

The Weekly Farbrengens

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

HEARING GOOD

UNCEASING SOUND WAVES

One of the first chassidim who came to Lubavitch after the Mittlerer Rebbe settled there in תקע"ג (1813) was the eminent chossid, Reb Hillel Paritcher. The Mittlerer Rebbe had instructed his chassidim that whenever they were traveling home, they should stay over in every town through which they passed, and *chazer a maamar* that they had recently heard.

Once, when Reb Hillel was about to return home, he asked the Rebbe what he should do about this directive, because the villagers whom he would meet on his way were simple folk who could not grasp the abstract concepts of *Chassidus*.

The Rebbe went into deep thought for a moment and then assured him, *Di neshama hert* - "The teachings of *Chassidus* are heard by the *neshama*, which is identical in everyone. Those words then trickle down into the body and give the listener the strength to fulfill the 248 *mitzvos-aseh*, and to abstain from transgressing the 365 *mitzvos losa'aseh*."

(אג"ק הרי"צ ח"ג ע' שלא, היום יום כד אדר א')

Upon seeing his younger colleague, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, the *tanna* Rabbi Dosa exclaimed, "I remember that when he was an infant, his mother would take him in his carriage to the *beis midrash* so that his ears would absorb the words of Torah!"

(תלמוד ירושלמי יבמות פ"א ה"ו)

The Rebbe often mentioned that mothers used to rock their little ones to sleep with rhyming lullabies of Yiddish content, such as "*Torah iz di beste sechorah*" (Torah is the best merchandise).

The Rebbe said, "Some people think that it makes no difference what one sings to a young child, since anyway he does not understand. The truth is that everything that enters a child's ears affects his *neshama* in the years ahead." A mother must therefore not only know about the importance of Torah: she should sing about it to her child.

(שיח"ק תשל"ט ח"א ע' 616, תשל"ז ח"א ע' 112)

HEARING ONLY GOOD

Rabbeinu Yonah writes that just as speaking indecently harms a Yid's *neshama*, so too listening to indecent talk tarnishes one's *neshama*. The Shaloh writes that a child who hears *goyische* songs will develop a negative nature.

(ס' היראה לרבינו יונה, [שבת נט ע"א], משנ"ב ס"י תקס שעה"צ כה)

The *Tzemach Tzedek* said, "The bell in Petersburg brought forgetfulness upon me." Until he visited Petersburg in the year תר"ג (1843), he forgot nothing, but hearing the church bells caused him to forget.

(לקוטי סיפורים ע' קלח)

CONSIDER

How can hearing words of Torah affect a person if he doesn't understand them at all?

Imagine the surprise of the *talmid* who entered the home of the *Chasam Sofer* and found him with his fingers in his ears. He stood perplexed until the *Chasam Sofer* asked him, "Is it still chiming?"

He then understood that his mentor wanted to avoid hearing the sound of the bells.

(קדושת עיניים ע' 331)

Reb Nachman of Breslov, said that hearing a *rasha* speak has a negative influence on the listener.

(לקוטי עצות דיבור סק"ח)

When a certain chossid complained that he was having doubts in *emunah*, the Rebbe instructed him to discontinue setting his clock by the chimes of the local church.

(כפר חב"ד 672 ע' 20)

PROTECTING ONESELF

HaShem created man's fingertips narrow enough

to enable him to obstruct his ears from hearing improper things. The soft earlobe was created for the same purpose.

(כתובות ח ע"ב)

The Rebbe points out that unlike the other senses, hearing does not require the cooperation of the listener. One will hear a nearby conversation unless he makes an effort to avoid hearing it.

(תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"ד ע' 15)

Reb Shlomo Leib of Linchna, a student of the Chozeh of Lublin and the Yid HaKadosh of Pshischa, made every effort not to listen to unsuitable talk, and for his part, he was careful to speak only when necessary. When he was young, he rented a room together with some others in the home of a tailor, but would always return there only after they had already gone to sleep.

It once happened that the *beis midrash* closed earlier than usual, and as Reb Shlomo neared his boarding home, he noticed that the tailor was still wide awake and was sitting and joking with his friends. True to his principle, he kept at a distance, but due to the freezing temperature, he walked to and fro to keep himself warm. This did not help much, but he refused to go inside, though he knew this might cost him his life. With the help of *HaShem*, the lamp suddenly went out, and the renters retired for the night. Only then did Reb Shlomo go inside.

"From then on, in order to avoid such a situation again," he later said, "I learned to give myself a forewarning, by honing my listening abilities and being able to hear whispering even at a distance."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 488)

The Rebbe Rashab once mentioned that he had lost his hearing in one ear. Seeking the cause of the problem, some of the chassidim recalled that the previous *Shabbos*, the conversation of people in the adjoining room had disturbed him while he was delivering a *maamar* of *Chassidus*. He had therefore weakened his sense of hearing in the ear closest to that disturbance.

(תו"מ ח"ז ע' 651, תו"מ תשמ"ח ח"ד ע' 51 הע' 56)

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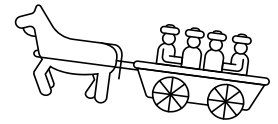
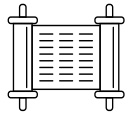
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GOOD NEWS.



PEST CONTROL

Can I kill insects indiscriminately or is there *tzaar baalei chaim* involved?

