

# The Weekly Farbrenge



למען ישמעו • בהר-בחוקתי תשע"ז • 410  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELINGER

## TRUE HUMILITY

### THE BEND OF TRUTH

The Rebbe Rashab once described a painting he had seen, depicting a field of grain stalks on a sun-drenched day, in the midst of which a little bird stood perched on one of the stalks.

Many professional artists who viewed this painting were overawed by its lifelike projection. Along came a farmer, took one look at the artwork, and said, "It's all good: the field looks authentic, the grain is drawn well... but the little bird standing on the stalk is unrealistic. For when a bird stands on grain, although it is small and light, its weight needs to somewhat bend the stalk on which it stands. Yet in this painting, the stalk is standing as straight as all the others!"

The Rebbe Rashab concluded with the lesson to be derived: "Everything could be first rate, as if it was alive, but if the 'bend' is missing, then it's all unrealistic. It's missing *emes*..."

(סר"ש תרצ"ו ע' 47)

### A SIGN OF GREATNESS

A *misnagdisher rov* once asked the Alter Rebbe, "I have a *sefer* called *Noam Elimelech* which, as I have discovered, was written by a chossid, a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch. I have put the *sefer* under the bench, but can you tell me something about its author?"

The Alter Rebbe replied, "Even if you would put the *tzaddik* of Lyzhensk himself under your bench, he would be silent and not say a word. Such was his humility!"

(בית רבי ע' סג)

The Rebbe Rashab was once traveling incognito by train, and a Yid sitting in the same car asked him where he was from.

"Lubavitch," the Rebbe replied.

"Do you know the Rebbe?" the Yid inquired

further. "They say great things about him. Are they true?"

The Rebbe answered humbly, "Whoever he is, he is; but he doesn't approach the greatness of his ancestors!"

(שמר"ס ח"א ע' 105)

### CONSIDER

*Why is a 'bend' a sign of life?*

*Why did Reb Noteh justify the Chassidim's conduct? How would someone else have seen it?*

### WHO AM I?

The esteemed chossid Reb Noteh of Malastirzineh was a very simple and humble person, and whenever he visited Lubavitch, he presented himself like a commoner. Once he arrived there on a market day. At such times, so many thieves roamed the streets looking to take advantage of the trade season, that the *Tzemach Tzedek* instructed the local residents not to allow any strangers to sleep in the *shul*. Reb Noteh had just arrived and was about to lie down to rest in the *shul*, when some young men, who did not recognize him, told him that this was not allowed.

Reb Noteh pleaded with them, trying to convince them that he was not a thief. The young men persisted and started to forcefully remove him from the *shul*. Amidst the commotion, the

*Maharin*, Reb Yisroel Noach, the son of the Rebbe, entered the room. When he saw the situation, he shouted, "What are you doing?! This is Reb Noteh!"

They boys knew of Reb Noteh and were shocked and embarrassed. To their surprise, he turned to the *Maharin* and said, "What do you want from them? This was the instruction of the Rebbe! They were right! And who am I, anyway...?"

(בית רבי ח"ב ע' 30)

Hearing so much praise sung about Reb Noteh, one of the younger chassidim wanted to meet this great *chossid* and get to know him. Such an opportunity presented itself during one of his trips to Lubavitch, when he found out that Reb Noteh was also there. He hurried excitedly to where Reb Noteh was being hosted. Just as he was about to enter the inn, he noticed someone on his way out. "Is Reb Noteh from Malastirzineh here?" the young chossid asked, pronouncing the name Reb Noteh with great reverence. The man however, answered with lackluster, "Eh! People exaggerate! There's a tiny village out there called Malastirzineh, and over there can be found a simple Reb Notke... and this they turn into something spectacular."

Hearing such dishonorable words being spoken about Reb Noteh, the young man angrily rebuked the other, even slapping him on his cheek. The great chossid continued on his way and the young man entered the inn, again inquiring where he could find Reb Noteh.

"He just walked out; you must have seen him," he was told.

Realizing that the man he had spoken to earlier had been Reb Noteh, he was filled with remorse and hurried to ask forgiveness. Reb Noteh laughed and asked, "For what? What have you done to me?"

(שמר"ס ח"א ע' 262)

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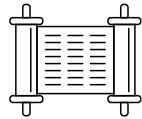
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## OVERCHARGED

I got locked out of my car and called a locksmith. Knowing that I was desperate to get it open, he demanded an exorbitant fee and I agreed. Must I pay it?

Halacha lists certain circumstances where a person who is desperate may claim that he wasn't serious about his commitment and is not obligated to pay.<sup>1</sup> The Gemara gives an example of one who is escaping attackers and agrees to an unreasonable toll for crossing the bridge, and he need only pay the regular toll. Similarly, if a seller demands a high price for a medicine from one desperate patient, the patient need only to pay the standard price.<sup>2</sup>

If a laborer quotes the going rate for a certain professional job<sup>3</sup> (or up to a sixth more<sup>4</sup>), and one tells the laborer to go ahead, one becomes obligated to pay the fee in full. If the timing or conditions are irregular (i.e. late night or poor weather), it is acceptable to charge extra.<sup>5</sup>

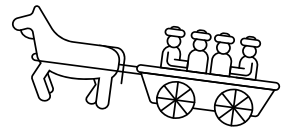
However, if the laborer is charging extra simply because he knows that the person is desperate and will pay more, the person can commit to pay, and then afterwards say that he wasn't serious about paying that unreasonable amount (*meshateh hayisi bach*).<sup>6</sup>

If one disrupted the laborer from some other profitable activity in which he was engaged<sup>7</sup>, one must pay the larger fee.<sup>8</sup> Some say that the laborer can charge the maximum profit he could have possibly earned from whatever he was doing,<sup>9</sup> while others write that whatever amount one agrees to must be paid, no matter how unreasonable.<sup>10</sup> In practice, one can only be obligated to pay the lesser amount (*kim li*).

Once one paid the larger amount, he cannot request that the extra money be returned to him, since if he hadn't been serious, why did he pay?<sup>11</sup>

1. שו"ע חו"מ סי' רס"ד טעיפים ו-ז.
2. ע"פ קצוה"ח סק"א. וראה הרי הלכות - השבת אבידה סי' רס"ד סמ"ד.
3. רמ"א חו"מ שם ס"ז.
4. פת"ש חו"מ שם סק"ז ע"פ ניתה"מ סק"ח.
5. הרי הלכות - השבת אבידה סי' רס"ד ס"מ ומ"ב.
6. שו"ע שם. וראה סמ"ע חו"מ שם סק"יט.
7. וראה קצוה"ח שם סק"ג שאם מפסיד בעבודה זו ביטול ימים ושעות מגולגלין עליו הכל, לשיטתו דלקמן.
8. סמ"ע שם סק"כ. וראה נה"מ שם סק"ח, וכן מפורש בס"י רס"ה חידושים סק"ד.
9. קצוה"ח חו"מ שם סק"ב (ע"פ הרא"ש בב"מ פ"ב סי' כ"ח).
10. הרי הלכות - השבת אבידה סי' רס"ד ס"מ ומ"ב.
11. שו"ע שם ס"ח. (וראה נה"מ שם סק"ח ובקצוה"ח סי' רכ"ז סק"א שיש ראשונים שחולקים על פסק השו"ע במקרים מסויימים. וראה דברי התומים הידועים בחו"מ סי' כ"ה בתקפו כהן סימן קכ"ד שא"א לומר קים לי נגד הכרעת המחבר ורמ"א (ובפרט שאינו מוחזק).

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



## REB LEIB HOFFMAN

Reb Yehuda Leib Hoffman from Tchashnik was a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash. As a young man he was instructed by the Rebbe Maharash to work in the forest but as a supervisor, so not to be overloaded with work. He did so for twenty two years, learning every day for about fifteen hours and with time became a great *talmid chacham* and *mekubal*. Even though he worked in the forest, his real essence was Torah and *avoda*. In the year 5658 (1898) he was chosen by the Rebbe Rashab as a *shadar* to *chazer Chassidus* and collect money. He was also a talented *baal menagen*.

The Friediker Rebbe related:

In the winter of 5652 (1892) I witnessed how the *chossid* and *maskil* Reb Zalman Zlatapolsky was debating with the *mekubal* Reb Yehuda Leib Hoffman about a *maamar* of my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, that they had heard on Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5637 (1876) - about fifteen years earlier. They both spoke with such a passion, Reb Zalman saying this is what the Rebbe meant, and Reb Leib saying that the Rebbe meant something else, both bringing

proofs to their words, and by both of them the *maamar* is fresh and they are living with it, as if they had just heard the *maamar* that very day.

(סר"ש תש"ג ע' 104)

At a farbrengen Reb Leib shared a *vort* that he saw in a *sefer*: It is said that Paroh said the *possuk* "*mi chamocha bo'eilim hashem mi kamocho nedar bakodesh*." That is why the second *kamocho* is written with a *kaf* (though according to *dikduk* it should be a *chaf*) since at that moment Paroh's mouth was full of water.

The *mashpia* Reb Groinem, who was also present, suspected this was Reb Leib's original idea, but Reb Leib said he thinks he saw it in Shoshan Sodos by a *talmid* of the Ramban. They found that *sefer* and two *bochurim* looked through the *sefer* simultaneously from both ends but they did not find it. A while later Reb Groinem told Reb Shaul Ber Zislin (one of the two *bochurim*) that he found the *pirush* in the *Alshich*, and added, "One should not question a *talmid chacham* when he quotes something".

(הלקה והלבוש ע' י"ד)

## A Moment with The Rebbe



### THE GREATEST PIDYON SHEVUYIM

Reb Berl Futerfas relates:

"My father, the Mashpia Reb Mendel, would spend a few weeks every winter fundraising for Russian Jewry. This was a continuation of his work there: to help *Yidden begashmius*.

"One year he was also asked to collect funds for Oholei Torah Cheder. Not knowing what to do, he asked the Rebbe in a *yechidus*, and was encouraged by the Rebbe to fundraise for the cheder as well."

"My father was still troubled. He said to the Rebbe, 'But someone who gave a thousand dollars last year will give the same again, to be split between the two causes. This will mean that it is on the account of *pidyon shevuyim* (redemption of captives) funds?'

"The Rebbe looked at my father and said, 'Saving children from learning *limudei chol* is the greatest *pidyon shvuyim!*'"

(As heard from Reb Berl)

PHONE 347.471.1770

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