



BEING EARNEST

The Need to be Earnest

Shlomo HaMelech writes, "An arrogant sinner is a scoffer," for he will constantly mock others and ignore rebuke.

Leitzonus, mockery, is a negative trait and is forbidden. Rabbeinu Yona explains that a *letz* is a person who is constantly involved in idle talk, mocks others, and ridicules what they do and say. This negative trait comes from a lack of *yiras Shamayim* and from *prikas ol*.

(משלי כא, כד וברש"י ומצודות, פי' רבינו יונה)

Chazal say that one word of *leitzonus* can undo the effect of a hundred words of reproof. The *tzaddik*, Reb Mendel Rimanover, would say, "With *leitzonus* a person can rebuff anything." He once pointed out the window towards the sky and said, "Such a person can even deny that this is the sky!"

(ראה דרך חיים ט, ג, תפלה למשה פ' ויצא)

The Mittler Rebbe writes that although *leitzonus* is not an actual *aveira*, it is worse than that. When one commits an *aveira* because his *yetzer hara* wins him over, or even because of a lack of belief that *HaShem* is watching him, it is likely that he will do *teshuva*. However, a person who takes everything lightly will not easily do *teshuva*. Although he may not have evil intentions, his attitude is the complete opposite of fearing *HaShem*, and he therefore is unable to see the *Shechinah* or accept reproof.

(דרך חיים ט, ג)

A *bochur* once told the Rebbe at *yechidus* that he suffered from speaking *leitzonus*. The Rebbe advised him to learn *Derech Chaim* by the Mittler Rebbe and to become involved in the *avoda of davening*.

(היכל מנחם ח"ב ע' ריז)

Chazal say that there is one type of *leitzonus* that is good: mocking *avoda zara* and other negative things.

A well-known example of this is the confrontation between Eliyahu HaNavi and the false *nevi'im* of the *Baal* on Har HaCarmel. He challenged them to put the truth to the test by

seeing which *mizbeiach*, theirs or his, would be answered by fire from Above. The false *nevi'im* promptly agreed. For half a day they cried out to their *avoda zara*, asking that the fire come down on their *mizbeiach*. When there was no response, Eliyahu HaNavi poked fun at them, saying, "Cry out loudly! Maybe he is conversing, or busy in the bathroom; perhaps he is sleeping and you will wake him up..."

(ע"ז מ"ו ע"א, [צדקת הצדיק אות רס], מלכים א יח, כו ופרש"י)

Poisonous Scorn

Chazal say that every generation has *leitzonim*.

During the time of Dovid HaMelech, scoffers would stand by his window and taunt him, "Dovid, when will the *Beis HaMikdosh* be built? When are we going to the House of *HaShem*?" In response, Dovid HaMelech would say that although these people had come to anger him, he was happy that at least they talked about the *Beis HaMikdosh*.

(ירושלמי ברכות, פ"ב ה"א)

Eager to gain the support of the Yidden against Moshe Rabbeinu, Korach gathered a crowd and spun a story that was filled with *leitzonus*: "There was once a widow who lived in my neighborhood with her two daughters. She owned a field. When she wanted to plow, Moshe Rabbeinu warned her not to plow with an ox and donkey harnessed together, and when the soil was ready to be planted, he told her not to plant *kilayim*. When the harvesting season arrived, she was instructed to set aside *Leket*, *Shikcha* and *Peia*, and when the grain was ready to be piled up for threshing, Moshe Rabbeinu reminded her to give *truma* and *maaser*, which she did.

"To ease her burden, this widow finally decided to sell the field and buy two lambs, hoping to be able to enjoy the profits of their wool. When the lambs gave birth, Aharon HaKohen came to ask for the firstborn, saying that this was what *HaShem* had instructed. The time came to shear the animals, and Aharon was back, asking for the wool that was shorn first.

"Completely frustrated, the widow cried out, 'I have no more energy for this man! I will just

shecht the lambs and eat them' – but once they were *shechted*, Aharon asked for certain parts of the meat. On hearing this, the widow moaned, 'Even now that I've *shechted* the lambs, I have no peace. I'll give them up to *HaShem*. They will now be *cherem*!' Aharon said, 'Now it is all mine, for *HaShem* said that all *cherem* belongs to me.' He took the animals and left the widow crying with her two daughters."

This was how Korach ridiculed everything holy.

