

# The Weekly Farbrengens



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## VALUING TIME

### PRECIOUS MOMENTS

The Torah says that Avrohom Avinu became old and was "coming in days." The Zohar explains that this refers to the many *mitzvos* that he fulfilled: all the days of his life were fully utilized for the service of HaShem.

As Chassidus explains, a person is given the exact number of days he needs to accomplish his tasks in this world. If a day is not used for its purpose, that day's task is left undone.

(זהר ח"א קט"א, תר"א עט"ב, אג"ק ח"א ע' נד, חכ"ב ע' א')

To highlight the importance of valuing every moment and utilizing it for growth, the Rebbe made two points:

Firstly, wasted time never returns. Every individual is given a specific number of days and seconds to accomplish all that he is charged with. Hence, when a day is misused, this loss is irreplaceable.

Secondly, today's *avoda* raises tomorrow's *avoda* to a higher level – for, as Chazal say, a person who has a hundred coins desires two hundred. Therefore if today is misused, this will weaken the chances for a better tomorrow.

(תו"מ חכ"א ע' 59)

Many ancient ethical works point out the same unfortunate reality: while people are concerned over a loss of money, they are less concerned over a loss of time. In truth, of course, the reverse should be the case. Lost money, after all, can be recovered; lost time cannot.

(ראה ס' החיים לר' שמעון מפראנקפורט י"א, סר"ש תשמ"ט ח"ב ע' 601)

### PASSING TIME?

During the summer of תרנ"א (1891), at the age of eleven, the Frierdiker Rebbe was arrested for trying to protect another Yid from a cruel police officer. Thrown into a dark cell and overcome by fear, he suddenly realized, "I'm imprisoned just like my holy forefathers were, so I should respond to the challenge with courage and faith, and spend my time studying Torah."

He already knew the *Mishnayos* of Zero'im and Moed

by heart, so he began reviewing them. Suddenly, he heard fearful groaning and whimpering. The prison was dark, and he could not make out the source of the sounds, so he tried to ignore the moaning and concentrate on his learning. He then davened *Mincha*, omitting *Tachanun* because he was so happy to have had the great merit of being imprisoned for defending another Yid's honor.

Continuing to review from memory, he once again heard wailing noises. He struck a match, looked around the cell, and discovered a calf tied up, with a muzzle on its mouth. His fears were calmed. He went through the entire *Seder Zero'im*, began *Seder Mo'ed*, and before he had a chance to finish, he was released.

Later, when his father, the Rebbe Rashab, heard what had occurred, he complimented his son on being able to review *mishnayos baal peh*. Otherwise, he added, with what would he have been superior to (*lehavdil*) the calf which had also been imprisoned...?

When the Frierdiker Rebbe related this story, he added: "These words engraved in my mind and heart the necessity of preparing 'provisions for the way' by learning Torah by heart, so that in any situation, one will not waste his time."

(התמים חו"ד ע' ס"ה)

### CONSIDER

*Is it important to use every moment so that more will be accomplished, or so that each moment is elevated?*

*Does using time to the maximum mean not to relax?*

Every moment was so precious to the Rebbe Rashab, that he was available to discuss communal matters only at mealtimes. When the Frierdiker Rebbe was away and the Rebbe Rashab had to review the *yeshivah's* affairs with the bookkeeper, he did so during mealtime.

For the same reason, even when money was extremely tight, he always traveled by train first

class, so that he would be able to learn undisturbed.

On *Nittel Nacht*, when it is forbidden to learn Torah, the Rebbe Rashab would use his time to play chess, thereby sharpening his mind for his future Torah studies. From this, says the Rebbe, we see how even when one cannot learn Torah, he should utilize his time for beneficial activities.

(לשמע און ע' 113, רשימות היומן ע' ריח, סה"ש תש"נ ע' 192)

### A SINGLE MINUTE

During a visit of the Rebbe Rashab to Germany, some local *Yidden* accompanied him to the railway station, and one of them remarked that the train would be leaving in another minute.

The Rebbe replied, "In one minute one can do *teshuvah*."

(תו"מ ח"ב ע' 183)

In the year תש"ד (1944), the Rebbe davened at the *amud* after the passing of his father Reb Leivik. It once happened that the *minyán* did not gather in time. The Frierdiker Rebbe called the *rosh yeshivah* and told him that his son-in-law, the Rebbe, had complained about his wasted time. The *rosh yeshivah* excused himself, saying that the *bochurim* had arrived only five minutes late.

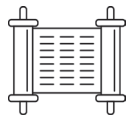
The Frierdiker Rebbe replied, "For my *eidem*, a minute is a year. Do you want to steal five years from him?!"

(אוצר פתגמי חכ"ב ע' 50)

When, in his early years in America, the Frierdiker Rebbe spoke of the imminent coming of *Moshiach*, some people questioned his activities to strengthen *Yiddishkeit* and build *yeshivos*. They argued: "If anyway we are in *golus* only for a short while, what is the need for all this?"

The Frierdiker Rebbe answered by reminding them of the *Mishkan* in the desert. While in some places *Bnei Yisroel* camped for long periods of time (once for 19 years!), in others they camped for only one day. Yet, in every place they set up the *Mishkan* with all of its *keilim* and *korbanos*, regardless of how long they stayed.

