



פרשת בשלח תשע"ב

SIMPLE FAITH

RELYING ON HASHEM

It had been a long, long ride, and the *tzaddik*, Reb Mendel of Bar, who was traveling together with the Baal Shem Tov, felt really thirsty.

The Baal Shem Tov told him, "If you will have true *bitachon* in *HaShem*, you will definitely find water."

Shortly afterwards a *goy* approached them and asked if they had seen horses roaming around, for he had lost his horses three days earlier and had been desperately searching for them. They replied in the negative and then asked him if he had some water.

"Sure I have!" the *goy* answered, and he gave Reb Mendel a drink.

Reb Mendel asked the Baal Shem Tov, "If the purpose of the *goy's* wanderings was just for my sake, to relieve me of my thirst, why did he have to travel for three days?"

The Baal Shem Tov replied, "Actually, *HaShem* prepared him earlier, in case you would exhibit true *bitachon*, because then your desire would have been granted immediately!"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 379)

Faithful to the instructions he had received from *Shamayim*, the Baal Shem Tov once invited a group of his *talmidim* to accompany him in a wagon to a certain town, so that they could learn the *middah* of *bitachon*. The local innkeeper was pleased to see them and welcomed them graciously. The next morning, while they were *davening*, a police officer walked in with a stick in hand, banged the table three times and left. The *talmidim*, baffled, froze in their places, but their host remained as cheerful as he had been before. Half an hour later the same man returned, banged the table three times, and left.

When the Baal Shem Tov asked the innkeeper to explain these strange events, he said, "This is a warning. He's reminding me to bring the rental payment to the *poritz*. It is repeated three times, and if I do not bring the money at that point, my family and I will be thrown into the dungeon."

Hearing this, the Baal Shem Tov told him, "Judging from your calmness, you have the

money ready, so why don't you go and pay your rent? We will await your return, and then we will be able to take our places at your table peacefully."

The innkeeper answered, "Truthfully, at the moment I don't have a single coin, but *HaShem* will surely not forsake me. He will provide the money. Let us eat without haste, because three hours still remain to the time limit."

They ate together unhurriedly, and the innkeeper's face disclosed no sign of his dangerous plight. At the end of the meal, the officer strode in for the third time and once again banged on the table, but the innkeeper, unruffled, remained calmly in his place. After *benching* with *kavana*, the innkeeper went off to get dressed in his *Shabbos* clothing. When he rejoined them and announced that he would now go pay and his dues, the Baal Shem Tov asked him again if he had the money he needed.

Shaking his head, the host answered, "I haven't got a single penny yet, but I am sure *HaShem* will take care of me!"

He took his leave and the Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim* went out to the porch overlooking the road that stretched out before them, to see him off as he set out on his mission by foot.

From the distance they saw a wagon driving towards the innkeeper, which slowed down as he exchanged a few words with the wagon driver. The wagon then continued on its way. After a few moments, its driver backtracked, called out to the innkeeper, and then handed him some money. The wagon then resumed its route towards the inn, where the curious onlookers asked the driver what had transpired.

"I had proposed a deal to the innkeeper," he said, "and offered to buy all the liquor he is due to make this winter, but he didn't agree to my price and continued on his way. Seeing his stubbornness, but knowing his honesty, I decided to give him the amount he had asked for. He then excused himself and hurried ahead, explaining that he was on his way to pay his rent."

The Baal Shem Tov turned to his *talmidim* and said, "Look how powerful is the *middah* of *bitachon*!"

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 379)

COMPLETE TRUST

The *tzaddik*, Reb Noach of Lechovitch, shared the following story with his *chassidim*:

Hirshke, a simple *Yid*, earned his *parnasa* by selling merchandise in the market. Before daybreak he would go out to the countryside to meet the *goyishe* farmers before they arrived in town, and bargain with them over their goods.

One day a visiting *maggid* came to town and spoke of the intrinsic value of living with *bitachon*, and explained that no man ever earns a *kopke* more than what *HaShem* has ordained for him. Hirshke took those words to heart. On the following market day he decided not to rush out early to try and reach the farmers before his competitors did. His anxious wife, seeing him lying in bed, urged him to get up. He told her what he had heard from the *maggid*, concluding that whatever *HaShem* had planned for him, he would be able to buy at home. She did her eloquent best to convince him otherwise, but Hirshke refused to leave the house.

A while later, when they heard the other buyers outside clinching their deals with the *goyim*, she pleaded with him again, but to no avail. Then one of the farmers called out, "We're not selling any more stuff until Hirshke shows up!"

The *goyim* began banging on his shutters, shouting for him to get up. Hirshke got dressed, brought the farmers inside and bought everything at a discounted rate without having to bargain. From that day on, he never had to leave his house, for the *goyim* would come to him, and he made a respectable *parnasa* till the end of his days.

