

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



SENSITIVE SIGHT (I)

SAFEGUARDING ONESELF

The Torah commands us, *velo sosuru acharei levavchem ve'acharei eineichem*: do not follow your heart and eyes, for the eye sees, the heart desires, and the body then commits wrongdoings.

(שלח טו, לט, רש"י שם)

Yeshayahu HaNavi praises one "who closes his eyes from seeing evil" and promises that he will be protected, that he will lack no sustenance, that his children will grow up properly, and that he will merit seeing the glory of the King.

As an example of the above, *Chazal* speak of a person who does not gaze at the women laundering clothes by the river. When there is an alternative route, he is obligated to take it, and earns no special praise for doing so (for otherwise he would be transgressing.) Yeshayahu HaNavi is speaking of a person who must take the original route, yet forces himself, with great difficulty to turn his eyes away.

(ישעיהו לג, טו-יז, בבא בתרא נ"ז ע"ב, שו"ע אהע"ז סי' כ"א ס"א)

At a *farbrengen* in Riga, the Friediker Rebbe once said: "There are times when one should not go out in the streets. If one must go out, he should set hours when he will not go, and take the least populated roads when he does."

(סה"ש תרפ"ט ע' 60)

Someone once asked the Rebbe what to do when doing *mitvzo'im* in places that require caution regarding what can be seen there. The Rebbe replied, "When someone thinks words of Torah while going on *mitvzo'im*, the Rebbe accompanies him and protects him from all negative influences."

However, to another who told the Rebbe that he felt that doing *mitvzo'im* in such places was causing him damage *beruchniyus*, the Rebbe advised him not to go there.

(סיפורים חסידיים ח"א ע' 164)

The revered *mashpia*, Reb Mendel Futerfas, was exceptionally particular to shield his eyesight, even in his old age. When a gathering was held in Kfar Chabad for a mixed group of soldiers, Reb Mendel sat at the head table, unobtrusively looking down the entire time.

(מפי הרד"מ שי' דרוקמן)

The vintage *chossid*, HaRav Shmaryahu Sosonkin, related: "One, day, while I was walking down the street in Paris, I passed the Rebbe who was holding a fully opened newspaper in front of him. When the Rebbe noticed me, he commented, 'Nu, it's impossible to walk in the streets of Paris with open eyes...'"

Chassidim once peeked into the newspaper and noticed that it was years old.

(ימי מלך ח"א ע' 465, ח"ג ע' 21)

CONSIDER

Why did only the Rebbe Maharash think of wearing opaque glasses?

What lesson did the talmid of the Baal Shem Tov learn?

TAKING CONTROL

A *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov once requested his Rebbe's advice on how to guard his eyes from seeing evil. The Baal Shem Tov advised him to travel to a particular town and stay at the home of a certain individual. There he would learn how to conduct himself properly. Arriving at his destination, the *talmid* was surprised to find that his host was a simple, unsophisticated dock worker.

Some days later, while alone in his host's home, he noticed a window high up near the ceiling. Being very curious, he placed one table atop another, piled a third above those two, and climbed up. Moving aside the curtain to look out, he was shocked to see some neighbors behaving inappropriately.

When his host returned, the *talmid* remarked: "I'm surprised at you! How can you live near such bad neighbors?" – and related what he had seen through the window.

The host replied, "The question is on your behavior! I've been living here for twenty years and have never considered checking to see what my neighbors are doing. You're here for only a couple of days, yet you couldn't restrain yourself from climbing up to look..."

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' ד)

USING FORESIGHT

The Rebbe Maharash often had to travel to various health resorts. On one such trip, he met one of the *gedolei hamussar*, who also required this visit for his health. One of the procedures was washing oneself in the remedial mineral springs. Two lines of chairs, one for men and the other for women, were set up opposite each other for the people who were waiting their turn.

Sitting on line, the *rov* was greatly disturbed that he was facing immodestly dressed women, and wondered how the Rebbe Maharash, wearing his glasses, was able to sit there undisturbed. The Rebbe later showed him how he had come with opaque glasses, and so he was spared from seeing any immodesty.

(רשימת דברים ח"ג ע' קמ"ו, וראה כע"ז בלקו"ס ע' קנ ולשמע אוזן ע' 76)

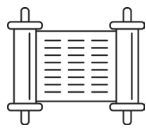
During the time that the Rebbe resided in Paris, he was very careful to protect his eyesight.

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AMIRAH L'NOCHRI

May I ask a non-Jew to open my fridge if the light will turn on?

On Shabbos, Chazal prohibited telling a non-Jew to do a melacha for you. Yet, if the melacha itself is d'rabonon (making your request of the non-Jew a twice d'rabonon - shvus d'shvus) and it's needed for a mitzva or pressing need, it is allowed.

Doing a melecha d'oraisa with a shinui (abnormal manner) lowers it to an issur d'rabonon. Thus, halacha rules that one who requires tevila and has grown nails which pose a chatzitza may have a non-Jew remove them with their hands or teeth.1 Likewise, some allow asking a non-Jew to cut an esrog off a tree by biting the branch.2

What about flipping a light switch with the elbow? Some hold that it's only considered a shinui if the result is imperfect (as in the cases above). Since l'chumra we consider the non-Jew a shliach of the Jew, the results are attributed to the Jew.3 Others write that any abnormal method is a shinui, even if the results are perfect (particularly by Shabbos where the Torah specifies meleches machsheves, a deliberate, calculated act).4 One may rely on this opinion in case of need.

