

ALWAYS PATIENT

98

לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שני בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

ENDLESS TRANQUILITY

Chazal taught, "A person should always be humble and patient like Hillel, and not impatient like Shammai."

Two people once made a bet that whoever managed to anger Hillel would receive four hundred zuz. Friday afternoon, while Hillel was washing himself in preparation for Shabbos, one of the men tried to irritate him. He passed by the door of Hillel's house, calling out with chutzpah, "Is Hillel here? Is Hillel here?" Hearing him, Hillel dressed, went outside, and asked how he could help.

"I have a question to ask," said the man. "Ask, my son," Hillel prompted. "Why are the heads of the Babylonians round?" To which Hillel answered, "My son, you have asked a great question. It is because the Babylonians do not have skillful midwives."

The man left, waited a while, then returned, calling out once again, "Is Hillel here? Is Hillel here?" Hillel once more dressed and went outside asking how he could help the man. "I have a question to ask," the man said. "Why are the eyes of the Tarmodiyim people bleared?" Hillel listened patiently and replied, "My son, you have asked a great question. It is because they live in sandy places."

The man left for a while, and returned a third time. "Is Hillel here? Is Hillel here?" Hillel put on his robe, went outside and asked, "My son, what do you require?" To which the man responded with another question, "Why are the feet of the Africans wide?" "My son, you have asked another good question," Hillel tolerantly replied. "It is because they live in watery marshes." The man continued roughly, "I have many questions to ask but I am afraid that you may become angry."

Thereupon Hillel sat himself down before him, saying, "Ask all the questions you have." As if he was unaware, the man asked, "Are you the Hillel who is called the Nasi of the Yidden?" "Yes," Hillel replied. The man retorted, "If that is you, may there not be many like you!" "Why, my son?" "Because I have lost four hundred zuz because of you," he replied. "Always be careful of your moods," Hillel answered. "You can lose four hundred zuz, and yet pay another four hundred zuz, but Hillel will never take offense."

(מסכת שבת ל"א ע"א)

PATIENCE BROUGHT THEM CLOSE

A goy once approached Shammai and asked, "How many Torahs do you have?" "Two," Shammai answered, "The written Torah

and the oral Torah." "Regarding the written Torah, I believe you," replied the goy, "but not with respect to the oral Torah. I want you to convert me on condition that you teach me only the written Torah." Shammai scolded him, sending him away angrily.

When the goy approached Hillel with the same request, he accepted him as a Ger, teaching him on first day, "Alef, Beis, Gimmel, Daled." The next day Hillel changed the order of the letters. "But yesterday you did not teach them to me like this," the Ger protested. "Then you need to rely on me, don't you?" explained Hillel. "Then rely upon me with regards to the oral Torah as well."

On another occasion, a different goy asked Shammai to convert him on the condition that he teach him the entire torah while he stands on one foot. Shammai pushed him away with the ruler in his hand. When the same goy approached Hillel, he was told, "What is hateful to you, do not do to another. That is the entire Torah, while the rest is an explanation; go and learn it."

There was another incident where a goy passed a beis medrash, and heard the melamed teaching about the clothing of the Kohen Gadol. The goy told Shammai, "I want to convert on condition that you appoint me as Kohen Gadol." Shammai pushed him away with the ruler in his hand.

The goy went to Hillel with the same request. Hillel asked the man, "Can any man be appointed as a king if he is not knowledgeable in the workings of government? Go and learn how the government functions." (Meaning, that to be a Kohen, one must first learn the torah.)

When the goy came to the possuk stating that a stranger that approaches the Mishkan will die, he asked, "To whom does this apply?" "Even to Dovid, the king of the Yidden," was the answer. The goy thought, "If B'nei Yisroel, who are called the firstborn son of Hashem, have this written about them, how much more so a mere Ger, who comes now with his staff and traveling bag."

He later returned to Shammai, asking, "How could I possibly have been fit to be a Kohen Gadol? Isn't it written in the torah otherwise?" He then returned to Hillel and said to him, "Hillel, the humble one. Let brachos rest on your head for bringing me under the wings of the Shechinah!"

Sometime later the three Gerim met, each one telling his story. Together, they concluded, "Shammai's impatience sought to drive us from the world, but Hillel's humbleness brought us under the wings of the Shechinah."

(מסכת שבת ל"א ע"א)

Lma'an Yishme'u

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לע"נ שרה רבקה בת ר' יוסף ע"ה

A man once came to Rav asking to learn torah. Rav took him in and began teaching him the *Alef Bais*. When he said *Alef*, the man immediately challenged, "Who says that's an *Alef*?" When Rav taught him *Bais*, he did the same, so Rav became angry and chased him out.

Coming to Shmuel, the man asked to be taught torah, and repeated his performance. Shmuel grabbed his ear strongly, and the annoyed man cried, "My ear!" "Who says that's an ear?" Shmuel challenged. "Everyone knows that's an ear!" the man replied. "Here too," Shmuel told him, "Everyone knows that this is an *Alef* and a *Bais*." The man acquiesced and learnt torah.

