

THRILLED TO ACTION (III)

A Spiritual Experience

Before the Baal Shem Tov became known, he served as a *shochet* in a little village. When it was time to reveal himself, he left his post and a different *shochet* filled his place.

Soon after, one of the locals sent a chicken to the new *shochet* with a *goyishe* servant. The *goy* returned with the live chicken and told his master: "Yisrolik would sharpen his knife with his flowing tears; this fellow just sharpens his knife with water from a jug. Should I give the chicken to be slaughtered by such a man?!"

(שמו"ס ח"ג ע' 148)

One year during the first *Seder*, *Rebbetzin* Chaya Mushka, the wife of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, came running in to the home of her father, the *Mitteler Rebbe*. While they were performing off the *Seder* at home, her husband had drifted off into a trance of ecstasy, had fallen off his chair, and was lying under the table in a state of *klos hanefesh*. The *Mitteler Rebbe* was unfazed and assured her, "Never mind; he will crawl out."

Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka returned home, only to find her husband in the same position. She ran back to father, who this time instructed some *chassidim* who had entered to tell the *Tzemach Tzedek* in his name that he should regain consciousness. They went along with *Rebbetzin* Chaya Mushka, but as they entered the house, the *Tzemach Tzedek* stood up and resumed his position at the table.

(למען ידעו ע' 315)

A Flaming Fire

It was during the lifetime of the *Mitteler Rebbe*, when the *Tzemach Tzedek* sat at a *farbrengen* with some of his father-in-law's *chassidim* and related:

Once, the Baal Shem Tov was about to gather with his *talmidim*. They knew that the Baal Shem Tov loved light, because of its connection to the inner secret, the Source of light, yet they

had only one candle.

When the Baal Shem Tov entered he said, "Yidden need light. My task is to provide them with light." The *talmidim* excused themselves, saying that they could only get their hand on that one candle. The Baal Shem Tov instructed them to break off the icicles that hung from the roof, and to kindle them. They did as the Baal Shem Tov instructed, and the icicles burned.

Concluding the story, the *Tzemach Tzedek* added with *dveikus*, "With the students of the Baal Shem Tov, icicles burned; with today's *chassidim*, everything is dark and frigid."

When the *Rebbe Rashab* recalled this episode, he noted, "My grandfather, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, uncovered in his *chassidim* the 'eternally burning fire' of the *neschama*."

(אוצר סיפורי חב"ד ח"ז ע' 214)

In a fiery *sicha* addressed to the *bochurim* of *Tomchei Temimim*, at the *farbrengen* of *Simchas Torah* תרט"א (1900), the *Rebbe Rashab* outlined the final battles against the opposition to Torah in our times:

Chazal tell us that the coming of *Moshiach* will be preceded by awesome birthpangs, both physical and spiritual.

Temimim! The worldly attitudes, which are shared even by some of those who observe Torah and *mitzvos*, are cold and smack of disbelief. Only a very fine line separates spiritual frigidity (*kfor*) from actual disbelief (*kfira*)... Since *HaShem* is "an all-consuming fire," our Torah study and *davening* should reflect the full flame of the Yiddishe heart, so that every aspect of our being proclaims the words of *HaShem*...

Indeed, this has always been the case: When immersed in his studies, a *chossid* would characteristically feel awe before the Giver of the Torah, Whose Presence he sensed within it. Likewise, when *davening*, the typical *chossid* would have an inner appreciation of the words, *da lifnei mi ata omed* — "Know

before Whom you are standing." Some *shuls* have this sentence inscribed on the lectern, so that at least *it* will know before Whom it is standing.... In *chassidic shuls* it is not written on the lectern: it is engraved in a *chossid's* mind and heart. And when a *chossid* would answer *Amen*, or *Amen*, *yehei shmei rabba*, or *Baruch hu uvaruch shmo* he sensed that it was a matter of cosmic significance...

Chassidus should be studied with intense involvement; it should be taken to heart. It is not meant to be treated with the casualness of those *chassidim* who sip coffee or chicory on *Shabbos* morning while looking inside a *Torah Or* or *Likkutei Torah*...

Not that these *chassidische baalei-batim* are at fault. The blame lies with their environment, which is so cold that *mitzvos* are commonly fulfilled by rote. They are surrounded by people whose Torah study is cold; their *davening* is cold; their singing is cold; even their dancing is cold. Immersed in a sea of ice, their spiritual life is so frozen that even the *chassidic* pulse beats faintly.

Chassidus should be studied with vitality — not with commotion but with inner vigor, so that not only does the *chossid* feel alive when immersed in the G-dly concept that he has studied, but the concept is *alive within him*.

(לקו"ד ח"ד ס"ע 1578, היום יום ט"ז שבט)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why did the *goy* think that the chicken must be slaughtered amidst tears? Was he right?
- How is the impact of *Chassidus* affected by sipping coffee while learning?



