



TOILING IN TORAH (1)

The Need to Toil

Rebbi Yitzchok said: "If someone says that he toiled in Torah but did not find (meaning that he was not successful), do not believe him. If someone says that he did not work hard but did find, do not believe him either. Believe the person who claims to have toiled and found (*Yagati u'matzasi - taamin*)."

Rava said: "Every physical body was created to work. Fortunate is he who merits having his work and effort in Torah."

(מגילה ו' ע"ב, סנהדרין צ"ט ע"ב)

Eliyahu HaNavi related: A *talmid* who was not well versed in *halacha* once complained to me, "I learn Torah and strongly desire it, and wait that it come to me, but it does not." I explained to him that only a person who gives up his life for Torah, for the honor of *HaShem*, merits this.

(תנא דבי אליהו רבה פכ"ב)

Based on the *Zohar*, the Alter Rebbe explains that just as the Yidden toiled physically and then went out to receive the Torah, so too we must toil in learning Torah, to bring about the final *Geula*. The Rebbe adds that even the laziest person would choose such work over the labor in *Mitzrayim*.

(תורה אור פ' וארא, שו"ת ק"ק תש"מ ח"ג ע' 636)

No Shortcuts!

The Alter Rebbe writes that since *HaShem* demands of us to serve Him "with all [our] *nefesh*," every individual is required to learn to use his skills to the utmost. One who is capable of learning something difficult cannot discharge his duty by learning something easy.

The Frieddiker Rebbe directed that everyone must have an in-depth *shiur* in *Gemara* (*Piyun*) and not be satisfied with simply learning *Mishnayos*, important though it is. The Rebbe explained that learning that takes place without effort is essentially insufficient, since it does not involve the entire person.

(מאמרי אדה"ז ענינים א' ע' קנח, לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 566)

At the Rebbe's *chassuna*, the Frieddiker Rebbe went around greeting the guests and pouring them *L'chaim*. Approaching the standing area of the *bochurim*, he said: "*Temimim!* Torah can only succeed through great effort. A person who toils will understand what he studies even better than another who has a stronger head. You must dedicate yourselves to learn *with effort!*"

(סה"ש תרפ"ט ע' 53)

The Rebbe once said that everyone ought to become a *talmid chacham*. He explained that there is no shortcut to this, and it is only attainable through hard effort. A person who thinks of excuses as to why he is unable to do so is really only fooling himself, and unfortunately he will remain ignorant (an *am haaretz*)...

(שיח"ק תשמ"א ח"ב ע' 565)

The Fruits of Toil

Reb Yekusiel, a salt merchant from Liepli who had been a *chossid* from the time of the Alter Rebbe, was a great *oved*, but with a limited understanding of Torah, especially of *Chassidus*. Once, a young *mashpia* traveling through Liepli stayed there for a few days, and every day he *chazered* a *maamar* of the Mitteler Rebbe. His sharp mind and articulateness left a strong impression on all those who heard him, but Reb Yekusiel didn't grasp the *maamarim* and was greatly disheartened.

As he later related, "I was then forty years old. For fifteen years I had often traveled to visit the Alter Rebbe and when I was there I studied with all my *kochos*. Yet when this *yungerman* sat and *chazered* the *maamarim*, I didn't grasp them. Every *maamar* I heard made me feel utterly crushed. Because of my burning desire to know the *maamarim* and understand them, I asked the *yungerman* to review them over and over again for me. This he did, but despite his repeated explanations, my mind remained like a block of wood. It was closed to it all.

"For three weeks I held him back from continuing his journey home, and let my

family run the store. Days and nights I toiled to understand what the *yungerman* taught me, but it was all to no avail. He eventually left, and I was left like a stranded ship at sea. I fasted and said *Tehillim* with tears, but my mind didn't open, so I decided to travel to Lubavitch.

"There I noticed that over the past nine months since my last visit, there was a new atmosphere. Fifty or sixty *yungeleit* sat for hours on end, learning *Chassidus* diligently. On my first *Shabbos* there, the Mitteler Rebbe delivered a *maamar*, and I understood it. But unlike the *yungeleit*, I couldn't understand the Rebbe's additional explanation. This caused me such intense pain that I cried all night and fasted the next day.

"When I went to *yechidus* with the Rebbe, I told him all that had transpired. He told me that nothing can stand in the way of a person's will. Indeed, a strong desire can actually change his capabilities. When I heard that everything depended on my desire, I decided to remain in Lubavitch until I would begin to understand, and sent a message to my family to continue running the store on their own. I spent about four months working intensely, training myself to think about an *inyan* for hours at a time and reviewing each *inyan* dozens of times.

"That Tishrei I felt like a new creation, as if I had 'washed out the pot' and had become a proper recipient for receiving what I truly desired to receive. Only then did I go home."

(אג"ק אדהר"י"צ ח"ג ע' ס"ד)

CONSIDER THIS!

- How does effort in Torah replace toiling in worldly labor?
- Did Reb Yekusiel not exert himself in his hometown? How much effort must one apply?

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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

Scrabble on Shabbos

Is there an issue of writing on Shabbos when playing Scrabble?

