

LOVING LOYALTY (III)

Physical Effort

After his arrest in תקני"ט (1798), the Alter Rebbe was escorted to the secret cells of the dreaded Peter-Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg, where he was to spend over seven weeks until his miraculous release on *Yud-Tes* Kislev. The interrogations took place not there, but in the headquarters of the Tsarist Soviet, the Secret Council on the other side of the Neva River, so that the Rebbe had to be taken across each time by ferry.

On one such occasion, the Rebbe asked the official accompanying him to stop the ferry so that he could stand and recite *Kiddush Levana*. He refused, whereupon the Rebbe said, "If I want to, I can stop the boat myself." And indeed, after the man again refused to oblige, the boat stopped in the middle of the river. The Rebbe then recited the *pesukim* of *Tehillim* which are said before the *bracha*, but did not pronounce the *bracha* itself. The ferryman realized that unusual forces were at work and he begged the Rebbe to release the boat. The ferry then proceeded on its way.

When the Rebbe again asked the official to stop the boat, he asked, "What will you give me in exchange for the favor?" In reply, the Alter Rebbe gave him a *bracha*. The man then demanded it in writing, and the Rebbe recorded it on a note in his own handwriting.

One year on *Yud-Tes* Kislev, the Frieddiker Rebbe related the above episode and added:

"When I heard this story at nine years old, I wondered: Since the Alter Rebbe had already stopped the boat, why did he not recite the *bracha* as well? Why did he have to depend on a favor? When I had grown older and studied *Chassidus*, I understood that here was a point of principle involved. The Rebbe had been obliged to act as he did, for a *mitzva* is made to be performed only when it is clothed in the ways of nature, and not through supernatural miracles."

The Rebbe points out that from this story we learn that not only should a *mitzva* itself be done in a natural manner, but even the means to enable us to perform the *mitzva* should be

natural. Challenges to perform a *mitzva* are an essential part of the *mitzvah*: they should not be sidetracked by miraculous means. Of course, we need not look for difficulties, but if we do encounter a difficulty, we should appreciate its role in elevating the physical world.

(לקו"ד ח"ד ע' תשנ"ב, ב, לקו"ש ח"ה ע' 80)

Valuable Exertion

Rebbi Shimon bar Yochai said: When a person does a *mitzva*, he should not do it freely and easily, but use his full capability. *Kedusha* will rest upon him only after he has toiled to cleanse himself. In contrast, the spirit of *kelipa* makes itself at home for free and demands no work.

(זהר תרומה קכ"א, א)

On his way to the big regional fair in Leipzig, a Jewish merchant once stopped overnight in Frankfurt. It was so late that the whole town was fast asleep. He searched for a home with the light still burning and when he found one, he was warmly ushered in and was offered a hot meal and a place to sleep. He soon realized that his host was no ordinary man but rather a great *talmid chacham*. In fact this was none other than the renowned *rov* of the city, Reb Pinchos Horowitz himself.

So the guest asked his host: "I have to travel far and work very hard to earn a living. Will I be granted a share in the World to Come?"

Reb Pinchos replied: "The answer can be derived from your business, which you just mentioned. Let's make a *kal vachomer*: If for a material livelihood - to bring home some bread and spices - you need to work hard, how much more so do you have to work hard to earn a share in *Gan Eden*. For *Gan Eden* is an infinite G-dly pleasure. All the physical pleasures in the world are not worth even a single hour of *Gan Eden*. So surely a share in *Gan Eden* demands a lot of plain hard work!"

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 215)

Devout Dedication

Rebbi Yehuda beRebbi Ilo'i would drink four

cups of wine at the *Seder*, even though this gave him such an intense headache that he had to keep his head bandaged until Shavuos.

(נדרים מט ע"ב, שו"ע אדה"י סי' תע"ב סכ"א)

Reb Hillel Paritcher would perform *hagba* himself at *mincha* on *Shabbos*. One *Shabbos* he suffered from a hernia and was bedridden, and so a *minyan* was held for him in his room. Before *Krias HaTorah* Reb Hillel requested that the *bima* be moved closer to his bed. The *chassidim*, thinking that he wanted to hear the *Kria* better, complied with his request. However, when the time came for *hagbah*, Reb Hillel jumped out of bed and fulfilled his custom as usual.

