

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 67

פרשת בשלח תשע"ו

Personal Kindness (2)

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Personal Involvement

The **Baal Shem Tov** said: The way to recognize lessons in *avoda* from the vicissitudes of life is to say *Tehillim* with a fiery heart, asserting oneself to do kindness for a Jew, and *ahavas Yisroel* with *mesiras nefesh*. These are the keys that open the locks to the chambers of mercy, health, *yeshuah* and *parnassa*.

(סה"ש קיץ ת"ש ע' 73)

One *Yom Kippur*, in middle of *chazaras hashatz* of *Shacharis*, the **Baal HaTanya** suddenly removed his *tallis*, left the *shul* and headed towards the home of an ailing *yolodes*. Immediately upon entering the house, he sized up the situation as one of *pikuach nefesh*. He took logs, lit a fire and cooked her a reviving meal.

Although the **Baal HaTanya** could have sent others to help the woman, he chose to do so himself, completely putting aside his lofty *Yom Kippur* *davening* to care for the needs of another Jew.

(רשימות היומן ע' שסא, תו"מ תשד"מ ח"ב ע' 627)

The **Rayatz of Lubavitch** described what had taken place while he was traveling with his father, the **Rashab**:

"One day, after lunchtime, my father was reclining on the couch and appeared to be in another world. He was not asleep but was leaning on his side and had an unusual expression in his eyes. This continued for many hours, until he suddenly woke up and asked me, "What day is it? What *parsha* is it today?" To which I answered.

"The following morning, my father said that he needed to take care of a few errands, entreating me to stay behind in the hotel. A short while later, a package of women's clothing was delivered to our hotel room, and throughout the rest of the day, more & more packages were dropped off. In the evening, my father returned and

said that we were to pack up and leave for Pressburg.

"Upon our arrival there, we began walking down the street and met a *bochur* on the way, whom my father asked for directions to a specific hotel. After the *bochur* directed us, he also informed that the hotel owner had just passed away (at the exact time when my father was reclining on the couch) and his family was now sitting *shiva*. We then walked to a nearby *Yeshiva*, where my father began a learned discussion in with some of the *bochrim*, including the *bochur* we had met in the street. There was one student with whom my father spoke to at length, later praising him highly.

"We then went to the hotel and my father spoke to the widow and her daughters. He encouraged her to marry off her daughters. The woman began to sob, saying that she could not afford clothing for a *chasuna* and didn't know of any appropriate matches for her orphaned girls. My father comforted her and proposed *shidduchim* for them. For the oldest daughter, my father suggested the *bachur* with whom he had spoken to at length at the *Yeshiva*, and for the second daughter, he suggested the *bachur* that we had met in the street. In the end, the *shidduchim* were successful and my father provided the clothing for both of the *chasunos*."

(סה"ש תרפ"ד ע' 62)

No Exceptions!

When **Moshe Rabbeinu** was growing up in Paroh's palace, he would often visit the suffering *Yidden* and sympathize with them. Seeing them carrying cement, he would cry and tell them, "Your suffering pains me! If only I could take your place!" – and he would help them carry their loads.

HaShem said, "You set aside your affairs to share in the suffering of the *Yidden*; I will set aside the higher and lower worlds

to speak only to you."

(שמ"ר פ"א כז)

A woman from a small town near Liozna related:

"Once the **Rashab of Lubavitch** and his son the **Rayatz** stayed in the town where I lived. One day I headed toward the *shochet*, holding a *chicken* in one hand and my young son in the other. At that time, I was also expecting a child. Sitting on the porch of his home, the **Rayatz** saw me struggling, and motioned to me to stop, and though he did not know me, he offered to *shecht* the chicken himself, sparing me from the walk to the *shochet*."

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 193)

As a young married man, the *tzaddik* **Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev** lived in his father-in-law's house. His in-laws, who were wealthy, often hosted many guests, and **Reb Levi Yitzchok** would personally see to the needs of the visitors, preparing bundles of straw for the bedding and proper linen. Seeing this, his father-in-law asked him why he troubled himself when *goyim* could be paid to do these menial jobs.

"Tell me," said **Reb Levi Yitzchok**, "is it right to give a *goy* the privilege of doing such a holy *mitzva*, & then to pay him to boot??"

(סיפור ח' זוין תורה ע' 66)

Consider This

Is personally doing the kindness an advantage for the provider or for the receiver?

Sparks of Greatness

Chozeh of Lublin

Reb Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz was known as the “**Chozeh**” of Lublin. Starting as a *talmid* of the **Mezritcher Maggid**, **Reb Schmelke of Nikelsburg** and **Reb Elimelech of Lizensk**, he later became a great Rebbe in his own right, leading thousands of *chassidim*. He received the title “*Chozeh*,” seer, for his ability to both see the future and perceive the deepest truths of every person. The miracles told of his doing, were widespread and legendary. He passed away on *Tisha Be’Av*, 1815 (תקע”ה).

The *Chozeh* once said to a simple but pious man: “I envy your piety for it is greater than mine. I am a leader and whether I like it or not, everyone looks up to me. If I *chas v’shalom* do something wrong, everyone will say, ‘The *Chozeh* did as follows.’ You, on the other hand, work in the shadows; you can act in whichever way you

want and yet you remain pious. It is clear that you are a truly pious person.”

The *Chozeh* was once asked, “*Chazal* say that *resho'im* don't do *teshuvah* even at the gates of *Gehenom*. How can this be? Do they not see that they are being led to *Gehenom*?”

The *Chozeh* replied, “As they are being led they believe that they are being taken to *Gan Eden*, and are only passing near *Gehenom* to take out the ‘sinners’; since why would they take him, the ‘*tzaddik*,’ to *Gehenom*?...”

The *Chozeh* once said, “In the time before *Moshiach* comes it will be extremely difficult for a *Yid* to hold on to his *emunah*, and it will take great effort to remain an upstanding *Yid*. It will be as difficult as trying to climb a straight wall, that only with tongs is one able to scale it.”

Library Sparks

This week's *Torah* portion, *B'shalach*, speaks about the manna eaten by the *B'nei Yisrael* during their forty-year sojourn in the wilderness.

The *Torah* describes at great length the way it fell from heaven, the manner in which it was gathered, its taste, and how Hashem commanded the Jews to collect only one *omer* (a dry measurement) per person.

“The *B'nei Yisrael* ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land,” the *Torah* states. Then, almost as an afterthought, the *Torah* concludes, “Now, the *omer* is a tenth part of an *epha* (a larger ancient dry measurement).”

Biblical commentators ask why this definition of the *omer* is left for the very end of the chapter. Why wasn't the *omer* defined the first time it was mentioned? The explanation that it would have interrupted the narrative of events is insufficient.

In order to answer this question, let us first pose a more fundamental one. Why did Hashem decree the same portion of manna for every single person?

How is it possible for everyone, young children and adults alike, to be sustained by the exact same amount of food? Aren't a person's nutritional needs directly related to the size of his body?

A similar principle involving a uniform amount of food was applied by our Sages in the prohibition against eating on *Yom Kippur*.

While it is forbidden to eat or drink anything on that day, a person becomes subject to the greatest punishment when he has eaten an amount equal to “a dried date.” This quantity was fixed as the minimum amount of food necessary to sustain life. Again, the size of the person is of no regard.

We see then that there are two distinct types of sustenance: one that is necessary to maintain bodily functions, directly related to the size of the individual and the organ itself, and another, more fundamental type of sustenance, that is required to sustain the person's life-force. This amount does not change from person to person or from organ to organ -- it is exactly the same for every human being.

This phenomenon stems from the two distinct levels of vitality that emanate from the soul to the physical body.

One type of energy is individualized according to the needs of the particular organism it sustains, and the other is a more generalized life-force that keeps the person alive on the most fundamental level. This latter type is always the same for everyone.

The manna -- “bread from Heaven” -- embodied both of these qualities:

On the one hand, a uniform amount was sufficient for every human being, yet at the same time, it was able to supply the person's individual needs as well.

This unique distinction is alluded to in the words “the *omer* is a tenth part of an *epha*” -- the *omer* of manna is part of a larger, fuller entity.

The manna was not only food in the physical sense, but provided spiritual sustenance, too.

When the Jews' forty years in the desert came to an end, it entailed “weaning” them from their heavenly subsistence and their relearning how to live in a wholly physical world once again - the very reason why this point is made *davka* at the end of the narrative concerning the Man.

Halacha Sparks

My Child's Damages

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin

I was shopping with my child in an electronic store. He was looking at an expensive camera and it fell and broke. Am I obligated to pay for it?

The *Mishna* states¹ that working with a child is a “bad deal” since an adult who damages him is liable, but if he damages the adult he is exempt. If a child steals he is obligated to return the object, but if it gets lost or stolen from the child, he has no obligation to repay its value. This is the *halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch*.²

Acharonim discuss whether the child must repay the damages upon reaching the age of *bar* or *bas mitzvah*. Some hold that he is obligated *midrabanan*,³ while others hold that he is only encouraged to pay “*lifnim mishuras hadin*,” beyond the letter of the law,⁴ and this seems to be the position of the *Shulchan Aruch*.⁵ The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*⁶ rules that although he is not required to pay or to do *teshuvah*, he should nevertheless accept upon himself an extra practice as atonement. Works of *Mussar* and *Chassidus* also discuss the need to do *teshuvah* for sins done as a child.⁷

Regarding repaying the damage upon becoming-of-age, some *acharonim* make a distinction between whether the child derived benefit from the damage (e.g. ate a chocolate bar) or not. If he did, the child will become obligated to pay when he gets older, but if there was no benefit he will be exempt.⁸

Parents are not obligated to pay for their child's damages⁹ (unless the parent facilitated the damage¹⁰). In a situation when the child is obligated to pay when he grows up, it is recommended that the father lay out the money for the child lest the child forget later on.

To protect himself, a storeowner should post a sign at the entrance declaring that anyone who comes in with children accepts responsibility for any damage caused by the children, and otherwise he may not enter. Then, the parents will be halachically obligated to pay for all damages.¹¹

1. ב"ק פ"ז ע"א.
2. שו"ע ח"מ סי' שמ"ט ס"ג.
3. ראה ס' חסידים תרצ"ב, ולהרחבת הנושא ראה פתחי חושן ח"ו פ"י סמ"ט ובהערות שם.
4. משנ"ב סי' שמ"ג סק"ט ע"פ ס"ז שם סק"ב ב'.
5. שו"ע ח"מ סי' צ"ז ס"ג, סי' שמ"ט ס"ג וראה שו"ת יבי"א ח"ח ח"מ סי' ו'.
6. שו"ע הרב או"ח סי' שמ"ג.
7. ראה פוקח עוורים פ"ב ד"ה באתי לגני אות ב'.
8. ראה פת"ש ח"מ שמ"ט סק"ב.
9. ראה חינוך ישראל פ"ו סי' ג'.
10. ראה פת"ח ח"ו פ"ה הע' פ"ז מחלוקת אחרונים בהעמיד קטן והדיק עיי"ש.
11. ראה משפטי התורה בב"ק סימן ס"ט הערה 2 (ודומה בקובץ זרע יעקב גליון ה' עמ' ל"ט).

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