



# THE PATH TO HAPPINESS (1)

## Delight in a Mitzva

The AriZal once told his *talmid*, Reb Chayim Vital, that the reason he merited *Ruach HaKodesh* and the revelation of Eliyahu HaNavi was his great joy in fulfilling *mitzvos*. In this the Rebbe saw a lesson for every individual – that through joy in fulfilling *mitzvos*, one can reach great heights.

(ס' חרדים בהקדמה, שמחה ובטחון בה')

The Torah warns that as a result of not serving *HaShem* with *simcha*, the Yidden will have to serve their enemies. The Alter Rebbe explains that these "enemies" are the *mekatregim*, the accusatory voices in the *Beis-Din shel Maala* that threaten a Yid in the areas of *parnasa*, health and children. Those voices are silenced when he *davens* with the exuberance and *simcha* that come from recognizing *HaShem*.

The Alter Rebbe would instruct people with troubles to *daven* with song and *simcha*, for doing so sweetens the *dinim*, the Heavenly verdicts that hang over a person, and eliminates all the adversaries in the *Beis-Din shel Maala*. The Mittlerer Rebbe noted that this approach has been tried and tested.

The Mittlerer Rebbe adds that even those people who are deeply immersed in meditation on *Chassidus* while they *daven* should say the words aloud, together with song, for this brings *simcha*. In addition, one ought to actually experience *simcha shel mitzva*, to the extent that when putting on *tallis* and *tefillin* or giving *tzedaka*, one should feel excitement in his heart that he is able to cause pleasure to his Creator. One should ignore those who mock him in this, and whose only sources of enjoyment are physical pleasures.

(אג"ק אדהאמ"צ ע' רס"ה)

A chossid once complained to the Alter Rebbe that his mind was being assailed by foreign thoughts. The Alter Rebbe told him, "They gather in empty space!" (This means that such thoughts come when the mind is not filled with thoughts of Torah and *mitzvos*.)

The Rebbe commented that the same is true of *simcha*: if a person does not have joy in fulfilling

*mitzvos*, his happiness will be expressed in other things...

(תו"מ חל"ו ע' 221)

In the days of the Baal Shem Tov there lived a chossid in the village of Lubavitch who was nicknamed Reb Yisroel *der Lebediker* ("Yisroel the lively one"). Even at the age of ninety, he would still *daven* and learn *Tanach* and *Mishnayos* with the excitement and energy of a young man. He used to say: "A *mitzva* without *kavana* is like a body without a *neshama*. The *kavana* must be that the *mitzva* comes from the commander, *HaShem*, Who *shleps* us out of all sorts of mud. So if I, Yisroel, who am nothing, have been given the *zechus* of fulfilling the command of *HaShem*, of course I should jump and dance out of absolute joy!"

(לקוטי דיבורים חלק א' ע' 228)

## True Simcha

The Rambam writes that when a person eats and drinks and rejoices on *Yom-Tov*, he should not be drawn into drinking and frivolity, and claim that by doing so he is fulfilling the *mitzva* of *simcha* more fully, for this is not *simcha*, just unbridled foolishness. We are commanded to have real *simcha*, which always involves *avodas HaShem* – and this cannot be carried out when one is wild or drunk.

(רמב"ם הל' יו"ט פ"ו ה"כ)

When the chassidim of Reb Naftali of Ropshitz *davened*, the holy *tzaddik* would walk up and down the *beis midrash*, scrutinizing each one. One morning, after *davening*, he commented, "Today, I saw Reb Tzvi the *shammes* dancing with great ecstasy. He can dance! And it is not in vain, for he will grow into a mighty tree under which many great men will find shelter. But quite in contrast to him, I saw another man dancing (and he named him). What a pity to wear out a good pair of shoes on dancing of that sort...!"

(סיפורי חסידים זיין מועדים ע' 188)

One night on *Chol HaMoed*, the *talmidim* of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshiva in Dokshyitz arrived at the *sukka* of Reb Yehoshua Lein to *farbreng*

and rejoice in *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*. The chossid told them, "What kind of *simcha* can one possibly have without studying beforehand the *maamar* that begins *U'She'avtem* (which explains the reason for the joy)?"

The *bochurim* went off to bring a few copies of *Likkutei Torah* from their homes and then studied that *maamar* for over an hour. Only then did they rejoice, dancing till late at night.

