פרשת חיי שרה תשע"ז



# RELIVING THE PAST (II)

#### The Value of Stories

Sent by the Tzemach Tzedek to Ruzhin to take care of a public matter, the chossid and gaon Reb Aizik Homiler used the opportunity to observe the ways of the Ruzhiner chassidim and of their Rebbe, the tzaddik Reb Yisroel. At that time, two chassidim came to Ruzhin to receive the Rebbe's haskama for seforim they had written. One was filled with chiddushei Torah and the other recounted sippurim of tzaddikim and notable chassidim. The Rebbe instructed that part of each sefer be read aloud. After sitting in dveikus for some time, he proceeded to praise the telling of sippurei tzaddikim, an activity in this world that arouses echoes in the chambers of tzaddikim in Olam HaBa, and then delivered a pilpul on some of the chiddushei Torah that appeared in the first sefer. Having done that, he instructed his gabbai to write haskamos for the seforim, first for the sippurim and then for the chiddushim.

Reb Aizik was impressed with the tzaddik's pilpul on the second sefer, but was puzzled by the precedence he had given to the sippurei tzaddikim. A few days later, at a Rosh Chodesh seuda, the tzaddik suddenly said, "This gaon is surprised at the priority I gave to the sippurim. In fact, this was addressed long ago by Rashi, who asks why the Torah begins with the story of the Avos, before listing the mitzvos. This is because the *sippurim* tell us about the greatness of HaShem's involvement in the world."

Turning to Reb Aizik, he concluded, "I followed the same order the Torah used."

(אג"ק מוהריי"צ ח"ו ע' עו)

The Rambam writes that speaking highly of the noble qualities of tzaddikim is beneficial, for it encourages one's listeners to want to follow their ways. Rabbeinu Yonah writes that by praising righteous tzaddikim one is praising HaShem, and doing so also brings out the good within the speaker.

(פיהמ"ש אבות א,טז, שערי תשובה שער ג')

### Sippurim for Everyone

The Frierdiker Rebbe related: "It was a Shabbos

afternoon in תרנ"ו (1896). After my father finished davening, he went to the home of his mother, Rebbetzin Rivkah, to make Kiddush. There, my father asked his mother, "Do you recall how the picture of the Alter Rebbe was brought to the Tzemach Tzedek and what he said about it?"

"Sure," she replied, "I remember it clearly."

My father then asked her to tell it to me, so that I would hear it from a first source. My grandmother readily agreed, and turning to me she said, "Come at a calmer time and I will tell it to you."

She then added, "At one Seder I heard my fatherin-law, the Tzemach Tzedek, say: 'Mitzva lesaper biyetzias Mitzrayim' – by telling sippurim we can get out of Mitzrayim. 'Ve'afilu kulanu chachomim u'nevonim veyodim' – even a person who is a true Chabadnik (meaning a chossid steeped in the insights of Chassidus) is obligated to tell chassidishe sippurim, for these will take him out of his Mitzrayim (that is, out of his ruchniyusdike

My grandmother concluded, "Since then, I make a point of recounting *sippurim* only when I'm completely focused."

(התמים ח"ב ע' 760)

In the year תרס"ג (1903), the Rebbe Rashab told his son, the Frierdiker Rebbe, "For a long time I have been complaining at the Ohel of my father, the Rebbe Maharash, about my lack of participation in chassidishe farbrengens, as a result of spending my time catering to the cause and avoda of Chassidus. I asked to receive this as a gift, and my father agreed. From then on, I began to hear sippurim at nighttime visions.'

Later on, the Frierdiker Rebbe said, "From that time on, I heard numerous stories from my father, the Rebbe Rashab, but I wouldn't ask where he had heard them or when he had heard them."

(24 'סה"ש תש"ה ע'

### **Special Stories**

Before the Alter Rebbe relayed a Torah of the

Baal Shem Tov, he would say, "The words of Torah from 'the Zeide' (as he called the Baal Shem Tov) are a segula to increase one's understanding and yiras Shamayim, and the stories of 'the Zeide' are a segula for long life and abundant parnasa."

When the Tzemach Tzedek's daughter once fell ill with high fever, he suggested that someone read her stories of the Baal Shem Tov, for they are a superb segula to heal fever.

(135 ע' החדש בימו"ד החדש ע' 508, רשימו"ד החדש ע'

The Rebbe Maharash once said: "People say that relating a story of the Baal Shem Tov on Motzaei *Shabbos* is a *segula* for *parnasa*. The truth is that these three points are not necessarily so - lavdavka. It does not necessarily have to be about the Baal Shem Toy – it can be about any tzaddik: and it is not only applicable on Motzaei Shabbos – it can be at any time; and the segula is not only for parnasa - but for all good things as well. "

(4 'ע מו"ד החדש ע' 211, וראה שמו"ס ח"א ע'

Rebbetzin Rivkah related: "In תר"ט (1849), when I was newly married, my father-in-law, the Tzemach Tzedek, called in all his daughtersin-law who lived in Lubavitch and instructed them to gather every Motzaei Shabbos and relate a sippur of the holy Baal Shem Tov. We asked whether it was enough to just mention the Baal Shem Tov's name. My father-in-law replied, 'Definitely -a story!'

After that, every Motzaei Shabbos, one of the daughters-in-law would visit the Tzemach Tzedek, where she would hear a story of the Baal Shem Toy, and this she would then share with the rest of us."

(סה"נוז ח"נוז ע' 173)

## **CONSIDER THIS!**

- Are stories a means to an end or an end themselves?
- Why can't the same benefits be acquired through learning Chassidus?



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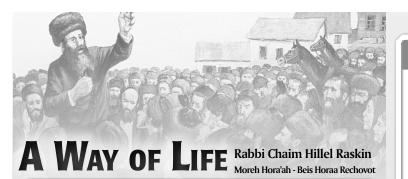
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### **Bracha Before Tefilas Haderech**

Someone told me that I must eat something and recite an after bracha before reciting Tefilas Haderech. Is this true?

- Chazal say that a bracha must open with the words "baruch ata," praising Hashem. In a series of brachos, the second bracha is covered by the baruch ata of the first bracha (such as the brachos of Shmoneh Esrei or "Ahavas Olam" in Birchos Krias Shema). Thus, a bracha lacking a baruch ata must be appended to another bracha.
- Rishonim are divided whether this rule applies to birkos hoda'a blessings of thanks, such as "Elokai Neshama" (thanking Hashem for returning our *neshama*), and supplications, such as *Tefilas* Haderech. <sup>2</sup> There is a further dispute within the stringent opinion whether it is an obligation or a hiddur.<sup>3</sup> The Alter Rebbe writes that one should try to satisfy the stringent opinion and recite "Elokai Neshama" immediately after "Asher Yatzar" without interruption,4 and recite some bracha before Tefilas Haderech.5
- What type of bracha should the first bracha be? Some require a bracha with a concluding baruch ata (i.e. Asher Yatzar or Al Hamichya). Others accept a short bracha, provided that it is not a bracha on food or smell be since eating or smelling will constitute a *hefsek*. Others yet hold that any *bracha* is fine.<sup>6</sup> The Alter Rebbe's seems to side with the first opinion.<sup>7</sup>
- In his siddur by Tefilas Haderech the Alter Rebbe does not mention this practice. Furthermore, a story is recorded of how the Alter Rebbe once discussed the matter with his chassidim and concluded that Tefilas Haderech is an independent bracha and does not need to be appended to another.8 Similarly, when the Rebbe was offered a food to make a bracha before Tefilas Haderech, the Rebbe replied that it was unnecessary.9

.5 שוע"ר סי' ק"י ס"ז.

ועיין בפסק"ת סי' ק"י סק"ז.

.7. שוע"ר סי' ק"י ס"ז.

.148 ספה"ש תש"א ע' 148.

9. ראה יומן בנאות דשא ע' 47 וע' 84 ("מען

1. שו"ת הרא"ש כלל א' סימן ד' סב"ל שצריכים להסמיך אלקי נשמה.

.י."ם מרוטנבורג הו"ד בטור סי' ק"י. וראה תשב"ץ קטן אות רמ"ג ופרישה סק"ח

3. ראה שו"ת מהרי"ל החדשות א'. ומלשון אדה"ז סי' ק"י ס"ז משמע שאינו אלא הידור.

.4. שוע"ר סי' ו' ס"ז.

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

לע"ג הת' יוסף ע"ה בן יבדלחט"א הרה"ת נחמן בער שי קריימאן

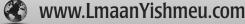
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## **OUR HEROES**

#### Maharil of Yanovitch

Reb Yehuda Leib (Maharil), born around 5509 (1749) to Reb Boruch and Rivkah, was the younger brother of the Alter Rebbe. He was the first systematic transcriber of the Alter Rebbe's maamorim, and transcribed most of the maamorim of Torah Or and Lekutei Torah. When young men came to learn in Liozhna, the Maharil arranged for them to be tested and set-up for their material needs, in addition to his role of generally overseeing them in learning and conduct. Toward the end of his life he lived in the city of Yanovitch and served as the rov there. He passed away in approximately the year 5586 (1826). Many of his responsa were printed in the sefer Sheiris Yehudah.

In the year 5524 (1764) when the Alter Rebbe was eighteen years old, his brother the Maharil suggested that he travel to Mezritch, contending, "To learn, you know. Chassidus however, you do not know at all." With the help of his wife, Rebbetzin Sterna, the Alter Rebbe purchased a horse and wagon and set off for Mezritch together with the Maharil. When they arrived in Orsha along the way, the horse died. The Alter Rebbe discerned that the reason for this was because the Maharil did not get his wife's wholehearted consent for the trip. He told his brother, "It seems you do not need to travel. Return home and I will continue alone. Whatever I will receive, I will share with you."

(לקו"ד ח"ג ע' 966, בית רבי פ"ב)

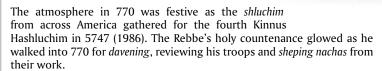
Chassidim once asked Maharil, the Alter Rebbe's brother: What was the zechus by virtue of which his parents were blessed with four sons who were Torah giants? Maharil told them that it was probably due to the yiras Shamayim and the passionate love of Torah of his mother, Rebbetzin Rivka. He illustrated this with the following story:

"My father, Reb Baruch, once traveled on a business trip and brought back an expensive coat as a gift for my mother. Our melamed's wife became so envious that she began nagging him to give her gifts as well. This distressed him, and his usual enthusiasm faded. Noticing this, my mother questioned him and he told her of his troubles. Without hesitation, she took out her coat and gave it to the melamed, saying, 'Give this to your wife, and continue to teach my sons with enthusiasm.' "

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 198)

## A Moment with the Rebb

#### Take Over the World with Yiddishkeit!



The official opening of the kinnus was the Shabbos farbrengen, remembered by all present. The sichos were powerful, and the joyous nigunim were strongly encouraged by the Rebbe's hand motions. The electricity in the air was tangible.

The zenith was reached during the third *sicha*. The Rebbe spoke with passion: "There was never a time like ours, when the world could be peacefully conquered with Torah and Yiddishkeit. There are thousands of children and adults, even here in Brooklyn, New York, without a Yiddishe education...

"We therefore have to call on every Yid, especially to the products of Tomchei Temimim, whom the Rebbeim educated with mesiras nefesh, to serve in the battle to bring Moshiach: 'Become shluchim! Take over the world with Yiddishkeit!"