

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • ואתחנן תשפ"ה • 839
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

REFRESHING OURSELVES (I)

THE BENEFITS OF RELAXING

The Rambam writes that taking care of one's health is part of serving HaShem, for when a person is not well, he is unable to serve Him properly.

Rebbi Yehuda HaChossid advises a person who is stressed to take a walk so that he can then return to his learning. Indeed, the *Midrash* relates that Dovid HaMelech would take walks in order to clear his mind and then learn further.

(רמב"ם הל' דעות רפ"ד, ס"ח אות תש"ע, יוסף אומץ אות של"ז)

Rebbi Yehuda HaNasi was so wealthy that he always had unique produce served at his table, even when it was out of season. Nevertheless, before his passing, he raised his hands and declared, "I did not have any pleasure at all!" The Shelah explains that although Rebbi ate these delicacies, he did so only in order to be strong and healthy for *avodas HaShem*.

The Rebbe says that similarly, a person can take breaks for the sake of his health so that he will be able to serve HaShem. For this reason, too, when children are allowed to play, this too is *kedusha*, for in the case of Yidden, a holy nation, their body too is holy.

(ע"ז י"א ע"א, כתובות ק"ד ע"א, של"ה עש"מ מ"ח, ת"מ תשמ"ז ע' 186 תשמ"ד ע' 2453)

When people notified the Rebbe of their vacation plans for rest, the Rebbe would often give a *bracha* that it should bring about the desired result – strengthening the body. As the Rebbe Rashab expressed it, "How precious is the Yiddishe body for which so much Torah was given!" At the same time, care must be taken that one does not arrive at a situation in which the strength of the body weakens the *neschama*.

(אג"ק ח"ד ע' שד"מ)

REST, DON'T SLEEP

In a letter to one mother, the Friediker Rebbe writes, "Surely children must relax from time to time, from their toiling in learning; however, the relaxation of a *ben Torah* and *yiras Shamayim* does not mean to do nothing, but rather he uses this

time to spread *Torah* and *yiras Shamayim*."

(אג"ק רי"צ ח"ז ע' שיט)

The Rebbe taught:

We must conduct our lives contrary to the ways of the rest of the world. During the summer months, people often decrease their learning and focus on strengthening their physical health. We must do the opposite; we must focus on the health of the *neschama*, and then, automatically, our physical lives will be strengthened as well.

Moreover, as *Chassidus* teaches, during the summer there is an additional measure of *Elokus* in the world, which also finds expression in the additional sunlight at that time.

(תורת מנחם חכ"ה ע' 268, לקו"ש ח"א ע' 4)

CONSIDER

Does indulging in the pleasures of vacation enhance its beneficial results or lessen them?

How does one ensure that they do not get drawn into excessive pleasures?

STANDING ON GUARD

Midrash Shmuel writes that because physical desires are stronger in the summer, we learn *Pirkei Avos* particularly at that time, in order to reinforce our proper conduct.

(מדרש שמואל בהקדמה)

The *Gemara* tells that one of the greatest *chachomim*, Rebbi Elazar ben Arach, traveled to distant lands and partook of the pleasures there, drinking the

wine and bathing in the springs. As a result, he forgot what he had learned, and when he returned to the *beis midrash* and was called to the Torah, instead of reading *לכם* החדש הזה, he mistakenly read *החורש* ה' לבם.

The Rebbe Maharash explains the significance of these words, which literally mean, "their heart grew deaf." They imply that the heart was stopped up – it became insensitive to *ruchniyus* – as a result of the pleasures of which he had partaken.

(שבת קמז ע"ב, סה"מ תרכ"ו ע' לא)

Addressing the *bochurim* who would be speaking in various *shuls*, the Rebbe instructed them to speak about the *avoda* of the summer months:

At that time, when nature blooms, one must be careful not to be overly drawn into physical pleasures, for he can be affected as Rebbi Elazar was. True, one must take care of his body, since this, too, is part of serving HaShem, yet one should not do so excessively. Rather, an appreciation of the beauty now apparent in nature, as in the blooming trees, can be channeled into *kedusha*: one should learn from them to grow in *avodas HaShem*.

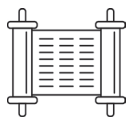
(תורת מנחם, ח"א ע' 248, 255)

On one of the weekly trips from *datche* back to Lubavitch, where the Rebbe Rashab would visit his mother and receive guests for *yechidus*, Shaul the wagon driver stopped near a well so that his horses could drink. When they finished, he whipped their backs and said, "Fools! Do you think I've given you water for your own benefit, so that the hay you've eaten should be tastier?! Not at all! I've given you water so that you'll have more strength and desire to *shlepp* the wagon!"

Hearing this, the Rebbe sat deep in earnest thought for some time and then said, "The Baal Shem Tov taught that whatever a Yid hears and sees is a lesson in *avodas HaShem*. A Yid must remember that he is given his physical needs in order to have the strength to *shlepp* the *ruchniyus*'s wagon, through Torah and *avoda*. One must not err and think that what really counts is the hay, just for our indulgence."

(אג"ק ח"ד ע' תכ"ו)





FRIDAY AFTERNOON 'TOAMEHA'

Is the practice of eating on Friday afternoon ("toameha") appropriate?

On Friday, even during the morning, one may not partake of a meal larger than one is accustomed to during the week.¹ The Gemara tells us that there was a family in Yerushalayim that would consistently hold a large meal on Friday, and that family was left with no descendants, R"l.² (Mitzvah-related meals are discussed in issue 551.)

