



THE LUMINARIES OF HOMES (II)

Highly Regarded

Reb Nechemia Zalman of Shventzian was a student of Reb Michel of Opatzk, one of the prominent chassidim of the Alter Rebbe. He was a phenomenal genius both in *nigleh* and in *Chassidus*, and would often spend his time alone in deep thought.

Being exceptionally organized, he kept a strict schedule. Every morning at about three a.m., when the sky showed its first pale signs of day, both on weekdays and on *Shabbos*, he would meditate on *Chassidus* for six hours with his *tallis* over his shoulder, and then *daven* for another six hours. It was then time either to go home to eat and rest, or to *daven Mincha* and *Maariv* and then go home, depending on the season.

He would make a yearly trip to Lubavitch around Shavuot time, and would stay for five or six weeks. On the first day of Shavuot, when the visiting *rabbanim* were invited to the table of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to hear exclusive stories of the Rebbeim and to discuss Torah thoughts with the Rebbe, Reb Nechemia Zalman was seated up front and would amaze the other guests with his novel Torah insights.

On the outskirts of Lubavitch, on a hill off to the left, there was a little pine forest, in the middle of which stood a booth made of branches. At the foot of the hill flowed a brook about six feet wide, and deep enough to reach a person's waist. Throughout his stay in Lubavitch, Reb Nechemia Zalman made this hut his home. Every night, after sleeping and reciting *Tikkun Chatzos* in the township, he would head out to the forest, where he would *toivel* in the river and prepare for *davening*. After *davening* he would eat something, rest for an hour, learn, *daven Mincha*, and return to town.

Yet though he chose to spend most of his day there in solitude, he returned to the Rebbe's courtyard every evening for the "*yechidus* dance." Traditionally, whenever a chossid exited *yechidus*, his fellow chassidim would join him as he danced in joy over his great merit to have been in the Rebbe's presence,

while others clapped their hands to the rhythm of the *niggun*. And though by nature Reb Nechemia Zalman was a loner, he eagerly looked forward day after day to witnessing this comradely celebration of the superiority of Mind over Matter, the superiority of the soul over the body.

The Rebbe Maharash once related how he himself would stealthily visit the forest to peek between the cracks of that hut. He wanted to observe Reb Nechemia Zalman's face as he meditated upon topics in *Chassidus*, his eyes closed and his face aflame, and seemingly detached from bodily concerns and indeed from This World.

At a *yechidus* in תרל"ח (1878), the Rebbe Maharash told his son, the Rebbe Rashab:

"The purpose of the descent of a *neschama* in this world is not to be satisfied with only elevating the individual himself, but also to impact another person. Reb Nechemia Zalman was exceptionally great, but his *avoda* was the *avoda* of an individual and did not draw anyone along with him. The ultimate purpose of the *neschama* in This World is accomplished by chassidim like Reb Yosef Hillel, the *melamed* who taught little children in Druye, and like Reb Shmuel Chaim, the *rov* of Lutzin.

"Reb Yosef Hillel the *melamed* was a student of the elder chassidim in Druye, whom the Alter Rebbe taught that the ultimate goal of a chassid is to share with others the spirit of *avoda*, the correction of *middos* and *ahavas Yisroel*. This schooling influenced Reb Yosef Hillel so deeply that although he was a talented *lamdan*, and could have taught older students, which also would have brought him a greater income, he chose to teach young children – so that he could implant in their hearts a love for Torah and *yiras Shamayim*. In the course of the last fifty years he raised great numbers of G-d-fearing students.

"What Reb Yosef Hillel implanted in their young hearts cannot be uprooted, or even weakened, by all the winds in the world. This is the ultimate purpose of the descent of a *neschama* – to see to it that a Yid should live his life according to the will of *HaShem*.

"The town of Lutzin was made up primarily of coarse people, who were engrossed in *machlokes*, *rechilus*, jealousy and other bad *middos*. They would slander one another and make each other miserable.

"In תרכ"ז (1867) they asked me to send them a *rov*, so I sent them Reb Shmuel Chaim, the *melamed* in Tcharei. Reb Shmuel Chaim had exceptional *middos* and loved everyone. While in his hometown, he had guided the *chassidische yungeleit* with great success.

"When he arrived in Lutzin he was perturbed by the lowly state of the people there. Yet unfazed, he immediately got to work, to drive out whatever was negative and to introduce light. And within a few years of patient *mesirus nefesh* he transformed the town.

