

# The Weekly *Farbrengens*



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מרכז אנאש

860 • יוחי תשפ"ו • לחמן ישמעון  
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## RELIVING THE PAST (III)

### CHOOSING A STORY

The Rebbe taught: We should tell children stories from the *Tanach* and from *Chazal*, and true stories of *tzaddikim*, and not relate *bubeh maisehs*, as some people do. Every story should have a lesson of goodness and *kedusha*. Telling a story without a purpose is not the *Yiddishe way*.

(שיחור"ק תשמ"א ח"א ע' 246, תר"מ ח"ל ע' 52)

When at *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed Reb Abba Pliskin to *farbreng* with the *temimim* at 770, that quietly-spoken *chossid* asked what he should talk about. In reply, the Rebbe spoke of the need to repeat *sippurim* of *chassidische Yidden*. The Rebbe emphasized that he meant stories specifically about *chassidim*, for when hearing *sippurei tzaddikim*, people can think that they are too far removed from them.

(היכל מנחם ח"ב ע' רכא)

### AUTHENTIC STORIES

When telling a story, the Frierdiker Rebbe was particular to record all the details, even those not directly related to the subject of the story. On one occasion he said, "The Alter Rebbe was very particular that a story should be told with exact details."

(אג"ק מוהררי"צ ח"ד ע' סה, לקו"ד ח"א ק ע"א)

The *chossid* Reb Shlomo Yosef Zevin authored a rich collection of *chassidische* stories. Upon receiving the book, the Rebbe wrote him a lengthy reply about his responsibility to retell only reliable stories from trustworthy sources.

Particularly in our confused generation, the Rebbe pointed out, we must be exceedingly careful to transmit a story with precise details and not leave room for possible misunderstanding. Unfortunately, the circulation of inaccurate *chassidische* stories in recent times has led many to false conclusions about *Chassidus*. Such stories sometimes imply that the hero of the story conducted himself contrary to *halacha* or contrary to the principle of *lifnim mishuras hadin* – both of which are out of the question – and usually, by

correcting some detail, the difficulty falls away.

To highlight his points the Rebbe pointed out two such stories in Rabbi Zevin's book:

The first is a story about how the *tzaddik*, Reb Aharon Leib of Premishlan, was reprimanded by Reb Elimelech of Lyzhnsk for not wanting to learn Torah from Eliyahu HaNavi. Reb Aharon Leib excused himself by saying that he wished to toil in Torah. This implies, said the Rebbe, that Eliyahu came to the other *tzaddikim* to spare them effort, since they did *not* wish to toil in the study of Torah. The truth, the Rebbe explained, is that those *tzaddikim* also toiled; however, they saved their efforts for more advanced levels of study, beyond what Eliyahu HaNavi had taught them.

### CONSIDER

What harm is there in telling:  
an invented story? Or a true  
story that carries no lesson?  
Or an inaccurate story?  
When should stories of  
Rebbeim be told? And when  
are stories of *chassidim*  
preferable?

The second is a story of a man who, shortly after his father's passing, dreamt that his father ordered him to convert. When the dream repeated itself several times, he visited Reb Zusha of Hanipoli who instructed him to open the grave, since there was surely a *tzeilem* inside. They followed his instructions and found some coins with crosses that had mistakenly fallen inside during the burial. Now, concludes the Rebbe, since it is forbidden to open a grave, it must be that the coins were in the vicinity of the grave, and not in the grave itself.

(אג"ק ח"א ע' רסח, הסיפורים בסיפרי"ח זונין ע' 372, 118)

Every year on *Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, a *melava malka* would be held in support of the Crown Heights *gmach*. The custom developed that during the Rebbe's *Shabbos farbrengens* the head of that *gmach* would don a *shtreiml*, and before inviting all those present to the gathering, he would tell a story.