The primary reason for the prohibition is to ensure that one enters Shabbos with an appetite and is able to fulfill the Shabbos meal properly.³ Additionally, holding such a meal on Friday is disrespectful to Shabbos, as it seems like Shabbos is no more important than the weekday.⁴ Furthermore, one's preoccupation with this meal may detract from preparing the Shabbos meal.⁵

An ordinary meal, without alcoholic beverages, is halachically permitted throughout the entire day. While some *poskim* differentiate whether it is a one-time occurrence or a regular practice, the Alter Rebbe learns that the prohibition is only for a larger meal than usual.⁶

Yet, Shulchan Aruch rules that it is a mitzvah to refrain from starting even a small meal from the beginning of the tenth hour, i.e., three "seasonal" hours before sunset.⁷ If one has a small appetite, or on a short Friday, one should refrain even earlier (as appropriate).⁸

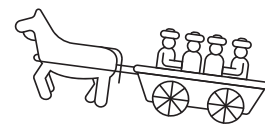
A "meal" is defined by a *k'beitza* worth of bread. Less than that amount, or fruits and vegetables of any amount, may be eaten up to *shkia*, and there is no need to refrain.⁹

There is a custom recorded to taste the Shabbos foods in advance to ensure they are seasoned properly, and one who does so merits long life (*to'ameha chayim zachu*). This is not required today, as cooking methods and ingredients are tried and tested. The Rebbe notes that the Friediker Rebbe did not taste the food before Shabbos, yet it's appropriate to taste the *kedusha* of Shabbos in advance.¹⁰

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' רמ"ט ס"א.
2. גיטין ל"ח ע"ב, לפי איכא דמפרשי ברש"י שם.
3. שו"ע או"ח סי' רמ"ט ס"ה.
4. פרמ"ג שם משב"ז סק"א.
5. רשב"א. מג"א סק"ד.
6. שו"ע או"ח סי' ק"א סק"ב.
7. שו"ע או"ח סי' ק"א סק"ב.
8. משנ"ב סק"ז וסק"ח ש"מ לא יתענה. וראה קצות השולחן סי' ס"ט סק"א.
9. שו"ע או"ח סי' ק"א סק"ט.
10. ראה תו"מ ח"ח ע' 104.

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

Our Heroes



R. ELIJAHU YOSEF RIVLIN

R. Elijah Yosef Rivlin was born in approximately 5565 (1805) in Ulla, Belarus to a family of chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. Originally a chasid of the Alter Rebbe's talmid Reb Aharon of Strashele, he later became a chossid of the Mitteler Rebbe and Tzemach Tzedek. R. Elijah Yosef lived in Dribin, and is known by the name of that town, before serving as Rov of Polotzk and eventually moving to Eretz Yisrael in 5707 (1847). Reb Elijah Yosef passed away in 5625 (1825). His *chidushim* in Nigleh were published under the title *Oholei Yosef*, and some of his writings on Chassidus have also been published.

Originally, R. Elijah Yosef traveled to R. Aharon of Strashele. Once, he was invited to a relative's *chassuna*. These relatives were Lubavitcher chassidim and they merited for the Mitteler Rebbe to join their *simcha*.

R. Elijah Yosef asked his Rebbe, if he should still go, since there was a divide between R. Aharon and the Mitteler Rebbe. R. Aharon told him that he should attend the wedding banquet, but he shouldn't go to hear the Mitteler Rebbe recite Chassidus.

During the *chassuna*, the Mitteler Rebbe was sitting enclosed in his room, when he suddenly entered the dining hall and began reciting a *maamar*. R. Elijah Yosef, who was seated at the head table, could not escape due to the

intense pushing. He heard the *maamar* with great pleasure and thus became a devoted chossid of the Mitteler Rebbe.

(מגדל עז ע' קצ)

At one *yechidus*, the Tzemach Tzedek told R. Elijah Yosef, "Learn Torah Ohr! Listen to me and you will thank me. When Moshiach comes, they will also learn Torah Ohr."

The Tzemach then gifted him with a copy of the *sefer*.

(למען ידעו ע' 288)

After several years in Eretz Yisroel, R. Elijah Yosef visited Lubavitch, where he entered the Tzemach Tzedek's room and asked him to say Chassidus.

"What brought you to Lubavitch?" the Tzemach Tzedek asked him. "You're in the Holy Land, so what are you missing?"

R. Elijah Yosef answered, "The fish in the river spend all their life in water. Yet, when it rains, they lift their heads above the water to catch the rain from above."

"Rebbe," R. Elijah Yosef begged, "Please say a *maamar* for me!"

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 245)

A Moment with The Rebbe

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



A PRIZE BEFITTING A CHABAD PROGRAM

In the summer of 5733, Tzeirei Chabad of Eretz Yisroel launched a campaign to encourage children to study *mishnayot baal peh*, and publicized the program with attractive advertisements, highlighting the reward system.

When the flyers reached the Rebbe, the Rebbe expressed disappointment with the fact they had chosen a soccer ball as a prize for the learning.

"What has compelled them to include this prize?" the Rebbe wrote. "Are there no other appropriate rewards in the entire land?"

But the strongest critique was for the

decision-making process. "Was there no one involved in the planning who had the thought that perhaps a program involving Chabad and the Alter Rebbe may give candies as a prize, but not soccer balls?"

Following this sharp response, Rabbi Chodakov, the Rebbe's secretary, clarified the Rebbe's stance in a phone call with his liason Reb Efrayim Wolf.

"The Rebbe doesn't approve of such a prize, and the remaining flyers should be burned. Find a way not to give this prize out, and for the future, know the Rebbe's approach."

(Askonus Tziburis p. 135)