

The Weekly Farbrengens



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LOVING LOYALTY (III)

PHYSICAL EFFORT

After his arrest in תקנ"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 Tainy 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 Frierdiker 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' תשנב, ב. לקו"ש ח"ה ע' 80)

CONSIDER

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?

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 קכח, 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 Shavuot.

(גדרים מט ע"ב, שו"ע אדה"ז 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 *minyana* 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)



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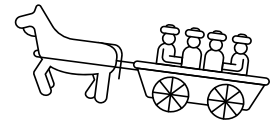
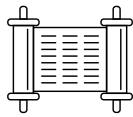
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CHALLAH ON PASTRIES

I heard that *challah* must be separated from cake. Could this be true?

The Torah commands that *challah* be separated from the dough that we knead. Halacha explains that this requirement is limited to dough that will be made into a final product that resembles bread.¹ The obligation applies to flour from any of the five grains (wheat, barley, spelt, rye, oats) when the amount of flour meets the *shiur* of tenth of an *efah*.²

There are only seven liquids which are halachically considered "liquid" (this is particularly relevant for making food susceptible to impurity). They are: water, wine, oil, milk, dew, honey and blood. All other juices are not halachically "liquid." Thus, if one makes dough with fruit juice or vegetable oil and none of the seven halachic liquids, some *poskim* exempt it from *challah*. While the Shulchan Aruch rules that *challah* is required, a *bracha* should not be recited unless some of the liquid is water,³ or halachic liquids make up the majority of the liquid in the dough.⁴ When a dough is made with pure fruit juice, Shulchan Aruch advises mixing in at least a drop of water before the flour and liquid are well mixed together to allow the *challah* to be burned.⁵

A loose and pourable batter that is cooked or fried (e.g. pancakes) is not at all like bread and does not require *challah*.⁶ If it is baked (e.g. cake) and thus gets a bread-like consistency, while some *poskim* are inclined to be lenient in *chutetz la'aretz*, R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach rules *challah* is required.⁷ When the dough is of a loose consistency, the *challah* should be separated only after baking once it acquires a resemblance to bread.⁸ This is of course provided that one used the *shiur* of flour that necessitates *hafrasha* (by regular white flour – at least 2 lb. 11 oz. to separate without a *bracha*).

When thicker dough is made with the intention to be cooked or deep fried afterwards (e.g. pasta, doughnuts) *poskim* debate whether the thick consistency of the dough in the interim necessitates *hafrashas challah*, or the intention to subsequently cook it precludes its resemblance to bread, thus some rule that *challah* be separated without a *bracha*. The Alter Rebbe rules that such dough is exempt.⁹

REB YEKUSIEL LYEPLER

Reb Yekusiel Lyepler, a salt merchant from Lyeple, was one of the great *chasidim* of the Alter Rebbe, Mittlerer Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek, and for a short while, the Rebbe Maharash. He was a *baal midos* and great *baal hispaalus* (full of life). Though a simple man by nature (he even found it difficult to learn Chumash with Rashi), he toiled tremendously until his understanding developed, and for him, the Mittlerer Rebbe wrote the *sefer* "Imrei Bina," a very profound essay in Chassidus.

When he first came to the Alter Rebbe, Reb Yekusiel heard a *maamar* about the *chalal hasmali*, the left ventricle of the heart where the *nefesh habahamis* resides. He climbed up to the second floor window, while the Alter Rebbe was wearing Rabbeinu Tam's *teffilin*, and cried out, "Rebbe! Cut out my left side! I cannot 'deal' with him!" The Alter Rebbe responded, "It says 'Ve'ata mechayeh es kulam', and You give life to all."

From that moment onward, Reb Yekusiel became a different person and his heart opened, for the Alter Rebbe "shined" into his *neshama* the ability to see *Eloku* as one sees something physical.

This 'shine' of his *neshama* (which he would refer to as "the chossid") would come and go and his *avoda* would vary greatly depending on the current expression of his *neshama*. If while walking down the street, it would start to 'shine,' he would start to dance, exclaiming, "Chossid *prishol*, the

chossid has come!" Once while standing in the Borisov post office, waiting to have something done for him, his *neshama* began to shine, and he broke out in dance with the post office clerk...