This was Reb Hillel's characteristic manner; once he accepted a practice upon himself, he would fulfill it to the point of *mesirus nefesh*.

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 247)

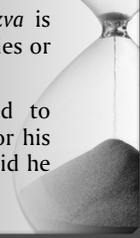
Once it rained very hard on *Sukkos*, and the Rebbe Rashab sent a messenger to see what the *bochurim* of *Tomchei Temimim* were doing—if they were eating indoors as the *halacha* allows when raining, or in the *sukkah*.

The messenger returned and reported to the Rebbe that the *bochurim* were eating in the *sukka*, and to keep the rain out of the food, they covered their heads and their plates with their coats. The Rebbe was very pleased by this and said: "In this one can see the effect of learning *Chassidus*. Even if they are exempt from the *mitzva*, they still seek to perform it."

(רשימות דברים ח"ב ע' קמו)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Is it better when a *mitzva* is accompanied by difficulties or without?
- Was Reb Hillel required to exert himself so much for his personal custom? Why did he do it?



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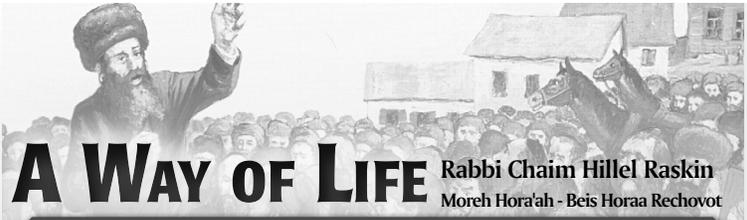


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A WAY OF LIFE

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

OUR HEROES

Reb Berel Kalisker



Reb Dovber was the son of Reb Gershon Halevi Ashknazi of the city of Kalisk, and was known amongst chassidim as "Berel Kalisker." He was a *shadar* and a *choizer* for the Tzemach Tzedek, and a close friend to the Rebbe Maharash. For twelve years they studied Gemara and *meforshim* together in the room next door to the Tzemach Tzedek's. A small window connected the rooms, enabling them to ask him questions during learning. During the year 5633 (1873) Reb Berel moved to Chevron, where he was greatly respected and quickly became one of the leaders of the community. He passed away on 7 Teves 5660 (1900), and is buried in Chevron. His grandson was the famous *rov*, Reb Avrohom Chaim Noeh.



The Tzemach Tzedek respected Reb Berel greatly, and also relied on him in matters of *halacha*. One *maamzai* *Shabbos*, Reb Berel visited the home of the Tzemach Tzedek, and a lengthy discussion in *Chassidus* began. The Tzemach Tzedek's wife, Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, waited up a long time to serve *melava malka*, but seeing that the hour was late, she went to lie down and fell asleep. In the morning she realized her husband had not eaten and asked him, "Why didn't you tell Reb Berel - who is a *ben bayis* to us - to serve you?" The Rebbe responded, "Berel is a *talmid chochom*, and one is not allowed to make use of *talmid chochom*!"

(דבר ציון לר"ד אליעזרוב ע' רסט)



Reb Berel was fluent in 600 *maamorei Chassidus* of the Tzemach Tzedek, and when he would *chazer* them publicly, he would say them exactly as he heard them, copying even the motions the Rebbe had made while saying the *maamor*. He was also a *maniach* - a transcriber of the *maamorim* - and the Rebbe Maharash even made comments on his *hanochos*. The Rebbe Rashav writes that most (if not all) of Reb Berel's writings are very precise.

In Chevron there was a shortage of Gemaras, and one of the elders of the city came to Reb Berel late at night to borrow a certain volume. Reb Berel asked him, "Which *masechta* do you need?" "*Gittin*," was the response. "And which *daf*?" When the man replied, Reb Berel proceeded to say the whole *sugya* by heart, explaining it beautifully until it was crystal clear, and the man no longer need to borrow the Gemara...

