

## TOTALLY INVOLVED (II)

### Connected Above

The chossid Reb Yankel Kaidaner related: "While traveling with the Mitteler Rebbe on one of his journeys, we stopped over in a town called Krislavch. On our second night there, the Rebbe delivered an incredible *maamar*, the like of which none of the chassidim had ever heard. We *chazered* it and then went off to eat. After the meal, the Rebbe's *meshares* rushed over and told me that this would be a good opportunity to gaze at the Rebbe's face. Knowing how the Rebbe in his humility did not like this, I hesitated, but the *meshares* reassured me, "Don't worry: he won't even see you!"

"I followed the *meshares* to the Rebbe's room, and when he opened the door, I saw the Rebbe standing in the center of the room, motionless, his face flaming and his eyes wide open. Shocked, I jumped back, but the *meshares* grabbed my sleeve and said aloud, "You have nothing to fear: he is now in the *ruchniyus/dike* worlds and won't hear or see anything."

"How do you know?" I questioned, knowing him to be a simple man.

"This is not first time that I've seen him this way," he replied.

"I stood at the doorway, looking to make out any movement, but the Mitteler Rebbe remained still, utterly unaware of the people walking about the house. I stood there from ten o'clock at night until three in the morning, when the *meshares* had the table set for the Rebbe to eat, as he had not eaten the entire day. A helper then approached the Rebbe with a *kvort* of water so that he could wash his hands, but the Rebbe did not move. The *meshares* tugged the Rebbe's sleeve and asked him to wash, but the Rebbe turned away and walked to a wall, standing immobile as before. At that point, since I could no longer see his face, I left for the night.

"The following day, the *meshares* told me that the Rebbe had continued to stand that way until four o'clock, and then, visibly filled with *simcha*, had sat down at the table of his own accord. The Rebbe later revealed that during the previous day's *maamar*, his father, the Alter Rebbe, had come to him, together with the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid, and they had

praised the *maamar* tremendously. After he had delivered it, he had repeated it for the Alter Rebbe, who revealed to him deep secrets of the Torah.

"This was what had occurred while he stood motionless the previous night, and this was the cause of his unusual *simcha*."

(סיפורים נוראים ע' לז')

### Not Earthbound

The Friediker Rebbe related: "In Vienna, my father and I stayed in adjacent rooms with an open door in between. It was around five o'clock in the afternoon when my father gave me a certain manuscript to copy while he sat down on the sofa. I approached him a number of times and saw that he was sitting motionless with his eyes open. He sat this way until 3:45 in the morning! He then woke up, so to speak, took out his watch and stared at it in utter disbelief, walked over to the window, and said, 'It seems as if it's already nightfall. Time to *daven Maariv!*' By responding to his questions about the time and the place, I revealed to him that almost the entire night had already passed. I even had to remind him which day we were in, as he was completely removed from this world..."

"The next day I found him writing a lofty concept in *Chassidus* in his notebook, which was apparently what he had been engrossed in the night before." This was perhaps the basis of *Hemshech Ayin-Beis*.

(רשימת היומן ע' רי, לקו"ש חכ"ז ע' 275)

Commenting on the above episode, the Rebbe said that it is possible, even in our times, for a person to reach some degree of *klos hanefesh*. When one delves deeply into something, he can reach a point at which he does not notice what is happening around him. The Rebbe then related the following:

Once the Mozhitzer Rebbe fell ill and traveled to Berlin to visit the doctors there. The doctors said that he was in need of an operation, but they were afraid that in his weak state he would not be able to handle the pain. Hearing this, the Mozhitzer Rebbe suggested that they allow him to sing a *niggun* and wait until he was fully absorbed in it, and then operate on him,

for he would feel nothing. They did as he said, and everything went smoothly.

(לקו"ש חכ"ז ע' 275)

### Connected to Torah

The Rebbe would often say that every Yid can reach "*Toraso umnaso*" (his Torah is his occupation) by dedicating himself completely to learning during the times that he learns. On one occasion the Rebbe said that when one sees Torah as his *primary* occupation, even if the world "turns over" he will not stop his learning. Doing so makes the Yid into a "Beis Chabad," a permanent vessel for Torah.