■ The *melochah* of *koseiv* is defined as the creation of a symbol or character that conveys an idea, and is not limited to writing in the conventional understood sense¹. It includes drawing a sketch or even marking a paper with one's fingernail to note a typing error². Any manner of creating a letter on a surface is also *koseiv* even without actually inscribing or marking the surface. For example affixing shapes of letters to a wall or any backing is included in *koseiv* because letters are effected upon a surface³.

■ Only the formation of an image where none existed previously is considered *koseiv*. However, arranging existing letters to form a word, such as placing cards with letters on them next to each other, is not *koseiv*⁴. Therefore the use of a combination lock that opens by requiring a specific succession of numbers on adjacent dials is permitted without concern for *koseiv*, because the letters already exist on that surface and are merely being rearranged and aligned⁵. However, **attaching** shapes of letters or pictures to a backing is prohibited, because that is equivalent to creating the letter and therefore constitutes an act of *koseiv*.

■ There are two types of Scrabble games: (a) One is a board on which the lettered tiles are merely placed to form words. This would be comparable to arranging loose cards and therefore permissible on Shabbos (provided that one does not usually record the scores in writing). (b) The second is designed with framed squares into which the lettered tiles are fitted snugly. Snapping the tiles into place is comparable to attaching letters to a backing and therefore prohibited to play with on Shabbos⁶.

1. ראה שוע"ר סי' ש"מ סעי' ד-י.
2. שם סעי' ז.
3. שם סעי' ט.
4. ראה אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי' קלה.
5. יסודי ישורון מלאכת כותב.
6. שמירת שבת כהלכתה סי' טז סעי' כג. שו"ת באר משה ח"ו סי' מו.

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

לעלוי נשמת ר' יוסף מאיר בן ר' צבי ז"ל
לעלוי נשמת גאלדא בת שמואל שמעלקא ז"ל

לעלוי נשמת ר' יצחק בן ישראל יוסף
ולעלוי נשמת ר' שמריהו בן יצחק

לזכות הילד יצחק מאיר שי' קאגאן
שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים

OUR HEROES

Reb Pinchas Reizes

Reb Pinchas Reizes, one of the greatest chasidim of the Alter Rebbe, was an incredible *gaon* in learning. The Rabbeim trusted him fully, involving him in many private and clandestine activities having to do with them and the chasidim. He was also a wealthy and influential resident of Shklov and did a great deal for the Alter Rebbe in that respect. He was a *chozer* during the time of the Alter Rebbe who was known for the preciseness of his *hanachos* (transcriptions). The Mitteler Rebbe called Reb Pinchas the "field marshal" of *chasidei* Chabad.



Reb Pinchas traveled to the Alter Rebbe for four months during the year: Elul, Tishrei, Nissan and Sivan. Once, Reb Pinchas fell ill and was unable to make the journey for Tishrei. Later on during the month, he felt better, but because the winter had already set in, he remained in Shklov. While sitting in his *sukkah* on Shmini Atzeres, he suddenly cried out, "Oy Rebbe!" and said to those sitting with him that the Rebbe had just thought of him.

At this same time, the Alter Rebbe was sitting at his *seudah* in his *sukkah*, and he said: "Pinchas Reizes needs his body to be cured. That which I cannot give him, I cannot give, but a bodily *refua* I can give him."

The *chassidish* young men from Shklov were very surprised to hear the Rebbe suddenly mention Reb Pinchas in middle of the Shmini Atzeres meal. After Yom Tov, upon their return home, they immediately went to the home of Reb Pinchas and asked him for *mashke*, which he supplied. As they were speaking, they discovered that at the same time the Alter Rebbe had mentioned him, Reb Pinchas had screamed, "Oy Rebbe!"

Chasidim have always been averse to an outwardly showing of greatness by displaying *ruach hakodesh* and the like, and reprimanded him for such behavior. Reb Pinchas declared, "It was not me. The first time I went for *yeichidus*, I gave the Rebbe my *nefesh*. The second time, I gave him my *ruach*, and the third time, I gave over my *neshama*. Being that my entire *neshama* had been given over to the Rebbe, it was not my powers that did this."

The Rebbe explained some aspect of this relevant today through total dedication of the *neshama* to the Rebbe. However, this level was reached only after the intense learning and toiling in *avoda* as Reb Pinchas would do.

(סה"ת תש"ה ע' נב, חסידים הראשונים ח"א ע' 64)

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

From the Siddur

The Rebbe would always use a *siddur*, even for the shortest *tefillos*. The Rebbe would come down to the *farbrengen* with a *siddur*, just so to be able to say the 'All *hamichyo*' from inside.

Before one *chassunah* where the Rebbe was to be *mesader kiddushin*, Harav Chodakov asked the *chassan* to see that there is a *siddur* prepared "just in case there is someone there who does not know the *brachos*." In this way, the Rebbe made sure not to make an issue of his special custom.

Many people who asked for advice to help them concentrate on their davening, the Rebbe encouraged them to look inside the *siddur* when they daven.

The Rebbe once revealed (13 Tishrei 5743), that this *minhag* is something he learned from the Frierdiker Rebbe.

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה