

The Weekly Farbrengens


MERKAZ ANASH
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TOILING IN TORAH (II)

TOILING FOR EVERYONE

When the Mezritcher Maggid first traveled to see the Baal Shem Tov, he was already a great *gaon* in Torah and advanced in *avoda*; he lacked only the new *avoda* of *Chassidus*. When he entered the *tzaddik's* room, the Baal Shem Tov asked him to explain a certain passage in *Eitz Chaim* of the *AriZal*, one of the deepest *seforim* in Torah. The Maggid explained the meaning, but the Baal Shem Tov was not satisfied. Looking again, the Maggid insisted that this was indeed the *pshat*, and asked that if the Baal Shem Tov thought otherwise, he kindly explain it to him.

The Baal Shem Tov then began learning aloud the words of *Eitz Chaim* with diligence and *hislahavus*. When he mentioned the names of *malochim*, they were actually seen in the room, and the entire house was lit up. The Baal Shem Tov later explained that although the Maggid knew the simple meaning of the words, because he had not learned it with all of his capacity, his learning had been lacking.

(תר"מ חכ"ח ע' 243)

When the Rebbe Maharash was *bar-mitzva* age, he was once called in by his father, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, to be tested on *Mesechta Menachos*, which he was then learning. After asking a number of questions, and receiving satisfactory responses, the *Tzemach Tzedek* pointed to a specific *sugya* and asked his son if he had toiled to understand it. The Rebbe Maharash, who had a phenomenal mind, answered that he had not toiled at all, for he had understood everything without effort. The *Tzemach Tzedek* sighed and countered, "But how can one learn without toiling?"

Hearing this, the Rebbe Maharash decided to begin putting effort in his learning, and worked so extremely hard that blood stains began to appear on his forehead. Seeing this, the *Tzemach Tzedek* called him in and directed him how to continue his learning. Later the Rebbe Maharash recalled, "From then on, I would toil in learning with the precisely correct measure of effort, just as one sets a clock..."

(רשימות היומן על ש"ז בשילוב תר"מ ח"ה ע' 49)

FOR ITS OWN SAKE

Although the *AriZal* had a phenomenal mind and no worldly worries, for his father-in-law supported him, he would toil intensely when learning Torah,

even when the concept at hand was not particularly profound. His *talmid*, Reb Chaim Vital, described this as follows: "I saw my Rebbe, when involved with *halacha*, strengthen himself like a lion, to the point of sweating. I asked him why he put in so much effort, and he told me that the purpose of learning something in depth is to break the *kelipos*, which are the difficulties that come up regarding the *halachos* being learned."

The Rebbe noted: "The *kelipos* that the *AriZal* dealt with were obviously not very strong; nevertheless, in order to break them, he toiled greatly when learning Torah. From this we can understand the importance for all Yidden, who are not at his level, to toil in Torah."

(שער המצוות פ' ואתחנן, התוועדויות תשמ"ג ח"ב ע' 869)

CONSIDER

Is toiling in Torah a means to a better understanding or is it an end for itself?

When the Alter Rebbe was five years old, the gates of Torah opened for him, and he easily grasped even the most difficult matters. He later related to his grandson, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, "This caused me great distress, since I was unable to toil in Torah. Only at the age of fifteen, when my purpose in this world was revealed to me, was I calmed."

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 131)

When the Mittlerer Rebbe delivered a *maamar* of *Chassidus*, he would wear a *kolok*, a type of *shtreiml* with a pointed centerpiece. Unlike his father, the Alter Rebbe, while speaking he would sit in one place and not move about, yet even so, he would perspire immensely from great concentration, to the point that perspiration would drip from the point of his *shtreiml*.

(שיחור"ק תשמ"א ח"א ע' 98)

CHOOSING TO TOIL

Once the Alter Rebbe called the *Tzemach Tzedek*

and offered to grant him a gift – a blessing for an understanding of Torah. The *Tzemach Tzedek* declined the offer, saying that he wanted to acquire Torah through toil. He later regretted this, for whatever levels of Torah he could have received as a gift from the Alter Rebbe, there would always be additional levels to toil for.

(לקו"ש חט"ו ע' 81)

Two businessmen with a financial dispute traveled to the city of the *gaon*, Reb Meshulam Igra, to ask that he act as their arbitrator. Reb Meshulam heard them out and asked that they return in a few days, during which he would look into the matter.

