



COMMUNICATING PATIENTLY (I)

Endless Tranquility

Chazal remind us, "One should always be humble and patient like Hillel, and not impatient like Shammai."

Two people once made a bet: whoever managed to anger Hillel would receive four hundred *zuz*. Friday afternoon, while Hillel was bathing in preparation for *Shabbos*, one of the men tried to irritate him. He passed by the door of the great sage and called out with *chutzpa*, "Is Hillel here? Where's Hillel?" Hearing him, Hillel dressed, went outside, and asked how he could help.

"I have a question to ask," said the man. "Ask, my son," Hillel prompted.

This was his question: "Why are the heads of the Babylonians round?" To which Hillel answered, "My son, you have asked a great question. It's because they don't have skillful midwives."

The man left, waited a while, then returned, calling out once again, "Is Hillel here? Where's Hillel?" Hillel once again dressed and went outside and asked how he could help. "I have a question to ask," the man said. "Why are the eyes of the Tarmodayim bleared?"

Hillel listened patiently and replied, "My son, you have asked a great question. It's because they live in sandy places."

Then a third time. "Is Hillel here? Where's Hillel?" Hillel again put on his robe and asked, "My son, what do you require?"

The new question was: "Why are the feet of the Africans wide?" "My son, you've asked another good question," Hillel tolerantly replied. "It's because they live in watery marshes."

The man continued roughly, "I have many more questions to ask, but I'm afraid you may become angry." Thereupon Hillel sat down before him and said, "Ask all the questions you have."

As if he was unaware, the man asked, "Are you the Hillel who is called the *Nasi* of the Yidden?" "Yes," Hillel replied. The man retorted, "If that is you, may there not be many like you!"

"Why, my son?" "Because I have lost four hundred *zuz* because of you," he replied.

"Always be careful of your moods," Hillel

answered. "You can lose four hundred *zuz* this time, and yet lose another four hundred *zuz* – but Hillel will never take offense."

(מסכת שבת ל"א ע"א)

Patience Brought them Close

A *goy* once approached Shammai and asked, "How many Torahs do you have?" "Two," Shammai answered, "The Written Torah and the Oral Torah."

"Regarding the Written Torah, I believe you," replied the *goy*, "but not with respect to the Oral Torah. I want you to convert me on condition that you teach me only the Written Torah."

Shammai scolded him and sent him on his way.

When the *goy* approached Hillel with the same request, he accepted him as a *ger*, teaching him on the first day, "*Alef, beis, gimmel, daled*." The next day Hillel changed the order of the letters. "But yesterday you didn't teach them to me like this," the *ger* protested. "Then you need to rely on me, don't you?" explained Hillel. "Then rely upon me with regard to the Oral Torah as well."

On another occasion, a different *goy* asked Shammai to convert him on condition that he teach him the entire Torah while he stood on one foot. Shammai pushed him away with the ruler in his hand. When the same *goy* approached Hillel, he was told, "What is hateful to you, do not do to another. That is the entire Torah, while the rest is an explanation; go and learn it."

Another *goy* once passed by a *beis midrash*, and heard the *melamed* teaching his pupils about the garments of the *Kohen Gadol*. The *goy* told Shammai, "I want to convert on condition that you appoint me as *Kohen Gadol*." Shammai pushed him away with the ruler in his hand.

When the *goy* went to Hillel with the same request, Hillel asked him, "Can any man be appointed as a king if he is not knowledgeable in the workings of government? Go and learn how the government functions..."

So the *goy* sat down and began to study Torah – but when he came to the *possuk* stating that a stranger who approaches the *Mishkan* will die,

he asked, "To whom does this apply?"

He was told, "Even to Dovid, the king of the Yidden."

The *goy* thought, "If *Bnei Yisroel*, who are called the firstborn son of *HaShem*, have this written about them, how much more so must it apply to a mere *ger*, who comes along now with his staff and traveling bag!"

