

The Weekly *Farbrengens*


MERKAZ ANASH
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RECOGNIZING THE ENEMY (I)

ALWAYS ON GUARD

A person must always be wary of the *yetzer hara*, for even when he forgets about it, the *yetzer hara* does not forget about the person. He acts like a friend but in reality, is trying to destroy him completely.

A righteous person once met a troop of soldiers returning from a victorious battle, their arms loaded high with spoils. The man told them, "Now be prepared for the real war." Surprised, they asked him to explain. "That's the war the *yetzer hara* will fight when you celebrate with the spoils," he clarified.

(חובת הלבבות שער יחוד המעשה פ"ה)

Reb Meir of Premishlan once related: "One wintry day, while traveling with my Rebbe, Reb Mordechai of Kremnitz, our wagon reached an incline. It seemed the carriage would topple over at any moment. Full of youthful courage, I prepared to quickly jump out, but my Rebbe held onto me with his hand and said, 'Sit down calmly; no harm will befall you.' So it was. The wagon passed the incline safely.

"After some time had elapsed, and I had already forgotten about my desire to jump out, the carriage, driving on flat land, turned over, and we all fell out onto the snow. Reb Mordechai laughed: 'Nu, you see?' But I did not understand to what he was referring.

"Quite a while later, I realized he had been intimating a lesson in *avodas HaShem*: Sometimes a Yid is worried that he will *chas veshalom* fall into the clutches of the *yetzer hara*, who is constantly out to ensnare him, and *HaShem* helps him stay safe. However, when a Yid is confidently going along his path, and does not even realize that the *yetzer hara* is ready to pounce, specifically then he is likely to fall into his clutches..."

(תפארת צדיקים)

Chazal warn us that throughout one's entire life, one should not rely on his righteousness, for Yochanan Kohen Gadol served eighty years in the *Beis HaMikdash* and then strayed and became a *tzedoki*.

(ברכות כ"ט ע"א)

The *yetzer hara* does not suddenly try to tempt a person to commit severe *aveiros*; he works stage by stage. At first he convinces him about something

small, then he pushes further, until eventually he tries talking the person into serving *avoda zara*.

The Friediker Rebbe explains that the *yetzer hara* may even begin by giving his approval to the *mitzvos* being done ("*aseh kach*"), but he rationalizes and limits the extent of their fulfillment. For example, he encourages a person to take it easy and watch his health, to be "normal", to find favor in the eyes of others, and he brings proofs and explanations for all his claims. This cools a person down and enables the *yetzer hara* to push him further into actually committing *aveiros*.

(שבת ק"ה ע"ב, סה"מ קונטרסים א' ע' ל"ז ע"א)

CONSIDER

Why does *HaShem* make our struggle even more difficult by disguising the *yetzer hara*?

How does one differentiate between the cleverness of *chassidim* and the *chassidische yetzer hara*?

(היום יום כ"ג סיון, אג"ק מהור"י צ"ח ד' ע"ז)

Concerning those pious folk who, out of humility, abstain from *avoda*, the Friediker Rebbe said: "Even before becoming Rebbe, the *Tzemach Tzedek* would *farbreng* with the *chassidim* for *Simchas Beis HaSho'eiva*, discussing *Chassidus* and *avodas HaShem*. At one such *farbrengens* he said, 'My grandfather the Alter Rebbe and my father-in-law the Mitteler Rebbe have made *chassidim* canny (*klug*), so that they should know how to recognize the *nefesh habahamis* in all his false costumes and clever antics.'

(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 87)

The Friediker Rebbe related: "When I was a child, my father, the Rebbe Rashab, taught me *Tanya*, explaining in depth how a *chassidische* child must work to change himself. At that time we learned the letter of the Alter Rebbe, in which he strongly warns his *chassidim* not to scorn those Yidden who had fought with them, nor to regard themselves as being superior to them. My father explained, 'The *nefesh habahamis* convinces a person that such behavior comes from the good *middos* of *kedusha*. His pride in his *avodas HaShem* then fools him into regressing further and further.'

