

# The Weekly Farbrengens

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מרכז אנאש

למען ישמענו • כי תצא תשפ"ג • 737  
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## TOTALLY INVOLVED (I)

### COMPLETELY ENGAGED

Shlomo HaMelech urges a Yid: "Be utterly engrossed (*tishgeh*) with your love for Torah, constantly." Chazal explain that this all-consuming love of Torah should even cause a person to make mistakes (*shogeg*) and drop all his affairs in order to run and study Torah, and the Torah will look after him and cause him to find favor in the eyes of those around him.

To illustrate this, the *Gemara* describes how Rabbi Elazar ben Pedas would be so utterly engrossed in his learning that he would sit and study Torah in the lower market of Tzipori, without realizing that he had left his cloak in the upper market of Tzipori. It once happened that someone tried to steal his cloak from the upper market, but found it protected by a poisonous snake.

(עירובין נד, ב, רש"י ור"ח, ומהרש"א בחדא"ג שם)

Once while seated and deeply engrossed in his learning, Rava placed his hands under his feet, pressing his fingers so hard that they began to bleed. Yet, being completely absorbed in his learning, he did not feel a thing.

A nearby heretic ridiculed him, "You people are so rash! Just as you accepted the Torah hastily, without asking questions and without knowing its difficulty!"

Rava replied, "We follow *HaShem* in simple innocence, and He protects us."

From this exchange, the Rebbe derives that one's approach to Torah should not be logical and calculated, but unreserved, and with total dedication.

(שבת פח סע"א וברש"י שם)

There was once a chossid who lived in seclusion and spent his time serving *HaShem*. When he eventually returned to civilization, he became a *shammes* in a *shul*, where no one recognized his greatness. Once the local *rov* observed that as he filled the lamps with oil, some of it spilled over the side. The *rov* recognized that this was not out of clumsiness, but out of *dveikus* and *kavana*: the mind of the *shammes* was preoccupied with higher

things. He was so overawed by what he saw that he informed the *kehilla* of the man's greatness, and told them, "This *shammes* should really be the *rov*, and I should serve under him."

(ס' חסידים כת"י, בראשית חכמה שער הקדושה פ"ג)

### CONSIDER

Why are these individuals being praised for their absentmindedness? Should they be mimicked?

What is there to be gained by being so absorbed in learning? Can't one accomplish the same results without losing oneself?

That winter in Lubavitch was particularly bitter, and Reb Yosef was on his way home in a horse-drawn sled on a dangerously slippery and bumpy path. The sled shook so violently from side to side, that the poor fellow fell overboard into the snow. Unfortunately, the driver didn't notice and continued on without him, and Reb Yosef, immersed in deep concentration, felt not a thing of the freezing snow in which he was sitting. A while later, a group of chassidim passed by and saw him sitting there in the snow. When they asked what on earth he was doing there, he looked surprised and replied, "I'm on my way to Lubavitch!"

(רשימות דברים ח"א עמ' רכז)

Reb Shlomeh *der Geler*, a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab, worked as a builder's assistant, and he and the builder would discuss *Chassidus* while working. Once, while building a wall, they were so raptly engrossed in their chassidic discussion that Reb Shlomeh found himself unintentionally enclosed behind the wall! When they realized this, they had to break it down to take him out.

(סיפורים חסידיים ח"א ע' 201)

### ENGROSSED IN CHASSIDUS

Reb Binyomin Kletzker was able to be so deeply engrossed in *Chassidus* that he would be utterly oblivious to whatever was going on around him. Once, while walking home from *shul* holding his *tallis* and *tefillin*, he got lost in thought. It was a market day and he put down his *tallis* bag on one of the merchant wagons of the *goyim*. He rested his foot on the axle of the wagon and carried on thinking. In the meantime, the *goy* finished his business, loaded his wagon and drove away. So engrossed in thought, Reb Binyomin stood with his foot that had been on the axle now up in the air, and after a while lowered his foot, though still lost in thought. Only the need to *daven Mincha* in time woke him up from his thoughts.

As the wagon driver was leaving town, he offered some of the produce that he was selling to a Yid who was passing by. The *tallis* and *tefillin* caught his eye, and he managed to return them to Reb Binyomin.

(רשימת היגיון ע' רמד)

On Acharon shel Pesach תשכ"ג (1963), the Rebbe challenged the constant rush and pressure that characterizes the American lifestyle. For example, instead of being totally absorbed in the midst of a *shiur* that they are learning, Yidden can find themselves already thinking about finishing.

"Such learning is only undertaken in order to be *yoitzei* - to get it over with. It lacks the *chayus* and the characteristic singsong with which Yidden have always learned. They could not imagine learning otherwise. Today, however, when the phone rings, even before knowing if the call is important, some people immediately shut the *Gemara* or the *maamar* and hurry to answer it.

"Why is that call so important to you right now? Right now you're speaking on the phone with *HaShem*!"

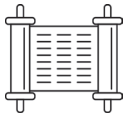
(תו"מ חל"ו ע' 332)

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TUITION RESPONSIBILITY

Can a school or yeshiva bar entry to a student due to lack of funds?