He later returned to Shammai and asked, "How could I possibly have been fit to be a *Kohen Gadol*? Isn't it written otherwise in the Torah?" He then returned to Hillel and exclaimed, "O humble Hillel! May *brachos* rest upon your head for bringing me under the wings of the *Shechina*!"

Some time later the three *gerim* met and each one told his story. Together, they concluded, "Shammai's impatience sought to drive us out of the world; Hillel's humility brought us under the wings of the *Shechina*!"

(מסכת שבת ל"א ע"א)

A man once asked Rav to teach him Torah. Rav took him in and began by teaching him the *alef-beis*. As soon as he said "*alef*," the man immediately challenged him: "Who says that's an *alef*?" When Rav taught him *beis*, he did the same, so Rav chased him out angrily.

The man then repeated his performance with Shmuel. Shmuel grabbed him by the ear until he cried out, "My ear!" "Who says that's an ear?" Shmuel challenged.

"Everyone knows that's an ear!" the man retorted. "Here too," Shmuel told him, "Everyone knows that this is an *alef* and that's a *beis*."

Sitting down humbly, the man was now ready to study Torah.

(קהלת רבה פ"ז)

CONSIDER THIS!

- How did Hillel muster such patience to these strange questions?
- Why didn't Shammai display patience to the three *gerim*? Was he not interested in bringing them close?

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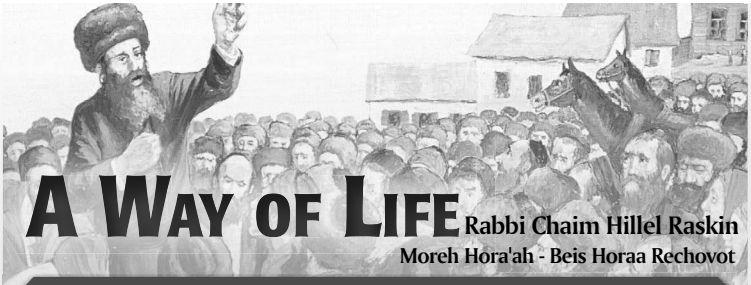
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OUR HEROES

Reb Aizik Homiler



Reb Yitzchak Aizik of Homil, known as Reb Aizik Homiler, was one of the most famous and greatest *Chabad Chassidim*. As a young man, he came to the Alter Rebbe, and after the Rebbe's *histalkus*, he became a great *chossid* of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. He was an incredible *gaon* in *nigleh* and a *maskil* in *Chassidus*, and wrote many *seforim* in *Chassidus*, including "Chana Ariel", and "Shnei Hameoros." Reb Aizik served as the *Rov* in Homil for 58 years, and passed away on the 26th of Iyar, תרי"ז (1857).

Reb Aizik would say: "When the Rebbe says *Chassidus*, the *nefesh habahamis* runs away. Today, you can hear *Chassidus* and learn *Chassidus* and the *nefesh habahamis* will maintain its strength, somehow it does not affect it. But when it comes to *davening ba'arichus* and traveling to the Rebbe, these are two things that the *nefesh habahamis* can still not tolerate."

Reb Aizik saw someone *davening* very fast, and confronted him. The man explained, "I do not give '*machshovos zoros*' (foreign thoughts) a chance to creep in." Reb Aizik replied, "About *machshovos zoros*, I do not know. What I can tell you for sure is that there weren't any '*machshovos tovov*' (good thoughts)..."

Once, Reb Aizik visited the city of Tchernigov and stayed in the home of a wealthy man. A fine meal was prepared in his honor, and many people participated.

When they finished eating the fish, before eating the meat, Reb Aizik turned to rinse his mouth as is necessary. The son of the host, who was sitting near Reb Aizik, remarked in ridicule, "What will happen if someone doesn't rinse out his mouth before eating the meat?" Reb Aizik responded sharply, "If one doesn't rinse out his mouth, he could come to *shmad* (apostatize) R"L. It all begins with something small." Sadly, Reb Aizik's prediction turned out to be true.