(קהלת רבה פ"ז)

NO MATTER WHO

An unfortunate fellow found himself obsessed with a strange fantasy. He was convinced that the local chief of police was actually Eliyahu Hanavi, and that the governor of the city was Moshiach, and he announced his discovery to everyone he knew or met. Sorely troubled by his behavior, the man's family took him to see the tzaddik, Reb Simcha Bunem of Pshischah.

The poor man had barely opened the door of the Rebbe's study when he excitedly gave him the news, "Eliyahu Hanavi and Moshiach both live in my city!" When the Rebbe asked who they were, he told him of his finding.

"And who am I?" asked the Rebbe. "Why, you are the Rebbe!" answered the visitor. "Is it possible then," asked Reb Simcha Bunem, "That I, who am a Rebbe, do not know that Eliyahu Hanavi and Moshiach are in your city?" The man admitted that the Rebbe must surely know but he was obviously keeping the information to himself. "Very well," said the tzaddik, "You too can know, but not reveal it to anyone, just as I do." Upon returning to his hometown, the man never raised the subject again, and eventually recovered his sanity completely.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 596)

IN THE FACE OF STUBBORNNESS

The tzaddik Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg had a friend, the Rov of Yanov, who was a Talmid Chochom and a Yerei Shamayim, but extremely stubborn.

For the chassunah of the Rov's son, many of the Yanov townsmen journeyed to the distant town where the chassunah was to be held. While traveling, the Rov stopped to find a quiet spot in the forest where he could daven Mincha, and those traveling in his carriage waited respectfully for his return.

But when the sun set and there was no sign of their Rov, they set out to look for him amongst the trees, becoming increasingly anxious as night fell. Eventually they decided to continue on, thinking that he had joined a different carriage traveling to the chassunah. On their arrival, though, they were greatly alarmed, for the father of the chosson was not there. Having no choice, they celebrated the chassunah without him. They searched for him again on the way home, but were unsuccessful. Nor did they find him when they arrived back in Yanov.

Actually, the Rov had lost his way in the endless forest, becoming confused by the roundabout tracks. He wandered for weeks, surviving on whatever fruit he could find. So distressed was he by his tribulations that he lost track of time and began keeping

Shabbos one day early. But, in the merit of his torah learning, Hashem protected him from harm, until at long last, he found his way back to Yanov.

Thursday afternoon, when the Rov began preparing for Shabbos, his family tried to explain that his calculations had become confused, but he could not be convinced. On Friday, he behaved as if the holy day had already arrived, and Shabbos he treated like a weekday, reprimanding his family for their stubbornness. Rabbonim and *talmidei chachomim* from all around tried to convince him that he was wrong, but to no avail. When Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg heard about this, he immediately set out for Yanov, arriving on Thursday. The Rov of Yanov invited him for Shabbos, and Reb Shmelke agreed to be his guest, telling all the people of Yanov to prepare for Shabbos.

On Thursday afternoon, the townsmen dressed in their Shabbos clothes and went to shul. Reb Shmelke saw to it that his host served as chazan for *Kabolas Shabbos*, while he and all the others quietly davened the weekday *maariv*. Then, as if it were Shabbos, the Rov, his family, and many others, sat down for a *Seudas Shabbos*. Reb Shmelke remarked to his host that it would be right to turn this occasion into a *Seudas Hoda'ah* for his miraculous survival, by serving a few extra bottles of wine. Reb Shmelke saw to it that his host drank a large amount of strong wine, falling into a deep sleep.

When the Rov fell asleep, Reb Shmelke told the townsmen to leave and return the following night, on Friday night. Reb Shmelke stayed to ensure that the Rov would not be disturbed, and did not even go to shul on Friday night, but davened alone in the house of Rov. After davening, the townsmen came to the Shabbos table, and found the Rov still sound asleep.

They had their *Seudas Shabbos*, and at midnight Reb Shmelke woke up his host. "Rov of Yanov," he said, "Please join us for bentching." The Rov washed his hands, and joined the rest of the guests. After Shabbos, all the local dignitaries came to offer Reb Shmelke their whispered thanks, to which he responded by making them give their promise never to make the slightest mention of the whole episode. And indeed, until the day of this death, the Rov never discovered what had transpired.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 297)

לזכות הילד שמואל בן ר' ישראל אפרים הכהן שיחיו
שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים

לזכות הבחור יעקב שמואל הלוי סיימאן
וב"ג דבורה לאה צרפתי שיחיו
לרגל בואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעטומ"צ
נדבת הורי החתן

לזכות הילדה שיינא ברכה בת ר' אהרון ליב ורעיתו שיחיו סטון
לזכות ר' לוי יצחק הלוי ודבורה לאה שיחיו ענגעלבערג לרגל חתונתם
לזכות ר' שלמה שיי ליצמאן לרגל יום הולדתו שנת הארבעים לשנת הצלחה בגו"ר