On another occasion the Rebbe explained that by appreciating the value of Torah learning a person will become so attached to Torah that he will not even *notice* his surroundings. This is accomplished by contemplating how Torah learning is more precious than the *Kohen Gadol* in the *Kodesh Hakodoshim* on *Yom Kippur*.

(לקו"ש כ"ה ע' 305, שיח"ו ק"תש"מ ח"ב ע' 296)

Two chassidim once traveled to the city in order to purchase merchandise for their respective shops. Having arrived and having entered the store, one of them reached into his pocket to remove the list of merchandise for which he had come, but instead, he accidentally took out a *maamar Chassidus* and of course began to learn from it. The other chossid, having noticed that his friend was holding a *maamar*, came over, and he too was soon peering intently at the paper that his friend was holding.

So steeped were they in the *maamar* that they completely forgot where they were and that they had come to buy merchandise. They remained immersed in their learning until the storeowner wanted to close up and was forced to drag them outside, where they stood and continued learning the *maamar*.

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' רלח)

### CONSIDER THIS!

- Why are these individuals being praised for their absentmindedness? Should they be mimicked?
- What is there to be gained by being so absorbed in learning? Can't one accomplish the same results without losing oneself?

## Offering Empty Favors

Is it permissible to offer a favor to someone who will positively turn it down, just to make them feel good?

- It is forbidden *midrabonan*<sup>1</sup> to deceive someone even if there is no financial loss (*gneivas daas*). For example: One may not sell a *goy treif* meat, telling him that it is *kosher*. Although there is no practical difference to the *goy*, it is nevertheless *gneivas daas* and forbidden<sup>2</sup>.
- One may also not lead someone to think that he did him a favor when he did not, causing himself to receive undeserved feelings of gratitude. For example<sup>3</sup>: Expensive wine does not last long once it has been opened. If Reuven plans on opening such a bottle for a dinner, and is visited during the day by a guest, he may only open the bottle if he tells the guest of the dinner plans, since otherwise the guest will think that he opened it in his honor.
- Similarly, one may not deceive someone into thinking that he is willing to do a favor for him, if he is not. For example<sup>4</sup>: Reuven knows that Shimon does not accept invitations for meals. Reuven may not invite Shimon time and again to join him, if his intention is solely that Shimon should think good of him.
- However, if Reuven is indeed interested in doing the favor it is not considered *gneivas daas*. For example, if the guest is a close friend of Reuven and he would have actually opened the wine just for him, he need not mention the dinner. In this case, he is not misleading since he would have done it regardless.
- Likewise, if Reuven is genuinely willing to host Shimon, he may offer the favor even though he knows that Shimon will decline. In this situation, he is expressing a genuine desire to host his friend and is not being misleading. However, if Reuven is not actually able to host Shimon (e.g. he is leaving town for Shabbos), he may not invite Shimon just to express his goodwill. The fact that he would be happy to host him on *another* Shabbos does not permit him to deceive him now.
- It is important to note, only urging someone to accept an invitation knowing he will decline is prohibited. However, extending an invitation as a gesture of honor and recognition is permissible. Others, who may not know that he does not accept invitations, may lose some respect for the person, seeing that nobody extends him invitations.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, when one occasionally invites a friend who doesn't accept invitations, his intent is not to deceive but rather to give honor and recognition, and is not causing himself to receive undeserved gratitude, as gratitude for showing recognition and causing him not to be embarrassed is actually deserved.
- Poskim write<sup>6</sup> that it is permissible to deceive one's antagonist into thinking that he did a favor for him in order to make peace. This is based on the rule that it is a *mitzvah* to alter one's words for the sake of peace.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

1. כן פסק אדה"ז בחו"מ הל' אונאה וגניבת דעת סי"ב, והוא כדעת הסמ"ק, ודלא כדעת עוד הרבה ראשונים שהאיסור הוא מה"ת. מובן שאם גורם הפסד ממון אז הוא איסורו מה"ת כמ"ש שם סי"א.  
 2. שם.  
 3. ראה כנסת הגדולה חו"מ סי' רכח ס"ז בשם דמשק אליעזר.  
 4. ראה שם סי"ד.  
 5. ראה סמ"ע סי' רכח סק"ח, וש"ע אדה"ז שם.  
 6. ראה כנסת הגדולה חו"מ סי' רכח ס"ז בשם דמשק אליעזר.

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

לזכות הילדה לאה גבריאלה תחי'

שיגדלוהו הור' לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

נדבת הרה"ת ישראל דוד ורעייתו דבורה מוסיא שיחיו רודאלף

לזכות הרה"ת שניאור זלמן משה שי' בן ר' ישראל ע"ה

ורעייתו מרת פרוימא איטא ומשפחתם שיחיו דריזון

להצלחה רבה ומופלגה בטוב הנראה והנגלה

בכל אשר יפנו בגשמייות וברוחניות

## OUR HEROES

### Reb Chaim Ber Vilenski



Reb Yitzchak Chaim Dovber HaLevi Vilenski was known as a great *maskil* and *oved* and was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. He lived in Kremenchug where he was known as one of the "Kremenchuger Beralach" (A number of great chassidim in Kremenchug were named Dov or Berel; Reb Berel Moshe's, Reb Dov Masaiov, and others. The Frierdiker Rebbe records them all as having powerful minds, great hearts, which would *daven* long with exuberance of the heart and a sweet voice, and would all publicly recite *Chassidus*.) Though he lost two wives and a son, he was always a source of inspiration and joy.



The Frierdiker Rebbe describes the first time he met Reb Chaim Ber:

"One day I returned from *cheder* to eat lunch in my home. It was a hot summer day, and when I came to the *chatzer* (yard), Reb Chaim Ber asked me how to get to the yard behind my father's home. I showed him the entrance next to the well, and I followed to see what he was going to do in the garden. Near the entrance to the garden there were a few benches. Reb Chaim Ber took off his hat and sat there. And I went home.

"At seven o'clock, I came home with my friends and we went to play in the garden. How surprised I was to see Reb Chaim Ber sitting in the same position as five hours earlier. My young mind just could not grasp how a person could sit for five hours and think. I have seen people sitting and learning for hours on end, but never sitting and thinking for so long..."



Reb Chaim Ber despised publicity and would go to great lengths to avoid it. At *farbrengens* he would usually sit quietly and listen to others speak, though he was the focus of their attention. At *chazara* of the *ma'amar* as well, he would listen and not comment.

When he got married in Lubavitch, he was insistent that only the required *minyán* of people should attend. Even in business Reb Chaim Ber did not want to be popular, though he knew that he lost out as a result.

When his son was Bar Mitzvah age, the boy's *melamed* claimed that it was time for the boy to begin learning Poskim. Reb Chaim Ber argued that it wasn't appropriate that a thirteen year old boy should be able to *pasken halacha* (this would leave him feeling haughty). He therefore set up a system of learning where the boy would learn Poskim in the context of Gemara, and would thus not know how to *pasken*.

לזכות הילד מנחם מענדל ווילשינסקי שי' שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### The Love Reflects Back

Reb Shmuel Gurevitch of Lyon, France, relates:

When we were in yeshiva in Brunoy, we were active in being *mekarev* many youth, under the direction of our *Mashpia* Reb Nissan. Some of the youth eventually joined the yeshiva.

There was one bochur, a *ba'al teshuvah*, who was very inspired by everything he saw and learned. However, he was bothered by one thing. He felt that the *bochurim's* love and respect for the Rebbe was too much; 'a little bit overdone,' he would say.

We tried to explain the greatness of the Rebbe, and the concept of *hiskashrus*. He couldn't grasp it. Finally, he decided to ask the Rebbe himself. Indeed, when he was next in *yechidus*, he posed his question.

The Rebbe smiled, and answered:

"It's simple. I love them. It is only natural, like a face that is reflected in water, that they reciprocate the love..."

לזכות מנחם מענדל הכהן בן חוה לאריכות ימים ושנים טובות בגו"ר