

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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POSITIVE EXPOSURE (II)

KOSHER AUTHORS

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

(שו"ע יו"ד סי' קע"ט סכ"ג)

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

(מגיד דבריו ליעקב סה, מעין גנים פט"ו פ"ג)

READING THE 'NEWS'

In a *yechidus* with a group of *chassidim*, the Rebbe expressed his disappointment with those who read newspapers, even for 'good reasons':

"How is it that *chassidim* read the newspaper to find out what is happening in Lubavitch? The papers are for people on the outside; *chassidim* have other ways of knowing about Lubavitch. The fact is that when one looks at one page where there is a write-up on Lubavitch, he comes to read what is written in the second and third page as well..."

The Rebbe concluded, "This is such a descent from who we really are..."

(דעם רבינ'ס קינדער ע' רה)

On *erev Shabbos Parshas Vayigash* (1968), תשכ"ט (1968), the first space shuttle landed on the moon and made headlines in all the media. At the *Shabbos farbrengens*, the Rebbe explained a lesson to be learnt from the event and added, "One should not mistakenly think that he should read the newspapers in order to be able to derive lessons in how to serve *HaShem*. The world would be better off without the papers at all, and it is a *rachmonus* on those who read them.

"There are those who immediately upon arising in the morning listen to the radio to hear the latest news. They then hurriedly buy the paper to read up on all the details, and memorize the names of all the personalities, their families, and so on. Then it's back to the radio to ensure they are updated on any details they may have missed... Entering *shul* on *Shabbos*, they make sure to display their knowledge. After all, one doesn't want to be deemed a '*batlan*' who doesn't know what's happening in the world..."

the Second was crowned almost seventy years later, in תרנ"ד (1894), the Yid was perplexed by the second crowning of Czar Nicholas.."

The Rebbe concluded, "From this story we can see how in the past Yidden lived long, peaceful years - unlike today, when people need psychologists and tranquilizers to alleviate their stress."

(שיח"ק תשכ"ט ח"א ע' 261)

YOU ARE WHAT YOU READ

When a certain man complained about *machshavos zaros* during *davening*, the Friediker 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*."

(אג"ק רי"צ ח"ט ע' שעה)

Reb Yoel Kahan related:

I was once told by the Rebbe to positively influence a fellow *talmid*, to address his questions and guide him in his *avodas HaShem*. I was dealing with him for a while, and he was progressing nicely. I was therefore shocked to hear him make a comment that implied doubts in his *emuna*. At a loss as to how to respond, I decided to seek the Rebbe's counsel.

The Rebbe said, "I know this person, and there is no need to worry. These words are meaningless and are most likely a result of reading a newspaper before going to sleep. It can therefore be expected that he will speak in such a fashion the following day..."

Needless to add, after we talked it over, that *talmid* realized that he was slipping in his *avoda* solely due to inappropriate reading material. As soon as he stopped reading the newspapers, he was well on his way, back on the right track.

(מפי הרב יואל כהן שי')

CONSIDER

Why do secular books
cause any more
machshavos zaros
than kosher reading
material?

The Rebbe then related a story:

"There was a Yid in Lubavitch who would sit day and night learning in the *beis midrash*, and had no interest in what was happening in the outside world. One day, someone related to him that Czar Nicholas was crowned. The Yid was surprised, 'Didn't they crown him years ago? Why are they crowning him again?'

"It turned out that when he was a child, in the days of the Mittlerer Rebbe, in תקפ"ה (1825), Nicholas the First had been crowned and in his honor they had dutifully lit additional candles in the *shul*. Since then, without this Yid realizing it, two czars had come and gone. When Nicholas



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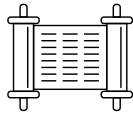
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DESIGNS ON SHABBOS

May I doodle on a fogged beverage bottle at the Shabbos table?

Writing two letters, numbers, or symbols—like a question or exclamation mark—on Shabbos is prohibited min haTorah, under the melacha of koseiv (writing), even if they have no meaning on their own. Writing one letter is also forbidden, as half of the shiur is forbidden min haTorah as well, even though one isn't liable. Although some poskim hold that writing is only in lashon hakodesh, the consensus is that writing in any language is forbidden.

Drawing or forming any meaningful design that conveys an idea is also prohibited as an offshoot (tolda) of the melacha of koseiv.

Many types of edible crafts may not be made on Shabbos due to the melacha of boneh (building). A craft that involves forming letters or shapes entails koseiv and is equally forbidden. For this reason, one may not mold or cut food into meaningful shapes, such as a flower, basket, boat or the like, or make these designs with frosting on a cake. One may, however, form or cut the food into a simple shape, such as a square, circle or triangle.