(שמועות וסיפורים ע' 168)

Reb Aizik would tell his *talmidim*, "As *yungerliet* learning under the Alter Rebbe, we would also *farbreng* among ourselves. But before every *farbrengen*, we would decide what should be the outcome of that *farbrengen*."

(לשמע און ע' ק"צ)

Free Gift

Reuven asked Shimon to buy him a set of *seforim*. After paying up, Shimon asked the storeowner the price of a certain *sefer*, and the owner offers it to him for free. Who deserves the gift?

- On one hand, the storeowner did not specify to whom he is giving it, and therefore Shimon can claim it was for him. On the other hand, Reuven can argue that the gift came only as result of his purchase.
- The *halacha* concludes that the gift should be divided among the two parties.¹ There are two reasons given: (1) Since we are unsure who it was intended for, we split it.² (2) Since they each have a part in prompting the buyer to give it (Reuven made the purchase and Shimon asked about the additional *sefer*), they each receive half.³
- A difference between these two reasons: If the seller specifies that he is giving it to Shimon. There is no doubt for whom it was intended, yet it was Reuven's purchase that influenced the seller to give a gift. The Alter Rebbe *paskens*⁴ that in such a case the gift belongs to Shimon, yet a *yerei Shamayim* should be *machmir* and give half to Reuven.
- Some *acharonim* write that if Shimon also benefited the seller in some way (e.g. he bought something for himself as well), all opinions would agree that it belongs entirely to Shimon. Although Reuven's purchase was of greater benefit to the seller, since Shimon also benefited him we can attribute the gift to his purchase. Therefore, in this situation there is no need to be *machmir*.⁵
- If the object does not have a fixed price (i.e. jewelry, a car) and the seller adds a gift, we assume that the seller is intending to give Reuven a discount on his purchase, and it belongs entirely to Reuven.⁶

1 כתובות צ"ח ע"ב, שו"ע חו"מ סי' קפ"ג 4 שו"ע ר חו"מ דיני מכירה ומתנה ושליח ס"ו. ואפוסטרופוס סעיף י"א.
2 רש"י שם ד"ה שיש, וכ"פ רמ"א שם. 5 קצוה"ח חו"מ שם סק"ז ע"פ תשובת רמב"ן.
3 רי"ף שם, רא"ש שם פ"א סי' ט"ו הובא בש"ך שם ס"ק י"ב. 6 שו"ע שם.

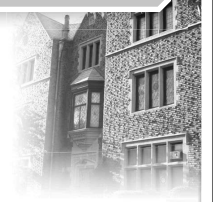
לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה

לע"נ הרה"ח הרה"ת חיים דוד נטע
בן הרה"ח הרה"ת נחמן דוב ע"ה וויכנין
נלב"ע כ"ו תמוז ה'תשנ"ה
מוקדש ע"י משפחתו שיהיו

לע"נ ר' חיים צבי הירש
בן ר' ישראל אליעזר ע"ה רובין
נלב"ע כ"ט תמוז ה'תשנ"ה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

I Would Never Have Sent You...



Reb Yaakov Yehuda Hecht was once sent by the Rebbe to a city where there was *machlokes* among the local *Lubavitcher chassidim*. His *shlichus* was to settle the dispute.

After completing his mission, Reb Yaakov Yehuda returned to Crown Heights and reported to the Rebbe the details of his work there and the restored *achdus*. The Rebbe looked very pleased.

While in that city, Reb Yaakov Yehuda had overheard a certain *poilisher chossid* talking disrespectfully about his own Rebbe's conduct at a *chassunah* in which he participated. In his report to the Rebbe, Reb Yaakov Yehuda included this incident.

On hearing this, the Rebbe suddenly grew very serious, and said, "Had I known that as a result of your trip you will repeat a *loshon horah* in *main daled amos* (my presence), I would never have sent you!"

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה