

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
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RECITING TEHILLIM (I)

THE VALUE OF TEHILLIM

Once, in the time of the holy Baal Shem Tov, it was decreed in Heaven that a certain Jewish settlement should be destroyed, R"l. The Baal Shem Tov called upon his friends, the hidden *tzaddikim*, Reb Mordechai and Reb Kehos, to join him to form a *beis din* and find a way to nullify the decree.

The *beis din* convened, and the *neschama* of the Baal Shem Tov ascended to the heavenly worlds. There he saw that the decree had already been sealed and could not be annulled. However, as he passed through the heavenly spheres while descending back to the physical world, he saw a magnificent light created by the words of *Tehillim* that were being recited by a simple villager. This Yid would complete the entire *Sefer Tehillim* five times every day, but since he was quite ignorant, he sometimes said *Tehillim* in unclean places. Nevertheless, *HaShem* valued his *Tehillim* so much, that a privileged share in *Olam HaBa* awaited him.

The Baal Shem Tov immediately traveled to see this man and asked him, "Would you be willing to sacrifice your share in *Olam HaBa* in order to save an entire Jewish community?"

The simple Yid responded, "If I have a share in *Olam HaBa*, I am ready to forfeit it for such a cause."

And the decree was annulled.

(שמח"ת תרצ"ז - קובץ מכתבים ע' 201)

On the *pasuk* "Yiheyu leratzon imrei fi" (may the words of my mouth find favor before you), the *Medrash* teaches that Dovid HaMelech requested that his words of praise be written and engraved for all future generations. Furthermore, he asked *HaShem* that the recitation of *Tehillim* be considered just as worthy as the study of the most complex *halachos* of the Torah.

(מדרש תהלים אה)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related: "When I was a little boy I once wondered whether *malochim* are able to calculate numbers. When I asked my father, he replied, 'That's a good question! But I am certain that Malach Michael counts all the *Tehillim* that one says, and with it he creates a chandelier that lights up, Above and below, for that person and for his children.'

"Following this, my father would often ask me,

'How is your chandelier doing?'

(סה"ש תש"ט ע' 336)

The Rebbe explains that even when *Tehillim* is said without particular *kavonos* and at a quick pace, as many do on *Shabbos Mevarchim*, this nevertheless has a tremendous effect. In fact, in the *Yehi Ratzon*, we ask that our reading be considered as if it came from the mouth of Dovid HaMelech himself.

The Frierdiker Rebbe emphasized that the *kedusha* of the words, even when they are not understood, is as precious in the eyes of *HaShem* as a *korbon*. One should learn the translation of the words, but not recite that instead of the original.

(התוועדות תשמ"ז ח"ג ע' 418, אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע' תנט)

CONSIDER

What about *Tehillim* is so effective: the *kavonos* that one has or the intrinsic *kedusha* of the words?

GREAT POWERS

About 650 years ago, in a village in Germany, there lived a simple pious Yid who was able to study Torah only at its simplest level. Every day, year after year, he would recite the entire *Sefer Tehillim*.

Less than thirty days after he passed away, he appeared in a dream to a *chochom* from the nearby city of Worms. In the dream he stood holding a little *Tehillim*, and he cautioned the *chochom*, "Warn the people in my village to escape immediately to the surrounding towns. During my life I protected them with my recitation of *Tehillim*, but now they are in grave danger."

Early the next morning, the *chochom* sent a messenger with an urgent letter telling the villagers of the looming danger. The people heeded his words, and they were saved.

(מנהגי וורמייזא סדר תהלים)

The Baal Shem Tov would say that reciting the

entire *Sefer Tehillim* is a *segula* for crushing any verdict on a person.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* once told his chassidim, "If only you knew the power of *pesukim* of *Tehillim* and their effect in Heaven, you would recite them at all times. The *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* break through all barriers as they soar aloft, higher and higher, uninterrupted. They prostrate themselves before the Master of the Universe, bringing results with kindness and mercy."

