



HOLY BUSINESS (2)

SETTING PRIORITIES

Reb Elye Abeler, a chossid of the Rebbe Maharash, was a businessman, and not particularly learned.

One day the Rebbe told him: "Elye, I envy you! You travel to fairs, meet many people, and in the course of your business dealings, you share a Torah thought and inspire the folk around you to study *nigleh* and *Chassidus*. This arouses joy Above, and *HaShem* rewards such 'business deals' with the *brachos* of children, health and sustenance. The larger the fair, the more work there is, and the greater the *parnasa* earned."

(היום יום ט"ז אייר, וראה היום יום ד' ניסן)

In his early years, the Baal Shem Tov would travel from one Yiddisher township to the next, gather a crowd in the marketplace, and speak to them about *ahavas Yisroel*. Once, he explained his message with a *mashal*:

There was a man named Reb Yaakov who was *baki* in the entire *Shas*, and thanks to his studious concentration, he was able to recite fluently all of *Rashi* and *Tosafos* by heart. Once while engrossed in a weighty passage of *Tosafos*, his young son interrupted him to relate a clever thought. Though the thought was not profound, relative to his father's level of understanding and scholarship, the father nevertheless stopped to listen.

Similarly, *HaShem* is occupied with lofty matters, to the point that the *malochim* objected to His creating mortal man who is involved in mundane activities. Yet, when a Yid rises in the morning and hurries off to *daven* with a *minyan*, and then, in the midst of his workday, even though he is busy and preoccupied, he drops everything and runs to *shul* to *daven Mincha*, then listens to a *shiur* in *Ein Yaakov* and later shares it with his family, – *HaShem* then says to the *malochim*: "You *malochim* have no challenges. But just look how man, who unwillingly has the burden of *parnasa*, lives his life!"

And so *HaShem* continues to pride himself before the *malochim* with the conduct of a Yid.

(ת"מ חכ"ג ע' 288)

One of the chassidim of the Rebbe Rashab was a man of scholarly stature who invested his excellent mind in the teachings of *Chassidus*. One day he began to manufacture galoshes and in due course he became deeply involved in his business.

Seeing him, the Rebbe Rashab commented, "I have seen *feet* in galoshes, but a *head* in galoshes...?!"

(לקוטי שיחות א ע' 224)

At a *farbrengen*, a chossid once asked the Frierdiker Rebbe: "How is a businessman, who is busy all day, able to *daven* at length like those who sit and learn and have the time to do so?"

The Frierdiker Rebbe explained that a *chassidisher* businessman should conduct himself like an *eidem af kest* – a young man who is supported by his father-in-law. With his income secure, the young man has no worries, and when his father-in-law drops a hint that his help is needed, he lends a hand, but only after he finishes eating comfortably. Similarly, the *chassidisher* businessman *davens* and learns at ease, and then he goes off to work....

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 20)

The Frierdiker Rebbe writes that in earlier times, people would refer to *parnasa* as *chiyuna*, which means sustenance, whereas in America they say that a person is "making a living" (implying that his earnings are the essence of his life).

(סה"ש תש"ד ע' 83)

The Rebbe describes how a Yid must go about his business. The first thing in the morning must be the *avoda* of *davening*, followed by a session of learning, and only after being steeped in *ruchniyus* can he – unenthusiastically – go to work. In addition, at work he must be distinguishable as a Yid, thinking or saying words of Torah, and while going about his business, having the intention of serving *HaShem*.

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 792)

The Rebbe clarified that in order for a Yid to be capable of elevating the world through his work, it is imperative that he elevate himself through learning Torah before and during his work.

(לקו"ש ח"ג ע' 43)

LEARNING ON THE JOB

A store-owner was once sitting at a *farbrengen* of the Frierdiker Rebbe in Russia, when the Rebbe turned to him and said that he wanted to make a covenant with him. The Rebbe first asked him if he had a *Tanya* in his store and stipulated, "I do not mean a *Tanya* that sits unused, but one that is the focus of all comings and goings."