(דבר ציון לר"ד אליעזרוב ע' רט)

Bracha Acharona on Coffee

Do I make a *bracha acharona* after sipping a coffee?

- The minimum amount of drink that obligates reciting a *bracha acharona* is a *revi'is* (2.9 oz., 86 gram). Some say that for wine the measure is the volume of a *kazayis* (about 1 oz.),¹ and one should therefore not drink between 1 and 2.9 oz. to avoid a doubt.²
- *Poskim* discuss whether ice cream or yogurt is considered a food or a liquid.³ The ruling is that if it is gulped it is a liquid and the *shiur* for a *bracha acharona* is a *revi'is*, but if it is thick enough that one must use his tongue to swallow it, it is a food and the *shiur* is a *kazayis*.⁴
- In order for the sips to add up to a *revi'is* they must be consumed within a certain timeframe. Some say that it is the same as for food - *kdei achilas pras*, six minutes, while others say it is a shorter timeframe, namely the time it takes to normally drink a *revi'is*, which is less than a half a minute. In his final ruling, the Alter Rebbe sides with the longer six-minute timeframe.⁵
- For a hot drink or smoothie which is normally consumed slowly, some say that the timeframe is as long as it normally takes to drink a *revi'is* of that drink (which can be much longer)⁶. However, the consensus of *poskim* is to treat it like a regular drink.⁷
- If a person is uncertain whether he met the timeframe, he does not make a *bracha acharona*, since in case of doubt one does not recite a *bracha* (*safek brachos l'hakel*).⁸ It is recommended that he complete the *shiur*, so that he can recite the *bracha acharona*.

1. שו"ע או"ח סימן ק"צ ס"ג בנוגע יין, וראה מג"א שם סק"ד שס"ל כן בשאר שאר משקים.
 2. סדר ברה"נ פ"ח ה"א ע"פ רא"ש ברכות פ"ז סכ"ד. וראה קצוה"ש סי' נ"ט בדה"ש ג'.
 3. ראה שערי ברכה פרק י"ד הע' י' באריכות.
 4. סדר ברכה"נ שם הל' ח'. וראה שוע"ר או"ח סי' קנ"ח ס"ח.
 5. שיטת הראב"ד בהגות על הרמב"ם הלכות תרומות פ"י ה"ג.
 6. ראה מג"א או"ח סי' ר"י סק"א שמדייק כן ברמב"ם הל' שביתת עשור פ"ב ה"ד.
 7. בלוח ברה"נ פ"ב הל' ז' כתב שספק ברכות להקל, אך בסדר ברה"נ פ"ח הל' ו' פסק בכא"פ. וראה מש"כ המהרי"ל בשארית יהודה או"ח סי' ט"ו בשיטת אדה"ז שדברים ששיעורם ברביעית שיעור זמנם גם לרמב"ם הוא בכא"פ, אך בקידוש ושתי' ביה"כ ששיעורם פחות מרביעית דעת הרמב"ם ששיעור זמנם ברביעית.
 8. משנב"ב סי' ר"ז סק"ד.

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

לזכות ציפא אסתר בת רבקה יונבד שתחי'
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שיגדלוה הורי' לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים

לזכות מנחם מענדל שי" גורארי'
לרגל ה"אפשרניש" שלו ביום ל"ג בעומר
נדבת משפחתו שי"

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Power of a Perek



The renowned *askan* and businessman Reb Zalman Gurary once went to the airport to catch a flight. When he arrived there, he was informed that the flight had been delayed by 24 hours.

Reb Zalman wanted to return home for the night. However, aware that Reb Yehudah HaChossid writes (*Sefer Chassidim Siman 38*) that one should not return home after taking leave, he was in a quandary as to what to do.

Reb Zalman called the Rebbe's secretariat, and asked for the Rebbe to direct him in how to proceed. A few minutes later, Harav Chodakov called him back with the Rebbe's answer:

"Tell Reb Zalman to learn a *perek* of Tanya, after which he could go home for the night. The *perek* will transform him, and it won't be the same Reb Zalman returning home."

(Bechol Beisi Ne'emon Hu, p. 518)