

The Weekly *Farbrengens*

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

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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.

(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 *neschama* 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* 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 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."

(שיחו"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 ריי"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 ע"ה כהן)

CONSIDER

Why do secular books cause 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 *Mitteler 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 the Second was crowned almost seventy years later, in תרי"ד (1894), the *Yid* was perplexed by the second crowning of Czar Nicholas.."




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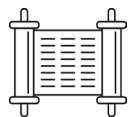


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KAPOTA BUTTON

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 *muktzah*. 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 *muktzah* 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.¹

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.²

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.³

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*.⁴

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 attach it tightly and transgress the *Melacha* of Boneh.⁵

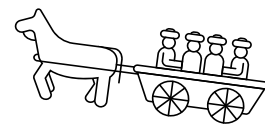
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Our Heroes



R. MICHOEL DVORKIN

R. Michoel 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. Michoel traveled to Lubavitch and became a staunch *mekushar* to the Rebbe Rashab, and later had a deep personal relationship with the Frierdiker Rebbe. He lived in Eretz Yisrael and then New York in his later years, and was known for his heartfelt davening, nigunim, and Chassidische stories.

Walking out after a *farbrengen* in the Frierdiker Rebbe's sukkah, R. Michoel, red faced and dancing, began singing in Russian "Nyet, nyet nikavoh," there is nothing besides Hashem. [R. Michoel 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. Michoel found out that the Rebbe Rashab heard his singing, he beat his head from emotion.

Years later, when the Frierdiker Rebbe

was exiled to Kostroma, R. Michoel went ahead to prepare a home, mikvah and even a cheder. When R. Michoel 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."

(ס"ה ש"תרצ"ט ע' 302, ת"מ חמ"ד ע' 70)

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

When R. Michoel served as *baal tefilah* he would often break down crying. Once, while learning a Purim *maamar* beginning *Balayla Hahu*, he came to the words "Hamelech" and began breathing heavily and crying as if it were Rosh Hashana...

(חסידים הראשונים ח"ב ע' 260)

The Frierdiker 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. Michoel is really a "Kopuster" – emotional and excitable – who ended up in Lubavitch...

(בדרכי החסידים ח"א ע' 357)

A Moment with The Rebbe



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 Nikolayever. 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 most 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 Yizchok's son Reb Leibel)