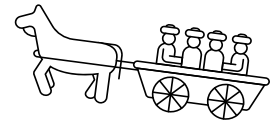
There is, however, no prohibition to cut or eat food that was fashioned in a particular shape before Shabbos, such as animal crackers, or a key-shaped challa. Food in the shape of letters may be more problematic in this regard.

The biblical prohibition of koseiv applies only when writing with an ink that has permanence on a surface that has permanence, or when engraving in a surface such as stone or piece of wood. Writing in a non-permanent manner is not fully considered writing but is still prohibited midrabanan. "Drawing" letters with one's finger in the air or on a dry surface is permissible if no trace remains.

Thus, one may not even draw letters, symbols, or meaningful designs with liquid or on a foggy window. If one mistakenly did so, it is forbidden to erase it. Drawing lines without any meaning is permissible.

- 1. ראה רמב"ם שבת פ"א ה"ט וה"י, ומשנ"ב סי' ש"מ סקכ"ב.
2. רמב"ם שם ה"ז.
3. ראה משנ"ב אור"ח סי' ת"ק סק"ז.
4. שבת כהלכה ח"ג פ"כ סע"ג*.
5. רמב"ם שם ה"ט"ז.
6. רמב"ם שם י"ז.
7. רמ"א אור"ח סי' ש"מ ס"ד וט"ז שם סק"ג.
8. ראה קצוה"ש סי' קמ"ד הע' י, שש"כ פכ"ג סמ"ב.

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



R. MEIR OF PREMISHLAN

R. Meir of Premishlan was born in the year 5540 (1780) to R. Aharon, who was a talmid of R. Michel of Zlotchov. R. Michel of Zlotchov said regarding their family that ruach hakodesh had not left it from the days of the second Beis Hamikdash. R. Meir became known as a man with "open eyes" and one of the greatest miracle workers of his generation. After hinting to his imminent passing numerous times, he passed away on Shabbos, Chaf-Tes Iyar 5610 (1850), and was buried in Premishlan, Galicia. His teachings were gathered in the seforim Divrei Meir and Or Hame'ir.

(משוש אבות עמי קפ"ט)

R. Meir was once posed a question on the Rambam by an extremely learned man. R. Meir told the man to come back for an answer the next day, when R. Meir taught him the Rambam in a way that answered the man's question.

R. Meir explained that he had been in the heavens and asked to be brought to the chamber of the Rambam, who learned the passage with him.

When the Rebbe Rashab was told this story, he affirmed that there is indeed a special "gateway" to learning Torah, which when entered illuminates all that is studied.

(רשימת היומן ע' שנ"ט)

In the course of his travels, Reb Meir of Premishlan once went to daven in a shul that

was in a state of dire neglect. As soon as he opened the door, he exclaimed in the words of Yaakov Avinu, "Ma nora hamakon hazeh! Ein zeh ki im beis Elokim! How dreadful is this place! This is no other than the house of Hashem!"

The chassidim who accompanied him assumed that with these words the holy Reb Meir was expressing some profound ruchniusdike insight. Seeing that they had not understood him, he explained, "This place is indeed dreadful; it is dangerous to walk around in here! It must be the house of Hashem, for I see that there is no one responsible for caring about its upkeep - unlike the other homes in this town, which seem to be in proper condition."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 1)

Two business partners once asked R. Meir for a bracha for success in an upcoming commercial venture. "Have you written out your partnership contract?" the tzadik asked. They replied in the negative.

Reb Meir wrote the letters Alef, Beis, Gimmel, and Daled on a piece of paper and handed it to them. Seeing their amazement, he explained, "In these four letters, the secret to success is hidden. Each one is an initial: Alef is for emunah (trustworthiness), Beis is for bracha; Gimmel is for gneiva, and Daled is dalus (poverty). If your transactions are trustworthy, they will be blessed; if you cheat, you can expect to become poor."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 237)

A Moment with The Rebbe



WITH FLYING COLORS

The Rebbe taught that every person can be inspired in their own language, with the right wording.

When Scottish-born Mrs. Rosseta Wolfson came to Lubavitch she faced many challenges, and in a private yechidus she poured out her heart to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe said to her in English, "If you try hard, you will pass with flying colors."

But Mrs. Wolfson drew a blank look. When the Rebbe asked her if she understood the meaning of the phrase, she replied in the negative.

The Rebbe explained that the phrase

originates from war ships, which had colorful flags. He continued, "When the American flag was raised and it flew in the wind, the victory of their hard-fought independence was won. And so will be with you. You will have hardships, but in the end you will emerge victorious!"

The simple phrase, and how the Rebbe patiently explained it to her, struck a chord on her heartstrings. Mrs. Wolfson says that she draws inspiration from these worldly words for her personal avodas Hashem, every day of her life.

(Sipur Ishi, page 31)