(ילקוט שמעוני פ' קרח)

Staying Clear

Rebbi Akiva would advise: "Do not spend time among *leitzim*, so that you will not learn from their ways." And Rabbeinu HaKadosh instructed his children: "Do not live in *Shechantziv*, for that city is inhabited by *leitzim*, and you may learn from their ways."

(אבות דרבי נתן פרק כ"ו, פסחים ק"ב)

Rambam writes: Whoever is interested in cultivating proper behavior should keep his distance from *leitzim* and not converse with them. For scoffers and wicked people begin with foolish talk, and eventually come to speak derogatively about *tzaddikim*. This leads them to speak about the *nevi'im* and find fault in their words, and in the end they come to speak against *HaShem* himself.

(רמב"ם הל' טומאת צרעת בסופו)

The Rebbe often spoke of the need to ignore scoffers. The Rebbe pointed out that the first *se'if* of the first *siman* of the first *sefer* of *Shulchan Aruch* says, *Al yeivosh mipnei hamal'igim* – "One should not be embarrassed by scoffers," for observing this principle is the foundation for the observance of the entire *Shulchan Aruch*.

(אג"ק ח"ו ע' שמו)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why is mockery spiritually poisonous? Why is it more necessary to stay clear of mockers than from sinners?
- Did Korach give a logical argument against Moshe Rabbeinu? How then did he succeed in riling up his followers?

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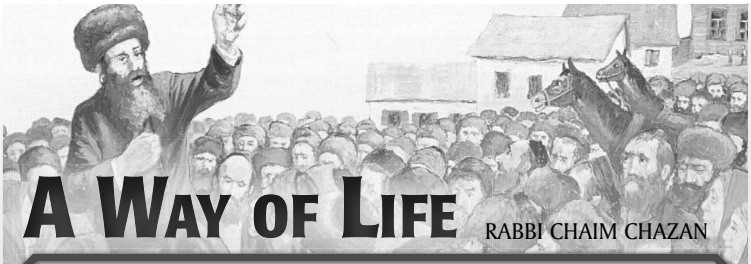
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OUR HEROES

י"ג שבט

Rebbetzin Shterna Sara



Rebbetzin Shterna Sara, the wife of the Rebbe Rashab, was a daughter of Reb Yosef Yitzchak of Avrutch and a granddaughter of the Tzemach Tzedek. When the Rebbe Rashab was five years old, the Tzemach Tzedek arranged the *shidduch* between the two. Rebbetzin Shterna Sara did a great deal for the benefit of the Rabbeim and when Tomchei Temimim was established, she founded a women's committee to aid the *yeshiva*. She joined her husband, and later her son, throughout all their years of wandering and suffering, until eventually coming to the shores of America, where after two years, on the 13th of Shvat 1942) she passed away. Her resting place is right across the *ohel*.

A Side Job for a Rov

- Is it permissible for a person in a position of spiritual authority (such as a rov of a community) whose salary is insufficient, to engage in a secular vocation on the side to supplement his income?
- There is a fundamental dispute among the rishonim¹ whether it is permissible at all to accept remuneration for studying or teaching Torah. Normative halacha as practiced today in virtually all communities allows rabbonim, teachers and kollel yungerliet to take salaries. On the contrary, in our generations poskim² discourage the once-held-virtuous practice of preferring to benefit by the toil of one's own hands over using one's Torah knowledge as a means to earn a livelihood. Our minds and hearts are diminutive in comparison to those of previous generations and even with full time study we don't manage to produce scholars like those that worked in the past.
- The Alter Rebbe writes in his Shulchan Aruch³: "One who is appointed as a leader of the community may not perform any labor himself in the presence of three people, so that his dignity will not be compromised. Instead, the community is charged with providing him with a respectable livelihood, so that he will not need to perform manual work at all. Indeed, they must make him wealthy. This is derived from the description of the kohen gadol as being "the most prominent of his brethren" which is interpreted as a charge to "make him prominent due to the wealth of his brethren." This applies to the community leaders in all generations and regions⁴."
- Poskim⁵ include publicly known non-manual labor such as an accountant or musician in this prohibition. There is a dispute⁶ among poskim whether work in private on a permanent basis is permissible.
- [It should be noted: According to the above mentioned rishonim who prohibit taking money for dispensing Torah knowledge, the prohibition for a rov to labor must apply only to work beyond his livelihood⁷ or they may hold that private labor is permissible].

1. רמב"ם הל' ת"ת פ"ג הל' י. ובפיה"מ" אבות פ"ד מ"ה, וכ"כ רבינו יונה שם. ועי' ב"י יו"ד רמ"ו ד"ה ומ"ש דלא נהגו כמותם, אלא כהתשב"ץ ח"א סי' קמב-קמה שהאר"ן לחלוק על הרמב"ם, ועי' רמ"א יו"ד סי' רמו סעי' כא.
 2. עי' תשב"ץ ח"א סי' קמה נ"ד א. רמ"א יו"ד רמו סעי' כא, ראשון לציון לבעל האר"ה הק"ש, ועי' אג"מ יו"ד ח"ב סי' קטז שכתב שאלו המתחסדים מצד שיטת הרמב"ם הוא בעצת היצה"ר.
 3. הל' ת"ת פ"ד סעי' טז.
 4. וראה בארוכה דברי רבינו בתו"מ ח"ג ע' 160.
 5. שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ב סי' מו אות ה, ע"פ החות יאיר סי' רה.
 6. תשב"ץ שם סי' קמב, וחלק עליו בעין אבות מהרי"ע ז"ל, ה, וראה שו"ת ברכה יו"ד סי' רנה אות ב' שהשיב על דבריו.
 7. ראה אריכות בשו"ת דברי יהושע ח"ג סי' לה.

The Rebbetzin once related the story behind the birth of her son the Frierdiker Rebbe:

A number of years had elapsed since our marriage and I was yet to have a child. This bothered me very much, especially because I was young and away from home (in Avrutch).

On Simchas Torah, a *kiddush* was made in the home of my father-in-law the Rebbe Maharash, and a "Mi Shebeirach" was said for all those present. Afterwards, a "Mi Shebeirach" was made in the women's section for all the women, but for whatever reason, they forgot to mention my name. Although they soon remembered and made up for it, I was still very distressed and sad.

After the *kiddush*, I went to my room and thought about how I had not yet borne any children, about my loneliness, and what had occurred at the "Mi Shebeirach." My heart constricted and I burst into tears. In the midst of crying, I fell asleep.

In my dream, I saw a Yid entering the room and asking, "Why do you cry, my daughter?"

I poured out my heart to him, and he responded, "Do not cry. I promise you that this year you will have a son. But there are two conditions: The first is that immediately after Yom Tov you give eighteen rubles from your personal money to *tzedakah*. The second condition is that others should not know about this."

After he concluded, the Yid disappeared, but soon returned with another two people. He then repeated his promise and the two conditions, and they agreed. The three blessed me and then departed.

When I told my husband about the dream, he immediately related it to his father. My father-in-law called me in and asked me to repeat it with all its details, and then asked me to describe the people I had seen. Hearing my description, he said, "The first one was my father (the Tzemach Tzedek), and the other two were my grandfather (the Mitteler Rebbe) and my great-grandfather (the Alter Rebbe)."

After Yom Tov, I had to fulfill the two conditions, but from where would I get eighteen rubles of my own? I owned a dress, designed with the current fashion, which my father-in-law had not wanted me to wear, and it was hanging in my closet. I called a woman who was involved in communal affairs and asked her to sell the dress, stipulating that no one should know of this, for what would people say if they heard that the daughter-in-law of the Rebbe was selling a dress...

In this way, together with other similar schemes, I managed to pull together the required sum and distributed the money to *tzeddakah*. That year, our son (the Frierdiker Rebbe) was born.

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

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

What Does the Rebbe learn?

One of the Rebbe's *shluchim* to London, Reb Shmuel Lew, relates:

As a *bochur*, I always felt that I was not dedicated enough to the Rebbe, as I should be. At a *yechidus* in the year 5721, I asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* and advice as to how I may be more *mekushar* to the Rebbe.

The Rebbe answered me, "*Lern vos ich lern*. (Learn that what I learn)." Of course, I didn't have the *chutzpah* to ask what the Rebbe learns, and so the *yechidus* continued.

As I was walking out, with my back to the door, I stopped, and gathered the courage to half ask – half state, "The Rebbe said to learn what the Rebbe learns..." and I let the sentence hang. The Rebbe smiled and finished my sentence, "...and I learn *nigleh* and *chassidus!*"

לזכות שלום דובער בן לובה לרפואה שלימה

לזכות הילד מנחם מענדל הכהן שי' קוגן שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

לזכות הילדה שטערנא שרה תח"י בלעסאפסקי שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט

לחיווק ההתקשרות לכ"ק אדמו"ר
נדבת א' מאנ"ש

לזכות הת' ישעי-הו סתהון וב"ג אסתר מרים גראסבוים שיחיו
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעתומ"צ