

FORGIVING ANOTHER (2)

Total Forgiveness

On *Kol Nidrei* night, Reb Yaakov the *shammes* led the *tefillos* in the shul of Yanova, and took a long time to *daven* the silent *Shemoneh Esreh*. Annoyed and impatient, the wealthy *rosh hakohol* went over and slapped his face. Reb Yaakov did not respond. He completed *Shemoneh Esreh* calmly, and continued *davening* as if nothing had occurred.

After Yom Kippur, one of the wealthy members of the community approached Reb Yaakov and offered to buy his share in *Olam HaBo* that he had earned by quietly accepting the public embarrassment that he had experienced.

Reb Yaakov said, "Sorry, but I have nothing to sell, for I forgave the *rosh hakohol* even before I finished *Shemoneh Esreh*. If I still had a grudge against him, I would not have continued as *sheliach tzibbur* on Yom Kippur. Besides, he was right, for it is inappropriate for the *rosh kohol* to have to wait for a *shammes*."

His simplicity and righteousness aroused a tumult in Heaven, and it was decided that he be granted the *zechus* of having a son, Reb Aharon of Karlin, a prominent *talmid* of the Mezritcher Maggid.

(כצאת השמש בגבורתו)

The *chossid* Reb Berke Chein was imprisoned and exiled in Soviet Russia for his efforts in spreading Yiddishkeit in the underground Lubavitch network that defied Stalin's religious suppression. Those who had him arrested were fellow Yidden, informers faithful to the regime, who had unfortunately been influenced by the communist beliefs and created the Yevseksia, a "Yiddishe" branch of the NKVD. Years later, at a *farbrengen*, Reb Berke shared his story with a group of chassidim, and upon mentioning the share of those Yidden in his imprisonment, he muttered to himself, "May HaShem forgive them! They are still Yidden." He bore no grudge against them for all the pain they had caused him.

(מפי השמועה)

Repaying with Love

The Midrash says: One must take a lesson in forgiveness from Avraham Avinu. When Avimelech took Sarah away he caused Avraham tremendous suffering; yet when Avimelech asked to be forgiven, he forgave him immediately. Moreover, he *davened* for the wellbeing of Avimelech and his family.

(מדרש הגדול וירא כ, יז)

The *Midrash* relates that when Yosef HaTzaddik was in the pit, his brother Shimon had him stoned. Nevertheless, when Shimon fell in his hands in Mitzrayim, he took good care of him and had him served the best delicacies. The *Zohar* writes that like Yosef, one should repay evil with good.

(ילקוט שמעוני וישב קמ"ב, תניא ספ"ב)

The *tanna* Rabbi Abba was once sitting near the entrance of Lud and witnessed the following scene. A weary traveler sat down on a boulder protruding from the edge of a mountain, and fell asleep. As he was sleeping, a snake crept out and was making its way towards him, when suddenly another creature attacked the snake and killed it, saving the man's life.

When the man woke up, he walked away, and at that moment the protruding boulder broke off the mountain and tumbled down the cliff. Rabbi Abba approached the man and said, "Tell me what special deed you have done to merit these two great miracles. They must have been *earned*."

The man replied, "When anyone wrongs me, I immediately make up with him. At any rate, I do not go to bed before forgiving him. I then try to be extra kind to them in the future."

Rabbi Abba said: This man's actions are greater than those of Yosef, for this man forgave people who were not his brothers, on whom one is inclined to have mercy.

It is for this reason that before *krias shma* al *hamitah*, we recite *Ribbono shel Olam*, forgiving anyone who may have hurt us throughout the day.

(זהר מוקץ רא ע"ב, וראה מגילה כח ע"א)

The King of Spain respected R. Shmuel HaNagid so highly that he appointed that brilliant and righteous talmid chacham his second in command. However, in the shadow of the king's palace stood a store belonging to a *goy* who envied the sage. Whenever he saw him passing by, he would go outside and curse him, but Reb Shmuel never paid any attention. Once, when Reb Shmuel was taking a walk with the king, the *goy* came out and, as usual, cursed him. The king was furious and commanded Reb Shmuel to cut off the storeowner's evil tongue.

After some investigation, Reb Shmuel found out that this *goy* was a pauper, so he began sending him money regularly, and this softened his heart. After some time, when Reb Shmuel again took a walk with the king, the *goy* came out and began to praise him. The king, who had not heard what the *goy* had called out, asked Reb Shmuel why he had not followed his instructions to cut off that man's tongue.

"I did do as you commanded," answered Reb Shmuel. "I cut off his bad tongue and replaced it with a good tongue..."

(כצאת השמש בגבורתו ע' קל)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Did Reb Shmuel HaNagid 'cut off the man's evil tongue'?
- How can one bring himself to repay good to one who wronged him?

Teachers' Strike

May *melamdim* strike for better pay?