However, since they felt they needed an immediate reply, they decided to return home and ask their local *rov* to help them. After hearing their claims he stepped into his study, and within a few minutes returned with a response that satisfied them both. Greatly impressed, they told their townsmen how within a few minutes, their own *rov* had supplied a fine solution to a complicated halachic issue that even the great *gaon*, Reb Meshulam Igra, had been unable to supply.

Some time later, finding themselves in Reb Meshulam's town, they decided to ask him what he would have *parkened* regarding their past dilemma. Surprised that his reply was exactly the same, they told him how their *rov* had given this verdict after only a few minutes. Amazed, Reb Meshulam exclaimed that if there was such a great *gaon* alive, he wanted to learn Torah from him.

He made the journey and asked the *rov* to tell him whether he had reached the conclusion himself or if someone had helped him. The *rov* replied, "When those two men came and presented their problem, I realized that I did not know the answer, so I went into my room and cried and *davened* to *HaShem*. I asked that He open my eyes and enable me to give a correct reply according to Torah, thus preventing a *chillul HaShem* [thinking that their *Rov* is insufficiently learned if he cannot resolve their issue]. I merited to receive clarity from *HaShem* and was able to immediately find the correct answer."

Hearing this, Reb Meshulam responded, "I, too, know how to *daven* and cry. Nevertheless, halachic conclusions should be reached by *toiling* in Torah..."

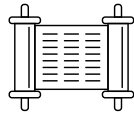
(היא שיחת')

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KASHERING BRACES

What is the proper method to clean and *kasher* my mouth for Pesach?

Heat facilitates a transmission of taste from food to utensil and vice versa. An absorbed taste is generally considered stale (*pagum*) after 24 hours and *b'dieved* won't prohibit food subsequently cooked in the utensil (if it isn't sharp food). Some hold that the taste of *chametz* prohibits on Pesach even after 24 hours, and the custom is to follow this view.¹

Poskim debate whether the heat of a *kli sheni*, transferred from the original cooking utensil, can facilitate a transmission of taste. *L'hatchila* we are stringent with a *kli sheni*, and by Pesach even a *kli shlishi* and further, yet in times of great need it is permitted *b'dieved* if 24 hours passed between the original transmission and the second use.²

Some *poskim* hold that a utensil used primarily for cold food (e.g. a cup) and was sometimes used for hot, need not be *kashered* and it's enough to clean it well. The custom is to be stringent, yet if it was used with hot food on Pesach without *kashering*, the food is permissible *b'dieved* if it was cleaned properly.³

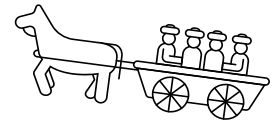
Teeth don't become prohibited from absorption of *chametz* before Pesach since they are part of the human body,⁴ (of course, between the teeth must be thoroughly cleaned⁵). However, fillings, braces or dentures aren't part of the body, and some are concerned they may have absorbed hot *chametz* (above *yad soledes bo*) from a *kli sheni* or *shlishi*. Moreover, some hold that a hot solid food - slice of pizza - is always considered like a *kli rishon*.⁶

Others write that fillings are made from a strong material that doesn't absorb. Moreover, several of the above points can be combined to allow a lenient approach: (1) The basic *halacha* that taste doesn't prohibit *b'dieved* after 24 hours; (2) Most of the foods one ate weren't *yad soledes*; (3) The lenient view regarding an absorption in *kli sheni* including solids. This is widely accepted year-round between *milchigs* and *fleishigs*.⁷

In practice, fillings or braces needn't be *kashered*, though one must stop eating hot *chametz* 24 hours before the *zman* so that any taste in them should be *pagum*. Some have a *hiddur* for Pesach to *kasher* them somewhat by drinking a hot drink (above 113° F, or at least slightly hotter than one usually drinks) before the *zman*.⁸ Dentures should be *kashered* by pouring from a *kli rishon*, but if they might get damaged, they should be placed into a *kli sheni*.⁹

