

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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REMEMBERING HIM (V)

NATURAL PRESERVATIVE

A man once asked his servant to take up a large sack of wheat to the attic for storage. When the servant reported that he had completed the task, the master asked whether he had mixed into the sack a small measure of *chumtin*, salty earth with preserving qualities. When the servant replied that he hadn't, the master bemoaned his rotting wheat: "It would have been better had you not brought it in at all!"

Similarly, when a person enters the *Beis Din shel Maala* to be judged about his conduct in This World, they ask him questions such as: "Were you honest in business? Did you await salvation? Did you study Torah earnestly?" Yet before the person is allowed to proceed further, he is prompted to answer one final question: "Was fear of *HaShem* your 'storehouse'?"

In order for a person's Torah study and *mitzvos* to be preserved intact, he must have a Fear of Heaven.

(שבת לא ע"א)

The great student of the Vilna Gaon, Reb Chaim of Volozhin, once sent a messenger to the Alter Rebbe with the following question:

In describing the need for incorporating a Fear of Heaven in one's Torah study, the *Gemara* uses a parable of adding salty earth to preserve the wheat. Now, as the *Gemara* says there, the proportion of earth to wheat is about one in two-hundred. Why, then, do chassidim dedicate so many hours to studying *Chassidus* and heightening their Fear of Heaven?

The Alter Rebbe told the messenger to return with this answer: The *Gemara* quotes the master as saying, "Did you *mix* a measure of earth into the wheat?" - since in order for the earth to preserve the wheat it must be thoroughly mixed with the wheat. Similarly, in order for the study of *Chassidus* to preserve all of a person's study and actions there is a need to 'mix' it in, and

'mixing' can take a long time...

(למען ידעו ע' 246)

KNOWING HIM

Reb Eliyahu di Vidas, student of the *Ramak* and the *AriZal*, writes in his classic work *Reishis Chochma*, that a Fear of *HaShem* can be acquired only by understanding who He is. A servant who doesn't *know* his master will not serve him properly.

(ראשית חכמה שער היראה פ"א)

CONSIDER

What does mixing entail? And why does it take so much time?

How would Ibn Ezra serve HaShem differently if he knew Him better? Didn't he already observe all the mitzvos as well as he could?

Reb Avraham Ibn Ezra was traveling incognito and a certain Yid invited him in. He gave his guest a nice room and fine food, and treated him well.

Somehow word got out that the visitor was none other than the famous Ibn Ezra, so all the scholars of the town lined up outside the house to meet the great *gaon* and bask in his teachings. When the host found out who his guest was, he fell before Ibn Ezra and asked forgiveness for not having treated him properly.

"Why are you begging forgiveness?" asked the *gaon*. "You treated me wonderfully!"

"Yes," said the host, "but had I known who you were, I would have treated you even better."

Hearing this, the Ibn Ezra raised his eyes

heavenward and said, "*Ribbono shel Olam*, I too must ask forgiveness for not having served You properly. Had I known Your true greatness, I would have served you *much* better."

(טללי תשובה ע' 533)

This, the Rebbe Rashab explains, was one of the reasons for the revelation of Kabbala and *Chassidus* in recent generations. Yidden of earlier times had lofty *neshamos* and they could bring themselves to love and fear *HaShem*, unaided. With the spiritual devaluation of successive generations, the potent spiritual revelation of the *Zohar* was revealed, to make people aware of *HaShem*. Later, due to a further descent, the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe were sent to introduce people to a deeper recognition and understanding of *HaShem*.

To use a parable: A person who is healthy needs only regular food and drink to thrive; a person whose health is impaired also needs medicines. Similarly, in earlier generations, when *klal Yisroel* was spiritually healthy, it thrived on the simple meaning of the Torah. The secrets of the Torah were reserved for the spiritual elite. However, as the spiritual health of our nation gradually deteriorated, a strong medicine was needed.

(קונ' עה"ח פ"ג, לקו"ש ח"ל ע' 170, אג"ק ח"ד ע' שע"ז)

A Yid living in the times of the Alter Rebbe could boost his *neshama* to withstand the challenges of *golus* with concise and potent chassidic teachings, such as those of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid. The thorough understanding of *Chassidus*, as introduced by the Alter Rebbe in Chabad *Chassidus*, was then a luxury, a foretaste of the revelations of *Moshiach*.

However, as the darkness of *golus* has deepened, the only way to withstand and survive its increasing challenges is to study and comprehend G-dliness.

(לקו"ש ח"ל ע' 170)



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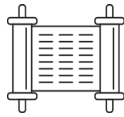
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WATER LEFT IN AN URN

May I drink water left overnight in an urn?

