

The Weekly *Farbrengens*

MERKAZ ANASH
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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

RECOGNIZING THE ENEMY (I)

ALWAYS ON GUARD

A person must always be wary of the *yetzer hara*, for even when he forgets about it, the *yetzer hara* does not forget about the person. He acts like a friend but in reality, is trying to destroy him completely.

A righteous person once met a troop of soldiers returning from a victorious battle, their arms loaded high with spoils. The man told them, "Now be prepared for the real war." Surprised, they asked him to explain. "That's the war the *yetzer hara* will fight when you celebrate with the spoils," he clarified.

(חובת הלבבות שער יחוד המעשה פ"ה)

Reb Meir of Premishlan once related: "One wintry day, while traveling with my Rebbe, Reb Mordechai of Kremnitz, our wagon reached an incline. It seemed the carriage would topple over at any moment. Full of youthful courage, I prepared to quickly jump out, but my Rebbe held onto me with his hand and said, 'Sit down calmly; no harm will befall you.' So it was. The wagon passed the incline safely.

"After some time had elapsed, and I had already forgotten about my desire to jump out, the carriage, driving on flat land, turned over, and we all fell out onto the snow. Reb Mordechai laughed: 'Nu, you see?' But I did not understand to what he was referring.

"Quite a while later, I realized he had been intimating a lesson in *avodas HaShem*: Sometimes a Yid is worried that he will *chas veshalom* fall into the clutches of the *yetzer hara*, who is constantly out to ensnare him, and *HaShem* helps him stay safe. However, when a Yid is confidently going along his path, and does not even realize that the *yetzer hara* is ready to pounce, specifically then he is likely to fall into his clutches..."

(תפארת צדיקים)

Chazal warn us that throughout one's entire life, one should not rely on his righteousness, for Yochanan Kohen Gadol served eighty years in the *Beis HaMikdash* and then strayed and became a *tzedoki*.

(ברכות כ"ט ע"א)

The *yetzer hara* does not suddenly try to tempt a person to commit severe *aveiros*; he works stage by stage. At first he convinces him about something

small, then he pushes further, until eventually he tries talking the person into serving *avoda zara*.

The Friediker Rebbe explains that the *yetzer hara* may even begin by giving his approval to the *mitzvos* being done ("*aseh kach*"), but he rationalizes and limits the extent of their fulfillment. For example, he encourages a person to take it easy and watch his health, to be "normal", to find favor in the eyes of others, and he brings proofs and explanations for all his claims. This cools a person down and enables the *yetzer hara* to push him further into actually committing *aveiros*.

(שבת ק"ה ע"ב, סה"מ קונטרסים א' ע' ל"ז ע"א)

general rule and remember it always. If something actually leads to active *avoda* (in refining one's *middos*) and is met up with opposition, then that opposition, even the noblest, is coming from the *yetzer hara*."

Relating this episode, the Rebbe Rashab added, "When I left that *yechidus*, I changed my *avoda* completely. Until then, I had assumed that the *yetzer hara* could only encourage a person to do negative things, and it is therefore necessary for one to be cautious only concerning those matters. I had never imagined that there could be a *frum yetzer hara*, let alone a *chassidische yetzer hara*, who is there just to restrain a person from being involved in his true *avoda*."

(היום יום כ"ג סיון, אג"ק מהור"י צ"ח ע"ד ע"סז)

CONSIDER

Why does HaShem make our struggle even more difficult by disguising the *yetzer hara*?

How does one differentiate between the cleverness of *chassidim* and the *chassidische yetzer hara*?

Concerning those pious folk who, out of humility, abstain from *avoda*, the Friediker Rebbe said: "Even before becoming Rebbe, the *Tzemach Tzedek* would *farbreng* with the *chassidim* for *Simchas Beis HaSho'eiva*, discussing *Chassidus* and *avodas HaShem*. At one such *farbrengens* he said, 'My grandfather the Alter Rebbe and my father-in-law the Mitteler Rebbe have made *chassidim* canny (*klug*), so that they should know how to recognize the *nefesh habahamis* in all his false costumes and clever antics.'

(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 87)

The Friediker Rebbe related: "When I was a child, my father, the Rebbe Rashab, taught me *Tanya*, explaining in depth how a *chassidische* child must work to change himself. At that time we learned the letter of the Alter Rebbe, in which he strongly warns his *chassidim* not to scorn those Yidden who had fought with them, nor to regard themselves as being superior to them. My father explained, 'The *nefesh habahamis* convinces a person that such behavior comes from the good *middos* of *kedusha*. His pride in his *avodas HaShem* then fools him into regressing further and further.'

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' כ')

The Rebbe would often quote the Rebbe Maharash: "To fool *HaShem*, you surely can't; others, you also won't be able to fool. Who then will you fool? Yourself! Is it a *kuntz* to fool a fool?!"

