

SIMPLE SINCERITY (I)

Greatest Virtue

The Torah says, *Tamim tih'yeh im HaShem Elokecha* – "Trust HaShem your G-d with simple faith." The *Midrash* interprets the *possuk* as if it were to be read as follows: If you are *tomim*, you will be *im* ("with") *HaShem Elokecha*. That is to say: If you serve G-d with simple faith, your portion is *with HaShem*.

To this teaching the *Mittler Rebbe* adds: "Through *temimus* you can connect with the *temimus* of *HaShem* – with the *temimus* of *Atzmus*, which is the simple and undefinable Essence of *HaShem*."

(דברים יח, יג, ספרי שופטים קעג, סה"ש תש"ה ע' 101)

Temimus, the sincerity of simple faith, is a lofty virtue: no other virtue compares to it. Everyone should therefore do his share and serve *HaShem* with a heart filled with simple faith. For even if his actions seem small in his own eyes, they are valuable to *HaShem*.

(משנת חכמים למהר"מ חגיז ס' ריט)

In days of old everything was done with *temimus*, unquestioning sincerity, and this was apparent in the children, the parents and the teachers.

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 101)

Desires the Heart

In a village near Tarnow in Galicia there lived a simple Yid called Reb Eliezer Lipa. He couldn't study Torah and didn't even know the meaning of the *davening* or *Tehillim*, but he was a sincere person who always *davened* with a *minyán*, made a point of never missing an *Amen*, and he would follow *Krias HaTorah* from a *Chumash*. He never conversed about worldly matters in the *shul*, and he would honor *talmidei chachomim* and *bnei Torah*.

He managed to make a decent living as a water-carrier, since he had four well-to-do merchants who were steady customers and paid him well.

One day, the Baal Shem Tov arrived in Tarnow. At that time, before he had revealed himself to the world, he appeared to be an ordinary traveler. He would befriend the simple folk and tell them stories from the *Aggada*, and he would describe to them the great pleasure that

HaShem derives from the sincere *Tehillim* of a simple Yid.

Reb Eliezer Lipa was once leading his wagon through the center of town, when he spotted his fellow water-carrier Reb Zalman Dov and other friends, listening to a poor traveler. Reb Eliezer Lipa went over to join them. The Baal Shem Tov was telling the following story from the *Midrash*.

"There was once a wealthy man who was taking a fattened ox to the *Beis HaMikdash* for a *korbon*. It was a massive beast, and when it decided, for reasons of its own, to stop still in its tracks, nobody could move it. A poor man was on his way home with a bunch of greens in his hand. Noticing the scene, he held out his greens for the animal to nibble, while he drew it to its destination. That night the owner of the ox had a dream in which he heard a voice saying, 'The *korbon* of the poor man is greater than yours.'

The Baal Shem Tov explained, "What *HaShem* desires is a person's heart. The wealthy man was so joyful that he made a huge feast for his family and friends and he distributed gifts to the *kohanim*. His felt very proud of his great *mitzva*. The poor man, on the other hand, felt broken by his poverty. He thought: What worth is my bunch of greens in comparison to the fatted animal of the wealthy man?"

"However," concluded the Baal Shem Tov, "the One Above derives more pleasure from the poor man's greens than from the rich man's ox."

The Baal Shem Tov went on to explain to his unsophisticated listeners that whatever *mitzva* a Yid does is measured by its intention. A small act done for *HaShem's* sake, with joy and purity of heart, is very precious to the Creator. *HaShem* prides himself with it before the *malochim* and says, 'Look at the good deed that my son or daughter has done!' and showers the Yid with *brachos*."

Reb Eliezer Lipa continued on, but his mind knew no rest. How he longed to be able to do a *mitzva* like the poor man in the story, with pure intention and a heart overflowing with joy. He shared with his wife what he had heard from the traveling guest, and told her how every *mitzva* they performed was like a *korbon*.

