

The Weekly Farbrengens

MERKAZ ANASH
מרכז אנאש

למען ישמעו • משפטים תשפ"ב • 655
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

PATIENCE FOR ALL (I)

ENDLESS TRANQUILITY

Chazal remind us, "One should always be humble and patient like Hillel, and not impatient like Shammai."

Two people once made a bet: whoever managed to anger Hillel would receive four hundred zuz. Friday afternoon, while Hillel was bathing in preparation for Shabbos, one of the men tried to irritate him. He passed by the door of the great sage and called out with *chutzpa*, "Is Hillel here? Where's Hillel?" Hearing him, Hillel dressed, went outside, and asked how he could help.

"I have a question to ask," said the man. "Ask, my son," Hillel prompted.

This was his question: "Why are the heads of the Babylonians round?" To which Hillel answered, "My son, you have asked a great question. It's because they don't have skillful midwives."

The man left, waited a while, then returned, calling out once again, "Is Hillel here? Where's Hillel?" Hillel once again dressed and went outside and asked how he could help. "I have a question to ask," the man said. "Why are the eyes of the Tarmodayim bleared?"

Hillel listened patiently and replied, "My son, you have asked a great question. It's because they live in sandy places."

Then a third time. "Is Hillel here? Where's Hillel?" Hillel again put on his robe and asked, "My son, what do you require?"

The new question was: "Why are the feet of the Africans wide?" "My son, you've asked another good question," Hillel tolerantly replied. "It's because they live in watery marshes."

The man continued roughly, "I have many more questions to ask, but I'm afraid you may become angry." Thereupon Hillel sat down before him and said, "Ask all the questions you have."

As if he was unaware, the man asked, "Are you the Hillel who is called the *Nasi* of the Yidden?" "Yes," Hillel replied. The man retorted, "If that is you, may there not be many like you!"

"Why, my son?" "Because I have lost four hundred zuz because of you," he replied.

"Always be careful of your moods," Hillel answered.

"You can lose four hundred zuz this time, and yet lose another four hundred zuz - but Hillel will never take offense."

(מסכת שבת ל"א ע"א)

PATIENCE BROUGHT THEM CLOSE

A *goy* once approached Shammai and asked, "How many Torahs do you have?" "Two," Shammai answered, "The Written Torah and the Oral Torah."

"Regarding the Written Torah, I believe you," replied the *goy*, "but not with respect to the Oral Torah. I want you to convert me on condition that you teach me only the Written Torah."

Shammai scolded him and sent him on his way.

When the *goy* approached Hillel with the same request, he accepted him as a *ger*, teaching him on the first day, "*Alef, beis, gimmel, daled.*" The next day Hillel changed the order of the letters. "But yesterday you didn't teach them to me like this," the *ger* protested. "Then you need to rely on me, don't you?" explained Hillel. "Then rely upon me with regard to the Oral Torah as well."

CONSIDER

How did Hillel muster such patience to these strange questions?

Why didn't Shammai display patience to the three *gerim*? Was he not interested in bringing them close?

On another occasion, a different *goy* asked Shammai to convert him on condition that he teach him the entire Torah while he stood on one foot. Shammai pushed him away with the ruler in his hand. When the same *goy* approached Hillel, he was told, "What is hateful to you, do not do to another. That is the entire Torah, while the rest is an explanation; go and learn it."

Another *goy* once passed by a *beis midrash*, and heard the *melamed* teaching his pupils about the garments of the *Kohen Gadol*. The *goy* told Shammai, "I want to convert on condition that you appoint me as *Kohen Gadol*." Shammai pushed him away with the ruler in his hand.

When the *goy* went to Hillel with the same request, Hillel asked him, "Can any man be appointed as a king if he is not knowledgeable in the workings of government? Go and learn how the government functions..."

So the *goy* sat down and began to study Torah - but when he came to the *possuk* stating that a stranger who approaches the *Mishkan* will die, he asked, "To whom does this apply?"

He was told, "Even to Dovid, the king of the Yidden."

