter they discovered that he did not own a Zohar and he was not hired.

(לקוטי סיפורים ע' תנח)

As rov, Reb Avremke sat at the mizrach wall in shul, far from the bima. When he was called up for an aliya, everyone would stand up for him out of respect. Out of his humility, this bothered him very much and he would cover his face with his tallis. When he reached the age of seventy he stopped covering his face, saying that at that point he didn't mind because they are simply fulfilling the Torah's instruction to rise for an elderly person.

(לקוטי סיפורים ע' תנח)

Before Reb Avremke passed away, he said to his talmid Reb Groinem, "Pass me the Tanya, I would like to part with it." When he took the Tanya, he sat up in his bed, opened the sefer with both hands and cried so hard that the pages became soaked with tears. After a while Reb Avremke said, "The Alter Rebbe said, that with the Tanya one can be a chossid like Avrohom Avinu!" Reb Avrohom continued to weep, and then he handed the Tanya back to Reb Groinem. He lay back down in bed and after a few moments passed away. When Reb Groinem would repeat this episode, he too would cry uncontrollably.

(כפ"ח גליון 1021)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TRUST

As the weekday farbrengens would draw to a close, the Rebbe would hand out piles of dollars to mivtzoyim activists so that they could distribute them to the assembled for tzedaka. This custom began in 5735 (1975) and continued throughout the years.

that belief in Hashem is inscribed on the dollar bill.

"On money!" the Rebbe emphasized.

"And since you understand English," the Rebbe continued, "You can appreciate the exact language: In G-d We Trust.

At the conclusion of the 19 Kislev 5748 (1987) farbrengen, Harav She'ar Yashuv Cohen, Chief Rabbi of Chaifa, approached the Rebbe to receive a dollar.

"Trust is radically different to belief. One could believe, yet at the same time do as one pleases. Trust, however, implies that one gives himself entirely over to Hashem."

Unexpectedly, the Rebbe turned to him and pointed out "an overlooked fact"

(Techayeinu Issue 7, Page 97)