(לקוטי סיפורים פערלאוו ע' ש"ה)

## The Joy of Reunion

At the beginning of the Alter Rebbe's *nesius*, he discontinued the practice of his chassidim to arouse *atzvus* (sadness) within themselves over their wrongdoings. The chassidim thought they were also to do away with *merirus* (bitterness over *aveiros*) and were therefore constantly in a state of *simcha*. Later, the Alter Rebbe wrote in *Tanya* that there is a benefit to be gained from feelings of bitterness over *aveiros*, for in fact it serves as a necessary prerequisite for joy. The chassidim then understood that it was only melancholy that the Alter Rebbe had negated.

The Rebbe once said that in our times we no longer have the emotional strength to do *teshuva* with bitterness; rather, we must do *teshuva* with *simcha*. The Rebbe went further and explained that in fact, *teshuva* itself is a great reason for *simcha* – for there can be no greater joy than finding oneself and being reunited with our Father, like a wandering prince who finally comes home, after a long separation, to his father, the king.

(סה"ש תש"א ע' מוה, תו"מ תשמ"ו ח"א ע' 667, תו"מ תשמ"ג ח"א ע' 90)

## CONSIDER THIS!

- Is the difference between worldly excitement and *simcha shel mitzva* in the object of the joy, or in the joy itself?
- Why is *merirus* not a contradiction to joy? Is the *teshuva* of joy less earnest than *teshuva* of *merirus*?

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# A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

## Grabbing a Good Deal

Reuven wants to sell his house quickly and is selling it for a very low price. Shimon agrees with Reuven to buy it. Levi wants the house as well, and is ready to pay more than Shimon, as it will still be a good deal. Is Levi allowed to buy the house?

In the previous issue we discussed the *issur* of “*oni hamehapech becharoro*” – buying something that someone else has already made up to buy and set a price with the seller. There is a *machloikes* amongst the *Rishonim* whether this *issur* applies to an object that is *hefker* (free): Rashi<sup>1</sup> holds that if someone is taking action<sup>2</sup> to grab something that is *hefker* it is forbidden to take it before him. Rabbeinu Tam<sup>3</sup> however argues that the prohibition only applies to objects for sale, since they can be purchased elsewhere. By contrast, a free item is not always available, and one cannot be expected to pass this opportunity. As such, no *issur* applies to *hefker*.

*Rishonim*<sup>4</sup> add another difference between Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam: According to Rashi the *issur* is only to grab something ahead of a poor man, however, if the person looking into the item is well-off one need not accord him this special right. According to Rabbeinu Tam there are no need for distinctions, as no *issur* applies.

The underlying logic of these arguments is the following: According to Rabbeinu Tam, the *halacha* considers the invested time and effort, and will protect one who invested time and effort to investigate an item. Therefore, (a) the *issur* applies equally whether the one trying to buy is poor or rich; (b) the *issur* applies only when similar items are available elsewhere, and does not apply to *hefker*.<sup>5</sup> According to Rashi, the *halacha* is to help the one interested in acquiring the object. Therefore, (a) the *halacha* applies equally to a sale and *hefker*; (b) the *issur* applies only to a poor man whom we are obligated to help, since the rich man can always buy the object elsewhere. Even according to Rashi, items that are difficult to purchase at any price, such as real estate, may not be grabbed even from a wealthy buyer, since we cannot tell the wealthy buyer to buy a similar property elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

The *halacha*<sup>7</sup> follows Rabbeinu Tam, and this *din* only applies to a sale, with no difference between the poor or rich.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, the Alter Rebbe writes that it is appropriate for a *ba'al nefesh* to be stringent with a *hefker* item as well. Since the added stringency follows Rashi's opinion, the stringency only applies to a poor person trying to acquire a *hefker* object, or if the object is rare and cannot be easily found elsewhere. An item being sold at a very cheap price is considered like an object of *hefker* since it is an unmatched opportunity.<sup>9</sup>

Based on the above, the *halacha* in our case would be as following: According to *halacha*, Levi may jump ahead and buy the house since the price is unusually cheap. However, a *baal nefesh* should not jump ahead of Shimon's purchasing the house. This is regardless if Shimon is poor or rich, since suitable real estate is not readily available.

