

DEALING HONESTLY (1)

Question #1

When a person passes on to the next world, the first question the *Beis Din* on high asks him is, "Were your business dealings honest?"

(שבת לא ע"א)

A certain Yid was so occupied with his business throughout the entire week that he only had *Shabbos* to devote himself to learning *Torah*. He felt so bad about this that he asked a *chochom*: "What can I do that will be equivalent to all other *mitzvos* and will bring me to *Olam HaBa*?"

The *chochom* answered, "Since you are a businessman, make sure to deal honestly with both *Yidden* and *goyim*; tilt the scale to benefit your customer; and always do your business dealings with a smile."

The *chochom* concluded, "If you do so, may my portion in *Olam HaBa* be like yours!"

(ספר חסידים אות שזה)

Although Lavan tricked Yaakov Avinu countless times, Yaakov Avinu remained honest with him, never taking anything he was not entitled to. He watched over Lavan's sheep in the sweltering heat and bitter cold, and replaced any lost sheep even when the loss was entirely not his fault.

(ויצא לא, לב-מ)

The *Shulchan Aruch* goes into great detail when it *paskens* that it is forbidden to mislead anyone, whether a *Yid* or a *goy*, in business dealings, even when an extremely small amount is involved.

A few examples: If a customer is expecting a certain product, it is forbidden to sell him something of lesser quality. One is not allowed to polish a product so it will appear to be of superior quality. A worker must work faithfully, doing his job with the utmost diligence. If one gives his word to make a deal, he must abide by his word of honor. Indeed, a *yereh Shamayim* should not only keep his *word*: he should even abide by a decision he made *in thought*!

(שו"ע אדמור' הרזקן בכ"מ בח"מ, ובאו"ח ס"י ק"נ)

The *amora* Rav Safra had an item for sale. One day while he was reciting *Krias Shema*, someone approached him and offered to buy it for a

certain price. Since Rav Safra did not respond, the man assumed that he wanted more money, and offered a higher figure. When Rav Safra finished, he sold it to the man at the original price, since in his mind he had agreed to that offer.

(מכות כד ע"א ברש"י)

Honesty brings Success

The Torah promises that if a person deals honestly, his earnings will increase, whereas if he is dishonest he will lose his money. Furthermore, one who deals honestly will be rewarded even for business he did not do, for had he done so, he would have surely been honest.

(ויקרא רבה טו, ז, ט' חסידים אות תתרס"ב)

Once, as Eliyahu HaNovi was walking on his way, a man approached him and asked him many questions in Torah. After Eliyahu HaNovi answered each one, the man related the following:

"A *goy* once came to my home to buy a large amount of dates. I only had a small measuring container, and therefore needed to measure small amounts and then total all the measurements together. Because of this, and the fact that my house was dark, I miscalculated and gave him less than I was supposed to. Later, I used the money to buy a jug of oil, and put it in the same place where I had sold the dates. A short while later the jug broke, and all the oil spilled out."

Eliyahu HaNovi explained to him that the Torah forbids stealing from a *goy*, just as it forbids stealing from a *Yid*.

(תנא דבי אליהו פרק טו)

Two business partners once asked the *tzaddik* Reb Meir of Premishlan for a *bracha* for success in an upcoming commercial venture.

"Have you written out your partnership contract?" the *tzaddik* asked.

"No," they said.

Reb Meir wrote the letters *alef, beis, gimel, daled* on a piece of paper and handed it to them.

Seeing their amazement, he explained, "In these

four letters, the secret to success is hidden. Each one is an initial: *alef* is *emunah*, *beis* is *bracha*; *gimmel* is *gneiva*, and *daled* is *dalus*. If your transactions are trustworthy, they will be blessed; if you cheat, you can expect to become poor..."

(סיפור חסידיים זין תורה ע' 237)

Shlomo HaMelech writes, "Treasures of wickedness will not avail, but *tzedaka* will rescue from death." Since the word *tzedaka* is related to *tzedek*, which means "righteousness," the Meiri explains this *possuk* to mean that money acquired in a dishonest manner will not bring benefit to a person; benefit can only come from money that is acquired *righteously*.

Another explanation of the above *possuk*: *Tzedaka* – in its usual sense of "charity" – that is given from dishonest money will bring no benefit, as it will fall into the hands of undeserving recipients. However, *tzedaka* given from righteously-earned money will find its way to worthy causes, and thereby protect the donor from death.

(משל יב, מאורי שם, שבט מיהודה שם)

The Rebbe added that recognizing how a favorable livelihood comes from HaShem will lead a person to deal honestly. For what use is there for money made dishonestly, if it will be spent on doctor bills and other unfortunate expenses?

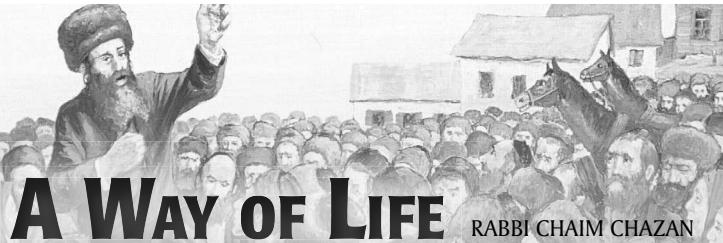
(תו"מ חי"ב ע' 107)

The *tzaddik* Reb Menachem Mendel of Rimanov asked why we find that pure young children who daven and learn with fervor, later leave that path entirely. He explained that this is often a result of being fed food bought with dishonest money, which breeds negative *middos* and desires just like non-kosher food.

(אגרא דפרק אות ככו)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is dealing honestly more significant than all other *mitzvos*?
- Is success from honest business or loss due to dishonesty a punishment or a natural consequence?



A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

Yiddishe Names

Is there any halachic objection to using a non-Jewish name?

- There are several classic *poskim*¹ who categorically forbid a Yid to use a *goyishe* name, as part of the general prohibition to imitate *goyishe* customs and culture. Indeed, one of the three practices that kept the *Yidden* distinct from the *Mitzriyim* and served as a merit for them to be redeemed from *Mitzrayim*, is that they did not change their names².
- However, Rav Moshe Feinstein³ brings many examples of great *tzadikim* and *rabbonim* who had non-Jewish names. He therefore says that the need to have a *Yiddishe* name to be distinct from the *goyim* was only necessary prior to the giving of the Torah. However, once the Torah was given, *Yidden* are distinct by virtue of the very fact that they adhere to the ways of the Torah, and hence there is no prohibition to use non-Jewish names.
- Some⁴ reject Rav Moshe's proof and explain that once a name has become entrenched and accepted among *Yidden* and many *Yidden* use that name, using that name cannot be considered imitating the *goyim*. However this would not permit the use of distinct non-Jewish names.
- However, we do find early *poskim*⁵ allowed the *marranos* who escaped from Portugal to use their *goyishe* names when writing to their acquaintances in Portugal or for business purposes. Some⁶ suggest that those *poskim* understood that the *Yidden*'s merit in *Mitzrayim* was the fact they didn't change all three things - their dress, language and names, but changing merely one of those three would not be a problem.
- Moreover, perhaps the *poskim* who forbid *goyishe* names were referring to people who changed their names to separate themselves from their Jewish brethren, and assimilate into the society around them, like the *maskilim* in days gone by. But perhaps they would not forbid a person who is proudly *medakdek bemitzvos* to use a non-Jewish name merely because it is more familiar to his non-Jewish business associates⁷.
- All of the above is from a purely halachic perspective. However, as is well known, according to *Kabbalah* a person's name serves as a conduit for his *chayus*, and therefore it is important to use one's *Yiddishe* name. Indeed, the Rebbe addressed this issue, encouraging the use of *Yiddishe* names.

1. צפנת פעינה סי' רעה, מהר"ם שיק יו"ד ס"י קצט, מהר"ט צהילון החודשות סי' קנה.

2. קסטט, מהר"ג ח"ב ס"ק קצט.

3. מנוחת אשר שם.

4. שם.

5. שם.

6. שם.

7. שם.

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

OUR HEROES

Reb Moshe Leib of Sasov

Reb Moshe Leib of Sasov was a *talmid* of Reb Shmelke of Nikelsburg and Reb Elimelech of Lizensk. He became a great Rebbe spreading Chasidus to thousands of chasidim throughout Galicia. He was known for his *ahavas Yisroel* and care for fellow *Yidden*. His *toros* are collected in the *seforim* "Chidushei Ramal." Reb Moshe Leib was niftar on the 4th of Shvat, תקס"ז (1807).



Reb Moshe Leib was not only concerned about the well-being of human beings, but of animals as well. When going through the market, he would help wagon drivers ease the load of the horses by loading the wagons properly. Once, he was seen at the fair, giving water to the sheep on sale whose owners had obviously not cared enough for.

Reb Moshe Leib would say: "I learned *ahavas Yisroel* from two peasants. I once saw two peasants drinking in a tavern, and one asked the other, 'Do you love me?' 'Sure,' the other replied. The first peasant rejoined, 'But how can you say you love me when you do not know what I need!?' From this I learned that true love is when you know what the other person needs."

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

"How Many Prokims Tanya Do You Know?"

Rabbi Noach Vogel relates:

In the year 5736, I spent *Sukkos* with the Rebbe. Among the many fond memories I cherish from that visit, there is one that shall never leave me. It was *Yud Gimmel Tishrei*, during *davening*, and a young *bachur*, a guest like myself, was snapping photographs of the Rebbe. He had a strategic position, and looked very proud of himself. After *davening*, the Rebbe turned to go. On the way out, he passed the *bachur* and said something to him. From afar, I could see his face turn white.

After the Rebbe left the room, the *bachur*, still quaking, told to us what the Rebbe had told him: "Vifil prokim Tanya kenstu baal peh?" (How many chapters of *Tanya* do you know by heart?)

A similar incident is recorded in a chossid's diary of *Chol Ha'moed Sukkos* 5741. The Rebbe told a *bachur* to learn twenty two *p'rokim* of *Tanya* by heart, to compensate for the twenty two pictures he had taken!

לזכות הילד ביבנין הכהן שי' גוטניך
שיגידלו הורי לתורה לחדפה ולמע"ט
נדבת זקנוי הרה"ת מאיר הכהן ורعيתו שיינדל טעמא שייחיו גוטניך

לזכות הילד דיביכא רחל תה"י
שיגידלה הורי לתורה לחדפה ולמע"ט
נדבת הורי הרה"ת לי מנחם מענדל ורعيתו חי' מוסיא שייחיו גראנער

לע"נ ר' חיים יצחק בעיר הלוי בן ר' בנימין זאב הלוי ע"ה
נפטר בשם טוב טו"ב בטבת ה'תשס"ט



347.471.1770



info@LmaanYishmeu.com



www.LmaanYishmeu.com