(הוספות לכש"ט סי' נז, היום יום כ"ד שבט)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related how in all generations, whenever a decree was issued against Yidden, they would run to *shul* to recite *Tehillim*. The *melamdim* would recite *Tehillim* with their young *talmidim*, for "their breath is sinless." The Frierdiker Rebbe added that the numerous Hamans in every generation are eliminated by the heartfelt *Tehillim* of a simple Yid - "not by sword or spear, but only by a heartfelt *kapitel* of *Tehillim*."

In the year תר"ג (1843), the interior minister of Russia summoned the *Tzemach Tzedek*, along with three other leaders representing the Yidden of Russia, in order to pass new decrees upon the Yidden. When they arrived in Petersburg and heard of the *gezeira*, they immediately ordered three *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* to be recited in all *shuls* and *chadorim* (כ.כ. סט). This required *mesirus nefesh*, for the czar was likely to punish them for supposedly assuming control over Russian citizens. Shortly after, that evil minister fell ill and died, and was replaced by a neutral minister who canceled the decrees.

In the year תרמ"ב (1882), which became known as "a year of bloody pogroms," the Yiddishe leaders led by the Rebbe Maharash revealed a secret plot against the Yidden. They likewise called upon the Yidden to recite the above-mentioned *kapitlach*, and within one month the evil plan fell through.

In the year תרס"ו (1906), pogroms began to erupt throughout Russia. The Yiddishe leaders, lead by the Rebbe Rashab and Reb Chaim of Brisk, gathered in Petersburg, where they heard of the czarist government's secret plan to instigate pogroms in 116 Yiddishe communities. At that time, too, they requested that the three *kapitlach* be recited by Yidden everywhere, and shortly afterwards the plan failed.

(אג"ק הרי"צ ח"ב ע' קלא, סה"ש תש"ט ע' 308)

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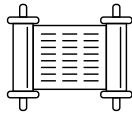
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PLANNED RETURNS

May I buy something short term with plans to return it?

According to halacha, there is usually only a small window to retract from a sale once it was finalized—by most methods of acquisition within a few seconds, and by a *kinyan sudar* (“lifting a handkerchief”) as long as the sides are discussing the sale. After this, there is no going back.¹

If the buyer was overcharged more than 16% above the market value, he can invalidate the sale and receive a refund within the time frame it takes to find this out. After that time it is too late, unless circumstances beyond his control prevented him from finding out right away.²

If he discovers a defect in the article, he can demand a refund since he received something different than what he purchased.³ If, however, he continues to use it after finding the defect, or the problem was easily discernable and he neglected to notice, he may no longer return it (even if he didn't know the repercussions of continuing to use it).⁴ If there is a compelling reason for his continued usage, he often will still be able to return it (e.g. if he found a fault in his new car on the way home, he can continue his trip).⁵

In many countries, there are federal and state laws that govern consumer transactions. These laws definitely have the halachic status of *minhag hamedina* and one who purchases an item does so according to the local terms and conditions. The details of these terms differ from country to country and even between different states of the same country. Many countries have special policies for online or over-the-phone purchases as well.

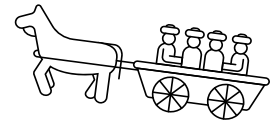
In most states in America, there is no right to cancel contracts or purchase agreements; a refund option depends on the specific retailer's policy, and in absence of one we follow the halachic return policy outlined above. In certain states, like New York, a store is legally required to post its refund policy. If they don't, the store is required by law to accept returns within 30 days of purchase.

Buying with plans to return the item would clearly not be permitted under the “halachic” return policy, yet the specific store's policy is what is binding in this case. If their terms for return require the purchaser to be “unsatisfied,” one needs to ask oneself honestly if that is the case. Some major retail stores, however, clearly allow purchases and returns with no questions asked even after the item was used short term, since they concluded that such a policy is worth it for them. In such a case, it would be permissible to buy the item with the intent to return.