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' כ')

The Rebbe would often quote the Rebbe Maharash: "To fool *HaShem*, you surely can't; others, you also won't be able to fool. Who then will you fool? Yourself! Is it a *kuntz* to fool a fool?!"

(ת"מ ח"ג ע' 130 ועוד, וראה סה"ש תרפ"ד ע' 79 בהערה)

KNOWING HIS TRICKS

At *yechidus*, the Rebbe Maharash once told the Rebbe Rashab: "The *yetzer hara*, though called an 'animal', can at times act slyly, and clothe itself in the guise of a straightforward, humble *tzaddik*, so that one really has to be clever enough to uncover its tricks. The *yetzer hara* manifests itself in each individual according to his nature. One person may suddenly feel a powerful desire to learn *Chassidus* [at a particular time], yet that desire is coming from the *yetzer hara*, who is trying to prevent him from *davening* at length, or the like."

The Rebbe Maharash concluded, "Take this as a



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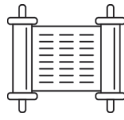
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“LUBAVITCHER SHECHITA”

What is the Lubavitch standard for a shochet?

The Alter Rebbe notes that the regular *chezkas kashrus* that applies to every Yid does not suffice for a *shochet*; rather, he must be known and recognized as an upright and trustworthy Yid. For this reason, the *rov* who certifies a *shochet* and grants him “*kabalah*” must investigate whether the recipient’s ways are proper and that his fear of Hashem is noticeable. The *shochet* must also know how to independently learn Gemara with Rashi, as the Mishna says, “An ignoramus can’t have fear of sin.”

The Alter Rebbe adds that even if a *shochet* possesses *kabalah*, you should not eat from his *shechita* unless you personally know the *shochet*, or he is under the jurisdiction of leaders who are *yerei Hashem*, so one can be certain that they appointed the correct individual.

If the *shechita* knife has even a small nick, it is not kosher and can disqualify the *shechita*. It is easy to miss a small nick unless he truly checks it well. Therefore, those overseeing the *kashrus* must be certain that the *shochtim* check their knives properly. ¹Similarly, the *bodek*, who checks the animal’s lungs for growths and holes, must be exceptionally *yerei Shomayim* since it is a careful procedure, and a slight problem can render it a *treifa*.²

The signs of a *yerei Shomayim* vary according to the time and place. During the Tzemach Tzedek’s era, a *shochet* was removed due to wearing galoshes, which were a sign of modernity.³ While a beard and *peyos* were certainly considered an essential condition,⁴ the Friediker Rebbe noted that *shochtim* from certain non-chassidic communities were acceptable even without it.⁵ When a Chabad *shochet* disgraced a *talmid chochom*, Reb Hillel Paritcher would not eat from his *shechita*, and ate from the other *shochet* instead.⁶

In many letters, the Rebbe highlights that the function of a *shochet* is not simply to slaughter the animal (*skotobyetz*, a slaughterer) but to elevate it.⁷ This should, of course, be done by someone with a heightened level of spiritual sensitivity (even more so than a *rov*) whose way of life reflects being the “heart” of the community.⁸ For these reasons, chassidim were particular that the town *shochet* should be a chossid who lives by the ideals of Chassidus.