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

והשגת גבול ס"י. וכתבו האחרונים ש"ה גם דעת המחבר כדמוכח מס"ב שם - ראה פתחי תשובה שם סק"ה.  
8. ומ"ש הרמ"א שם דהאיסור הוא דוקא בעני, היינו דוקא במציאה שהאיסור הוא רק לדעת רש"י - כן משמע בסמ"ע שם סק"ו, וכן משמע מל' אדה"ז שם עש"ה. והדברים מובארים היטב בדברי ר"מ אריק בספרו מנחת פסים על השו"ע שם ע"ש.  
9. רמ"א ושו"ע אדה"ז שם. ודלא כהש"ך סק"ג שם.

1. קידושין נט ע"א ד"ה עני המהפך.  
2. ראה שו"ת אמרי יושר ח"ב סי' עב (ועד"ז כתבו עוד פוסקים) דדיו עני המהפך בחררה במציאה הוא דוקא כשהעני עשה מעשה דומיא דפסיק דמים דמכר.  
3. שם ד"ה עני המהפך.  
4. ראה ר"ן קידושין דף כד ע"א לדפי ה"ר"ף ד"ה ודאמרינן עני.  
5. ראה גם כסף קדשים לשו"ע חו"מ סי' רלז ס"א.  
6. ראה ר"ן שם.  
7. רמ"א חו"מ סי' רלז ס"א. שו"ע אדה"ז הל' הפקר.

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

ליכות הרה"ת דניאל מסעוד  
ורעינתו מושקא שיחיו אלוליאן  
לרגל התונתם ביום ט' אדר ראשון

# OUR HEROES

## Rabbeinu Yitzchak Alfasi – The Rif

Rabbeinu Yitzchak ben Yaakov lived about one thousand years ago, at the end of the era of the *Geonim*. He was a *talmid* of Rabbeinu Chananel, the last of the *Geonim*. Later he moved to Fez, Morocco, where he earned his name ‘Alfasi’ (of Fez). In Fez, and later in Cordova, Spain, he taught many famous *talmidim* including Rabbeinu Efraim and the R"l Migash.



One of the *talmidim* of the R"l Migash records the following story:

“The Gemara (Bava Kamma 92b) states, “Do not throw a stone in the well that you drank from,” meaning do not cause harm to something that benefitted you. In connection with this, my Rebbe, the R"l Migash, told a story about his Rebbe, the Rif. The Rif once fell ill and went to use someone's private bathhouse. The man invited the Rif to stay with him until he recovered and accorded him great honor. Time passed and that man lost his fortune and he had to sell his estate, bathhouse included. The Rif refused to give any critical comments about the bathhouse, whether regarding its assessment or sale. “I benefitted from it, so I will do nothing to bring negative bearing on it.”

The *talmid* concludes, “This is concerning an inanimate bathhouse, how much more so must one be careful with a human being...”

(שיטה מקובצת על אורח)

The *tzaddik* Reb Mendel of Rimanov started off learned in the *yeshiva* of the Nodah Biyehuda. One day, after many years of learning, he was learning from the Rif's sefer. Suddenly, his thoughts started bothering him, “Look, I have already finished Shas Bavli and Yerushami with all the *Rishonim*, and I remember it all clearly, but of what good is it if I have not merited to truly stand in awe of Hashem in its true sense!” Reb Mendel started to cry profusely and fell asleep on the *sefer* he was learning. As he was sleeping, the Rif appeared to him in his dream and said, “You should know that our *neshamos* are connected and this is why your awakening came as you learned my *sefer*. If you want to reach true awe of Hashem go to the city of Lizhensk, to Reb Elimelech. There you will merit the true service of Hashem.” And so it became that Reb Mendel eventually became a *chossid* and then a *Chassidische Rebbe* in his own right.

ליכות הילדים התאומים בנציון הלוי ודוד זאנוויל הלוי שיחיו ווינפעלד

## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### Having Time

When a boy would come into the Rebbe before his *bar-mitzvah*, he would receive a special *brocha*. Often, the Rebbe would ask him to say a part of his *droshe*, on which the Rebbe would often comment on the content and delivery.

One *bar-mitzvah bochur* was asked by the Rebbe what he prepared to say for the *bar-mitzvah*, and upon his reply was asked to begin reciting the *ma'amer*.

When the *bochur* reached the part where the *ma'amar* says, “*Yidden* say to Hashem, ‘We want to learn Torah, but we have no time!’”, the Rebbe stopped him and asked lovingly, “And what is with someone who does have the time? He certainly must learn! And now, since you have the time, are you going to learn?”

ליכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה