POSITIVE EXPOSURE (II)

WORTHY TEACHERS

Shulchan Aruch states that it is forbidden to learn anything from an apikores for one may be influenced by his beliefs.

The Mezritcher Maggid said that one should not learn from a sefer written by a rasha even if it contains valid ideas, for the reader connects with the neshama of the author. One should certainly not learn from books written by apikorsim.

You are What you read

When a certain man complained about machshavos zaros during davening, the Frierdiker Rebbe replied that this was a result of reading newspapers. “Stop reading articles of foolishness and aveira, dedicate yourself to learning, and HaShem will help you in your learning and yiras Shamayim.”

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**KAPOTA BUTTON**

A button that fell off my Kapota in shul. Can I put it aside for after Shabbos?

Items that don’t serve as utensils may not be handled on Shabbos since they are muktza. What about items that are not currently useful, but they could serve as a utensil?

Shulchan Aruch rules that a detached door which was never a utensil is muktza when detached. Even if it could be used for something in its current state, it remains muktza since it’s designated to be reattached to the building. The same is true for any item that is attached to the ground (e.g. toilet cover) or the door of a large cabinet or refrigerator (i.e. larger than 40 seah). The door of a smaller utensil, however, is not muktza since it’s fit to be reconnected and is still considered a utensil.

Does it have to be useful now? Some acharonim require the door to be fit for use even in its present state, while others understand that it’s sufficient that the door is fit to be reconnected to the utensil.

A button that fell off and isn’t currently fit for any other use would depend on the above debate. While some rule to be stringent lechatchila, the Alter Rebbe seems to follow the more lenient view. In that case, it would be allowed to move the button normally to a safe place.

If the button isn’t slated to be reattached — e.g. a plain button that it easily replaceable and is not normally saved — the button would indeed be muktza.

If part of a utensil becomes detached making the utensil unusable and it is possible for a layman to put it back together (e.g. glasses arm that detaches), the components become muktza due to a decree of Chazal that one may put it aside for after Shabbos.

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**R. MICHELO DVORKIN**

R. Michael Dvorkin (5626-5709) was born in a town near Nevel to a family of Kopuster Chabad Chassidim. After the passing of the Magen Avos of Kopust, R. Michael traveled to Lubavitch and became a staunch mekushar to the Rebbe Rashab, and later had a deep personal relationship with the Friediker Rebbe. He lived in Eretz Yisrael and then New York in his later years, and was known for his heartfelt davening, nигнім, and Chassidishe stories.

Walking out after a farbrengen in the Friediker Rebbe’s sukkah, R. Michael, red faced and dancing, began singing in Russian “Nyet, nyet nikavoh,” there is nothing besides Hashem. [R. Michael had worked in the lumber business and borrowed various Russian expressions he had heard there.]

The Rebbe Rashab, who was visiting his son’s home, stood by the door for some time to make out the words, and then said, ”These are birurim of the forest… a tohu’diker ein od.” He then added, ”Even something simple, when done earnestly, is good. But without feeling, even a profound insight is dead.”

When R. Michael found out that the Rebbe Rashab heard his singing, he beat his head from emotion.

Years later, when the Friediker Rebbe was exiled to Kostroma, R. Michael went ahead to prepare a home, mikvah and even a cheder. When R. Michael heard about the Rebbe’s release, he was overcome with emotion. He danced around the house holding a bottle of mashkeh and singing his niggun, ”Nyet, nyet nikavoh.”

Reb Michael was a talented baal menagen, and he would sing niggunim with precision and emotion. When Reb Michael came to America, he was recorded singing two nигнім, which the Rebbe later instructed Nichoach to include in an album.

When R. Michael served as baal tefilah he would often break down crying. Once, while learning a Purim maамар beginning Balayla Hahu, he came to the words ”Hamelech” and began breathing heavily and crying as if it were Rosh Hashanah...

The Friediker Rebbe once noted that two Chassidim came from Kopust to Lubavitch, but they’re not the same. R. Mendel Leib Abramson is a ”Lubavitcher” – calm and collected – who happened to have gone to Kopust, while R. Michael is really a ”Kopuster” – emotional and excitable – who ended up in Lubavitch...

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**THE REBBE’S CHILDHOOD**

As a bochur in 5668 (1908), Reb Yitzchok Dubov visited the Rebbe’s hometown Nikolayev, where he stayed at the home of the prestigious chossid Reb Osher Nikolayev. During his stay, he once accompanied his host for a visit with Reb Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe’s father.

As they approached the house, a wondrous scene appeared before them. Reb Levi Yitzchok was seated on a chair in the middle of the garden, with a Likutei Torah in his hands, and was reading from it to his two sons seated on the grass, aged six and three. Reb Osher was perplexed. “You’re teaching children Likutei Torah? Do they understand anything?!” he asked incredulously.

“If you want you could test them,” responded Reb Levi Yitzchok.

Reb Osher turned to the older of the two, the future Rebbe, and asked him to share what they had learned. The young boy repeated verbatim the entire page that they were studying.

Years later, in 5749 (1989), the Rebbe once said in passing, “There were fathers who would learn with their sons the weekly Likutei Torah…”

(As told by Reb Yitzchok’s son Reb Leibel)