There is a prohibition, either *min haTorah* or *midrabanan*, of *tzaar baalei chayim*, causing an animal to suffer. Some hold the prohibition also includes killing an animal,¹ while others hold that while hunting isn't a Jewish activity, killing an animal in a quick manner is not considered *tzaar baalei chayim*.² Some draw a distinction between animals that provide a service to humans and pests or insects that don't.³

Regardless, *poskim* rule that one may not kill any animal or insect for no reason, since everything was created by Hashem for a purpose—even a leaf shouldn't be detached from a tree for no reason⁴—and the prohibition of *bal tashchis* may also be applicable.⁵ We find that halacha requires a *beis din* of 23 judges to administer the death penalty to an ox that killed a person.⁶

Dangerous animals that may cause harm should be killed, and otherwise, one is at fault for whatever damage they inflict later on. Yet, there is no obligation to kill dangerous animals in the wild where humans aren't normally found.⁷

Anything that serves a human purpose isn't prohibited by *tzaar baalei chayim*, just as the Torah allows slaughtering an animal to eat its meat. Since bugs and pests in the home are a nuisance and a source of fear, one is allowed and encouraged to exterminate them. Moreover, mosquitoes and rodents can bite or transmit diseases and ants can infest food, (which besides disgust can result in a prohibition).⁸ Although the Arizal would not to kill bugs in his home although they were a nuisance, it is not an instruction for all.⁹

Is there a preferred way to get rid of them?

R. Moshe Feinstein recommends using a trap or poison and not killing them directly, since killing them oneself may engender in the killer a trait of cruelty (unlike *shechita* which is a spiritual mitzvah).¹⁰ If there is a choice of traps, preference should be given to those that involve the least pain to the pest.

1. שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ד סי' ק"מ. ע"פ הר"ן חולין יט ע"ב, או"ח הק יוקרא פרק יז פסוק א'.	6. ראה רמב"ם הל' סנהדרין פ"ה ה"ב. שו"ת נו"ב תניינא יו"ד סי' י'.
2. שו"ת נו"ב קמא סי' פ"ז ותניינא יו"ד סי' י' ע"פ גמ' חולין ז ע"ב.	7. בני יששכר דרך פקודין ל"ת ל"ד.
3. שאלת יעב"ץ ח"א סי' ק"י.	8. סי' תתל"א.
4. ליקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 168.	9. ראה שער המצוות להגר"ח וויטאל פר' נח.
5. לקוטי שיחות חל"ח ע' 135.	10. שו"ת אג"מ חו"מ ח"ב סי' מ"ז.

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REB SHLOMO LEIB ELIEZROV

Reb Shlomo Yehuda Leib Eliezerov was born in Latvia in Nisan 5623 (1863). His father Reb Eliezer Shimon was a grandson of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel Slonim, daughter of the Mitteler Rebbe, and he was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek. At age ten his family moved to Chevron, where he studied with the famed Reb Shimon Menashe Chaikin, the rov there. He married the daughter of Reb Berel Kalisker. He spent a total of seven years in Samarkand, serving as their rov and strengthening *Yiddishkeit* there. In 5762 (1902) he returned to Chevron, and was appointed the rov of the Ashknazim. He made trips to Lubavitch to visit the Rebbe Rashab, and assisted with founding the Yeshiva Toras Emes in Chevron in 5672 (1911). After World War I he moved to Yerusholayim, and was appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe as the *menahel* of Colel Chabad. He passed away on 27 Teves 5712 (1952).

While in Lubavitch, he spent much time with the Rebbe Rashab, who respected him greatly. He would eat at the Rebbe's home, and the Rebbe would honor him to wash his hands for bread before him, so he could watch his *dikdukim* in the *halachos* of hand-washing. After he washed, the Rebbe told him that he too washes that way.

Reb Shlomo Leib heard many things from the Rebbe Rashab, including the following: One who is careful about the respect and cleanliness of *seforim* will merit that - if he writes a *sefer* - his *sefer* will be kept clean and respected.

(שאלת שלמה ע' 29)

Once Reb Zelig Slonim was very tight financially, and borrowed one lira from Reb Shlomo Leib's *tzedaka* fund to cover the costs of the oncoming Shabbos. When Reb Zelig returned home, he simply could not find the money, and returned to the home of Reb Shlomo Leib. Together they searched for the money, but it was not found. Reb Zelig returned home very broken; not only did he not have money to buy food for Shabbos, but also he had the burden of paying up the loan. Reb Shlomo Leib resolved to take another lira from his own money and although he was old and walking was hard, he went to the home of Reb Zelig and announced happily that he had found the lost money. Reb Zelig was overjoyed. The next morning Reb Zelig found the lost lira on the floor of his home and realized the *chesed* that Reb Shlomo Leib had done.

(שאלת שלמה ע' 32)

A Moment with The Rebbe



NOW I CAN SLEEP CALMLY

Every year, before sitting down at his own Pesach *seder*, the Rebbe would visit the *seder* of the students of the Machon Chana Women's Institute in their dining room on President Street.

In 5736 (1976), the Rebbe came in and gave the traditional *bracha*, and then wished the girls that by next year they will host their own *sedarim*.

The Rebbe then turned to go upstairs, to pay a visit to the dormitory. As the Rebbe walked into one room, he immediately asked, "Why aren't there any mirrors?"

Reb Leibel Groner quickly moved a door and showed the Rebbe that there was a mirror hanging on the inside. The Rebbe said, "*Itzter ken ich shlofen ruig* - now I can sleep calmly."

Reb Yaakov Yehuda Hecht, the administrator of Machon Chana, chuckled lightly to himself. The Rebbe turned to him and said, "Why are you laughing? *Yiddishe* girls have to care for their beauty!"

(Levin Teshurah, Nissan 5769)