

The Weekly *Farbrengens*

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EVERY SINGLE YID (I)

FOR A SOLITARY LAMB

Before Moshe Rabbeinu was chosen to lead the Yidden, HaShem measured his level of caring dedication to his flock. Indeed, when Moshe would take the sheep to graze, he would allow the old and weak sheep to eat the softer grass, while the tougher grass he left for the young and strong ones. This sensitivity to the needs of each group was certainly impressive, but it was not yet enough to show that he was fit to become the Yiddishe leader.

Once, one solitary lamb ran away from the flock and Moshe ran after it. He followed it to a creek where it stopped and drank. Moshe apologized, "I didn't know that you were thirsty. And you are probably also quite tired!"

He lifted it onto his shoulder and returned it to the flock. It was this incident that proved him truly worthy of becoming the *Raaya Mehemna*, the Faithful Shepherd.

Similarly, the Rebbe explains, a true Yiddishe leader is not one who concerns himself only with the grand needs of his community - "*Klal Yisroel*," but one who also sees to the seemingly insignificant needs of each **individual** Yid - "*Reb Yisroel*."

(שמו"ר פ"ב פ"ב, שיחור"ק תשל"א ח"ב ע' 342)

TWO YEARS FOR ONE NESHAMA

Reb Yosef of Beshenkovitch, a *talmid chacham* who knew the entire *Shas* and *Rambam* by heart, earned the greatest honor from the *talmidei chachomim* of his town. In the year תקס"ד (1804), the Alter Rebbe advised him, "For the benefit of your *neshama*, it would be better for you to become a wagon-driver than a *rov*." Ten years later, in תקע"ד (1814), when he was 70 years old, Reb Yosef was offered the *rabbonus* in the town of Liepli. Recalling the Rebbe's advice, he realized that now was the time to follow it, and he declined the offer.

For a month he wavered, confused, not knowing what to do. Eventually he mustered up enough courage to visit the local wagon station. When the wagon-drivers saw him, they asked him where he wished to travel.

"I haven't come to travel," he answered in a low voice. "I've come here to learn how to become a wagon-driver."

They looked at each other in surprise, and began to joke at his expense. One driver, however, saw his insistence and agreed to teach him the trade. In the stall, he was shown how to hitch the horses, attach the saddle and the reins, and how to oil the wheels. While he was busy learning, one of the horses whipped his tail and almost knocked out his eye.

That night, Reb Yosef arrived home dirty and bruised. He changed his clothing, went to *shul* to *daven*, and gave his *shiur*. Returning home, he found his wife in tears, for she had heard of his visit to the stables. However, when he then shared the Rebbe's instructions, she told him, "So if the Rebbe told you this, you mustn't delay even a day. Tomorrow I'll sell my jewelry and you will be able to buy a wagon."

CONSIDER

Why did specifically the care for an individual show that one is a worthy leader?

Hearing her innocent words, Reb Yosef decided to travel to Velizh, where he would learn more about the trade from a wagon-driver who was also a *talmid chacham* and a *chossid*.

Time passed and he became used to his new lifestyle. One evening he stopped over at a Yiddishe inn, and sat down with a *sefer*. The innkeeper introduced him to a guest who needed to travel the following day. The guest, 'Solomon Gamitzki' (earlier known as Shlomo Leib), was a Yid who had deserted the paths of Yiddishkeit, and had become a friend and employee of Count Batchaikov, no less.

"What time will we leave?" asked the guest.

"After *davening*," was Reb Yosef's reply.

"At what *time*?" he retorted. "To me, it makes no difference whether you *daven* or not; I need to know when we will travel, to know when to wake

up, wash, and eat."

"...And *daven*," added Reb Yosef.

"That I leave for you," concluded the guest. When he realized that Reb Yosef would not be ready to leave until 10:00 a.m., he ordered another coach for 5:00 a.m., and went to sleep for the night.

Shortly after midnight he awoke, bewildered. Someone was crying. He opened his door and saw Reb Yosef sitting on the floor, saying *Tikkun Chatzos* by candlelight and weeping. That sight penetrated deeply into his heart. Memories of his youth, his father, his *melamed*, the wife and children he had left, all passed before his eyes. When the night drew to an end, he watched Reb Yosef *daven* with earnest *kavana*, and his eyes filled with tears. At 5:00, the innkeeper came to notify him that his coach was ready, but he decided to travel with Reb Yosef instead. Hours passed, and Reb Yosef was still *davening*. Overcome with anguish, the guest went to the innkeeper, borrowed his *tallis* and *tefillin*, and *davened* too.