Min hatorah, the father is obligated to teach his son Torah, and if he can't, he must hire a teacher.1 Toward the end of bayis sheini, the kohen gadol Rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla ordained that schools be established in every town for children as young as six or seven. Chazal say that if not for him, the Torah would have been completely forgotten.2

Besides mandating for Torah to be taught in a school setting, rishonim understand that it also put the responsibility of paying the teachers on the community. Some rishonim place the burden on the community members, who are taxed according to their financial ability, whether they have children in school or not.3 Others place the primary obligation on the parents, with the community required to cover the deficit.4

The Alter Rebbe maintains that the original takana was for teachers to be paid from communal funds, but notes that the present custom is for parents who can afford to pay their own child's tuition, and the community must pay for those who cannot afford it.5

However, the obligatory takana only applies to the cost of the actual Torah learning — not to food, transportation, or extracurricular programming — and only until the age of Bar Mitzvah. Similarly, although contemporary poskim obligate parents to educate their daughters in Torah, and our Rebbeim have underscored its importance,6 still, this takana was only for talmud Torah of boys. Yet, as the continuity of am Yisroel depends on girls' education, whoever can should donate to this worthy cause.7

At the same time, parents must live up to their obligation to provide chinuch for their children, and make tuition a priority over many other expenses. They must be honest with themselves and with the school as to what they can afford to pay and make every effort to follow through. Moreover, Chazal teach that money spent on chinuch is added to a person's allocated parnassa.8 The Rebbe explained that the money for chinuch is a deposit from Hashem, and when parents invest whatever is needed to give the best true chinuch, Hashem will provide their needs.9

Today, with the demise of the 'kahal' which handled all community matters and collected taxes, it is questionable whether a community school can be forced to carry the burden, particularly when there is more than one school. It is further complicated when parents can afford the cost but do not wish to pay it, and the question is whether they must treat the child like an orphan and absorb the costs.10

From their side, schools and supporters should do as much as they can to lower costs, and the zechus for doing so is extremely great. The Rebbe requested of schools to give free tuition to ten percent of the student body, and promised a special bracha to those who give more.11

Due to the complexity of the matter, it is critical that every school leave the authority for such decisions to a rov who can weigh the factors and give a psak.

1. רמב"ם הל' ת"ת פ"א ה"א-ה"ג. 2. בבא בתרא כ"א ע"א. 3. יד רמ"ה בבא בתרא כ"א ע"ב אות נח. 4. ראה ח"י הריטב"א שם כ"א ע"א ד"ה אמר רבא. וראה רמ"א ח"מ סי' קס"ג ע"ג. 5. הל' ת"ת לאדה"ה פ"א ס"ג. 6. סה"ש תש"נ ח"ב ע' 456. 7. ראה לדוגמא אג"ק חכ"א ע' ק"כ. 8. ביצה ט"ז ע"א. וראה אדה"ה ל' ת"ת פ"א ה"ז. 9. תר"מ תשמ"ג ח"ג ע' 1482. 10. ראה לדוגמא שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ו סי' קמז. שו"ת משנה הלכות ח"ו סי' צו בסופו. שבות יהודה וישראל (זולדון) ע' 365 ואילך. 11. שיחור"ק תשל"ו ח"ב ע' 190 ואילך. וראה מכ' באג"גלית לדוגמא מ"ט תמוז תשל"ו.

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



RASHBATZ

R. Shmuel Betzalel Sheptel, known among chassidim as Rashbatz, was one of the prominent chassidim of the Tzemach Tzedek, Rebbe Maharash and Rebbe Rashab. In the publications "HaTomim", the Frierdiker Rebbe describes his incredible journey to Chassidus Chabad and the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe Maharash entrusted him with the education of his son, the Rebbe Rashab, who later entrusted him with the education of his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe. In the year תש"ט (1900), he was appointed as the leading mashpia of Tomchei Temimim, a position which he kept until his last day. He passed away on the 15th of Sivan תשס"ה (1905), and was buried, according to his wish, within 50 amos of the ohel of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash.

The Rashbatz valued time exceedingly. During the time when he mentored the Frierdiker Rebbe (then a young bochur, (he would sometimes wake him up at 1 am saying "Wake up, wake up, vehinei Hashem nitzav alav", "Hashem's presence is upon us.

(רשימות היומן עמ' ש"פ)

The Rashbatz once asked his mentor R. Michel Opotzker to show him klipah (impurity). At first R. Michel would not agree, but after much pestering R. Michel agreed to show him. The Rashbatz would later regret this and said that it would have been better had he not seen klipah.

(רשימו"ד החדש עמ' 239)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related that as a child he had the habit of looking out of the window. There was nothing essentially wrong with this, since there was nothing to wrong to see in the streets of Lubavitch. Yet, his mentor the Rashbatz would tell him: Rather than sitting in the home and looking out, it would better for you to stand outside and look into the Rebbe's holy home.

The Rebbe applied this in practice: Being a "Torah yid" means not just to study Torah, but for the Torah to teach the person so that it becomes the person's identity. When one is fully engrossed in the study of Torah, he doesn't look at what is around him.

(ספה"ש תרצ"ו עמ' 10, תר"מ חמ"ה עמ' 117 ואילך)

A Moment with The Rebbe



ELUL IN LUBAVITCH

Once considered just one of many maamarim in Likkutei Torah, the "Ani Ledodi" maamar was transformed by the Rebbe to be the gateway of all the chodesh Elul avoda. Almost no farbrengen, rally, public or private letter in Elul didn't have some reference to the mashal of the king in the field. Today, it has become a cornerstone of the perception of Elul throughout the Jewish world.

Already at the beginning of the nesius, the Rebbe invested efforts in utilizing Elul appropriately. In the year 5713 (1963), the Rebbe

gave instructions to the yeshiva administration on how to inspire the talmidim with yiras Shamayim during this month of teshuva:

Firstly, they were to impress upon them the seriousness of the month by relating how chassidim in Lubavitch conducted themselves throughout Elul.

Secondly, every night for fifteen minutes after maariv, the talmidim were to learn avoda'dike maamarim relevant to this time of year.

(From Reb Moshe Levertov's diary)