The *goy* thought, "If *Bnei Yisroel*, who are called the firstborn son of *HaShem*, have this written about them, how much more so must it apply to a mere *ger*, who comes along now with his staff and traveling bag!"

He later returned to Shammai and asked, "How could I possibly have been fit to be a *Kohen Gadol*? Isn't it written otherwise in the Torah?" He then returned to Hillel and exclaimed, "O humble Hillel! May *brachos* rest upon your head for bringing me under the wings of the *Shechina*!"

Some time later the three *gerim* met and each one told his story. Together, they concluded, "Shammai's impatience sought to drive us out of the world; Hillel's humility brought us under the wings of the *Shechina*!"

(מסכת שבת ל"א ע"א)

A man once asked Rav to teach him Torah. Rav took him in and began by teaching him the *alef-beis*. As soon as he said "*alef*," the man immediately challenged him: "Who says that's an *alef*?" When Rav taught him *beis*, he did the same, so Rav chased him out angrily.

The man then repeated his performance with Shmuel. Shmuel grabbed him by the ear until he cried out, "My ear!" "Who says that's an ear?" Shmuel challenged.

"Everyone knows that's an ear!" the man retorted. "Here too," Shmuel told him, "Everyone knows that this is an *alef* and that's a *beis*."

Sitting down humbly, the man was now ready to study Torah.

(קהלת רבה פ"ז)

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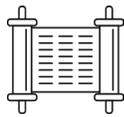


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META-PHYSICAL DAMAGE

I mistakenly treifed up my host's soup. Must I pay for a new soup?

If one damages another person or their belongings, whether deliberately or by mistake, he must compensate the victim for the loss incurred. However, in Halacha, there is a unique category of damage — one that isn't considered "noticeable" (eino nikar) — and it has different laws (see issue 589).

In the Gemara, examples of such damage include making another person's food tamei or rendering his wine yayin nesech. From the Torah's perspective, the item isn't considered "damaged" and no compensation is required. Nevertheless, to deter people from inflicting such damage, Chazal fined one who does so purposely.¹

Kenasos, penalties, are generally not enforced in the present age when batei dinim don't have bona-fide semicha going back to Moshe Rabbeinu. Most poskim hold that compensation for unnoticeable damage is an exception.²

The Ramban defines these cases in that nothing physically changed about the items, only their halachic status. Tosefos, however, holds that if the damaging act is obvious to onlookers as it happens, it is considered "noticeable" even if the effect isn't noticeable after the fact. (In the above examples, it isn't obvious even during the act that the food is susceptible to tuma or his intention with the wine.)³

A practical difference between these definitions may come to play if one accidentally put his friend's food under a bed, causing a ruach ra'ah to rest on the food. According to Ramban's criteria, there is no physical change in the food, and it would be considered "unnoticeable." But according to Tosefos, an onlooker clearly recognizes how the act is damaging. (Interestingly, some write that the impure spirit can only reside on an item with the permission of the owner, and not if someone else placed it there.)⁴

If a person contaminated his friend's food with bacteria, there is a physical change that is recognizable in a lab and it doesn't fall under the category of "unnoticeable." The same applies to erasing files from a friend's computer or infecting it with a virus.⁵

If one stole an esrog and returned it after Sukkos, some poskim hold that there is no noticeable change, and he can return the esrog as is (like chametz after Pesach). Others argue that the near-worthless value of an esrog after Sukkos is obvious (unlike with chametz that wasn't sold).⁶

If a guest treifed up his host's meat stew by accidentally using a milchig spoon, some categorize this damage as unnoticeable and exempt him, while others contend that the milk taste introduced to the meat is considered recognizable and he would be liable.⁷ In practice, while the damager can't be forced to pay since he can claim to side with the minority view ("kim li"), it is appropriate to pay for the loss.

