

The Weekly *Farbrengens*

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנש
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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

POSITIVE EXPOSURE (I)

THE IMPACT OF READING MATERIAL

The *Rambam* writes: *HaShem* commanded us to refrain from studying about an *avoda zara* or its service, for this can cause a person to be drawn after it. Furthermore, anything that can bring someone to question the basis of our *emuna* may not be studied. Since a person's mind is limited, he may think of a question to which he will not find a satisfactory answer, leaving him in doubt about the truth of Yiddishkeit.

(רמב"ם הל' ע"ז פ"ב ה"ב)

Chazal say that whoever reads books of an extraneous nature (*sfarim hachitzonim*) may lose his portion in *Olam HaBa*. The *Rivash* explains that even if he does not believe what is written there, he still forfeits his *Olam HaBa*.

(סנהדרין ק ע"א, שו"ת ריב"ש סי' מה)

The Alter Rebbe rules in *Shulchan Aruch*: Books which arouse the reader to *taivos* are absolutely forbidden because they incite the *yetzer hara*. People who write or publish such books are counted among 'those who cause others to sin'.

Furthermore, a book or magazine which *contains* forbidden material may not be read at all, for one may come to read the forbidden parts.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' שז ס"ל, קצות השלחן סי' קז בדה"ש מג)

SECULAR BOOKS

In תרמ"ח (1888), when the Frierdiker Rebbe was only eight years old, the Rebbe Rashab wrote his first will, in which he directed the *Rebbetzin* concerning the education of their young son.

"Regarding our son *sheyichye*, I request that you watch over him in all matters *begashmiyus* and *beruchniyus*, which nowadays necessitates a special safeguard. Most importantly, he needs to be protected from bad friends, who lack *yiras Shamayim* and an acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. Because of their exposure to inappropriate things, including books and stories written in Yiddish, which many of them read and lend to one another,

they can negatively influence others. Much of such literature can *r"l* cause a person to think foreign thoughts when occupied with matters of *Torah*, *mitzvos* and *tefila*. They desensitize and cool down one's enthusiasm in anything holy. May *HaShem* have mercy on us and send *Moshiach* speedily, in our days. Amen."

(חנוך לנער ע' 26)

CONSIDER

How can objectionable reading cool one's enthusiasm in holiness if he does not accept what he reads?

Why should Chassidus protect a person from wanting to engage in secular literature?

During a routine search conducted in the Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah, secular books were found among the possessions of some *bochurim*. The Rebbe Rashab was extremely disturbed and was most upset with the *bochurim* for allowing such a thing to happen. The *mashpia* Reb Groinem and the *chozer* Reb Moshe traveled to the Rebbe's *datche* to reconcile between the *bochurim* and the Rebbe. They asked him: "Since only a few *bochurim* had these books, why then is the Rebbe so upset?"

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the Rebbe. "They are being showered with *Chassidus!*"

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 175)

In תשי"ז (1957), various secular newspapers were being issued in *Eretz Yisroel*, and the Rabbonim there proclaimed that they were forbidden and not to be read.

When a certain Yid questioned the Rebbe about them, the Rebbe replied: "Concerning the secular

newspapers, especially those which contain forbidden material, there is no need to elaborate, for the *Shulchan Aruch* explicitly states that reading them is forbidden, and many proclamations have been recently made in *Eretz Yisroel* against them."

(לקו"ש חכ"ג ע' 363)

The *Chiddushei HaRim* would say that just as an infant whose brothers had died from a *bris* may not undergo a *bris*, even though the danger is doubtful, secular newspapers which have caused more than two Yidden to desert the proper path should not be read by any Yid.

(בואר חשבון ע' כז)

KOSHER TELEVISION?

In a *yechidus* with with R. Moshe Chaim Sapochinsky of Montreal in תשי"ד (1954), the Rebbe lashed out at the challenge of the time – television. At the time, many Yidden considered television to be an innocent provider of kosher entertainment and numerous *frum* Yidden brought it into their homes. The Rebbe explained that the 'kosher' television was not really so 'kosher' and would only spiral further downward. Children would see their parents using it and would watch other programs, and the adults as well would become lax over time.

The Rebbe said that even if one sees a *frum* or even a *chassidisher* Yid who has a television in his home, one should not learn from him. No one is perfect, and such a person is deficient in this area. No one would want to be blind, though there are successful people with that disability.

The Rebbe concluded: "In the past, Yidden were extremely particular to keep their distance from any negative influences, even avoiding walking near a church or the like, but with television, one brings the church *r"l* into their home! One must know that this is all a test from *HaShem*, to see if we indeed love him with all our heart. Make sure that you correct this matter in your hometown, and here in particular."

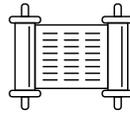
(לקו"ש ח"ח ע' 459, תוי"מ ח"ב ע' 192)

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WHEN TO OMIT TACHNUN

Is tachnun recited by mincha after a bris?

Although tachnun and nefilas apayim is discussed in the Gemara, it isn't considered as strict as other parts of tefilah, and its customs vary from community to community.

(1) Bar Mitzvah: There are various customs if a boy says tachnun on the day of his bar mitzva, and the minhag Chabad is that he does.

(2) Avel: Tachnun is omitted in the house of a mourner—the home where the person passed away or where the mourners are sitting shiva—since the posuk compares mourning to a festival, and we don't want to arouse judgement in the house.