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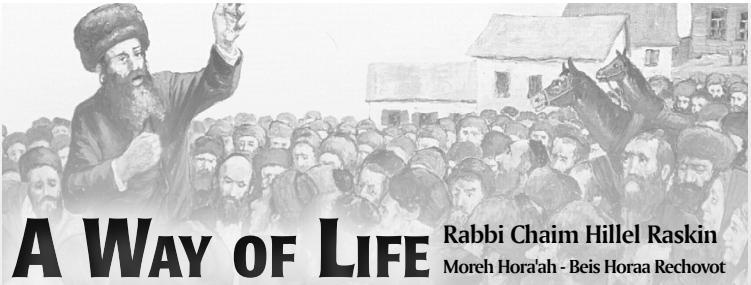


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OUR HEROES

Maharil – son of Tzemach Tzedek



Reb Yehuda Leib was the second son born to the Tzemach Tzedek around the year 5571 (1811) in Liadi. His great-grandfather the Alter Rebbe was his *sandak*. He was very close to his grandfather the Mittlerer Rebbe, and would learn with him very often. He was his father's right-hand man, as most of his father's activities would go through him. He married the daughter of Reb Shlomo Friedes of Shklov, a great chossid of the Alter Rebbe. After his father the Tzemach Tzedek passed away, he moved to the city of Kopust and many chassidim flocked to him. After a short time he fell ill and passed away on 3 Cheshvan 5627 (1866).



Throughout the year after the Tzemach Tzedek's passing, each of the sons *davened* in a *minyán* of his own. The Maharil's manner of *davening* was with a lot of excitement, sometimes walking from place to place and even dancing. His *davening* was also at great length. The men *davening* in his *minyán* told him that they cannot *daven* so long, and every time he would promise to keep it short, however once he started to *daven* he would forget about the deal. Once he decided to tie himself to the *omud* as a reminder to keep the *davening* short, but from such great fervor he started walking around and dragged the *omud* with him to the other side of *shul*.

(אוצר סיפורי חב"ד ח"ה)



All of the Tzemach Tzedek's sons had business partnerships with various merchants. The Maharil had a partnership with a merchant who dealt with horses. At one point, the Maharil made a calculation of the business. As the total he wrote, "*leis asar ponui minei*," there is no place empty of Hashem.

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 41)

לזכות יהושע העשל בן חנה שיי' לרפ"ש וקרובה

Besamim for a Stuffed Nose

I am under the weather and cannot smell. Can I make the bracha on *besamim* at *havdala* for others who are listening?

- The *halacha* is that even one who is not obligated may recite that *bracha* for others who are. For example, one who heard *kiddush* or *havdala* may recite it again for those who haven't.¹ This is based on the principle of *arvus*, that all Yidden are interconnected and responsible for each other's observance of *mitzvos*.
- This rule applies specifically to *brachos* of *mitzvos*. However, *brachos* for pleasure (*birchos hanehenin*) may only be recited for another person if the one reciting it is also benefiting.² Since the listener isn't obligated to eat, his friend isn't obligated to recite the *bracha*.³
- After Shabbos, the extra *neshama* ("neshama yiseira") granted for Shabbos departs. *Besamim* is smelled to console the *neshama* in its distress over the loss. Smelling *besamim* is not an absolute obligation and one who doesn't have *besamim* is not obligated to seek it out.⁴
- *Poskim* dispute whether *arvus* applies to the *bracha* on *besamim*. While some say that it is a *mitzva* and is subject to *arvus*,⁵ many, including the Alter Rebbe, rule that it is a *bracha* on pleasure and there is no *arvus*.⁶ Therefore one who is under the weather and cannot smell, may not recite *borei minei besamim* for those listening to his *havdala*. However, one who can smell but already made *havdala*, may recite a new *bracha* if he is in another setting or was distracted since the previous *bracha*.⁷
- There is a similar discussion concerning the *bracha* on fire at *havdala*. The reason for the *bracha* is to commemorate the creation of fire by Adam HaRishon on *motzaei* Shabbos, and to demonstrate that throughout Shabbos one wasn't allowed to create fire.⁸ One need not seek out a fire except on *motzaei* Yom Kippur.⁹
- The Alter Rebbe questions if we consider the *bracha* on fire to be a *birchas hamitzva*, since it is not for pleasure (unlike the *besamim*), or not, since it is not an obligatory *mitzva* which one must pursue.¹⁰ Since *safek brachos lehakel*, the Alter Rebbe rules that should not recite this *bracha* again for others.

1. שוע"ר סי' קס"ז סכ"ג.
2. ראה שוע"ר סי' ר"ג ס"א לפרטים בזה.
3. שוע"ר סי' קס"ז שם.
4. סי' רצ"ז ס"א.
5. מחבר סי' רצ"ז ס"ה, מג"א סק"ה.
6. סי' רצ"ז ס"ז.
7. סי' הליכות שבת פ"ז דין' ב' ודין ט'.
8. שוע"ר סי' רח"צ ס"א.
9. שם ס"ב.
10. שוע"ר רצ"ז ס"ט. וראה קו"א סי' רצ"ז סק"ב.

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

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

What Should Excite the World

As soon as Reb Nissan Mindel arrived in America, he was instructed by the Friediker Rebbe to prepare a translation of the Tanya.

Dr. Mindel related: "I worked eighteen hours a day, until I had headaches from the intense concentration and lack of sleep. After I had studied the *mafteichos* (indices) of the RaMaSh (the Rebbe as he was then called) for a significant amount of time, I felt that I was ready to begin translating the Tanya. I asked the RaMaSh if he was willing to help me with this project, and he agreed. However, I did not want to bother him too much.

"In 5718 (1958), when I brought the first copy of the printed English Tanya and handed it to the Rebbe, the Rebbe was visibly moved. After a moment's silence, the Rebbe said:

"The world is going agog today because of the successful Russian launching of the Sputnik, the first world satellite launched into space. What the world should truly be excited about, today, is the publication of this *sefer* which had been a closed book to the Western world. Now it has been opened for the whole world!"

(Introduction to "The Letter and the Spirit," Volume 1)

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