



פרשת לך לך
מרחשון תשע"ח

PUBLIC HOLIDAY LEARNING

Tuesday November 7 is Cup Day and that means the Kollel will be hosting one of our Public Holiday breakfast learning events.

Join us at 9:30am in the Werdiger Hall foyer for a full breakfast followed by a shiur by Rabbi Johnson on the topic

The Euthanasia Bill

The Halachic perspective on mercy killing, withholding treatment, praying for the death of a patient and other end-of-life issues.

FAREWELL THE JACKS'

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks has been a regular presenter at Kollel shiurim and learning programs.

Join us in saying thank you and farewell to the Jacks' at a special shiur and brunch.

Sunday November 5 Cheshvan 16
10:-11:15am in the Goldhirsch Hall
For men and women

Topic

My teacher, Reb Mendel Futerfas

Rabbi Avrohom Jacks

Avos Ubonim / Dor LeDor learning for boys

Same program, new name. Join us each Shabbos afternoon throughout the Summer for learning, nush, stories and prizes.

6:30pm after Mesibas Shabbos in the ORZ Mezzanine.

To dedicate a week of Dor LeDor learning contact Reuven Centner
0434 797 706

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא
חידוש Chiddush



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When too much kindness is not good

The first Bracha of Shemoneh Esrei is the Bracha of Avos. We mention our Forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov who stand in our zechus. The Bracha ends with the words מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם, blessing Hashem who is the Shield of Avraham.

This phrase is borrowed from Parshas Lech Lecha. When Hashem comes to Avraham in a vision and tells him that he will have many descendants, He says "Do not fear Avraham, I will be your shield - לא תירא אברהם, אנכי מגן לך".

On the literal level, the Shield of Avraham refers to how Hashem protected Avraham in the War of Kings (Ibn Ezra) Or that Hashem would protect Avraham from punishment for having killed in battle (Rashi).

In the Chassidische Parsha, the Alter Rebbe gives a deeper insight in the meaning of this blessing.

Avraham embodied the Divine attribute of Chesed - loving kindness. Chesed was his very nature and was expressed in how he would serve Hashem and relate to his fellow man.

Like the Divine attributes, Avraham's Chesed was unlimited; Everyone was good in his eyes and he would shower them with unbounded love, whether they deserved it or not.

Even the wicked; sinners and idolaters were recipients of Avraham' kindness.

Avraham had a son Yishmael who was less than a savoury character. Yet when Avraham was told that he would father a son together with Sarah he asked "if only Yishmael will live before You." Avraham knew who his son Yishmael was, yet he davened that Hashem bless him with kindness so that he too will live and endure.

Pure unadulterated kindness without discerning whether it is deserved or not, is not necessarily a good thing. In the absence of discipline, kindness alone allows negativity and negative behaviour to thrive.

Our sages describe that "Yishmael went out from Avraham". To a certain extent, Yishmael and his behaviour was a product of Avraham's unlimited kindness and tolerance.

The ultimate purpose of Creation is that negativity will be eradicated from the world. A world run with pure Chesed will not uproot negativity. For this we need

Din - judgement, strictness and discipline.

And so after Avraham came Yitzchak, who embodied the attribute of Din. But strictness and discipline which is too intense and intolerant also leads to undesirable results. Yitzchak was pure Din and as a result, "Eisav came out from Yitzchak".

The proper approach is balance, a synthesis of kindness and discipline. This balance was embodied in Yaakov, the attribute of Tiferes. Unlike with the approach of Avraham and Yitzchak, all of Yaakov's children followed in his ways.

In the macro-sense this is true as well. Hashem sustains all existence with His attribute of kindness. Even the forces of negativity receive their vitality from Hashem. But if Hashem would bestow His infinite, unadulterated kindness to the forces of negativity as well, they would be strengthened and perpetuate.

And so each morning, when the attribute of Avraham - Hashem's kindness flows into the world, we make the blessing *Magen Avraham*. Like a shield which covers its bearer, we ask Hashem to shield and limit this Chesed so that it does not flow in its full intensity to the forces of negativity.

This idea finds application in our parenting approach. We love our children infinitely. We want to shower them with pure Chesed, see only the positive and give them everything. But this does not mean that we should give our children unlimited freedoms, grant all of their desires or tolerate all of their behaviours.

Some modern-parenting approaches advocate permissiveness and fewer rules and expectations. The permissive parent seeks to be more like a friend than an authority. Not wanting to be mean, they try to grant all of their children's desires and fail to set limits and discipline negative behaviours.

This approach fails our kids. We need to be an authority figure, being able to say no, to set limits and to firmly discipline. Not every desire should be granted.

At the same time, overly strict and rigid discipline without empathy is not healthy either.

Magen Avraham is the ideal parenting paradigm; Genuine love and Chesed, but shielded so that it is applied discriminately in their best interest.

Tachanun on a Tzaddik's Yartzheit

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

This past week we began reciting Tachanun once again. Many people eagerly await for a reason not to have to say Tachanun.

In some communities they don't say Tachanun on the Yartzheit of Tzaddikim. Chabad custom is that we do recite Tachanun on the Yartzheit of our Rebbeim. What is the basis of not reciting Tachanun on a Yartzheit of a Tzaddik and why do Chabad say Tachanun?

Sources for the custom

This custom is generally followed in Chassidic circles on the Yartzheit of a Rebbe. The reason is because the Tzaddik's Neshama has an *Aliyah* on the day of the Yartzheit.

Proof for this practice is brought from a Rashi on Yevamos 122a. Rashi quotes the Geonim that the days referred to as ריגלא דאמוראים are "the day on which a great man passes away which is established in his honour. Each year when this day arrives, the Talmidei Chachamim gather from around to visit his gravesite". Since this is referred to as ריגלא - a festival - we see that the day of the passing of a Tzaddik is like a Yomtov when Ta-CHANUN is not recited. (See Mishmeres Shalom¹).