"Aside from the fact that the *mesirus nefesh* of Reb Yosef Hillel and Reb Shmuel Chaim impacted a multitude of people, their *mesirus nefesh* was truly elevated, since it was not for their personal benefit. And this is the vessel for the *bracha* of the Alter Rebbe – that chassidim should be successful in their Torah and *avoda*."

The Frierdiker Rebbe records the above in a letter to teachers and he concludes:

The lesson from this is that aside from the responsibility to teach his students, every teacher must educate and guide them in *yiras Shamayim*, *middos tovos* and *derech erez*. The responsibility for their future lies on his shoulders, and their future depends on his personal conduct.

(אג"ק אדמו"ר צ"ח ע' 497)

CONSIDER THIS!

- Why couldn't Reb Yosef Hillel have the same influence of *yiras Shamayim* on older students?
- When is *mesirus nefesh* for personal benefit and when is it not?



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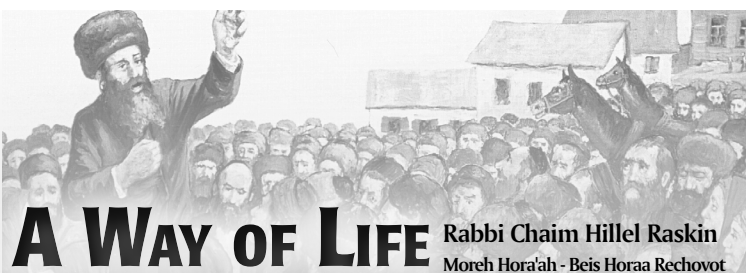


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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Cut Melon in a Supermarket

Can I buy cut melon in a non-kosher supermarket?

- There are two *kashrus* concerns regarding knives in a non-kosher supermarket: (1) Residue from non-kosher foods. (2) Non-kosher flavors absorbed in the knife.
- If the knife was used to cut cold vegetables without being thoroughly cleaned, hard vegetables (i.e. carrots) must be rinsed and soft vegetables (i.e. melon) must be grated at the point of contact (washing it will only absorb it further).¹ Early *poskim* write that a regular knife is assumed to have residue on it,² however contemporary *poskim* write that with today's hygiene and dishwashing system, a clean knife can be assumed to be completely free of residue.³
- Even if the knife is clean it may have non-kosher flavor absorbed in it, due to having been used for hot, sharp or very salty non-kosher foods, or washed together with greasy utensils.⁴ Although absorbed flavor is generally extracted only through heat, nonetheless cutting with pressure (*duchka desakina*) on a sharp vegetable (i.e. onion, garlic, lemons, olives⁵) can have the same effect.⁶ And even though absorbed flavor generally becomes repugnant after 24 hours and does not pose a *kashrus* problem, sharp foods can make it edible and unkosher.⁷ *Poskim* are divided about a sharp vegetable which was doubtfully cut by a non-kosher knife.⁸
- If local laws prohibit using a knife from one division for another (because of contamination), some say that we can safely assume that it was only used for fruits and vegetables (especially in professional supermarkets which have distinct knives for each department). Thus, in *Chutz La'aretz* (where problems of *orlah*, *shmita* and *tevel* aren't relevant) a knife in a fruit and vegetable department is usually not a problem.⁹
- In practice: Sharp cut vegetables should only be bought when complete *kashrus* restrictions are in place (for this reason one should avoid drinking water with cut lemons in a non-kosher eatery¹⁰). Non-sharp cut vegetables and fruits may be bought as long as one is certain that the knife was clean.

1. שו"ע יו"ד סי' צ"ו ס"ה ש"ך שם סקכ"א. 7. ראה רמ"א שם באם אוסר כדי נטילה או כולו, ובש"ך שם סק"י בנוגע לכתחילה ובדיעבד (יש להעיר משיטת המחבר שמתיר באינו ב").
2. רש"י חולין קי"ב ע"א, ש"ך סי' צ"ו סק"ג.
3. ס' הכשרות פכ"ג הערה ס"א.
4. ראה טור ב"י יו"ד ריש סימן צ"ח לפרטים בזה. וראה ש"ך שם סקט"ז.
5. שו"ע שם (סני"ה וס').
6. ראה שו"ע ורמ"א יו"ד סי' צ"ו ס"א. ושו"ע ר"ר אהר"ם שם סני"ט.
7. רמ"א יו"ד סי' צ"ו ס"א. וראה ט"ז שם סק"ח. פרמ"ג יו"ד שם שפ"ד סק"ב.
8. ס' הלכות בשר וחלב פ"ט ס"ל.
9. יש להעיר משי"ע שם ס"ד. ובש"ך שם סק"כ שאם חתכו כמה נתבטל טעם האיסור בראשונים (אלא שיש מחמירים, ראה המשך הרמ"א שם והט"ז סק"ב).
10. יש להעיר משי"ע שם ס"ד. ובש"ך שם סק"כ שאם חתכו כמה נתבטל טעם האיסור בראשונים (אלא שיש מחמירים, ראה המשך הרמ"א שם והט"ז סק"ב).