1. ראה שו"ע חו"מ סי' קפ"ט והלאה. תוך כדי דיבור - ראה שם סי' קצ"ה ס"ז אבל בפת"ש סק"ו שיש חולקים בזה. קנין סודר - ראה שם סי' קצ"ה ס"ז ובנתה"מ סק"ד שה"ה קנין סיטומתא.
2. שו"ע חו"מ סי' רכ"ז ס"ב וס"ד וס"ז.
3. שו"ע חו"מ סי' רל"ב ס"ג.
4. שו"ע שם וסמ"ע שם סק"י.
5. ראה בארוכה שם בפת"ש סק"ג, ובכל מקרה הממעי"ה.

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

Our Heroes



REB BEREL KALISKER

Reb Dovber was the son of Reb Gershon Halevi Ashknazi of the city of Kalisk, and was known amongst chassidim as “Berel Kalisker.” He was a *shadar* and a *choizer* for the Tzemach Tzedek, and a close friend to the Rebbe Maharash. For twelve years they studied Gemara and *meforshim* together in the room next door to the Tzemach Tzedek's. A small window connected the rooms, enabling them to ask him questions during learning. During the year 5633 (1873) Reb Berel moved to Chevron, where he was greatly respected and quickly became one of the leaders of the community. He passed away on 7 Teves 5660 (1900), and is buried in Chevron. His grandson was the famous *rov*, Reb Avrohom Chaim Noeh.

The Tzemach Tzedek respected Reb Berel greatly, and also relied on him in matters of *halacha*. One *motzaei Shabbos*, Reb Berel visited the home of the Tzemach Tzedek, and a lengthy discussion in *Chassidus* began. The Tzemach Tzedek's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, waited up a long time to serve *melava malka*, but seeing that the hour was late, she went to lie down and fell asleep. In the morning she realized her husband had not eaten and asked

him, “Why didn't you tell Reb Berel - who is a *ben bayis* to us - to serve you?” The Rebbe responded, “Berel is a *talmid chochom*, and one is not allowed to make use of *talmid chochom!*”

(דבר ציון לר"ד אליעזרוב ע' רסט)

Reb Berel was fluent in 600 *maamorei Chassidus* of the Tzemach Tzedek, and when he would *chazer* them publicly, he would say them exactly as he heard them, copying even the motions the Rebbe had made while saying the *maamor*. He was also a *maniach* - a transcriber of the *maamorim* - and the Rebbe Maharash even made comments on his *hanochos*. The Rebbe Rashab writes that most (if not all) of Reb Berel's writings are very precise.

In Chevron there was a shortage of Gemaras, and one of the elders of the city came to Reb Berel late at night to borrow a certain volume. Reb Berel asked him, “Which *masechta* do you need?” “*Gittin*,” was the response. “And which *daf*?” When the man replied, Reb Berel proceeded to say the whole *sugya* by heart, explaining it beautifully until it was crystal clear, and the man no longer need to borrow the Gemara...

(דבר ציון לר"ד אליעזרוב ע' ער)

A Moment with The Rebbe



NOT FOR EVERYONE

The Rebbe set that *davening* at 770 should begin at 10 o'clock on Shabbos, to allow for time to appropriately prepare for *tefila*, through learning and contemplating *Chassidus*.

However, this wasn't for everyone. In a 5734 (1974) *yechidus* with Reb Efraim Volf, the administrator of Chabad *mosdos* in Eretz Yisroel, the Rebbe directed him regarding the Beis Sefer Limelacha vocational school:

“At this *mosad*, *davening* should start no later than the time of reading *Krias Shema*. Since the students learn

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, they wouldn't understand why *davening* doesn't begin at the proper time.

“A *yeshiva bochur*, who is capable of learning *Chassidus* for two hours, understands why according to *Chassidus davening* should start later. But not a student at a vocational school. Especially the younger classes. Regarding the older classes, if indeed they could learn for two hours, and none of them waste their time, they could begin *davening* at ten.”

(For the full *yechidus* see Halperin Teshurah, Tammuz 5762)