

The Weekly Farbrengens


MERKAZ ANASH
 מרכז אנאש
 888 • דברים תשפ"ו • לחמן ישמעו
 EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

SENSITIVE SIGHT (II)

STANDING GUARD

The *Midrash* tells of the *kedusha* of Yosef HaTzaddik who vigilantly controlled his eyesight. Potiphar's wife tried to entice him to look at her, even putting an iron rod under his neck, but despite whatever she did, he refused to look. Later, when Yosef was chosen as second to the king and was escorted throughout Mitzrayim, the local princesses endeavored to look at his face, yet he did not glance at any of them. He therefore merited success in *Olam HaZeh* and *Olam HaBa*.

(בראשית רבה פ"ז י"א, ילקוט שמעוני ויחי רמז קס"א)

The *Midrash* says that whoever restrains himself in the area of *tznius* is called *kadosh*, holy. Elisha HaNavi was described by the woman of Shunaim as holy, for throughout the time he was there, he did not gaze at her.

(ויקרא רבה כ"ד ו')

The wife of On ben Peles was determined to prevent her husband from joining Korach's campaign against Moshe Rabbeinu. She positioned herself at the entrance of her tent and uncovered her hair, saying to herself, "Now I know they will not approach the tent, for even these evildoers are careful to guard their eyes."

(סנהדרין ק"ט סע"ב)

HOLY EYES

One day, as Rashi was leaving his beis midrash, he saw a minister's wife riding towards him and was greatly disturbed that his holy eyes had to witness such a scene. Later on, when he wrote his *peirush* on the Torah and had to describe the ephod of the kohen gadol, he understood that this was why he had seen that woman.

(לקו"ש חכ"ו ע' 198)

An early chossid called Reb Yitzchak of Yanovitch used to do business with a German Yid who would deliberately ask him heretical questions to challenge his emuna, but Reb

Yitzchok answered them all.

Seeing his lack of success in angering Reb Yitzchak with his questions, he decided to make him stumble with lusts. "We've been doing business together for a number of years," he said, "so why don't you come over to my home for a friendly visit, at least for a cup of tea?"

Reb Yitzchok agreed, and when he arrived and sat down by the table, his host had the refreshments served by his daughter, who was dressed in an insolently immodest manner. Immediately upon seeing her, Reb Yitzchok vomited, being unable to handle her insolent immodesty.

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' רל"ז)

CONSIDER

Why is holiness especially attributed to one who protects his vision?

What type of blindness is caused by harmful sights? Why is it called blindness?

THE POWERFUL IMPACT

The Rebbe Rashab writes: Those who care for their *neshamas*, and want to safeguard it from becoming impure, should monitor their vision and not look at everything around them, especially forbidden sights. Even if this is difficult and one may be ridiculed for it, he should strengthen himself like a lion and know that it is vital for his *neshama*. Without this, all his *avoda* is worthless and will have no effect. For one's physical health, one overlooks nothing; how much more should this apply to the life of the *neshama*.

(קונטרס העבודה פ"ב)

The Rebbe writes in a letter: One who looks where he should not, is misusing his eyes. He is considered blind for the moment, and a blind person is considered to be lacking in life.

In another letter the Rebbe adds that the mere sight of something negative, even without conscious thought, has a negative effect on the onlooker.

(אג"ק חי"ט ע' שד"מ, אג"ק ח"כ ע' פב)

When Shaul HaMelech asked some girls for directions while searching for his donkeys, they gave him a lengthy response. *Chazal* say that they did not do so because they wanted to gaze upon his handsome appearance, "for just as it is forbidden for a man to gaze upon a woman, it is forbidden for a woman to gaze upon a man."

The Mitteler Rebbe writes that when a woman does so, this can affect the health of the children that she will bear.

(ילקוט שמואל א' פ"ט, פוקח עוריים)

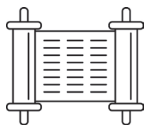
A German Yid once traveled to the noted student of the Baal Shem Tov, Reb Pinchas of Koritz, to request a *bracha* for his daughter, who had suddenly become blind. "The reason," said Reb Pinchas, "is that her father is also blind, and this disease is hereditary."

The Yid protested, "But my eyes are perfectly healthy! I don't even wear glasses!"

The *tzaddik* explained that it is a sinner who is truly blind. He warned the Yid that his entire family was in danger of losing their vision, for "if one gazes upon the face of a *rasha*, his eyes grow dim."

Hearing this, the Yid wept and resolved to begin conducting his life according to Torah, and indeed, upon his return to Germany he made his home *kosher* in all respects. When his daughter was cured, she traveled to Koritz to see the *tzaddik* and donated money for the writing of two *sifrei Torah*.

(סיפ"ח זוין תורה ע' 97)



THE DAY AFTER TISHA B'AV

When do the Nine Days mourning practices end when Yud Av falls on Friday?

When the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, the fire took hold toward the end of the ninth and continued through much of the tenth. For this reason, we continue the mourning customs of the Nine Days until *chatzos* of the tenth, including refraining from eating meat, drinking wine, taking a haircut, laundering clothes, bathing, and listening to music.¹

When Tisha B'Av falls on a Thursday, laundry may be done on Friday morning in honor of Shabbos.² In such a case, one may even launder clothing that is not needed for Shabbos, though some are *machmir*.