(3) Yahrzeit: In many chassidic circles, tachnun is omitted on the yahrzeits of tzadikim. This is not the Chabad custom. In fact, the Tzemach Tzedek noted that there is no better time to say tachnun than on a yahrzeit.

(4) Hachnasas Sefer Torah: When describing the great joy associated with a hachnasas sefer Torah, the Friediker Rebbe records that the day was festive and tachnun was not recited.

(5) Bris Mila: A bris mila is associated with joy, thus those closely involved with the bris—the sandek, mohel, and father, even if he won't be at the bris—omit tachnun, and the joy also spreads to those who daven with them.

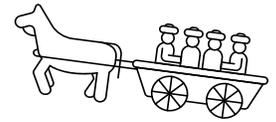
After the bris is over, tachnun is recited, except by the baalei bris since the entire day is like a yom tov for them. Yet, if there is a minyan for mincha during or before the seudas mitzva near the child, tachnun is omitted.

(6) Pidyon Haben: This is dispute amongst poskim, since it is a joyous occasion, but it still isn't like bris mila which Bnei Yisroel received with joy. In practice, if mincha is davened right before the onset of the pidyon, tachnun may be omitted.

It is told that the Friediker Rebbe once came to a city and they omitted tachnun by mincha. Upon the Friediker Rebbe's inquiry why they skipped tachnun, the chazzan replied it is in honor of the Rebbe's arrival. The Friediker Rebbe replied that the Rebbe's arrival in a city is "a reason not to sin."

9. אג"ק מהור"י צ"ח ע"ד. 10. שו"ת יב"א ח"ג סי' י"ב. 11. ראה משנ"ב סי' קל"א סק"כ"ה. 12. וראה שו"ת סי' קל"א ס"ו ו' כשמתפללים אצל התנוק שמשמעותו גם אחרי סעודת הברית מילה, וראה תול"מ ח"ב ע' 282, שו"ת שבה"ל ח"ח סי' כ"ד אות ג', וראה התקשרות גל"ק ע' 16. וצ"ע במקרה שאביו שם אבל התינוק כבר עזב את האיזור. 13. ראה סי' אשי ישראל פכ"ה פכ"ה סכ"ו והמסומן שם, ובס' פדיון הבן כהלכתו ע' רכ"ז הע' 17*, ולמעשה הכי נוהגים. 14. בכל ביתי נאמן הוא ע' 65.

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



R. YEKUSIEL LYEPLER

Reb Yekusiel Lyepler, a salt merchant from Lyeple, was one of the great chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, Mittlerer Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek, and for a short while, the Rebbe Maharash. He was a baal midos and baal hispaalus (full of life). Though a simple man by nature (he even found it difficult to learn Chumash with Rashi), he toiled tremendously until his understanding developed, and the Mittlerer Rebbe wrote the sefer Imrei Bina especially for him, a profound essay in Chassidus.

From that moment onward, Reb Yekusiel became a different person and his heart opened, for the Alter Rebbe "shined" into his neshama the ability to see Elokus as one sees something physical.

This shine of his neshama (which he would refer to as "the chossid") would come and go and his avoda would vary greatly depending on the current expression of his neshama. If while walking down the street, it would start to reveal itself, he would start to dance, exclaiming, "Chossid prishol, the chossid has come!" He would grab whoever stood nearby to dance with him.

Once while standing and waiting in the Borisov post office, his neshama began to shine, and he broke out in dance with the gentile post office clerk.

R. Yekusiel once jumped onto the Alter Rebbe's second story porch and exclaimed, "Rebbe! Please chop off my left half!" (Referring to the yetzer hora, which resides in the left side of the heart). The Alter Rebbe motioned for him to descend from the porch.

R. Yekusiel fasted and entered the Alter Rebbe's room a little while later as the Alter Rebbe was wearing his Rabeinu Tam tefillin. The Alter Rebbe leaned his head on his hands, then picking up he said in his characteristic sing-song, "Master of the Universe, it is said that you give life to everyone!"

When R. Yekusiel left the room, he was a new man.

(רשימת היומן ע' ש"ז)

After the Tzemach Tzedek's histalkus, R. Yekusiel came to Lubavitch to choose which of the sons of the Tzemach Tzedek would be his Rebbe. Eventually he connected to the Rebbe Maharash, saying, "Until now you were a 'you' to me, now you are my Rebbe. Please put on your hat and tell me Chassidus."

(רשימת היומן ע' ש"ז)

(ס' התולדות אדמו"ר מהר"ש ע' 68)

A Moment with The Rebbe



GUARDING THE BORDERS

Reb Yoel Kahn relates:

The Shabbos Parshas Beshalach 5729 farbrengen began like any other, but the middle of the Rashi sicha took a sharp turn. The Rebbe said that he will leave the unanswered questions for next week and suddenly began speaking of the borders of Eretz Yisroel. "The posuk says 'Prozos teisheiv Yerushalayim,' meaning that Yerushalayim will be so safe that guarding it won't be necessary."

"Prozos teisheiv," and sprang up to dance with great simcha. We of course all joined in.

As he left the shul, the Rebbe began the niggun again. And then again, he led the chassidim with this song before maariv.

We knew something was going on. Two days later, four Syrian warplanes penetrated the border with a strategy to hurt civilians. They were successfully grounded.

The Rebbe began singing the song

(Maynosecho issue 21)