Traveling through Lyeple, one of the young *Chassidim* stayed over for a number of days, and each day he *chazered* a *maamar* of the Mittlerer Rebbe. Due to his sharp mind and eloquence, he made a strong impression on his listeners, yet Reb Yekusiel was unable to grasp the *maamorim*.

Totally crushed, Reb Yekusiel kept the *yungerman* back for three weeks to teach him the *maamorim*, but it was to no avail. Out of desperation, he left his store in the hands of his family, and traveled to Lubavitch.

Upon arrival, he encountered tens of *yungerleit* learning Chassidus diligently, yet he could not comprehend the *maamar* the Rebbe delivered. Reb Yekusiel stayed up all night crying, fasted and said *Tehillim*. Afterwards, he went for *yechidus* and told the Rebbe what had been happening.

The Rebbe told him that ultimately everything was up to his desire; if there is a will there is a way. Reb Yekusiel decided to stay in Lubavitch, and for four months, he toiled tirelessly in the study and contemplation of the Mittlerer Rebbe's Chassidus. His efforts bore fruit, and his mind opened; as Reb Yekusiel later described, "I felt like a new creation."

(אג"ק אדריי"צ ח"ג ע' שס"ד)

A Moment with The Rebbe



SHADCHAN'S PAYMENT

Reb Nissan Mindel, the Rebbe's longtime secretary and writer, was marrying off his daughter to Reb Sholom Ber Schapiro. On the day of the *chuppa*, the Rebbe approached Reb Nissan and asked him whether the *shadchan* had been paid.

When Reb Nissan responded that he had not, the Rebbe instructed him to "make sure that it's taken care of before the *chuppa*."

Reb Leibel Groner recalls a similar incident: "I remember the Rebbe once told a person an hour before the *chuppa* to make sure the *shadchan* was paid. Or at least he should be

called and told that the check or cash was ready, waiting for him, whenever he wanted to pick it up." (*Levitan Teshurah, Shevat 5763*)

There was a couple who was childless for ten years. When upon the advice of a friend they wrote to the Rebbe, the Rebbe directed them to clarify whether they had hurt anyone's feelings at the time of their marriage.

After a deep investigation, they learned that a woman who had been somewhat involved in their *shidduch* had expected payment, and had not received it. Once they the matter was settled, the couple was blessed with four children.

6. שו"ע יו"ד סי' שכ"ט ס"ב. וראה שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ח סי' רמב"א אות א' שכן הוא לגבי אפיו"ת וואפלט.

7. ערוה"ש יו"ד סי' שכ"ט סעיפים ה"ט"ו ש"לפי השו"ע עשוי לפרפת פטור רק לפי הרמב"ם חייב, אבל ראה מנח"ש סי' ס"ח בהערה שא"י נכון, וכן פסק ג"כ האבנ"ז יו"ד סי' תי"ג סק"א.

8. ראה שו"ת שבה"ל ח"ח סי' רמ"ד.

9. שו"ע יו"ד סי' שכ"ט ס"ג, אבל הש"ך שם סק"ד חולק מציי"ן לפוסקים שסב"ל שצריכה חלה, ולכן לדיעתו יפרש בלי ברכה. שו"ע יו"ד סי' קס"ח קר"א ס"ק ז'.

1. שו"ע יו"ד סי' שכ"ט ס"א וש"ך שם סק"א.

2. שו"ע יו"ד סי' שכ"ד ס"א, וראה שם ס"ב מתי הם מצטרפים.

3. שו"ע יו"ד סי' שכ"ט ס"ט (שחיב) וש"ך שם סק"ט (שמציין לראשונים מחסותפקים בדבר) וראה פת"ש שם סק"ב שדין זה שייך גם ב' משקין.

4. ראה ס' משפטי ארץ - חלה פ"א סי' (ועיי' בהערות שם 28-33).

5. שו"ע יו"ד סי' שכ"ט ס"י, וראה ט"ז שם סק"ז. וכן מועיל שבעת המשקים אבל ראה רעק"א על שו"ה"ג שכשמדובר על הז' משקין בעיני' שהם יהיו רוב ולכן בפנים כתבנו מים.