Weeks passed and still Reb Eliezer Lipa knew no peace. One day, as he delivered water to a wealthy customer, an idea fell into his head. He was excited. His four wealthy customers provided him with half of his livelihood, since they paid him far more than the going rate for a barrel of water. On the other hand, his friend Reb Zalman Dov supplied the town's four *shuls*, which paid him half-price for their water. "I can exchange four of my customers for four of his," thought Reb Eliezer Lipa. "Four wealthy homes for four *shuls*." He shared the idea with his wife, and she immediately agreed.

Reb Zalman Dov accepted the offer, and the two switched without anyone noticing a difference. There were days when Reb Eliezer Lipa's wife went to the river to participate in the *mitzva* of drawing the water for the *shuls*. As they hauled the water, they would concentrate on the *mitzva* of preparing water for their fellow townsmen to wash their hands with before *davening*.

They were blessed with two sons, who did not succeed in learning. The parents would often recite *Tehillim* together in tears, with Reb Eliezer Lipa reading word for word and his wife repeating each word after him. Every Friday she would distribute two *challos* to the poor, and light two candles so that their two sons should shine in Torah. At times they also fasted, and distributed the value of their meals to *tzedaka* in the merit of their sons.

A short time after they began supplying the water for the *shul*, word reached them that their sons began to succeed in their studies. Eventually they both grew up to be the great *tzaddikim* – Reb Elimelech of Lyzhensk and Reb Zusya of Anipoli.

(סה"מ תשי"א ע' 903, ויקרא רבה פ"ג ה')

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is sincerity so valuable?
- Why are a poor man's greens more sincerely given than a rich man's animal?

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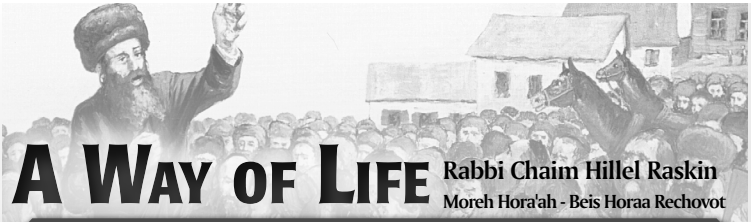


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A WAY OF LIFE

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

Driving to Minyan

I return home each night after the local *shuls* have davened *maariv*. How far must I drive to daven with a *minyan*?

- Davening with a *minyan* is a great *mitzva midrabanan*. Chazal highly extol the power of davening done together with a *minyan* where his *tefilla* is more easily accepted by Hashem, and that he "redeems me and my children from among the nations."¹ For this reason, one must therefore travel up to four "mil" to daven with a *minyan* if it's along the way that he's traveling, and up to one "mil" if it's out of his way.²
- How long is a "mil"? The actual length of a *mil* is .6 of a mile (3150 feet / 960 meters). However, in certain areas of *halacha* (e.g. baking *matza*) a *mil* is used to describe the amount of time it takes to walk a *mil* (which *poskim* argue if it is 18 minutes, 22.5 minutes, or 24 minutes, which the Alter Rebbe accepts as the primary opinion³).
- What if a person is traveling by car? Is he obligated to travel 6/10^{ths} of a mile or must he drive for a full 24 minutes?
- Some contemporary *poskim* hold that Chazal obligated a person to trouble himself for a *minyan* for a certain amount of time regardless of how he travels.⁴ However, others argue that we cannot build a stringency based on a timeframe being that the original measure is set by distance. Furthermore, during the days of the Mishna people also used other modes of travel (donkey, horse and wagon) and yet Chazal set it at a *mil* without distinction.⁵ This seems to be the position of the Alter Rebbe.⁶
- While some *poskim* suggest that one who is at home and not traveling should be obligated to travel more than one mil (which was said for traveling in the opposite direction),⁷ the Alter Rebbe writes that one need not travel more than a *mil*.⁸