1. שו"ע א"ח סי' תמ"ז ס"ח. וראה סי' תל"א ס"ג שהעיקר שאינו בן ימנו מותר.
2. ראה שו"ע א"ח סי' תנ"א ס"ג וס"ד.
3. ראה שם ס"ג.
4. ראה פרמ"ג סי' תמ"ז א"א סק"מ, וראה שו"ת בית יצחק יו"ד ח"א סי' מ"ג.
5. ראה מעשה נורא בבא"ח פ"ר צו אות ח'.
6. ש"ך יו"ד סי' ק"ה סק"ח (וראה שבת כהלכה פ"א סנ"ז וביאורים סק"א להרחבה בנידון).
7. אמנם ידוע הנהגת רבותינו לימנע משיניים
8. תובתוב בכלל, ראה ימי מלך ח"א ע' 256, וראה המסופר על אדמו"ר הרשב"ב בנשיאי חב"ד ובני דורם ע' 98.
9. היות שבלע בכלי שני די לו בחום יס"ב. אבל להעיר שלחומרא יס"ב הוא מעל 160" (ראה בכ"ז שו"ע יו"ד סי' תנ"ב ס"ג).
9. ראה פסק"ת סי' תנ"א סק"ג והערה 113 שיש נזהרים לא לאכול מאכלים חמים כל ימי הפסח. ויש נזהרים גם בדבר חריף, אבל בפשוט אין לשייגים דין סכין.

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



REB CHAIM TZANZER

Reb Chaim Halbershtam of Tzanz was a well-known *posek* and Chassidische Rebbe, and is known for his work called "Divrei Chaim". He learned under Reb Naftali of Ropshitz and Reb Tzvi Hirsh of Ziditshov. As Rebbe, thousands of chassidim swarmed to him, and today many chassidic dynasties trace their lineage to him. Reb Chaim passed away on the 25th of Nissan תרל"ו (1876).

When Reb Chaim was a child of four years, he learned of the Rambam's *Sefer Hamitzvos*, a complete list of 613 *Mitzvos*. Reb Chaim learned this list, committing it to memory. When asked why, he responded, "A soldier in the czar's army needs to know the rules of the army. How could he be a good soldier without knowing the rules? We are soldiers in Hashem's army and we must know all the rules."³

During his leadership, new styles of women's clothing reached Galicia and some of the wives of the chassidim adopted the new fashion. This embittered Reb Chaim greatly.

At his *tish*, Reb Chaim discussed Yitzchok Avinu's wanting to give his *brochos* to Eisav. "Why would the *tzaddik* want to do this?" he asked.

He explained that Yitzchok sensed that Eisav had the potential to be part of the great holiness of the Avos, and wished to reveal this with his *brochos*. When "Eisav" entered the room to receive

the *brochos*, Yitzchok felt the *kedusha* coming in and rejoiced in thinking that his wish was accomplished. However, Yitzchok felt that his son's clothing still contained characteristics of "Eisav." "The voice is the voice of Yaakov" - inside is Yaakov; but outside, the clothing, is still Eisav. This means there is still work to do.

Reb Chaim concluded that if one dresses in a *goyishe* manner, even though it is an external matter, it shows that they still have work to do on themselves.

While reciting *Krias Shema*, overcome with love for Hashem, Reb Chaim would pound his foot on the floor. As time went on, his foot become terribly bruised and sore leaving Reb Chaim no choice but to visit a doctor. Hearing the full story, the doctor inquired, "I understand that you must bang your foot, but why don't you switch off between your feet?"

"Doctor, doctor," he replied with a smile, "If I was able to choose which foot to bang with, then I wouldn't bang at all..."

Reb Chaim would sleep at night for a very short time. His family members were concerned about this practice. Reb Chaim explained himself: "When I was younger people said that I had a quick head; that which took others an hour to learn took me a few minutes. It is the same with sleeping. I sleep the full amount, I just do it faster."

A Moment with The Rebbe



GOOD BUSINESS

Mrs. Sara Simon of New Jersey felt bad that her son's *yeshiva* studies had withheld him from a secular education. During the summer break, she expressed her feelings to the Rebbe in a letter.

The Rebbe responded in English, "It is often necessary to sacrifice one thing for another, inasmuch as it is impossible to have both. Therefore, you should feel very happy that your son made the proper choice, for he has avoided a path

of pitfalls, danger and conflicts...
"Granted that if he had the formal secular education, which you mention, he might have certain advantages, but in view of what he would have lost thereby..."

"In business, letting a highly profitable deal slip by while going after a small deal is not good business!"

(See full letter in *Beitelman Teshura*, Tammuz 5759)