- Students' Torah learning is a "*davar ha'aved*" since every moment not used for learning Torah is a lost opportunity. For this reason, a *melamed* is prohibited from quitting during the year unless he has a qualified replacement¹ or his contract is over.² Torah teachers in girls' schools may also not strike since they serve a crucial role of implanting *yiras Shomayim*, practice of *mitzvos*, and Chassidus, into their students.³
- Although workers who are not being paid on time may strike in many instances, it is questionable if a *melamed* who isn't being paid on time may strike, since the loss is irreplaceable and impossible to compensate.
- Some write that although halachic basis can be found to allow Torah teachers to strike, it is nonetheless a great sin since the world depends on young boys' Torah study, and one may not sin to have a better livelihood. However, the same *poskim* hold that if the teachers' basic needs aren't being met and striking for a few days will certainly improve their situation, they may do so, since this is ultimately for the students' benefit. Serious thought is needed before approving such a step.⁴ Regardless, the teachers who strike may not force another teacher to join them.⁵
- In a letter to teachers, the Rebbe writes that without getting in to the halachic discussion, the teachers should consider that: (1) By striking they are punishing the students who haven't wronged them, sometimes to an irreversible degree; (2) The administration didn't hold back wages on purpose; (3) It conveys a hindering message to the students that material needs override the children's *chinuch*.⁶ Elsewhere the Rebbe notes that these points do not take away from the administration's responsibility to ensure that teachers are paid properly.⁷
- *Poskim* point out that if the administration is not paying the *melamdim* as they should, they are at fault, as well as for the disruption of the children's Torah study.⁸
- Due to the severity of the issue a *rov* should be consulted in a case-by-case basis.⁹

1. רמ"א סי' של"ג ס"ה, ובש"ך שם סקכ"ו.
2. שו"ת הר צבי חו"מ סי' ק"ט.
3. מנחת צבי ח"ב סי' י' פט"ז.
4. אג"מ חו"מ ח"א סי' נ"ט.
5. שם.
6. אג"ק ח"י ע' נ"ה.
7. התוועדות תשמ"ח ח"ב ע' 554. וראה גם תו"מ חל"ג ענ"ל 252.
8. שו"ת מנחת שלמה סי' פ"ז.
9. אג"מ חו"מ ח"ב סי' נ"ט.

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

לזכות הרך הנמול שמואל שי

שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים

נדבת הרה"ת מנחם מענדל זווגות חי' מושקא שיחיו שטראקס

לזכות הילדה מנוחה שתחי

שיגדלוהו הוריה לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים

נדבת הרה"ת אפרים פישל זווגות שי' אסטער

OUR HEROES

Reb Pesach Malastovker

Reb Pesach Malastovker was of the younger chasidim of the Alter Rebbe and a great chossid of the Mitteler Rebbe and Tzemach Tzedek. He was a brilliant *gaon* and had an immensely deep understanding in Chasidus. Reb Pesach was a great *oved* and a remarkable *baal midos tovos*.



Some enemies of Reb Pesach became jealous of his exceptional *davening*, and used forces of impurity to cast bad thoughts into his mind. Reb Pesach couldn't understand how such lowly thoughts were coming to him, and he brought his dilemma before the Alter Rebbe.

Recognizing the cause of the thoughts, the Rebbe took an apple and stared at it for a while. He then handed it to Reb Pesach and told him, "Say that you don't want the apple." Reb Pesach understood that the Rebbe wanted him to despise the apple and so he told the Rebbe, "How can I say that, when in truth I do desire it?"

The Alter Rebbe took the apple back and stared at it again. He then asked Reb Pesach a second time to state his dislike for the apple, but Reb Pesach insisted that he still desired it. The Alter Rebbe took the apple a third time, and this time Reb Pesach said with confidence, "Now I truly don't desire it."

The Alter Rebbe instructed Reb Pesach to eat the apple, and he was healed from his negative thoughts.

(למען ידעו ע' 270)

Reb Pesach would relate: "Each year I collect all of the questions I have in Chasidus in order to present them to the Rebbe when I enter *yechidus*. Yet, every time, as I enter the Rebbe's room all of my questions are resolved."

Reb Groinem, the *mashpia* in Lubavitch, would explain why this happened: Lack of clarity in Torah is brought about by *klipa* hiding the truth. When Reb Pesach entered the Rebbe's room where *Elokus* is revealed, his *neschama* felt the *kedusha*. As a result, the *klipos* were shattered and all of the questions disappeared.

(למען ידעו ע' 269)

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Chassidus for Children

"Chassidus is for everyone," the Rebbe would always say, "even for small children."

Whenever the Rebbe would speak at Tzivos Hashem rallies, the *sichos* would always be designed for the young in their language. Nevertheless, they contained messages culled from the depths of Chassidic thought.

Reb Zusha Posner, *mashpia* of Tomchei Temimim Lod, relates:

"There was a teacher of nine and ten year olds boys who was in *yechidus*. The Rebbe told him that he should teach his pupils about *gadlus haBoreh* – the greatness of Hashem.

"The *melamed* was befuddled. 'Gadlus haBoreh? How will these children understand?!' he exclaimed.

"The Rebbe answered with a smile, 'If Hashem has managed to be *metzamtzem* (condense) Himself so much that we are able to realize His greatness, surely He could be *metzamtzem* Himself just a little bit more so that a child will comprehend.'"