The Frierdiker Rebbe went on to assure him that if he became more deeply involved in that *sefer*, the communist investigators would not become too deeply involved in his books....

(סה"ש תרפ"ז ע' 116)

Reb Binyamin Kletzker, a prominent chossid of the Alter Rebbe, had a log business. One day, while calculating his earnings, he wrote out all the entries in the column correctly, but when he reached the Total line, he inadvertently filled in the words, *Ein od milvado* – "Nothing exists apart from *HaShem*."

Someone asked him, "How can you be involved in *Chassidus* while you're doing business?"

He replied, "If, while I'm standing before *HaShem*, thoughts of the logs can enter my mind, then surely holy thoughts can enter my mind while I'm dealing with logs...."

(אג"ק ח"ז ע' רג"ז)

Reb Shlomeh *der Geler*, a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab, worked as a builder's assistant, and he and the builder would discuss *Chassidus* while working. Once, while building a wall, they were so raptly engrossed in their chassidic discussion that Reb Shlomeh found himself unintentionally enclosed behind the wall! When they realized this, they had to break it down to take him out.

(סיפורים חסידיים ח"א ע' 201)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why does setting priorities straight, bring additional success in business?
- If *HaShem* wants a Yid to do business, shouldn't he put himself entirely into it?

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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

PLEDGES TO TZEDAKAH

A contractor verbally committed to do work for free in the house of one in need, but later had a change of heart and regretted his offer. Is he obligated to honor the verbal commitment or may he retract it?

- In general, in order for a statement to be considered a *neder* or *shevuah*, it is necessary to use an added expression of obligation. However, a vow made towards *tzedakah*, is binding unless one explicitly states otherwise by saying *bli neder* or the like. Even a resolution of the mind to donate to *tzedakah* must be carried out.
- In fact, *Beis Din* has the right to force a person to fulfill his pledges to *tzedakah*, and if needed, they may confiscate possessions in the amount of the pledge. This is despite the fact that the person accepted this upon himself out of his own good will.
- When a vow concerns a *mitzvah*, one can only nullify the vow via *hatoras nedarim* if he is in a situation of great duress and is unable to fulfill his vow. Though a gift to someone in need is considered *tzedakah*, and a pledge to give a gift to one in need is considered *nidrei tzedakah*, the conditions required to nullify such a vow are less severe.
- Often, such as in our case, an earlier posek would have suggested a *din* tentatively, while later *poskim* accept that as the decisive ruling. The *Maharik* surmises that unlike pledges of money, committing to do work or exert effort on behalf of one in need is not necessarily considered a vow. Later *poskim* write clearly that such a commitment is **not** a vow, and some understand this to be the position the *Tzemach Tzedek* takes as well. It would be wise to consult one's own *posek* for a final ruling on this matter.
- This discussion is regarding the legal **obligation** incurred by verbal commitments, which applies only to *nidrei tzedakah*. However the *Shulchan Aruch* strongly cautions a person to be faithful to **all** verbal commitments, even when they include no *mitzvah*.
- In conclusion: Since there are those *poskim* who do not consider such a commitment a form of *nidrei tzedakah*, the contractor cannot be obligated to follow through with his offer.

ר"ה ו' ע"א, רמב"ם ריש פ"ח מהל' מתנת עניים, שו"ע יו"ד סי' רנ"ז סעי' ג', רנ"ח ס"ו וסי"ב, ר"ג ס"ג, רמ"ח ס"א, ש"ך חו"מ סי' רמ"ג ס"א ק א בשם מהר"ק שורש קלג, נתיבות המשפט סי' ר"צ ס"ק יב, שו"ת צ"צ חו"מ ח"ב סי' פ"ב סעי' ה, שו"ת משיב בהלכה יו"ד ח"ב סי' ק"צ.