1. ברכות ז ע"ב ואילך. וראה רמב"ם הל' תפילה פ"ח ה"א.
2. פסחים מו ע"א, שו"ע ר סי' צ' ס"ז.
3. שו"ע ר אור"ח סי' תנ"ט ס"י.
4. התפילה בציבור פ"א ס"ז, אבני ישפה פ"ו ס"ו ע"פ משנ"ב סי' קס"ג באה"ל ד"ה ברחוק.
5. שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ח ס"ט. וראה אליה.
6. רבא אור"ח סי' צ"ב סק"ה בשם תשובת ב"י סי' ל"ה שגם ברוכב הולכים לפי שיעור מהלך ברגליו.
7. ראה אג"מ ח"ב סי' כ"ז.
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OUR HEROES

Reb Shlomo Leib Eliezrov



Reb Shlomo Yehuda Leib Eliezrov was born in Latvia in Nisan 5623 (1863). His father Reb Eliezer Shimon was a grandson of Rebbetzin Menucha Rochel Slonim, daughter of the Mitteler Rebbe, and he was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek. At age ten his family moved to Chevron, where he studied with the famed Reb Shimon Menashe Chaikin, the *rov* there. He married the daughter of Reb Berel Kalisker. He spent a total of seven years in Samarkand, serving as their *rov* and strengthening *Yiddishkeit* there. In 5762 (1902) he returned to Chevron, and was appointed the *rov* of the Ashknazim. He made trips to Lubavitch to visit the Rebbe Rashab, and assisted with founding the Yeshiva Toras Emes in Chevron in 5672 (1911). After World War I he moved to Yerusholayim, and was appointed by the Frierdiker Rebbe as the *menahel* of Colel Chabad. He passed away on 27 Teves 5712 (1952).

While in Lubavitch, he spent much time with the Rebbe Rashab, who respected him greatly. He would eat at the Rebbe's home, and the Rebbe would honor him to wash his hands for bread before him, so he could watch his *dikdukim* in the *halachos* of hand-washing. After he washed, the Rebbe told him that he too washes that way.

Reb Shlomo Leib heard many things from the Rebbe Rashab, including the following: One who is careful about the respect and cleanliness of *seforim* will merit that - if he writes a *sefer* - his *sefer* will be kept clean and respected.

(שאלת שלמה ע' 29)

Once Reb Zelig Slonim was very tight financially, and borrowed one lira from Reb Shlomo Leib's *tzedaka* fund to cover the costs of the oncoming Shabbos. When Reb Zelig returned home, he simply could not find the money, and returned to the home of Reb Shlomo Leib. Together they searched for the money, but it was not found. Reb Zelig returned home very broken; not only did he not have money to buy food for Shabbos, but also he had the burden of paying up the loan. Reb Shlomo Leib resolved to take another lira from his own money and although he was old and walking was hard, he went to the home of Reb Zelig and announced happily that he had found the lost money. Reb Zelig was overjoyed. The next morning Reb Zelig found the lost lira on the floor of his home and realized the *chesed* that Reb Shlomo Leib had done.

(שאלת שלמה ע' 32)

לזכות יהושע העשל בן חנה שי' לרפו"ש וקרובה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Family Tradition

A descendant of a respected *chassidische* dynasty, in need of an income, opened a restaurant. The Rebbe blessed him in his pursuit for *parnasa*, and encouraged him to utilize his job for strengthening *Yiddishkeit*.

The father of this individual was very disappointed with the occupation his son had chosen, especially considering his lineage. In a private *yechidus* he lamented to the Rebbe, "Is this what my son's *neschama* came down to the world to do?!"

"What's wrong?" the Rebbe calmed him. "Didn't his grandfather have the same occupation?"

"His grandfather?" wondered the frustrated father. "Not from my side..."

"We have a *zeide* Avrohom Avinu."

"But he didn't do it for money!"

"Indeed," the Rebbe caringly continued defending the son, "in *Midrash Raba* (49, 4) we find that our *zeide* did take payment."

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