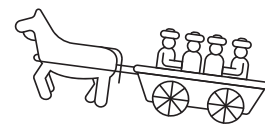
What if I tell the non-Jew to use a shinui and he decides to do it normally? Some hold that since he is doing a Torah prohibition for the Yid it would be prohibited to benefit from it.5 Others argue that since the Jew explicitly instructed him to do it with a shinui and the non-Jew chose to do it normally for his own convenience, he is not acting as his shliach.6 This is the accepted practice.

Opening a fridge with an automatic light is psik reishai, an unintended result which is unavoidable. When telling a non-Jew to open the fridge, one is not telling him specifically to turn on the light. While some poskim are concerned, the Alter Rebbe permits it, even if the non-Jew knows that the light will turn on.7 Since it's not part of the Jew's instructions, the non-Jew was not made a shliach for that act, and it isn't attributed to the Jew.8

Some argue that opening the fridge is not truly a psik reishai but a direct act. Psik reishai is when one action inadvertently triggers a separate, unrelated result, whereas an act that serves two functions at once, one permitted and one forbidden, is considered to have been done for the forbidden act as well.9

1. ראה שו"ע רבנו או"ח סי' ש"מ ס"ב. 2. ראה פרמ"ג א"א או"ח תרנ"ה סק"א. 3. ראה שו"ע א"ח סי' רנ"ג ס"ז. וראה גם שם סי' רנ"ט ס"ז, סי' רע"ו ס"ט, וסי' רע"ז ס"ה. ומנגד ראה משנ"ב סי' רנ"ג ס"ק נ"א. שם סי' רע"ו סק"ל ופסק"ת שם אות טז. 4. ראה נשמת השבת ח"ה סי' קי"ד וקט"ו. 5. ראה שו"ע פל"א הערה א' בשם הגרש"א. 6. את דעת בעל העיטור - הובא בשו"ע סי' רע"ו ס"ח וראה רמ"א שם ס"ב. 7. ראה שו"ע אדה"ז סי' רנ"ג ס"ז. וראה גם שם סי' רנ"ט ס"ז, סי' רע"ו ס"ט, וסי' רע"ז ס"ה. ומנגד ראה משנ"ב סי' רנ"ג ס"ק נ"א. שם סי' רע"ו סק"ל ופסק"ת שם אות טז. 8. ראה נשמת השבת ח"ה סי' קי"ד וקט"ו. 9. ראה שו"ע פל"א הערה א' בשם הגרש"א.

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



R. SHIMSHON VITEBSKER

R. Shimshon Milner of Vitebsk (5650-5673) was a talmid in Tomchei Temimim who was known as a sincere oved Hashem and very spiritual person. He tragically passed away in his youth, but he left a deep impression on his fellow temimim. When the news of his passing reached the Rebbe Rashab, he said, "It seems that they need good ones in heaven too..."

After Kabolas Shabbos, we were told that the Rebbe would say the maamar after eating. I hurried to my host and returned within ten minutes, but the doors were already locked. Apparently, the Rebbetzin brought out mezonos for those who remained, and the Rebbe began straight away. Thankfully, the window shutters were open, and the Rebbe spoke loudly, so we stood in the snow listening to the maamar.

After having spent several years in Lubavitch and making great progress in learning and avoda, Shimshon returned to his hometown of Vitebsk. When asked whether he had learned nigleh or Chassidus, he replied, "I learned that I'm a Yid!"

(מעשה חשב ע' 92)

Shimshon Vitebsker had also come late, but because of his poor health, he could not possibly stand outside. He knocked on the house door, and to our surprise, Rebbetzin Shterna Sara allowed him to walk through the entire house to the room where the Rebbe sat.

At 11 pm, after chazara, we sat in the Zal and expressed our remorse at having gone to eat before the maamar. Shimshon noted that when he was healthy, he would never leave to eat, except for once when his head began to spin and his eyesight became dark. "Never go away," Shimshon told his friends, "You'll be fine!"

(זכרון לבני ישראל ע' לט)

On one of the days before Pesach, the Rebbe Rashab would go out to draw the mayim shelanu, accompanied by the mashpi'im, mashgichim and bochurim of Tomchei Temimim. They would return with the water to the chotzer, the courtyard of the Rebbe's house and the yeshiva, where they would break out in a joyous dance.

One year, Shimshon Vitebsker danced with exceptional fervor, and his face shone so brightly that one could barely gaze at it. The Rebbe Rashab, who was watching the dancing from his room, said, "I saw Shimshon Vitebsker dancing and his yechida shebanefesh shined!"

(לקו"ס פרלוב ע' רט"ו)

Shimshon once shared a tradition he received from an old Yid:

Every year, during the height of the winter, the freezing cold weather breaks and it rains, to show that nature is in the hands of Hashem. This was observed for over one hundred years, even in the cold regions of Russia.

(זכרון לבני ישראל ע' לט)

R. Yisroel Jacobson related:

In 5673, Asara B'Teves fell out on Friday.

A Moment with The Rebbe



LEARNING UNTIL 12:30 IN THE SUMMER?

"How could it be that a school is closed for the entire summer?!" the Rebbe exclaimed at the farbrengen of Yud Beis Tammuz 5745.

the Rebbe commented on their summer learning schedules, even for younger children:

"How is it possible that a 'house of life' should be closed even for one day, and certainly not for many weeks and months? They claim that the schools don't have enough money to remain open during the summer, but how can one even bring up money when lives are at stake?"

"They write that the young children learn only until lunch break at 12:30 PM. This needs clarification: How do they spend the remainder - and majority - of the day? Especially since among them are students above age [six] when one is to 'stuff them with Torah as one stuffs an ox.'"

(Toras Menachem 5745, vol. 4, p. 2450; Igros Kodesh, vol. 11, p. 121)

In one letter to a school administration,