One year the *gabbai* Reb Shimon Goldman related a story about a *chossid* of Reb Nochum of Tchernobyl, who would always host the *tzaddik* when he visited his town. On one visit, the *tzaddik* sent him a message that he must bring him two thousand rubles, otherwise he would not stay at his home, and the *chossid* would even be forbidden to visit the Rebbe or participate in his *tefillos*. The *chossid* had no way of collecting such a sum, and so, to his terrible dismay, he was unable to see his Rebbe throughout his entire stay in his town. A short while later a miracle occurred to him, and he received exactly two thousand rubles. When he presented it to the Rebbe he was told to keep it, and the Rebbe added, "You were destined to be wealthy. However, the only way you could receive it was if you would plead for it. That is why I caused you all that pain."

The Rebbe questioned the viability of this story: Would Reb Nochum Tchernobyler cause his *chossid* to endure such suffering for such a long time?! Why, even a coarse person (*grobber yung*) would experience unbearable pain watching everyone going to hear the *tzaddik's* *davening* while he is forced to remain outside!

It must be, concluded the Rebbe, that the *chossid* was merely held back from joining one *tefilah*, and shortly afterwards the *tzaddik* returned to stay at his home. This pain was surely enough to arouse the *chossid* to *daven* to *HaShem* for the wealth.

The Rebbe then added, "It should not come as a surprise that a story could become so mistaken. We often see how when a story is transmitted from one person to another, each narrator tries to embellish it, at times at the cost of ruining it all ..."

(תר"מ תשמ"ז ח"ב ע' 501)



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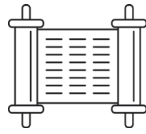
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## TECHEILES

### Why don't we wear *techeiles* on our *tzitzis* today?

The *mitzva* of *tzitzis* includes having a woolen "*pesil*" dyed with *techeiles*, extracted from *chilazon* blood. While white fringes alone fulfill the *mitzvah*, having some dyed with *techeiles*, when it's available, contributes to the *mitzva's* complete fulfillment. The *rishonim* debate how many of the eight strings should be dyed: either one string (i.e., half of a folded string), two, or four, and the Alter Rebbe rules like the third view.<sup>1</sup>

The Gemara describes the *chilazon* as a sea creature that would surface once in 70 years. Chazal were aware of fraudulent *techeiles* and outlined tests to distinguish authentic dye from counterfeits like *kala ilan*, a plant-based indigo dye.<sup>2</sup>

At some point after Talmudic times, the identity of the *chilazon* became lost for over a thousand years. In 1887, the Radziner Rebbe, Harav Gershon Leiner, proposed the cuttlefish as the *chilazon* and wrote extensively to support his theory.<sup>3</sup> Many of his contemporaries doubted this assertion, and Harav Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog later demonstrated that the blue tint of the cuttlefish dye came from chemical additives. Instead, Harav Herzog proposed the Murex snail, which produces a purple dye. In 1985, it was discovered that the Murex dye could be transformed into sky blue by exposure to sunlight.

Despite these discoveries, most Yidden continue to wear only white *tzitzis*. *Poskim* note problems with the theories and point to the lack of a *mesora* (unbroken tradition) with no candidate meeting all of the criteria given by Chazal. Using the wrong dye can even invalidate the *tzitzis* according to some.<sup>4</sup> (Some explain that *safek de'oraysa lechumra* is only when, at the end, you will have certainly fulfilled the desired *mitzva*.<sup>5</sup>)

According to Kabbala, *techeiles* corresponds to a high spiritual level unattainable during *golus*. The Arizal taught that *techeiles* is hidden until Moshiach's times, and Midrashim echo a similar idea.<sup>6</sup> In a lengthy letter to the Radziner's son and successor, the Rebbe Rashab explains this in line with the Alter Rebbe's *maamorim*.<sup>7</sup>

The Rebbe writes that we follow the Rebbe Rashab's words.<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere, the Rebbe explains that the absence of *techeiles* in *galus* demonstrates that the primary *avoda* must be in the *kav* of Ahava (represented by the white fringes).<sup>9</sup>