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

לע"נ

מרת טובה גיטל בת ר' יוסף צבי ע"ה ווייס
- יאהרצייט כ"ו טבת

OUR HEROES

Reb Hendel



Reb Chonoch Hendel Kugel lived in Lubavitch and was a "ben bayis" by the Rebbe Rashab for forty years. The Frieddiker Rebbe describes him as follows, "Reb Chonoch Hendel came to Lubavitch, to the Tzemach Tzeddek, for the first time in the year תר"ג. He had prepared himself for ten years before coming to the Rebbe. His heart burned with a fire of *ahavas yisroel* and he had unparalleled *midos tovos*. His *ahavas yisroel* and *midos tovos* were a product of much work and toil, and not so much from thinking and meditation. It is impossible to describe the love he had for another Yid; he would literally go on *mesirus nefesh* for every individual." When the yeshiva Tomchei Temimim opened, he was appointed by Rebbe Rashab as the leading *mashpia*. He passed away on the 19th of Teves, תר"ס (1900).

When the news came to Lubavitch that the chossid Reb Chonye Marozov was released from his draft service, Reb Hendel began dancing in the yard of the Rebbe, chanting "Chonye has gone out!" He went into the Rebbe Rashab's room, told him the news and started dancing in the room. The Rebbe Rashab got up, put his hand on Reb hendel's shoulder and went around with him three times. Afterwards, he said, "For this, I will say Chassidus for you."

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ליקוטי ב' אות י"ח)

Before he became a chossid, Reb Hendel went to the chossid Reb Zishke of Kurenitz to watch the way he conducts himself. He saw that throughout the entire day, Reb Zishke was occupied with his Rabbonus, and had no time to learn himself. Once, at a late hour of the night, when Reb Hendel was preparing to go to sleep, he saw Reb Zishke get up for *Tikun Chatzos* and then watched as he sat and learned for a few hours. The Rov then went to the *mikva* and started preparing for *davening*. Seeing this, Reb Hendel was impressed, but he began doubting his desire to become a chossid, perhaps it would be too difficult.

Later, he saw a woman come to Reb Zishke, telling him about a very seriously ill person, and as she was speaking, he saw tears streaming down Reb Zishka's face. Sometime afterward, he witnessed the Rov going out of his way to request a favor for another *yid*.

Finally, Reb Hendel decided to become a chossid, and he went to Reb Zishka to tell him his decision. "Good," said Reb Zishke. Reb Hendel asked, "But how do I do this? Please don't make it too hard!" "It's very simple," said the Rov. "The very first thing in Chassidus is *ahavas yisrael*." He explained the idea of true *ahavas yisrael*, and then said, "You are also a Yid and you must love yourself, but first you must banish the "goy" that is within you..."

(ספר השיחות תרצ"ז ע' 16)

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

A Bochur's Uforatzto

As Torah Jewry pulled itself out of the ashes of the Holocaust, they looked worriedly into the future, hoping to build strong defenses from the secular influences.

The Rebbe, however, saw things differently. He explained, "We should not be on the defensive, looking to survive; we ought to go on the offensive." With the battle cry of "Uforatzto!" the Rebbe blazed the way for the *teshuvah* movement.

Reb Moshe Herson, the Rebbe's *shliach* to New Jersey, related: We were then a small group of *bochurim* at the yeshiva in 770. The Rebbe spoke very powerfully, and we were swept up by the Rebbe's vision.

One day, we got together, and wrote to the Rebbe that we are dedicating ourselves entirely to the Rebbe's *uforatzto* call.

The next day, *HaRav* Chodakov called each one of us in separately. On his table the letters the *bochurim* had sent in sat in a pile. He told us that the Rebbe had directed him to call us in individually, and to personally show us the Rebbe's answer.

The Rebbe wrote: "For now, your *inyan* is to have *uforatzto* in your [personal] *ruchnius*."