

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

TOILING IN TORAH (II)

TOILING FOR EVERYONE

When the Mezritcher Maggid first traveled to see the Baal Shem Tov, he was already a great *gaon* in Torah and advanced in *avoda*; he lacked only the new *avoda* of *Chassidus*. When he entered the *tzaddik's* room, the Baal Shem Tov asked him to explain a certain passage in *Eitz Chaim* of the *AriZal*, one of the deepest *seforim* in Torah. The Maggid explained the meaning, but the Baal Shem Tov was not satisfied. Looking again, the Maggid insisted that this was indeed the *pshat*, and asked that if the Baal Shem Tov thought otherwise, he kindly explain it to him.

The Baal Shem Tov then began learning aloud the words of *Eitz Chaim* with diligence and *hislahavus*. When he mentioned the names of *malochim*, they were actually seen in the room, and the entire house was lit up. The Baal Shem Tov later explained that although the Maggid knew the simple meaning of the words, because he had not learned it with all of his capacity, his learning had been lacking.

(תר"מ חכ"ח ע' 243)

When the Rebbe Maharash was *bar-mitzva* age, he was once called in by his father, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, to be tested on *Mesechta Menachos*, which he was then learning. After asking a number of questions, and receiving satisfactory responses, the *Tzemach Tzedek* pointed to a specific *sugya* and asked his son if he had toiled to understand it. The Rebbe Maharash, who had a phenomenal mind, answered that he had not toiled at all, for he had understood everything without effort. The *Tzemach Tzedek* sighed and countered, "But how can one learn without toiling?"

Hearing this, the Rebbe Maharash decided to begin putting effort in his learning, and worked so extremely hard that blood stains began to appear on his forehead. Seeing this, the *Tzemach Tzedek* called him in and directed him how to continue his learning. Later the Rebbe Maharash recalled, "From then on, I would toil in learning with the precisely correct measure of effort, just as one sets a clock..."

(רשימות היומן ע' ש"ז בשילוב תר"מ ח"ה ע' 49)

FOR ITS OWN SAKE

Although the *AriZal* had a phenomenal mind and no worldly worries, for his father-in-law supported him, he would toil intensely when learning Torah,

even when the concept at hand was not particularly profound. His *talmid*, Reb Chaim Vital, described this as follows: "I saw my Rebbe, when involved with *halacha*, strengthen himself like a lion, to the point of sweating. I asked him why he put in so much effort, and he told me that the purpose of learning something in depth is to break the *kelipos*, which are the difficulties that come up regarding the *halachos* being learned."

The Rebbe noted: "The *kelipos* that the *AriZal* dealt with were obviously not very strong; nevertheless, in order to break them, he toiled greatly when learning Torah. From this we can understand the importance for all Yidden, who are not at his level, to toil in Torah."

(שער המצוות פ' ואתחנן. התועודיות תשמ"ג ח"ב ע' 869)

CONSIDER

Is toiling in Torah a means to a better understanding or is it an end for itself?

When the Alter Rebbe was five years old, the gates of Torah opened for him, and he easily grasped even the most difficult matters. He later related to his grandson, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, "This caused me great distress, since I was unable to toil in Torah. Only at the age of fifteen, when my purpose in this world was revealed to me, was I calmed."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 131)

When the Mittler Rebbe delivered a *maamar* of *Chassidus*, he would wear a *kolok*, a type of *shtreiml* with a pointed centerpiece. Unlike his father, the Alter Rebbe, while speaking he would sit in one place and not move about, yet even so, he would perspire immensely from great concentration, to the point that perspiration would drip from the point of his *shtreiml*.

(שיחור"ק תשמ"א ח"א ע' 98)

CHOOSING TO TOIL

Once the Alter Rebbe called the *Tzemach Tzedek*

and offered to grant him a gift – a blessing for an understanding of Torah. The *Tzemach Tzedek* declined the offer, saying that he wanted to acquire Torah through toil. He later regretted this, for whatever levels of Torah he could have received as a gift from the Alter Rebbe, there would always be additional levels to toil for.

(לקו"ש חט"ו ע' 81)

Two businessmen with a financial dispute traveled to the city of the *gaon*, Reb Meshulam Igra, to ask that he act as their arbitrator. Reb Meshulam heard them out and asked that they return in a few days, during which he would look into the matter.

However, since they felt they needed an immediate reply, they decided to return home and ask their local *rov* to help them. After hearing their claims he stepped into his study, and within a few minutes returned with a response that satisfied them both. Greatly impressed, they told their townsmen how within a few minutes, their own *rov* had supplied a fine solution to a complicated halachic issue that even the great *gaon*, Reb Meshulam Igra, had been unable to supply.

Some time later, finding themselves in Reb Meshulam's town, they decided to ask him what he would have *parkened* regarding their past dilemma. Surprised that his reply was exactly the same, they told him how their *rov* had given this verdict after only a few minutes. Amazed, Reb Meshulam exclaimed that if there was such a great *gaon* alive, he wanted to learn Torah from him.

He made the journey and asked the *rov* to tell him whether he had reached the conclusion himself or if someone had helped him. The *rov* replied, "When those two men came and presented their problem, I realized that I did not know the answer, so I went into my room and cried and *davened* to *HaShem*. I asked that He open my eyes and enable me to give a correct reply according to Torah, thus preventing a *chillul HaShem* [thinking that their *Rov* is insufficiently learned if he cannot resolve their issue]. I merited to receive clarity from *HaShem* and was able to immediately find the correct answer."