1. ראה גיטין נג ע"א, שו"ע חו"מ סי' שפ"ה ס"א. ונח' אם עשה להנאתו בלי כוונה להזיק - ראה שו"ך חו"מ סי' שפ"ו סק"א (לפטור) וראה שו"ך סי' ס"ו סק"פ"ו (לחייב).
2. ראה ח"י הרי"ם סי' סק"א. וראה משפט המזיק פ"ל הע"ה.
3. ראה שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"א סי' פ"ח מה שביאר דברי הראשונים.
4. ראה שו"ת רב פעלים ח"ד סי' ה', שו"ת שלמת חיים או"ח סי' כ"ג, וסי' משפט המזיק ח"א פ"ל סי"א.
5. ראה שם, חשוך חמד על ב"ק ה' ע"א, וסי' משפט המזיק שם סי"ד.
6. ראה פת"ש חו"מ סי' שס"ג סק"א.
7. ראה פת"ש חו"ה סי' שפ"ה סק"א (וראה רמב"ן בקי" דנא דגמרי ששינוי בטעם וריח נח' הזק הנכר).

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



R. MENACHEM TZVI RIVKIN

R. Menachem Tzvi Rivkin (5629-5708) was a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab and the Friediker Rebbe. Born in Plisa, near Vilna, R. Menachem Tzvi was the son-in-law of R. Eliyahu Leib Itigina of Kublich, who was a son-in-law of the chossid R. Shlomo of Chashnik. He served as Rov of Babinovich, a town near Lubavitch, and World War I forced him to move to Vilna, where served as a Rov for Anash and founded the local branch of Tomchei Temimim.

In 5683, R. Menachem Tzvi was appointed as a Rov in Manchester, and he was a leading Chabad figure in England. Some of R. Menachem Tzvi's chidushim are included in his father in law's sefer Lev Eliyahu, and other material remains in manuscript.

R. Menachem Tzvi's parents had great trouble with children, as all of their previous children died when they were young. His father, R. Yechiel Nossan, travelled to the Rebbe Maharash for a bracha, and the Rebbe gave him a silver earring that he should place on the child's ear as a segula. When the boy was born, they applied the earring to his right ear, and he wore it all his years as a Rov, until his passing at 79 years old.

R. Yitzchok Dubov, who succeeded him in Manchester, described him:

R. Menachem Tzvi was incredibly fluent

in Shas, in Navi (which he review daily after davening), and he learned much Chassidus. He would daven at length with nigunim and tears from the depth of his heart, finishing at 2:00 PM every day, aside from Monday and Thursday when he sat on the Beis Din. He was particular to say the daily Tehillim with the minyan according to the instruction of the Friediker Rebbe, even though he personally was still before Shema (which he would recite in tefillin).

(כפר חב"ד גל' 915 ע' 54)

When R. Menachem Tzvi took up the rabbonus in Manchester, England, the community leaders demanded that he replace his Russian kasket with the customary English top hat. He so despised the modern style that he considered leaving the position over the issue, but the Friediker Rebbe instructed him to wear the hat. Now that it was an instruction from the Rebbe, he kept the hat on his head whenever he could.

One day in 5741, during the Nazi Blitz on England, R. Menachem Tzvi sat at home learning, when a bomb hit his home, causing part of the building to collapse. The door frame of his room was blasted off the wall and it landed on him. His hard top hat was crushed, but he was spared.

(כפר חב"ד גל' 974)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TRIVIALITIES

The mashpia Reb Moshe Veber of Yerushalayim was mekarev a bochur from the Me'ah She'arim neighborhood, and he eventually merited to learn near the Rebbe in 770. In 5723 (1963), before Reb Tuvia Bloi traveled to the Rebbe, Reb Moshe asked him to mention this bochur's name to the Rebbe, and request that Anash in New York assist this bochur with finding a shidduch.

When Reb Tuvia passed on the message, the Rebbe said, "Anash are actually trying to assist him, but in a shidduch

one must focus on essential qualities, and he insists on focusing on tofel detofel (utter trivialities)."

After his yechidus, Reb Tuvia met this bochur, and he discovered that he was refusing to meet girls who aren't from an Ashkenazi background.

"I then realized," said Reb Tuvia, "how insignificant the Rebbe considered the differences between Sfardim and Ashkenazim."

(Leket Uperet, Yerusholaim 5776, page 59)