

CHARACTER CHANGE (I)

The Big Challenge

Rav Saadia Gaon taught: The main reason man was created in this world was – to break his natural negative *middos*.

(כתר שם טוב סימן כ"ד)

A chossid from Beshenkovitch once asked the Mitteler Rebbe for a *brocho* to be able to do *avoda*. He added, "I am not exactly sure what *avoda* entails, but since I have a strong desire **not** to do it, I understand that it must be something really good..."

(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 106)

The Frierdiker Rebbe fondly described the elder chossid, Reb Hendel, as a man with a good heart and good *middos* that he had refined by toiling in the *avoda* of *kabbolas ol*. He recounted what Reb Hendel had once said at a *farbrengen*: "As long as a *metzora* still suffered from *tzoraas*, he would not visit the *Beis HaMikdosh*. So, too, a *yungerman* who has not yet been healed of his negative character traits is not allowed to go to Lubavitch and *chas veshalom* contaminate the *heichal HaShem*, where the Rebbe is.

"For ten years," continued Reb Hendel, "I studied *Reishis Chochma*, *Chareidim*, *Shaarei Teshuva* and *Pokeiach Ivrim*. I reviewed *Iggeres HaTeshuva* dozens of times, as well as chapters of *Derech Chayim*, in order to eradicate my negative *middos* and rid myself of the body's natural behaviors. Only then, with the approval of *eltere* chassidim, did I finally make my first trek to Lubavitch."

Relating this, the Frierdiker Rebbe concluded: "Listen, *yungeleit*, to what an *elterer* chossid is telling you about how he became a chossid! For ten years, a *yungerman* toils to attain *middos tovos* and during all that time he does not travel to Lubavitch, to the *Tzemach Tzedek*, because he is embarrassed to have the Rebbe see his *ruchniyusdike* essence. **That** is a proper preparation

to becoming a chossid."

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"ב ע' 696)

The Frierdiker Rebbe once said: When one notices a negative trait in himself, this should bother him seriously, and he must make every effort to correct it. Yet this task should not depress him. On the contrary, it should bring him joy: he should rejoice that he has been granted the opportunity to correct his *middos*.

(סה"ש תרפ"ח ע' 26)

When the Rebbe Rashab observed good *middos* in his chassidim, his joy was visible, and when he noticed a negative trait, this would hurt him to the point of tears. He could have changed things by saying a few firm words, but he wanted the change to result from the *avoda* of the chassidim themselves.

(סי' המאמרים תשי"א ע' 246)

Unwanted Baggage

The Alter Rebbe writes that before introducing *middos tovos*, one must first remove all negative *middos*. By way of analogy: A king desires to have a beautiful palace built for him. For a start, the selected location must be cleared of all filth, and only then is it possible to begin constructing the palace and decorating it. Similarly, we cannot construct a *dira betachtonim* for *HaShem* unless we first clear ourselves of all negative *middos*.

(לקוטי תורה ע, ג, לקו"ש חי"ב ע' 136)

At a *farbrengen*, the Frierdiker Rebbe said that nowadays *Chassidus* is not being used for what it was intended; instead, it is being used for tasks that should be tackled before one approaches *Chassidus*. The *avoda* of correcting one's *middos* and refraining from forbidden actions (*sur meira*), as well as the positive actions (*aseh tov*) of good *middos* and *ahavas Yisroel*, does not require the *avoda* of *Chassidus*: it must be done earlier.

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' קצד)

The *farbrengens* of the esteemed chossid Reb Peretz Chein were often spiced by his favorite *mashal*:

The chefs in the Czar's royal kitchen once prepared a lavish banquet for the visiting Kaiser William of Germany, the Czar's relative, and the highlight was to be a dish of stuffed and spiced calf intestines. Their efforts were so successful that the Kaiser asked for the recipe so that his own cooks at home would be able to serve him this extraordinary delicacy. The Czar duly ordered the head chef to write a detailed list of ingredients and instructions, and Kaiser William left Russia a happy man. As soon as he arrived home in Germany he handed the recipe to his chef, but when the kitchen doors opened and the carefully prepared dish was served to the eagerly waiting Kaiser, he cried out, "What a disgusting odor!" – and the platter was quickly removed from the table.

Bitterly disappointed, he wrote to the Czar demanding to know why his chefs could not produce the same delicacy, even though they had carefully followed the recipe. The Czar asked his chef to offer an explanation.

The chef thought for a moment and then burst out laughing: "What?! The German chefs didn't work it out themselves?! There was one step so obvious that I didn't even include it in my instructions: *Before* the intestines are stuffed and spiced, they must first be turned inside out and *washed thoroughly*..."

(רשימות דברים לר"י היטריק)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is correcting one's character so important? And why is it so difficult?
- Why can't we just focus on the positive and allow the negative to vanish on its own?



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A WAY OF LIFE Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Ice on Shabbos

May I dissolve juice concentrate into water on Shabbos?