Reb Noach finished the story and added, "This worked for him, because he was a simple fellow whose faith was whole and uncomplicated. It wouldn't be the same for someone else who tried to upgrade his *bitachon* by adding the sophistication of reason...."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 183)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Where does one get such pure *bitachon* from?
- Why can't anyone just follow Hirshke's form of *bitachon*? What then must they do?

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A WAY OF LIFE

COURTEOUS VERSES FRIENDLY

I have heard that it is forbidden for a man to inquire about the welfare of a woman not related to him. Does that mean that it is forbidden to greet a bank teller, for example, by saying "Hi! How are you doing?"

Aside from the relationships that the Torah prohibits, there is an additional prohibition referred to in *halacha* as 'kraiva le'aroyos', which includes engaging in friendly conduct with a person from the opposite gender (aside from some immediate relatives and very young children). This is derived from the *possuk* 'lo sikrevu legalos ervav' – do not approach one who is prohibited to you. The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that this is forbidden *mide'oraisa* and one is required to sacrifice one's life over it.

The *Shulchan Aruch* specifies some examples of behaviors considered expressions of friendliness, including:

1. Touching.
2. Acting in a frivolous manner – e.g. joking together, making a sarcastic comment to someone from the opposite gender about something a co-worker said and the like.
3. Giving personal gifts which create friendship (unlike a general bonus and the like which may be given). This is why it is forbidden for a woman to give *mishloach monos* to a man and vice versa.
4. Inquiring of a woman about her personal life (*sheilas sholom*).

This *din* of *sheilas sholom* applies only to questions of personal nature, such as "How was your vacation?" etc.; but not to salutations customary in our society such as 'Hello', 'Good Morning' and the like, because this impersonal gesture of etiquette will not elicit feelings of friendship.

Therefore, since in today's society, initiating a conversation with a bank teller by asking 'How are you doing?' is usually an expression of etiquette, rather than a genuine curiosity to know the answer, it would be permitted.

רמב"ם הל' אסו"ב פכ"א ה"א, רמב"ן בהשגות על ספהמ"צ ל"ת שני"ג, ח"מ וב"ש סי' כ' ס"ק א, שו"ע אבן העזר סי' כ"א סעי' ו, וי"ד סי' קנז סעי' א, ערוך השולחן שם סעי' ח, ספר יצא אדם לפעלו פרק א.

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

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שיגדלוה הורי לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

נדבת הורי ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו חי' מושקא שיחיו עקהויו

לזכות הילדה אסתר רבקה תחי קאנאן שיגדלוה הורי לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

לזכות הילדה שרה תחי כהן שיגדלוה הורי לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

CURRENT EVENTS

ט"ז שבט

RABASH

Reb Boruch Sholom, known as the Rabash, was the eldest son of the Tzemach Tzedek.

His great grandfather the Alter Rebbe, expressed a profound love for him. He was extremely modest and refused to become the Rebbe after his father's passing, unlike his other brothers who all became Rebbes. Both the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash would seek his counsel regarding communal matters. He passed away on the 16th of Shevat, תרכ"ט.



The Alter Rebbe taught Reb Boruch Sholom the *trop* (tune) of Tanach, and Reb Boruch Sholom taught them to the Rebbe Maharash. Even though the Rebbe Maharash had a long breath, singing these notes would strain his heart.



The Rebbe Rashab was once in the home of Reb Yuzik Gurevitz in Warsaw, and there were many chassidim there; the house was packed, and some attendees began pushing. The room quieted, and the Rebbe Rashab began relating, "Once, when the Tzemach Tzedek was saying Chassidus, his eldest son Reb Boruch Sholom put his foot on the fireplace and wanted to lift his second foot unto it as well. However, because the room was jam packed, he was unable to lift his foot, and was forced to remain in that position for the duration of the entire *maamor*."

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"JUST START"

The Rebbe would not only demand of chassidim to accomplish more than they were doing, but to accomplish more than they thought they were capable of.

Harav Yitchock Meir Hertz, the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Lubavitch London, reminisces, "When I was a *chossan*, I went into *yechidus*, and the Rebbe told me to finish the entire *Shas* within the first year of my *chassunah*. In a state of shock, I mumbled to the Rebbe that I don't see how I would be able to do accomplish such an undertaking, in so short a time.

The Rebbe smiled to me and replied: "*Du heib on, vestu shoin gefinen tzait!* (You start; you'll already find the time)." And indeed, Harav Hertz accomplished the Rebbe's directive, much to his own surprise.



לזכות הרה"ת ר' מנחם מענדל והת' אהרן שיחיו שפוטץ