Hearing this, Reb Meshulam responded, "I, too, know how to *daven* and cry. Nevertheless, halachic conclusions should be reached by *toiling* in Torah..."

(היא שיחה)



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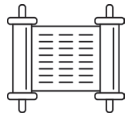
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BALL PLAYING ON SHABBOS

What is the halacha of playing ball on Shabbos?

The Mechaber rules in Shulchan Aruch that one may not play with a ball on Shabbos or yom tov. The Rama comments there that some allow it and that the custom is to permit it.

What is the problematic issue with ball playing?

A number of explanations are offered: (a) balls were once made from paper or wood and didn't have a noticeable categorization of a keili, and were thus muktzah, like a rock, which can't be moved at all on Shabbos;

The decrees related to leveling the ground are more lenient today when all floors are finished. In earlier times, prohibited activities were banned even in houses with finished floors out of concern for homes with dirt floors.

What about outdoor courts? Contemporary poskim debate whether this leniency applies to paved outdoor courts, e.g., basketball courts; some consider it an extension of the home, especially if fenced in, while others hold it's problematic.

The Yerushalmi states that the metropolis of Tur Shimon was destroyed because they played ball on Shabbos. Meforshim explain that this was because they made the Shabbos mundane.

חורש סי"ב.
8. ראה שש"כ פכ"ג הע' י שמצוד
כהמשך הבית גם כשאינו מקורה.
ובס' חוט השני פי"א סק"א מחמיר.
9. ראה משנ"ב סי' ש"ח ס"ק קנ"ה.
10. ירושלמי תענית פ"ד ה"ה.
11. ראה כף החיים סי' ש"ח ס"ק קרנ"ט.

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' ש"ח סמ"ה.
2. שו"ע י"ד או"ח סי' ש"ח ספ"ג.
3. ראה משנ"ב סי' ש"ח ס"ק קנ"ז.
4. ראה משנ"ב שם ס"ק קנ"ח.
5. קצוה"ש סי' ק"י הע' ט"ז.
6. ראה פסק"ת סי' ש"ח אות נט.
7. ערוה"ש סי' של"ז ס"ה, אגלי טל

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

REB AVROHOM OF TCHECHNOV

Reb Avrohom Landau was the rov in Tchechnov, Poland starting from 5580 (1820). He came from a very distinguished lineage, and was a descendant of the Ateres Zkeinim on Shulchon Aruch. He was a master in halacha and wrote many seforim. Towards the end of his life, after the passing of the Chidushei HaRim, he conducted himself as a Rebbe and many chassidim flocked to him.

In Tchechnov there was a simple Yid that would celebrate and get drunk the entire month of Adar. Reb Avrohom said that the man was actually acting correctly. Haman drew lots when to kill the Jews and it fell out on the entire month of Adar; why did he request from Achashverosh to kill the Jews only on 13 Adar, and not the entire month?

(לקוטי סיפורי התועודיות לרמז"ג ע' 422)

It is told that after reciting kinos on Tisha B'Av, Reb Avrohom would not take the sefer home with him. He would say, "Why do I need it in my home? This coming year I will anyway not need it—I believe every day Moshiach will come."

(זכותא דאברהם ע' נו)

A fellow once traveled to Tchechnov only taking along his tefilin, figuring that he will borrow a talis at his destination. However, when he arrived, he could not find a proper kosher talis with which to daven.

In the meantime chassidim went to greet the Rebbe and he joined them. When his turn came, the Rebbe asked him if he had already davened, and the man replied he had not, since he had left his talis at home and could not find one here.

Reb Avrohom rebuked the man's carelessness saying, "You have embarrassed your talis by leaving him at home. The talis is now laughing at you, saying that there will come a time when you will leave your tefilin and only take your talis with you..."

(אוצר ישראל ע' צט)

A Moment with The Rebbe

זכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות



THE UFORATZTO POTENTIAL

Erev Rosh Hashana 5719. Rabbi Chodakov summoned a group of bochorim to enter the Rebbes room. They were joined by Reb Shmuel Levitin, Reb Yisroel Jacobson, Reb Binyomin Goredetzky, Reb sholom Morozov and Rabbi Chodakov.

When they entered, the Rebbe looked at everyone, then closed his eyes and began to speak. "From the beginning of the year I spoke about 'uforatztu,' and throughout the entire time I haven't see any movement. I don't know the reason for this, and it makes no difference.

"What more can I do? I spoke, begged, wrote, once, twice, up to ten times. And throughout the years, perhaps a hundred times. L'poiel, nothing has happened. Not in communal matters, and not in personal matters. And in the personal matters,

people were involved in the pettiest things.

"Especially in general matters, uforatzo did happen. Everyone was involved in tzimtzum - more tzimtzum, less tzimtzum. And today is the last day of the year 5719.

"The only way to utilize the lost potential of 5719," the Rebbe said, "is to continue the year until Yom Kippur. This can be accomplished by having 24-hour shifts of two or three people up, learning and saying Tehillim..."

As the Rebbe spoke, his eyes remained closed. Towards the end, the Rebbe began weeping, and tears streamed down his face. He lay his head on his hands, and wiped his face with a handkerchief.

(Yoman - Sichos Kodesh 5719)