Others explain that the basis for this custom is from the Zohar². On the day of his passing, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai instructs his Talmidim to celebrate and rejoice on this day since it is his day of joy. As his bed was miraculously carried to burial, a heavenly voice announced "come and gather for the *Hillulah* of Rabbi Shimon." The word *Hillulah* means a wedding. From this we see that the day of the passing of a Tzaddik is a joyous day, akin to a wedding. Just as Tachanun is not recited on the day of a wedding, it is not recited on the Yartzheit of a Tzaddik.

Opposition to the custom

But what does this practically mean? Every day of the year is certain to be the Yartzheit of a particular Tzaddik in history! Should we never recite Tachanun?

Following this logic, many Poskim vehemently challenged this practice.

In Teshuvos Yabia Omer³, Rav Ovadiah Yosef writes very strongly against this custom. He observes that on the contrary, the day of the passing of a Tzaddik is a sad day; a day of rebuke and a day of fasting⁴.

He adds that if one is in a Shule where Tachanun is not recited on the Yartzheit of a Tzaddik and

he cannot protest and change the practice, he should recite Tachanun on his own. He needn't be concerned for either יוהרא (arrogant piety) or לא תתגודדו (separateness created through observing a different custom to those around him). Rav Moshe Feinstein issued a similar ruling.

The Minchas Elozor of Munkatch⁵ similarly writes that by following this custom one would never recite Tachanun, since among the thousands of Tzaddikim throughout history every day would be a Yartzheit of a Tzaddik. Indeed there are calendars printed which list the names of Tzaddikim who passed away on each day. The entire siman of Tachanun in the Shulchan Oruch would be irrelevant.

Lag Baomer is an exception as it was also the day when the Talmidim of Rabbi Akiva stopped dying. Additionally, the Yartzheit of the Rashbi has the unique status of being called a *Hillulah*.

The Munkatcher writes about a Rabbi who justified being lenient in reciting Tachanun so as not to arouse accusations and *Dinim* against the Jewish people. On the contrary says the Munkatcher (quoting the Ariza"l): By reciting Tachanun one has the status of someone who is *Modeh* - who confesses to his wrongdoings and is therefore exempt from a *Knas* (penalty). Further, through Tachanun the sins of Klal Yisroel are forgiven.

Skipping Tachanun is not something to take lightly. Even though in Halacha Tachanun is considered a *reshus* (literally optional), according to the Ariza"l, based on Kabbalah, Tachanun is a *Chiyuv*. The Munkatcher points out that Maariv is also technically only a *reshus*, but we would never use this as basis to skip it.

The Zohar speaks about the tremendous power of reciting Tachanun in gaining atonement. The Baal Shem Tov taught that the words וזאת מעכה at the end of Parshas Vayeira is an acronym for נידוי אחר - confession recited after Shemoneh Esrei reaches to the Kisei Hakovod.

Limitations on the Minhag

Nonetheless, there are Poskim who do not discount the custom entirely. In answer to the question that one would never recite Tachanun, Mishmeres Shalom explains that the exemption is limited to the Tzaddik's followers, who were subservient to his will and would spend time in the Tzaddik's presence during his lifetime.

Similarly Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach⁶ is quoted as saying that the dissatisfaction of the Poskim towards this practice does not include the followers of the Tzaddik who are connected to him - "go by

his light". This is particularly so when a Seudah is made in honour of the Yartzheit. (Other Poskim suggest that where a Siyum is made on the Yartzheit Tachanun may be skipped.)

Darkei Chaim Veshalom (Minhagei Munkatch), based on the Rashi quoted above limits the dispensation of Tachanun to the city itself where the Tzaddik is buried and people travel to his gravesite to daven there on the day of the Yartzheit. On any other Yartzheit, Tachnun should be recited.

Chabad custom

In Chabad, the minhag is that Tachanun is *davka* recited on the day of a Yartzheit such as Yud Shevat.

In a letter, dated 9th of Tammuz 5713, the Rebbe writes that he asked the Friedrike Rebbe concerning reciting Tachanun on the Yartzheit of a Tzaddik. The Rebbe's response was: "When is there a better time to re-quest and to be answered as on these days?."

In another letter, dated 17th of Nissan 5717, the Rebbe responds to the question what one should do if he is in a Shule which is not reciting Tachanun such as on the Yartzheit of a Tzaddik. The Rebbe responded that in general, conduct in a way that stands out as being overly pious is not favourable.

The Rebbe explains the possible reason for the deviance of custom between Chabad and other Chassidic circles: Other groups of Chassidim follow the path of צדיק באמונתו יחיה - אל. This means that the Tzaddik through his lofty service elevates and vitalises those who are connected to him. Accordingly Tachanun is not recited on the Yartzheit since the Chassidim are elevated along with the Neshama of the Tzaddik.

Chabad Chassidim demands that the Chassid grow from his own efforts, not relying on the Rebbe. As such, the Aliyah of the Tzaddik's Neshama is merely a catalyst for our personal Avodah and so Tachanun should be said.

1. Siman 12:4
2. Idra Zuta, Haazinu
3. Volume 3, siman 11:9.
4. Such as the Yartzheit of Moshe Rabbeinu 7th of Adar. See Orach Chaim siman 580 for other dates of Taanis Tzaddikim. Concerning why we rejoice on Lag Baomer but the minhag is to fast on Zayin Adar, the Rebbe explains

that there is a difference between the Yartzheit of those who were connected to the dissemination of the hidden parts of Torah such as the Rashb"i, and those connected to the revealed aspects of Torah.

5. Nimukei Orach Chaim 131
6. Halichos Shlomo 131