(סה"ש תש"א ע' 162, תו"מ ח"ה ע' 299)



## ALEXA AND SHABBOS

**Why can't I speak to my Alexa/Siri/Google Assistant on Shabbos if I'm not doing anything?**

Halacha holds a person responsible for actions caused by his speech. For example, if one raises his voice and causes his animal to carry on Shabbos, he has transgressed an *issur d'oraisa*.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, if one scares an animal while threshing so it doesn't eat, one transgresses on *lo sachsom* (muzzling it).<sup>2</sup>

Although the Gemara states that *megadeif* (cursing Hashem's name) is the lone speech-only transgression for which one is liable, Rishonim explain that muzzling is worse since his speech results in an action.<sup>3</sup>

Based on this, *poskim* write that one may not activate a machine by voice if it will cause a *melacha* to happen.<sup>4</sup> Rav Moshe Feinstein prohibits doing so even without the intention of causing the *melacha* if it will inevitably result (*psik reishet*).<sup>5</sup>

Halacha permits saying an incantation (*lachash*) on Shabbos to lock a snake or scorpion in place to prevent harm because it isn't the normal way of trapping.<sup>6</sup> However, activating a device through speech is normal today, and it could not be considered a *shinui*. Additionally, the activation is a direct effect and not a *grama*.

Besides the *melachos* that can result from the device's activation —e.g., *mav'ir* for glowing heat or bulbs— there are Shabbos prohibitions inherent in the use of electricity itself (as with speaking into a microphone).

Smart devices are constantly recording ambient sound and listening for a "wake word," such as "Alexa." Such devices should be turned off before Shabbos, but if you forgot, you may still speak near them, provided that you don't speak to it.

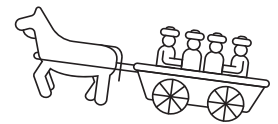
1. ע"ז ט"ו ע"א, שבת קנ"ג ע"ב, שו"ע ד.
2. ב"מ צ' ע"ב, שו"ע חו"מ סי' של"ח.
3. ב"מ שם תוד"ה ר' יוחנן. מאירי שם.
4. ראה שו"ת מנח"י ח"ב סי' י"ז.
5. אג"מ יו"ד ח"א סי' קע"ג.
6. סנהדרין ק"א ע"א. שו"ע ולבוש סמ"ה.

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

**DEDICATE AN ISSUE**

*in honor of a simcha or yahrtzeit*

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## R. AVRAHAM KLATZKIN

R. Avraham Klatzkin was the son of R. Naftali Hirtz Klatzkin, a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek who was a famous *gaon* and the Rov of Shimberg, Latvia. R. Avraham served as the Rov of Romanov, and then Liozna. After the Tzemach Tzedek's passing he became a chossid of the Chabad Rebbes of Liadi, as his father was. He eventually became a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab and corresponded with him on matters of *halacha*.

R. Avraham was a well-known Rov in his time, and *talmidim* of Tomchei Temimim in Lubavitch would visit him to receive *semichah*. Some of his *chidushim* are published in *Amudei Sheish*, and comments he wrote in the margins of his *seforim* have been published in various journals.

R. Avrohom was an exceptional *masmid*. He didn't have anyone with whom to share his Torah insights, yet he would rise in middle of the winter night and learn for hours while standing.

Once, the Rebbe Rashab spoke in a *maamar* about the importance of studying Torah *lishma*, for its own sake, and not for any ulterior motive. Afterwards, R. Shmuel

Levitin, who was then a *tomim* in Lubavitch, commented to his fellow *tomim*, R. Hirshel Gurary, "The Rebbe isn't speaking to us since we don't learn perfectly anyway. He's referring to the rov Klatzkin."

(ניצוצי אור - וויינגארטר)

Passing by his son who sat learning Gemara to a tune, R. Avrohom severely admonished the boy. R. Avrohom's brother expressed his wonder, since the boy had been learning well. R. Avrohom explained that from the boy's tune of learning he could sense that it wasn't *lishma*, but rather to pride himself with his knowledge.

R. Avrohom is described as having an incredible anticipation for Moshiach, which put him in good spirits. He would sleep half dressed in his clothing so that he would be able to quickly run to greet Moshiach.

As a result of his *bitachon* he was unfazed by his poverty, and to worry about tomorrow seemed to him foolish and heretical.

(היכל הבעש"ט ח"מ ע' רצב ואילך)

## A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



## WHEN ONE IS CONNECTED ABOVE

When Reb Avrohom Yitzchok Rosenfeld made a *bris*, 24 Iyar 5711, the Rebbe came and spoke a few sichos. At one point the Rebbe told a story:

"The mikva in Reb Meir Premishlaner's town was behind a hill, so when it became muddy and slippery the townsfolk would walk around the hill. Reb Meir, however, would walk over the hill.

"One day, several guests in town, who didn't hold of *mofsim*, also tried walking

over the hill, but fell and hurt themselves.

"When they asked Reb Meir how he does it, he answered, 'When one is connected above, one doesn't fall below.'"

The Rebbe concluded the story with a timely message. "We are now in the darkest period of *golus*, and therefore need a special Hiskashrus to the Rebbe, to keep us connected above, so that despite changes in time or situation, we don't slip..."

(Toras Menachem, Vol 3 p. 105)

לכבוד יום הולדת

**שאל זאב בן פרימיד**

לבריאות וברכה בכל המצטרך בגשמיות וברוחניות