However, so intense were his feelings of regret and *teshuvah* that he became extremely ill. For several days he hovered between life and death. The count sent his own doctor to examine him, but the doctor gave up hope. Reb Yosef remained at the sick man's bedside, fasting and saying *Tehillim*, and helping him with his decision to return to his family and Yiddishkeit. Eventually, Shlomo Leib regained his strength and was able to leave the inn. Reb Yosef traveled home and when he arrived, he saw many *chassidim* preparing to travel to the Mittlerer Rebbe in Lubavitch.

Arriving there, he was greatly surprised to meet Shlomo Leib. He had resigned from his job with the Count, and had now come to Lubavitch to learn and be near the Mittlerer Rebbe. When Reb Yosef entered for *yechidus*, the Rebbe informed him, "My father appeared to me last night and told me that Yosef of Beshenkovitch has fulfilled his mission. My father turned a *lamdan* into a wagon-driver for the sake of one Yid. Now, for the benefit of many Yidden, he instructed me to appoint you as *mashpia* to all the *chassidim* in Beshenkovitch."

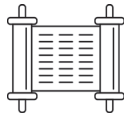
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TEFILLIN ON A WATCH

A man on *mitzva* does not want to remove his wristwatch. Is it okay to don *tefillin* over it?

The Torah states that *tefillin* must be tied “on your arm.” Halacha, therefore, rules that nothing may be intervening between the *tefillin* and one’s arm or head. This applies to the *tefillin* box and the sections of the straps (*retzuos*) that fasten the *tefillin* in place — i.e., the first loop around the arm and the part that encircles the head.

When donning *tefillin*, one should ensure that one’s *yarmulka* or sleeve doesn’t get caught under the *tefillin*. Long hair that obstructs the *tefillin* from sitting firmly or bangs from another part of the head can also be a *chatzitza*.¹

On the arm, there is technically room on the biceps for two small pairs to be placed above each other. Thus, in some instances, there may be room for the *tefillin* to be placed on the skin, even if part of the arm is wounded. However, if the entire biceps is wounded, and placing *tefillin* on the area will be painful, he is exempt from the arm *tefillin*.

If the head or arm is bandaged and it isn’t possible at all to remove the covering, one should still put on *tefillin* without a *bracha* and rely on a view not accepted in *halacha* that a thin *chatzitza* is allowed. In this case, the *tefillin* should be covered to ensure no one learns from his example, as well since the *posuk* states that the arm *tefillin* shall be “a sign for you,” meaning ‘for you’ and not ‘for others.’ Ordinarily, when placed directly on the biceps, which is ordinarily covered, the arm *tefillin* need not be concealed from view. Yet, when placed on the outside, the *tefillin* should be covered.²

What about a wristwatch?

Removing a watch so the *retzua* can be wrapped directly on one’s skin is preferable as a stringency and out of respect for the *mitzva*. However, since the primary halachic obligation is fulfilled with the first loop on one’s arm, removing one’s watch isn’t an absolute requirement. For bandages lower down on the arm or hand, one may *lechatchila* wrap them on top of the bandage.³

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' כ"ז ס"ד. שו"ע"ר 3. ראה שו"ע"ר שם ס"ז. פסק"ת שם ס"ז. משנ"ב שם סקט"ו. סי' כ"ז סק"ט.

2. שו"ע"ר שם ס"ז-ח.



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.

(רשימות היובל 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



WHAT IS CONSIDERED ‘LEARNING CHASSIDUS’

Reb Shimon Neubort relates:

At my first *yechidus*, 27 Shevat 5724, I asked the Rebbe whether I should transfer from my *yeshiva* at that time to a Lubavitch *Yeshiva*, to which the Rebbe said no.

Then the Rebbe asked, “What’s with learning Chassidus?”

“I learn the daily Tanya,” I responded.

“Chitas is like Alef Beis,” the Rebbe said to

me. “But it’s not a serious study that can be considered ‘learning Chassidus.’ You should start learning some *maamorim*.”

“I will try to find the time,” I said.

“Eretz Yisroel stretches according to its inhabitants, because of her holiness,” the Rebbe replied. “The time set aside for Torah is the same. Due to the holiness of torah, the time stretches as necessary.”

(Ovinu Roeinu p. 41)

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