Chazal cautioned against drinking water left uncovered and unsupervised — even for a very short time — due to the concern that a snake or other poisonous creature may have drank from it and left dangerous venom inside.

Shulchan Aruch rules that when poisonous snakes are no longer amongst us in more recent times, one needn't be concerned about uncovered liquids (giluy).

The Alter Rebbe in his discussion of dangerous activities in Hilchos Shmiras Haguf V'hanevash omits mention of this issue, and in Hilchos Kiddush mentions that we aren't careful about giluy because poisonous snakes aren't common among us.

The Alter Rebbe writes that wine left uncovered shouldn't be used for kiddush specifically because such wine is unfit for nobility. If it was uncovered for only a short amount of time, one may use it when other wine isn't available provided the taste or smell didn't change from being left open.

A separate issue applies to liquid with water in it — and possibly plain water — that is left overnight in a metal utensil, as it becomes infected with a ruach raah (evil spirit).

Although some chassidim are careful about this (and use a glass urn for Shabbos), the widespread custom is not to be concerned. Some explain that ruach raah is less powerful nowadays (just as we no longer avoid zugos, pairs).

The Rebbe offers various justifications for the common custom, primarily that when the public becomes accustomed to performing a dangerous activity, Chazal state, "Hashem protects the simple."

Additionally, a vessel that is attached — or possibly plugged in — to the ground loses its status as a "vessel." Some suggest that sealed cans are not yet considered vessels. There may also be additional grounds for leniency with Shabbos food, as Chazal say that "one who is involved in a mitzva will know no harm."

1. ראה רמב"ם הל' רוצח ושמירת הנפש פ"א ה"ו, וראה פיה"מ לרמב"ם תרומות פ"ח מ"ד. ולגבי שיעור הפתח או חור - ראה רמב"ם שם הל"ג, ופ"ח י"ד סי' קט"ז ו"ק א (והעיר שאין החורים מצטרפים זה לזה). 2. ראה רמב"ם שם הל"ט-י. 3. שו"ע י"ד סי' קט"ז ו"א ע"פ תוס' ע"ז דף ל"ה ע"א ד"ה חדא. וכך דעת בעל שבט הלוי בקובץ מבית לוי איסור והיתר ע' פו, וכן הובא גם בשם הגרי"ז מבריסק. 4. פ"ח י"ד סי' קט"ז ו"א. שו"י ברכה י"ד קט"ז סק"ג. וראה פת"ש שם סק"א שהש"ל התמיר בזה. 5. הושמט בהל' שמירת הגוף והנפש. ובשו"ע א"ח סי' רע"ב סי' א שאין נחשים מצויים. ולהעיר מלק"ש סי' רע"ב ע"ג.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בר' שלום דובער ע"ה



REB LEVI YITZCHAK SCHNEERSON

Reb Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, the Rebbe's father, was a great Rov and mekubal. He was the Rov of Yakaterinoslav (Dnipropetrovsk) for twenty years. He was of the most prominent Rabbanim in Russia at the time and had great mesirus nefesh for yiddishkeit.

idle. We left the station many hours later, and I only arrived home at 11 a.m. the following day. I then understood why Reb Levik begged me to stay and not waste my time in the train station.

Reb Chaim Leib Itkin, a nephew of the Rebbe's father, related: "My parents lived in a town Krivarag that was a five-hour train ride from Yakaterinoslav. I once visited my uncle on Motzei Shabbos and conversed with him about various topics. At 9:00, I stood up, ready to leave, but Reb Levik held me back, saying, "You already have a train ticket, so what's your rush?"

After his exile, Reb Levik came to the city of Alma Ata. He was sick and weak from the years of abuse and torture. While one might not have expected any great activity from a crushed and battered man, Reb Levik was different. His arrival to the city made a tremendous impression. People from all around, frum and not frum alike, came to revere this holy and brilliant man.

When I reached the train station, there were only three minutes remaining until departure. Yet, the train did not leave as scheduled. Hours passed and the train remained

Once, an argument broke out between the chassidische and the misnagdishe kehillos in the city. Reb Levik commented, "When there is a famine, you don't examine the bread to see if it is black or white. The main thing is that there is bread! Why are they quarrelling at such a time?! Is this the time for it!?"

A Moment with The Rebbe



HELPING HER HELP YOU

Longtime Shliach to Stamford CN, Reb Yisroel Deren, was standing in front of the Rebbe with his family, at dollars distribution, in 5751.

husband in his rabbonus," the Rebbe said to Mrs. Deren, as he handed her a second dollar.

"This is for your rabbonus," the Rebbe said to Reb Yisroel, as he handed him extra dollar.

Then the Rebbe gave Reb Yisroel another dollar, with a smile, "This is for helping her help you!"

(Heard from Reb Yisroel Deren)

"And this is for helping your