



The Early Morning Inspection

This was no regular learning session.

The Friediker Rebbe, in a letter and in his diary, describes the special time he spent learning with his father, the Rebbe Rashab, during the time period of 5677.

The words and expressions he uses to depict the late night *chavrusa* or early morning studying, gives us a glimpse into how those hours were treasured.

The Tuesday morning of 22 Teves, seemed to be another opportunity for this as had been the early hours of the previous day, Monday, 21 Teves. Things, however, turned out to be anything but usual, as the Friediker Rebbe himself relates:

“We would learn together either late at night or early in the morning. That Monday we had learnt in the morning and my father told me we would do the same on the following day.

“We learned together ‘Biurei HaZohar’ which were mostly taught by the Alter Rebbe to his sons, grandsons, and some of his outstanding students.

“The *drush* we studied that morning was extremely deep. My father’s method of learning was to first briefly explain the concepts and then to learn the actual text at great length with exceptional sharpness and fluency.

“Two hours passed and I was immensely enjoying the intellectual sharpness and wonders that I was hearing, and I saw that my father was deriving pleasure from the learning as well.

“It seemed that my father had sensed that I was greatly overcome with the delight of the concepts, and he explained to me the purpose of properly understanding a concept in Chassidus.

“When he finished talking, he glanced at the clock and it was six thirty in the morning. He closed his *sefer* and

THEY WILL SHOW YOU THE INSECTS, THE BAD SMELLS THAT YOU DIDN'T CARE FOR

לזכות
החתן הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל שיחי'
גלפערין
והכלה המהוללה
מרת חיענא מרים שתחי'
גאנזבורג
לרגל חתונתם ביום
"ב אב ה'תשע"ו, שנת הקהל
נדפס ע"י
הרה"ת ר' יוסף יצחק
ומרת ביילא זלאטא שיחיו
גאנזבורג



told me to put on my winter coat and come with him to the *mikveh*.

“It was unusual for my father to go to the *mikveh* this early, and he would always take an attendant with him. This time, however, he did not want anyone else to accompany us.”

The Friediker Rebbe then describes the layout of the *mikveh* in Rostov. There was a large entrance room, then there was the actual *mikveh* room with benches and a changing area, and finally there was the actual large *mikveh* itself.

After this description he continues to relate the events of that morning:

“When we arrived, the gate to the courtyard was still locked so I rattled the knocker a few times. This caught the attention of the guard who then opened the small gate. When he saw who was there he ran to call Mr. Chein Tov, who was in charge of the *mikveh*, to let him know who had come.

“My father sat on one of the benches in the waiting room because the actual *mikveh* room was locked. When Mr. Chein Tov arrived, he excused himself and apologized. Had he known the Rebbe would come so early, he said, he would have already cleaned and prepared the area.

“It is precisely for this reason that I chose to come at an unusual time,” replied my father. ‘Because I wanted to see the state of the *mikveh* at any given time.’ He then told him to open the door.

“Mr. Chein Tov requested a few minutes to put things in order and clean up a bit, but my father didn’t want this.

“Upon entering the room, there was a foul smell wafting through the room, on the floor there were broken buckets and despite the water itself being clear there were flies floating on the surface of the *mikveh*.

“My father returned to the waiting room, sat down on one of the benches at south wall and said to Mr. Chein Tov:

“To me it makes no difference, I can go into a *mikveh* that has insects swimming around, and the bad smell in the room doesn’t bother me. However, women won’t handle

such things and if *chas v’shalom* even one woman doesn’t use the *mikveh* because there are things in the water or there is a bad smell, it can bring about an *issur* of *kares* for her family. When we care for the cleanliness of the *mikveh*, and women can then be careful with their purification, we cause and actually take a part in establishing upright and ‘kosher’ generations of Yidden.

“Imagine the scene when you are standing in front of the Heavenly Court: They will show you the insects, the bad smells that you didn’t care for, which caused others to commit *aveiros* that are punishable by *kares*!

“Think of the terrible punishment this is deserving, as well as the great reward one receives for having a part in establishing generations of ‘kosher’ Yidden.”

“On our trip back, my father told me that the Reishis Chochma assures that immersing in a *mikveh* three times in any place at any time will not cause any harm. Based upon this promise, I have gone to many different *mikvaos* in various places.

“In the previous generation,” my father added, ‘men and women would dip in very cold water and it was not always so clean. Nevertheless they were all healthy and they knew of no sicknesses. But in these times, women abstain from going to *mikveh* with the claim that they are afraid of the water. At the end, those women that went to *mikveh* are well and give birth to healthy and strong babies, both in body and soul. A large percentage of women who don’t go to *mikveh* for whatever reason, on the other hand, have to contend with sickness and illness.’”

The Friediker Rebbe concludes his account of what happened that morning:

“That evening Mr. Chein Tov went to my father for *yechidus*. When he entered the room he broke down with bitter tears and said that after what took place that morning he found no rest.

“From that day and on every aspect of the *mikveh* was taken care of with utmost care and precaution.” **1**

(Based on the Friediker Rebbe’s letter,
Igros Kodesh vol. 4 p. 79)