A haircut may also be taken on Friday morning according to most *poskim*, while some suggest waiting until *chatzos*. When practical factors make this difficult, such as the barber's availability, all allow it from the morning.³

Ezra instituted that Shabbos laundry be done on Thursday, so that one should be free on Friday to prepare for Shabbos (see issue 799).⁴ When Thursday is Tisha b'Av, it is pushed off to Friday, but if Friday will be too busy as a result, one may launder and cut hair on Thursday night *l'chavod Shabbos*. In this case, one may wash only what is needed for Shabbos.⁵

One who took a haircut in the morning, or whose only opportunity to go to the mikvah is before *chatzos*, may wash with warm water at that time.⁶ Putting on freshly laundered clothing should generally wait until after *chatzos*, except in case of need.⁷

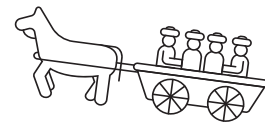
The Rebbe objected to singing and dancing on Motzei Tisha B'Av after Kiddush Levana.⁸ Even when Motzaei Tisha B'Av fell on a Thursday night, the Rebbe motioned to someone singing to wait until the following day.⁹

From *chatzos* of the tenth onward, the focus turns to the *nechama* and the *geulah*; may it come very soon.¹⁰

1. תענית כט ע"א. שו"ע ס' תקנ"ח ומג"א סק"א. מקור חיים שם.
2. מג"א שם.
3. ראה נט"ג פפ"ט ס"ה.
4. בבא קמא פ"ב ע"א. שו"ע או"ח ס' רמ"ב ס"א ושו"ע ר"ש ס"א.
5. ראה נט"ג פפ"ח ס"ב והע"ג.
6. נט"ג פפ"ט ס"ט.
7. נט"ג פפ"ט ס"ב.
8. ראה ס' הלכות ומנהגי חב"ד.
9. יוסף אומץ אות תתצ"ג.
10. יוסף אומץ אות תתצ"ג.

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

Our Heroes



R. MORDECHAI ELINSON

R. Mordechai Elinson was born in c. 5620 and was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash, Rebbe Rashab, and the Frierdiker Rebbe. He lived in Kharkov, where he was a successful businessman, owning both a vinegar and an ink factory. He was renowned for his hospitality and generosity and was a leading activist on behalf of Yiddishkeit in Kharkov. R. Mordechai was the director of a cheder which he continued to maintain with *mesiras nefesh* even under communist rule. He supported the cheder financially and guarded it spiritually, ensuring that the *melamdim* were *yerei Shomayim* and all the learning was *al taharas hakodesh*. He passed away c. 5700.

R. Mordechai was an incredible *machnis orach*, and his home was always full of guests. On Shabbos morning those who rose early to say Tehillim would come to his home for coffee before davening, and for the Shabbos meal he would host no less than ten people, local paupers and well-to-do travelers, at his table.

On his way home from a successful business trip, R. Yehoshua Eliyahu Volosov stayed in Kharkov for Shabbos. When he inquired about a reliably kosher inn, R. Mordechai invited him to his home.

At the house, R. Yehoshua Eliyahu found a Shabbos table lavishly set with food and drink and many people, who he presumed were

all paying for their stay and meals. Feeling generous, he asked R. Mordechai during the meal to serve extra liquor to the guests on his account. He repeated his request the following day, and overall behaved like a guest in a hotel.

After Shabbos, R. Yehoshua Eliyahu asked his host for a bill. R. Mordechai replied in surprise, "Are you going to pay me for all my guests? I won't take money for them or for you. I won't take money for the liquor you requested either, since your will is my will!"

(רשימות דברים חדש ע' 276, ס' הזכרונות דברי הימים ע' צח)

Once, after drawing money from the bank, R. Mordechai noticed that he was overpaid 10,000 rubles. He tried telling the clerk, but he insisted that they never make mistakes. When R. Mordechai persisted, the clerk recalculated and discovered that R. Mordechai was correct. This story was reported in the newspapers and caused a great *kiddush Hashem*.

(רשימות דברים חדש ע' 277)

While on a trip to Yalta, the Rebbe Rashab once spent some time in Kharkov, and a large feast was held in his honor. During the feast, the Rebbe displayed special affection for R. Mordechai, and at one point held onto R. Mordechai's beard while gazing at him with love.

(ס' הזכרונות דברי הימים ע' צט)

A Moment with The Rebbe



STOP THINKING ABOUT YOURSELF

On numerous occasions, both in public sichos and farbrengens, and in private correspondence, the Rebbe discouraged spending one's energy focusing on past wrongs and dwelling on negative thoughts and criticism.

Instead, the Rebbe repeatedly underscored that this energy be channeled into constructive action and real change.

During the period after the Frierdiker Rebbe's *histalkus*, before the Rebbe formally took on the mantle of *nesius*, Reb Yoel Kahn, then a

bochur, went in for *yechidus*. It was one of his first of many *yechidus*'n with the Rebbe.

In his *tztel*, he had written about various matters troubling him in his *avodas Hashem* and personal life, and he handed it to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe read his letter and responded: Instead of thinking "Yoel iz azoi un Yoel iz azoi," Yoel is this and Yoel is that, better use your thoughts to think about Hashem and to learn Nigleh and Chassidus.

(As heard from Reb Sholom Feldman a"h)