- Chazal forbade crushing ice to produce water on Shabbos.¹ There are several reasons offered by the *rishonim*: (1) One is forming a new entity (*borei*).² (2) The liquid is *nolad*.³ (3) It is similar to squeezing juice from fruit on Shabbos (*mashkin shezavu*).⁴
- If the ice melts on its own, even if one caused it to melt by taking it out of the freezer, one did not actively produce the liquid, though the resulting liquid is new. Thus according to the first and third opinions the liquid is permissible, however according to the second it is prohibited.⁵ The Alter Rebbe advises being stringent if it is not too difficult.
- If the melting liquid that came as result of crushing ice is mixed with other liquid there is no concern of *mashkin shezavu* since fruits are squeezed alone, but one has nonetheless actively created something new.⁶ The Alter Rebbe rules that this is prohibited.
- If one allows the ice to melt into liquid on its own, all opinions would permit it, since one is not actively causing it to melt and it is melting into another liquid⁷.
- When adding ice cubes to a beverage, one should not pour the beverage over ice cubes or stir the ice to melt it, since one is actively causing it to melt,⁸ but rather add the ice to a cup or pitcher with liquid.
- Likewise, one may add juice concentrate to water on Shabbos, as long as one does not stir it to disintegrate faster.

1. גמל שבת נ"א ע"ב.
 2. רש"י שם ד"ה כד, וראה ח"י הרשב"א שם.
 3. ספר התרומה סי' רלה ר"ן שבת שם וראה שוע"ר סי' ש"ח סכ"ה.
 4. ע"פ רמב"ם הלכות שבת פכ"א ה"ג.
 5. שוע"ר סי' ש"ח סכ"ה.
 6. בתרומה והר"ן בזה שהרי אין הטעם של משקין שזבו וצ"ע.
 7. ב"י סי' ש"ח סט"ז ד"ה ונר' דלבעל התרומה. שוע"ר סי' ש"כ סט"ז.
 8. שוע"ר סי' ש"כ ס"כ עיי"ש.

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

OUR HEROES

Reb Gershon Ber Paharer



Reb Gershon Ber's father passed away while his mother was pregnant with him, and he was named after his father. A short time later his mother passed away as well and he was raised by his relatives. Eventually, he was taken in by his uncle Reb Abba der Lebediker, a chossid of the Alter Rebbe who brought him close to the ways of *Chassidus*. In the year 5609 (1849), Reb Gershon Ber met Reb Hillel Paritcher and became his *talmid*. Reb Gershon Ber became a *mekushor* to the Rebbe Maharash and then the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab appointed him as a *shadar* to the cities in the Kherson region where he would collect money and *chazer Chassidus*.



Reb Gershon Ber would repeat some words of *davening* in Yiddish saying, "My *nefesh habehamis* understands better in Yiddish."



When Reb Gershon Ber grew old and stopped traveling as a *shadar*, the wallet in which he would store the money he collected remained with him. Since he had bought the wallet with *maamod* money, (he needed something to protect the money from getting lost), he evaluated the wallet's current value and gave that amount to *maamod*.

(לקוטי סיפורים ע' שלה)



Reb Gershon Ber once came to Lubavitch for *yechidus* with the Tzemach Tzedek. While waiting for his turn outside the *yechidus* room, he stood deep in thought buried his face in some hanging coats. Mendel the Meshares, not knowing who it was, suspected him of wanting to steal and quickly grabbed Reb Gershon Ber to lead him out of the room. Seeing the incident as a sign from Above, Reb Gershon Ber cried, "Even in the Rebbe's waiting room I am not worthy to be."

(ס' המאמרים תש"ט ע' 175)

לזכות יהושע העשל בן חנה שיי' לרפו"ש וקרובה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"Why Not Like a King?"

When Reb Chaim Horowitz ("Tashkenter") came for Tishrei 5718 (1958), Reb Zalman Duchman urged him to describe his meeting with the Rebbe's father in Chili, Russia to the Rebbe.

Reb Chaim related to the Rebbe that in 5700 (1940), he was standing at the train station. A person with a heavenly image and a royal appearance approached him and asked, "Are you a Lubavitcher?" Reb Chaim answered affirmatively. Reb Levik continued, "I am the *mechutan* of the [Friediker] Rebbe."

When Reb Chaim told the Rebbe that his father looked like a prince, the Rebbe commented, "Why not like a king?"

The Rebbe asked to hear more, so Reb Chaim described how Reb Levik poured out his heart. He had many obstacles in obtaining *tzizis* and *taleisim*, *tefillin*, flour for *matzah*, and a *sefer* Torah. He begged him to arrange that these be sent. The KGB constantly followed him, he had lamented. Even as they were conversing, Reb Levik said they were being watched.

During the course of their 15 minute conversation, Reb Levik said that every activity of his was achieved with "*greene verim*" (great difficulty). When Reb Chaim repeated these words, tears gathered in the Rebbe's eyes.

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