



EVERY SINGLE YID (2)

With Mesirus Nefesh

Reb Mordechai HaTzaddik, a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov, had two close friends from his *yeshivah* days, and he very much wanted to share with them his new path in serving *HaShem*. However, he was hesitant to leave his Rebbe. Besides, who knew if he would be able to find them. And even if he did find them, would they listen to him?

True, the Baal Shem Tov had once taught that "one must have *mesirus nefesh* to do a favor *begashmius*, and even more *beruchnius*, for even a single Yid. A *neshama* can descend to this world and live for seventy or eighty years or more, just to do a favor for even a single Yid." Accordingly, Reb Mordechai nearly resolved to begin the journey and seek his friends, but somehow he could not bring himself to actually leave. He decided to remain with the Rebbe for just a few more days, and then he would go.

After a few days, he considered approaching the Rebbe, telling him the whole story, and asking his advice. Then, by means of his *ruach hakodesh*, the Rebbe could tell him where his friends were now. That would certainly save him time. But a moment later, Reb Mordechai rejected the idea. Hadn't the Rebbe clearly said that "one must have *mesirus nefesh* to do a favor for even a single Yid?" So why ask if he should go? And as to asking the Rebbe to use his *ruach hakodesh* to save him some time – what a *chutzpa!* Furthermore, if Reb Mordechai did know where they were, he would have less *mesirus nefesh*. No - he would not ask! He decided to take to the road and search for his friends.

On the day of his departure he rose very early and prepared himself for *Shacharis*. After *davening* he packed a little bag with his *tallis* and *tefillin* and his belongings, and began the journey. He had already passed the city limits when the Rebbe's *shammes* ran after him with a message: the Rebbe wished to speak with him!

When he entered the Rebbe's room, the Baal Shem Tov said to him: "*Boruch HaShem*, you won your battle with yourself!" The Baal Shem Tov gave him instructions and a *bracha* for success, and Reb Mordechai was indeed successful in his mission. After a long journey he located his friends and brought them to the path of the Baal Shem Tov.

(אגרות קודש אדהר"י צ"ח ג' ע' קעד)

The Rebbe once spoke of how precious it is to help just one Yid. One of the *nevuos* of the *Geula* is that *HaShem* will gather together all the Yidden,

one by one, and lead them by the hand out of *golus*. Since the *Geula* is dependent on our *avoda* now, we must learn a lesson from this. Some people, when offered the opportunity of traveling on *shlichus*, only want to go to a place that has thousands of Yidden. They feel that anything less would be a waste of their talents. But just as it is befitting for *HaShem* to take a single Yid to *Eretz Yisroel*, so is it befitting for us to go and help even one single Yid, and kindle within him the light of Torah and *mitzvos*.

On another occasion the Rebbe pointed out two advantages of going to a city with a small number of Yidden. Firstly, one should always run to fulfill those *mitzvos* which others overlook. This is similar to the obligation of leaving everything in order to deal with a *meis mitzva*, a dead person who has no friend or relative to bury him. Secondly, working in a big city with a large Jewish population can leave a person with a feeling of *yeshus*, a bloated ego, which could cause him to be satisfied with his achievements and go off to rest. In a little town, where his activities are less publicized, he knows that he must constantly grow and expand.

(שיח"ק תש"ל ח"ד ע' 385, שיח"ק תשל"ד ח"ב ע' 280)

An Entire World

Chazal write: "Whoever saves one *Yiddishe neshama* is considered as if he had saved an entire world."

(סנהדרין פ"ד מ"ה)

In (1954) Reb Yochanan Twerski, the *Rachmistrivka* Rebbe, visited New York for the *chassuna* of his son. He used the opportunity to visit the Rebbe, whom he knew from his youth, when he had been involved in an underground *cheder* in *Nikolayev*.

At the *yechidus* the Rebbe mentioned a particular student from that *cheder* who had since immigrated to the United States, where he left the path of Torah. The Rebbe added that *Lubavitcher chassidim* had tried to bring him back but to no avail, and perhaps he would be able to influence him. Then and there, the Rebbe picked up the phone and dialed the man's number. "I have Rabbi Yochanan Twerski sitting here. Do you remember him? He is interested in meeting with you. When can you meet?"