1. במדבר ט"ו ל"ח. מנחות ל"ח ע"א.  
2. רש"י וחו"ט שם. רמב"ם הל' ציצית פ"א ה"ו והשגת הראב"ד שם. שו"ע ר"א ח"א סי' י"א ס"א.  
3. ראה מנחות מ"ד ע"א. בבא מציעא ס"א ע"ב.  
4. ראה ספרו עין התכלת. וראה הגסנון בפסק"ת ס' ח ע"ג.  
5. ראה שו"ע ר"ט ס' ט.  
6. תשובות והנהגות ח"א סי' כו בשם הבית הלוי.  
7. פת"ח שער ציצית פ"ד, הובא בלקו"ת שלח מ"ה ע"ד. וראה במדבר רבה פ"ז סי' ה. ביאור הגר"א או"ח סי' ט אות ב.  
8. שו"ת תורת שלום סי' א.  
9. אג"ק ח"ז ע' רלב. וראה גם ת"מ חכ"ח ע' 154 וחמ"ד ע' 37 וחמ"ט ע' 297. תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"ג ע' 533. ולהעיר מביאורו של הרב א.ז. ווייסברג בהע"ב אה"ת גלי אצ"ב ע' 65 ואילך.  
9. לקו"ש ח"ח ע' 101.

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



## REB AHARON STRASHELER

Reb Aharon Halevi of Strasheleh, was one of the greatest *talmidim* of the Alter Rebbe. He was chosen by the Alter Rebbe to be the Mittlerer Rebbe's *chavrusa*, and they became extremely close friends. He wrote and published numerous *seforim* of Chassidus, and after the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, some *chassidim* of the Alter Rebbe chose Reb Aharon as their Rebbe. Reb Aharon was imprisoned at the same time as the Mittlerer Rebbe. He passed away on Shemini Atzeres תקפ"ט (1828) in Strasheleh, where he is buried.

Reb Aharon's manner of *avodas Hashem* was full of enthusiasm and left an indelible impression on all those who saw it. The chassid Reb Abba Tshashniker related of his visit to Reb Aharon at the age of twelve: "The speech of Rabbi Aharon was fiery, and when he mentioned the name of the Alter Rebbe he would stand up and then fall silent, immersed in thought." Reb Abba's eyes would shine brightly as

he spoke of these things. He once said: "At a later time, I was privileged to see the Mittlerer Rebbe and to become a follower of the Tzemach Tzedek, but to the end of my days I shall never forget what I saw and heard when I was with the chassid Reb Aharon whenever the words of the Alter Rebbe were on his lips."

Once a chassid inquired of Reb Peretz Chein whether he should travel to Lubavitch or to Strasheleh, and Reb Peretz directed him to Strasheleh. The next time that Reb Peretz arrived in Lubavitch the Mittlerer Rebbe expressed his displeasure at having sent a chossid away from Lubavitch.

Reb Peretz replied that he saw that chossid was totally emotional and lacked the intellectual aptitude in which the Mittlerer Rebbe guided his chassidim. He therefore decided he would be better off by Reb Aharon who encouraged emotional enthusiasm.

(מעשי אבותי בס' מגדל עז אות פה)

## A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



## CHANGE THE WORLD BY CHANGING YOURSELF

After Mr. Gordon Zaks delivered a speech at the Council of Jewish Relations and Welfare Funds, he was invited by the Rebbe to a personal *yechidus*. As he entered, the Rebbe looked straight at him and began, "Mr. Zaks, I read your speech and it is clear that you have taken care of your mind; I see you and its clear you have cared for your body; what are you doing for your soul?"

Thus began a one and a half hour *yechidus*, in which the Rebbe implored him to connect to Hashem. "Remember Mr. Zaks," said the Rebbe. "If you want to change the world, you must first change yourself.

"When you change, it's like dropping a pebble in a lake, and there are ripples

which influence those around you. Through connecting to G-d in your soul, it will impact the people around you. So remember to focus on yourself first."

Mr. Zaks left the *yechidus*, deeply affected. Nineteen years later, when he came on the dollars line the Rebbe immediately asked him, "What are you doing for the Jewish people and Jewish education?"

The astounded Mr. Zaks felt as if he had just walked out of the Rebbes room. "Rebbe, you're amazing!" he exclaimed.

"Whom does it help that I am amazing? How are you going to help for the Jewish people? What are you doing for Jewish education?"

לעילוי נשמת

ר' משה יעקב ב"ר ישע"י ע"ה והילד תנחום ב"ר משה יעקב ע"ה

יאהרצייט י"ד טבת