(ת"מ ח"ג ע' 130 ועוד, וראה סה"ש תרפ"ד ע' 79 בהערה)

KNOWING HIS TRICKS

At *yechidus*, the Rebbe Maharash once told the Rebbe Rashab: "The *yetzer hara*, though called an 'animal', can at times act slyly, and clothe itself in the guise of a straightforward, humble *tzaddik*, so that one really has to be clever enough to uncover its tricks. The *yetzer hara* manifests itself in each individual according to his nature. One person may suddenly feel a powerful desire to learn *Chassidus* [at a particular time], yet that desire is coming from the *yetzer hara*, who is trying to prevent him from *davening* at length, or the like."

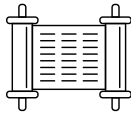
The Rebbe Maharash concluded, "Take this as a

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PAYING THE SHADCHAN

A sibling of the *kalla* took over the *shidduch* in the middle. Who must be paid?

A *shadchan*, who provided a service in arranging the match, must be paid a fee just like any broker.¹ This applies even if it was a friend and not a professional *shadchan*.²

When a relative served as the *shadchan*, they are sometimes considered beneficiaries of the *shidduch* themselves and aren't owed a fee. This definitely applies to a parent or child of the *chassan* or *kalla*.³ Though siblings are not considered beneficiaries, it is often accepted that siblings do things for each other for free. Therefore, a sibling may not demand payment from his family's side unless it was stipulated initially, but he may collect from the other side.⁴ A more distant relative—such as an uncle, aunt, or cousin—is usually entitled to full pay from both sides, unless stipulated otherwise or the situation clearly shows otherwise.

When multiple *shadchanim* were involved in clinching a *shidduch*, *halacha* discusses how to split the fee between the *maschil*, initiator and the *gomer*, the clincher (see issue 160). If a sibling took over the *shadchanus* in the middle, the *maschil* is only entitled to his allotted percentage from both sides even if the sibling doesn't collect his percentage from his own family. However, if close relatives—e.g. parent or child—took over the *shidduch*, the *maschil* is entitled to full pay, since he finished bringing it all the way to the actual beneficiaries.

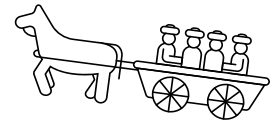
If the *shadchan* is involved until the end and family members only got involved to sort out problems, they are merely fulfilling their family obligations and may not demand payment as a *shadchan*.⁵

Upon whom lies the primary obligation to pay the *shadchanus gelt* – the young couple or their parents?

On the one hand, the *chassan* and *kalla* are the primary beneficiaries of the *shadchan* and they must pay, though the parents can choose to pay for them.⁶ On the other hand, the parents can be considered the primary beneficiaries, since marrying off a daughter is the father's obligation.⁷

If the parents do not pay, are the children obligated?

While some depend it on the abovementioned dispute, others say it depends solely on who the *shadchan* planned to bill and who customarily pays.⁸ Thus, for a young couple the obligation remains with the parents, but if they are older, it might be their own obligation to pay. Likewise, if it's clear that the parents aren't involved, the couple must pay.⁹



REB CHAIM YONAH LUTZKI

When Reb Chaim Yonah was a *bochur* in Tomchei Temimim he was known as 'a cut above the rest'; a *ba'al madreiga*, an *oved* and *maskil* of a lofty caliber. He was very much cherished by the Rebbe Rashab who gave him rare '*kiruvim*'. At one point he began concealing his greatness by conducting himself in an unusual manner. He passed away young after a difficult illness.

Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman would occasionally speak about Reb Chaim Yonah. He related that as an older *bochur* he would sometimes *farbrenge* for the younger *bochurim*. In preparation, he would stand and think for six hours straight. You could see how his entire being was involved in preparing for that *farbrengen*.

Reb Nochum Goldshmid related: There were always rumors going round that Chaim Yonah was a great '*maskil*' of *Chassidus*. But there was no way to verify this, as he never spoke with anyone about '*haskalah*' in *Chassidus*. I too would try and speak to him about *Chassidus* but could not get anywhere.

One day, I was walking down the street and I saw Chaim Yonah carrying two large suitcases. I seized the opportunity and I went over and said, "Let's make a deal. I will take those cases to wherever you need, but as payment, I want to talk with you in *Chassidus* for one full hour." Not having a choice, Reb Chaim Yonah agreed. For one hour, Chaim Yonah spoke about the deepest concept in *Chassidus*. After sixty minutes, and not a minute more, Chaim Yonah stopped and said, "That's it. An hour has passed. I did not promise more than that."

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE MOST VEHEMENT ENEMY

Reb Yoel Kahn related:

An American *Yid* once traveled to Russia on business. During his stay, he was arrested and interrogated to determine if he had any connections to Lubavitch.

When he was released, he asked them why they fear Lubavitch so deeply. One officer replied, "The Rebbe is the most powerful Jewish leader, and the most vehement enemy of mother

Russia's government!"

This *Yid* returned to the States and shared his experiences with the Rebbe.

When he repeated the officer's words commenting on the extent of the Rebbe's leadership, the Rebbe brushed it aside. The second phrase, however, received the Rebbe's full confirmation.

(*Otzar Hachasidim EY*, page 537)

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