On Friday afternoon, as arranged, the former student and the *Rachmistrivka* Rebbe met, and after exchanging reminiscences, the man offered him a generous check. To his surprise, the

Rachmistrivka Rebbe declared, "I won't accept a check until we discuss your *Yiddishkeit*." The man protested that he was a respected member of his Jewish community and even went to *shul* occasionally. However, it soon became apparent that he did not observe even the basics of *Yiddishkeit*.

Reb Yochanan's eyes filled with tears. "Was it for a '*Yiddishkeit*' like this that we invested so much effort in you in the *chadorim* in *Nikolayev*? Each of your teachers put his life in danger – and for what? So you would grow up to be a *yerei Shamayim* and a *frum Yid*. Just look how far you've strayed" The man was moved, and resolved to do *teshuva* and begin observing *mitzvos*.

He again tried to present the check, but again Reb Yochanan insisted: "I will accept it only after I find out that you have kept your word and have done *teshuva*. And how will I know when I don't live here?" He then answered his own question, "When the *Lubavitcher* Rebbe tells me that you did *teshuva*, only then will I accept your donation."

During his remaining few weeks in New York, the *Rachmistrivka* Rebbe received many people who came to him for *brachos* and advice. One day, the phone rang at his host's house and the *Rachmistrivka* *Rebbetzin* answered. The voice on the line asked to speak with Rabbi Twersky.

"Who's speaking?" she asked. "*Doh ret-men fun Lubavitch* (I'm calling from *Lubavitch*)." Realizing it was the *Lubavitcher* Rebbe, she excitedly gave the phone to her husband, who was happy to hear the Rebbe's update: their former student had indeed begun to observe *mitzvos*.

"Reb Yochanan," the Rebbe added, "you think you came here in order to marry off your son? You came here so that a Yid would do *teshuva*. Now this man is *frum!*"

(מפי נכדו הר"ר נחמן יוסף ש"י טווערסקי)

CONSIDER THIS!

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Diet Promises

Reuven is having a hard time keeping to his diet. He commits to pay \$20 for breaking his diet. Is he obligated to pay?

In the previous issue we explained the concept of *asmachta*, a commitment made with the assumption that it will not come to fruition, which is not *halachically* binding. Since Reuven did not think he would fail, his commitment should not obligate him.

There are however some exceptions to this rule:

Sale:

Shulchan Aruch¹ explains that there is a difference between one who obligated himself to do something in the future (*asmachta*), and one who actually sold or bought an item and stipulated it with a condition. For example: Shimon wants to buy Reuven's *sefer* and Reuven agrees to sell it to Shimon if he paints his house, an obviously disproportionate payment. Since Reuven only agreed because he did not believe that Shimon would paint the house, the commitment is not binding. However if Reuven allows Shimon to acquire the *sefer* via a *kinyan*, but stipulates the *kinyan's* effect on Shimon painting his house, the condition is binding and Shimon will only own the *sefer* after painting the house. In this case, the stipulation was only restricting a done deal.

Non-Jew

A commitment of a non-Jew to a Jew in the form of an *asmachta* is binding.² Since in non-Jewish courts *asmachta* is binding, the non-Jew commits realizes that his words may be used against him and is careful not to commit to something unless he really means it.³

If a Jew obligates himself to a non-Jew there is a *machlokes*. Some say that *asmachta* was only instituted by *Chazal* for transactions between Jews, whereas others argue that the concept includes *asmachta* made by a Jew to a non-Jew, since the commitment was not made wholeheartedly.⁴

Tzedaka

Halacha states⁵ that when dealing with *tzedaka*, even a commitment of *asmachta* is binding. According to some⁶ the reason for this is because *mide'oraisa asmachta* is valid, and *Chazal* only invalidated it in mundane transactions.

Therefore in our situation: If the commitment was made to *tzedaka*, Reuven must fulfill his promise. If however it was made to a friend or a mundane cause he is exempt from paying.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your Rov for a final psak.