In a *yechidus* with Harav Yitzchok Hendel, Lubavitcher *rov* of Montreal, the Rebbe said that while he may eat from and certify any *shochet* who he knows to be a *yerei Shomayim*, in order to call a certain *shechita* “Lubavitcher Shechita,” the *shochet* must be someone who learns and lives by the ideals of Chassidus Chabad.⁹ In a letter, the Rebbe adds that since a *shochet* must be exceptionally *yerei Shomayim*, he must learn Chassidus that brings to *yira tata’a* and *yira ila’a* which can only be achieved through *avodas hatefilah*.¹⁰

1. שו"ת י"ד שחיטה סי' א' ס"ב. שו"ת אדה"ו סי' ט'. אג"ק אדהאמ"צ ע' שיב.
2. שו"ת ורמ"א י"ד סי' ל"ט ס"ג.
3. אג"ק ח"ט ע' רטז, ח"ה ע' שנ.
4. אג"ק אדהרי"צ ח"ו ע' שלד.
5. אג"ק אדהרי"צ ח"ד ע' תקנת. ו"א שאדהרי"צ אכל משוחט כזה בהודמנות.
6. רשימות דברים חסריק ע' 246.
7. אג"ק חכ"א ע' קסח, ובכ"מ. מאמורי אדמ"ר הזקן עניינים ח"ב ע' תח.
8. אג"ק ח"ד ע' קמב. תורת מנחם ח"ד ע' 93.
9. וראה אג"ק ח"ט ע' רסט.
10. ממלכת כהנים ע' יג. אגרות קודש ח"ט ע' רסט.

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



REB CHAIM DOVID LEIN

Reb Chaim Dovid was the middle son of Reb Moshe Leib Lein, and a grandson of the famous chossid of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Peretz Chein. He was born around the year 5610 (1850). After his *chasuna* he was a *yoshev* by the Rebbe Maharash in Lubavitch, as was the custom was in those days. Eventually he took on the job of *shochet* and *bodek* in the city of Nevel, a task he continued to hold even in his old age, as he had very steady hands. As can be seen in the letters written to him, the Friediker Rebbe held him in very high esteem. He passed away in Nevel in the year 5699 (1939).

Reb Chaim Dovid once related two instructions he had personally received from the Rebbe Maharash:

- (1) To understand a *maamar Chassidus* one needs to learn it at least three times. To apply it in *avoda*, one needs to learn the *maamar* at least thirty times.
- (2) A *shochet*'s mind has to be utterly clear and focused. Therefore, since he

shechted on Fridays, he was to forgo the custom of chassidim to remain awake on Thursday night, making it up on *motzai Shabbos*. To strengthen his mind's clarity further he should add three hours of sleep on Friday and Sunday nights.

(אוצר החסידים אה"ק ע' 310)

Late one winter Friday night amidst a snowstorm, knocking was heard on the door of a chossid's home in Nevel. This was during the time when the NKVD would often make searches or arrests during the night, so the chossid opened the door with a pounding heart. He relaxed when he saw Reb Chaim Dovid standing in front of him in the cold, begging to come in. Reb Chaim Dovid explained, “I was in middle of learning a *maamar* of the Rebbe Maharash when the candle went out and I could not continue. I walked outside and saw the light was still burning in your home, so please let me finish the *maamar* here.”

(תשורה אבני חן ע' 43)

A Moment with The Rebbe



לזכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצורך בגשמייות ורוחניות

ONE SLAP

Reb Simcha Werner related:

Once, at a Farbrengen, I heard the Rebbe talk powerfully about the importance of a Yid conducting himself with *kabbolas ol*.

Around that time, I had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. I couldn't grasp the importance of total subjugation, so I asked, “What difference does it make to the Eibershter if once in a while I commit an *aveirah*?”

Usually, the Rebbe looked down at

the table in *yechidus*. Now the Rebbe looked up and gazed at me like I had never seen before. I became terrified, I couldn't look at the Rebbe, so I lowered my eyes.

The Rebbe spoke for a while, but I only recall one point:

“Imagine someone who generally respects President Johnson,” the Rebbe said, “but just sometimes, very rarely, slaps him in his face...”

(Teshura Werner Adar 2 5779)

לעילוי נשמת

מרת מוסיא בת ר' אברהם ישעי' ע"ה שטראקס

נפטרה כ"ה אדר"ר תשפ"ד