לזכות הבחור הבר מצוה יוסף מנחם מענדל שי' טענענבוים
שיגדל להיות חסיד, ירא שמים ולמדן
נדבת הוריו הרה"ת ר' יצחק וזוגתו חי' אסתר שיחיו טענענבוים

לזכות הילד הלל שי'
לרגל יום האפשרניש' שלו - כ"ו טבת תשע"ב
נדבת הוריו הר"ר שמואל וזוגתו חנה שי' פבזר

לזכות הילד מנחם מענדל שי' הכהן בריסקי נדבת הוריו שיחיו

CURRENT EVENTS

ב' שבט

REB ZUSHA OF ANIPOLI

Reb Meshulem Zusha of Anipoli was one of the great talmidim of the Mezritcher Maggid and a brother of Reb Elimelech of Lizensk. After exiling himself for many years, he finally settled in Anipoli, where he began teaching the ways of Chassidus. Throughout his life, he lived in poverty, but served Hashem with tremendous fervor and awe and aroused thousands to do *teshuva*. Reb Meshulam Zusha was the epitome of simplicity, humility, piety, and purity of heart. He was very close with the Alter Rebbe, who took a *haskama* from him on the Tanya. He passed away on the 2nd of Shevat, תק"ס (1800).



The Mezritcher Maggid once called in Reb Mendel Horodoker, Reb Pinchas Baal Hahafla'ah, and the Alter Rebbe, to ask them a question in *nigleh*. They left the Rebbe's room and discussed the matter among themselves. Reb Zusha came over to them, asking what they were conversing about, but Reb Mendel Horodoker told him that this was not his domain. Shortly after, when Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev came in, the chassidim told him the question, and Reb Zusha listened in.

Reb Zusha went to a side and began crying, "Ribono Shel Olam! Zusha does not have a part in the Torah; it does not belong to him..." Later, Reb Zusha approached the Alter Rebbe, for he was ashamed to speak up in front of the entire group, and elucidated a possible explanation. Amazed, the Alter Rebbe declared that this was Torah from *shamayim*. The Alter Rebbe told over the explanation to the Maggid, in the name of Reb Zusha, and the Maggid accepted it.

(משיחת כ"ה חשוון תרצ"ה)



Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg asked the Maggid of Mezritch, "How is it possible to fulfill the words of our chachomim, 'A person is obligated to *bentch* Hashem for the bad the same way he *bentches* him for good?'" The Maggid told him to go to the *bais medrash* where he would find his talmid Reb Zusha, who would be able to explain the meaning of the Mishna.

Reb Shmelke went to Reb Zusha and told him that the Rebbe had sent him here to hear an explanation on the Mishna. Reb Zusha could not fathom why the Rebbe had sent the chossid to him. "Such a question you should ask to someone who had some bad experience, *chas v'shalom*. I, however, have had no such experience, for nothing bad has ever befallen me! How then would I be able to explain this concept?"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין ע' 203)

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

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

THE LEARNING OF THE BOCHURIM

The learning of the *bochurim* was always very dear to the Rebbe. The *hanhala* of the yeshiva in 770 would go to the Rebbe regularly, to report on the *bochurim's* learning, and as to how much they are utilizing their time.

In fact, the Rebbe once explained (at the *Purim farbrengen* of 5745), that the Rebbe's *farbrengens* don't begin until nine thirty p.m., so as not to disturb the *seder* of the yeshiva which extends until that time.

For the *Kiddush Levanah* of Kislev 5739, the Rebbe came out at 8:10 pm, ten minutes after the beginning of *seder chassidus*. The Rebbe told the *mazkirus* (secretariat) to announce that he will be saying *Kidush Levanah* with this *minyana*, on the condition that no *bochurim* disrupt their learning to come out!

לע"נ ר' נפתלי איסר ב"ר יצחק ע"ה ומרת איתא בת ר' נפתלי ע"ה



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