1. שו"ע חו"מ סי' רז ס"ב. וראה שם סי' ד' לענין תנאי דמעכשיו אי מועיל ללא קנין.
2. ראה שו"ת ח"ס חו"מ סי' סו אות ג, דגם הסבורים דאסמכתא לא קניא אצל גוי היינו דוקא שגוי אינו קונה מישראל ע"י אסמכתא, אבל כ"ע מודי דישאל קניא מגוי שהקנה באסמכתא.
3. ראה מג"א סי' תמח סק"ד. וראה בחי' רע"א על המג"א סי' תמא סק"ב.
4. ראה בשו"ת ח"ס שם. וראה באריכות בשד"ח ח"א מערכת ג אות נה ס"ק יז.
5. רמ"א בחו"מ שם סי' ט. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רנח ס"י. וראה מזה שליטת בספר צדקה ומשפט לר"י בלויא פ"ד הערה צט.
6. ראה מרדכי ב"ק סי' מו. ועוד.

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שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

OUR HEROES

Reb Yitzchak of Hamburg



Reb Yitzchak Halevi Horowitz is known as Reb "Itzikel Hamburger". He was the *Rov* of Brodi and later, after the passing of Reb Yonasan Eibshitz, was appointed as the *Rov* of the prestigious *kehillos* of "AH"U" (Altoona, Hamburg and Vandsbek). Although not a *chossid*, he was held in high esteem by the *Baal Shem Tov*. He was the father-in-law of Reb Meshulam Igra and a *Mechutan* with Reb Yechezkel Ladau, the *Noda BiYehudah*. Reb Yitzchak passed away on the 10th of Iyar, תקכ"ז (1767).



One late Friday night, Rabbi Yitzchak of Hamburg was fully engrossed in his learning. Absentmindedly, Reb Yitzchak starting to move his hand up to flick some from the wick off the candle. At once, he realized what he had done and quickly withdrew his hand. Throughout the following week, he was tormented by the mishap that befell him! The following Friday afternoon, a kettle of scalding water accidentally burned Reb Yitzchak. People rushed to his aid, but Reb Yitzchak's mind was elsewhere. He kept repeating to himself, '*Eish ochla eish*,' fire consumes fire. At that moment, he found peace from what had been tormenting him all week.



Once, Reb Yitzchak came to a town and found no adequate *cheder* for the children. He approached the *Rov* and admonished him. The *Rov* lamented about the poverty of the townspeople and their inability to afford a *cheder*. Reb Yitzchak wouldn't accept this answer. "The *Gemara* says that Hashem only lets the world exist on condition that the *Yidden* accept the Torah. Hashem also made the Jews give a guarantor that the Torah would be kept; the guarantor was the children who will learn the Torah. Of course your people are poor! If you take away the pillars of the building, you cannot expect the building to be very strong! If the guarantor is penniless then what kind of trust do you want from the 'lender'? Go make the *cheder* and then you will see the situation turn for the good!"

לזכות רפואה שלימה וקרובה לשניאור זלמן בן בריינא

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Chinuch – A Priority



Reb Tuvia Blau served as principal of the Beis Chana Girls' School in *Yerushalayim*. Additionally, he was involved in many projects of *hafotzas hama'ayonos* throughout *Eretz Yisroel*.

His two responsibilities often conflicted. Reb Tuvia felt that it would be appropriate to leave his teaching position and dedicate himself entirely to his other important responsibilities. After much deliberation, Reb Tuvia presented the idea to the Rebbe during his next *yechidus*, in Tishrei 5728.

Although the outreach work of Reb Tuvia was very dear to the Rebbe, the Rebbe did not allow Reb Tuvia to leave the school. The Rebbe explained, "You are successful in *chinuch*. I do not think there is anyone in our generation who could take upon himself the responsibility of 'freeing' you from your *chinuch* work in order to concentrate on other activities, worthwhile as they may be."

At the *farbrengen* of Yud Shevat 5733, the Rebbe said, "It was once thought that when there are available funds, they should go towards organizations for *bikur cholim*, or for building new *shuls*. Today, however, it is clear that all available resources should be invested in *chinuch*, for the future depends on *chinuch*."

(*Heichal Menachem*, vol 2, page 216)

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה