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פרשת תולדות תשע"ז

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RELIVING THE PAST (III)

Choosing a Story

The Rebbe taught: We should tell children stories from the *Tanach* and from *Chazal*, and true stories of *tzaddikim*, and not relate *bubeh maisehs*, as some people do. Every story should have a lesson of goodness and *kedusha*. Telling a story without a purpose is not the *Yiddische* way.

(שיח"ק תשמ"א ח"א ע' 246, תרי"מ ח"ל ע' 52)

When at *yechidus*, the Rebbe instructed Reb Abba Pliskin to *farbrenge* with the *temimim* at 770, that quietly-spoken *chossid* asked what he should talk about. In reply, the Rebbe spoke of the need to repeat *sippurim* of *chassidische Yidden*. The Rebbe emphasized that he meant stories specifically about *chassidim*, for when hearing *sippurei tzaddikim*, people can think that they are too far removed from them.

(היכל מנחם ח"ב ע' רכא)

Authentic Stories

When telling a story, the Friediker Rebbe was particular to record all the details, even those not directly related to the subject of the story. On one occasion he said, "The Alter Rebbe was very particular that a story should be told with exact details."

(אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע' סה, לקו"ד ח"א ק ע' א)

The *chossid* Reb Shlomo Yosef Zevin authored a rich collection of *chassidische* stories. Upon receiving the book, the Rebbe wrote him a lengthy reply about his responsibility to retell only reliable stories from trustworthy sources.

Particularly in our confused generation, the Rebbe pointed out, we must be exceedingly careful to transmit a story with precise details and not leave room for possible misunderstanding. Unfortunately, the circulation of inaccurate *chassidische* stories in recent times has led many to false conclusions about *Chassidus*. Such stories sometimes imply that the hero of the story conducted himself contrary to *halacha* or contrary to the principle of *lifnim mishuras hadin* – both of which are out

of the question – and usually, by correcting some detail, the difficulty falls away.

To highlight his points the Rebbe pointed out two such stories in Rabbi Zevin's book:

The first is a story about how the *tzaddik*, Reb Aharon Leib of Premishlan, was reprimanded by Reb Elimelech of Lyzhnsk for not wanting to learn Torah from Eliyahu HaNavi. Reb Aharon Leib excused himself by saying that he wished to toil in Torah. This implies, said the Rebbe, that Eliyahu came to the other *tzaddikim* to spare them effort, since they did *not* wish to toil in the study of Torah. The truth, the Rebbe explained, is that those *tzaddikim* also toiled; however, they saved their efforts for more advanced levels of study, beyond what Eliyahu HaNavi had taught them.

The second is a story of a man who, shortly after his father's passing, dreamt that his father ordered him to convert. When the dream repeated itself several times, he visited Reb Zusha of Hanipoli who instructed him to open the grave, since there was surely a *tzeilem* inside. They followed his instructions and found some coins with crosses that had mistakenly fallen inside during the burial. Now, concludes the Rebbe, since it is forbidden to open a grave, it must be that the coins were in the vicinity of the grave, and not in the grave itself.

(אג"ק ח"א ע' רסה, הסיפורים בסיפ"ח זוו" ע' 372, 118)

Every year on *Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, a *melava malka* would be held in support of the Crown Heights *gmach*. The custom developed that during the Rebbe's *Shabbos farbrengen* the head of that *gmach* would don a *shtreiml*, and before inviting all those present to the gathering, he would tell a story.

One year the *gabbai* Reb Shimon Goldman related a story about a *chossid* of Reb Nochum of Tchernobyl, who would always host the *tzaddik* when he visited his town. On one visit, the *tzaddik* sent him a message that he must bring him two thousand rubles, otherwise he would not stay at his home, and the *chossid* would even be forbidden to visit the Rebbe or participate in his *tefillas*. The *chossid* had no way of collecting such a sum, and so, to his terrible

dismay, he was unable to see his Rebbe throughout his entire stay in his town. A short while later a miracle occurred to him, and he received exactly two thousand rubles. When he presented it to the Rebbe he was told to keep it, and the Rebbe added, "You were destined to be wealthy. However, the only way you could receive it was if you would plead for it. That is why I caused you all that pain."

The Rebbe questioned the viability of this story: Would Reb Nochum Tchernobyl cause his *chossid* to endure such suffering for such a long time?! Why, even a coarse person (*grobber yung*) would experience unbearable pain watching everyone going to hear the *tzaddik's* *davening* while he is forced to remain outside!

It must be, concluded the Rebbe, that the *chossid* was merely held back from joining one *tefilah*, and shortly afterwards the *tzaddik* returned to stay at his home. This pain was surely enough to arouse the *chossid* to *daven* to *HaShem* for the wealth.

The Rebbe then added, "It should not come as a surprise that a story could become so mistaken. We often see how when a story is transmitted from one person to another, each narrator tries to embellish it, at times at the cost of ruining it all ..."

(תרי"מ תשמ"ז ח"ב ע' 501)

CONSIDER THIS!

- What harm is there in telling: an invented story? Or a true story that carries no lesson? Or an inaccurate story?
- When should stories of Rebbeim be told? And when are stories of *chassidim* preferable?



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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Working on Erev Shabbos

Until what time may one work on Friday afternoon?

- Besides the *mitzva* to prepare for Shabbos personally, Chazal instituted a prohibition to work for some time before Shabbos so that a person is free to prepare for and properly usher in Shabbos. Chazal say that one who works at that time will not see blessing from the work he does, and whatever money he earns will be lost elsewhere.¹ The prohibition applies equally to one whose Shabbos needs are provided for by others.²
- What time does this prohibition begin? The Gemara says that it begins from *mincha*,³ but *Rishonim* are divided whether this means *mincha gedola* – a halachic half-hour after *chatzot* (midday),⁴ or *mincha ktana* – two and a half *halachic* hours before sunset.⁵ The Alter Rebbe permits following the lenient opinion.⁶
- Even after that time, certain forms of work are permitted:
 - Work that may be done on *chol hamoed*, such as to prevent a loss to property (*davar ha'aveid*), for the benefit of the public (*I'tzorech rabim*), or for health needs.⁷
 - Minor work,⁸ such as writing a letter, fixing a button, and ironing clothing,⁹ may also be done (these may be done even for pay,¹⁰ provided that they are not one's occupation¹¹). Gardening is not permissible.
 - One who needs money to shop for Shabbos,¹² or one who borrowed money to shop for Shabbos and needs to pay it back may work for that money.¹³
 - *Mitzva* work, such as altering or making garments for Shabbos or preparing *tzitzis* or *tefillin*, is permissible when done for free.¹⁴
 - Haircutting is obviously for Shabbos and is therefore permitted;¹⁵ it's also a *mitzva* to cut long hair before Shabbos.¹⁶
 - One may request a non-Jew to do work.¹⁷
 - Sales and business weren't included in the prohibition according to the Alter Rebbe, rather only active *melachos*. Yet, one should close his business an hour before *shkiah* so that he doesn't mistakenly run into *chilul Shabbos R"L*.¹⁸

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. שוע"ר סי' רנ"א ס"א. | 10. מושג"ב סי' רנ"א סק"ב. |
| 2. שם ס"ג. | 11. שש"כ שם סל"ח. |
| 3. פסחים נ' ע"ב. | 12. שוע"ר שם ס"ה. |
| 4. טור סי' רנ"א. | 13. בן איש חי פרשת לך לך ס"כ. |
| 5. רש"י פסחים נ' ע"ב. | 14. שוע"ר שם ס"ג. |
| 6. שוע"ר סי' רנ"א ס"ב. | 15. שוע"ר שם ס"ד. |
| 7. שוע"ר שם ס"ה. | 16. ראה שוע"ר סי' ר"ס ס"א. |
| 8. שש"כ ח"ב פמ"ב הע' קל"ג. | 17. פשוט (שהרי אינו צריך להתכונן לשבת). |
| 9. שוע"ר שם ס"ג. וראה פסק"ת סי' רנ"א | 18. שוע"ר שם ס"ג, וס' רנ"ו ס"א. וראה קו"א |
| הע' 14 שגיוהוץ הרבה בגדים שאינה לצורך | שם ליתר פרטים. |
- שבת אסור.

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OUR HEROES

Reb Chatzkel Droyer

Reb Yechezkel of Druyeh, known as Reb Chatzkel Droyer, was a great *chossid* of the Alter Rebbe. He was already an older man when he came to the Alter Rebbe and the Alter Rebbe said that it was difficult getting through to him, but he was successful. He became a profound *maskil* in *Chassidus* and would become oblivious to everything around him during his in-depth study and contemplation. He did not become a *chossid* of the Mitteler Rebbe but did travel to the Tzemach Tzedek several times.



The Rebbe related:

As was the custom under the leadership of the Tzemach Tzedek, all Pesach guests received Seder provisions from the Rebbe's kitchen a few days before Yom Tov. One Pesach, Reb Yechezkel visited Lubavitch, and upon receiving his package of provisions he promptly ate all of it. When Erev Pesach came, he went to the Rebbe's court and complained that he did not have food for the Seder. He was told that he was sent a package with everything he needed. He thought for a moment and said "Ah... that? I ate it! That was amazing! It helped me in my *avodah* and in the study of *Chassidus*." The Rebbe invited him to his own Seder.

The Rebbe elaborated on this saying that this *chossid* was no '*metzius*' (existence) for himself, his totality was the service of Hashem. Thus, when he received a package from the Rebbe he understood that this was obviously something to use now for the service of Hashem.

Once, Reb Yechezkel spent Rosh Hashana with the Tzemach Tzedek. The Rebbe entered the shul for *davening*, was called up for *maftir*, blew the Shofar with tremendous fervor, and remained in shul for *musaf*. During all this, Reb Yechezkel stood lost in thought. When he awoke, he asked when the Rebbe would be coming in for *tekios*...

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Heartiness, Simplicity and Innocence

The sun was blazing as the Rebbe walked to the library on *Chag Hashovuos* 5738 (1978). A small child, thinking that this was his father, ran up to the Rebbe. He held onto the Rebbe's hand, and wiped the sweat from his forehead with the Rebbe's *kapata*.

Aghast bystanders scolded the child's mother for allowing this to happen. Remorsefully, she sat down after *yom tov* to pen a letter of apology, and gave it in to the Rebbe.

On *Motzoei Shabbos Parshas Pinchas* the mother received her response. The Rebbe began by marking her apology letter with a question mark and an exclamation point.

Then the Rebbe wrote: "Quite the contrary, it gave me great pleasure: The heartiness, simplicity and innocence of a child are immeasurable. If only the adults would have something of it."



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