

## FORGIVING ANOTHER (1)

### Not Paying Back

The Torah forbids one from taking revenge against another who wronged him.

Why does the Torah forbid revenge? *Chazal* explain the rationale by a simple analogy: If a person were to cut himself accidentally, would he slap his own hand as a reprimand?! Similarly, if a person learns to consider his fellow Yid as part of himself, just like his own hand, he will not even *think* of acting vengefully.

(ירושלמי נדרים פ"ט ה"ד)

*Sefer HaChinuch* explains: A person must realize that all that happens to him, whether positive or negative, comes from *HaShem*. Therefore, when someone treats him badly, he should not have thoughts of taking revenge, for ultimately, it is his own *aveiros* that brought this about.

(ס' החינוך מצווה רמ"א)

The Raavad clarifies that one who refuses to loan his tool out of concern for his tool, is not guilty of revenge (*nekamah*). If, however, he does not lend something because he hates the other person (which in itself is prohibited), he also transgresses the prohibition against revenge.

(פי' הראב"ד לתו"כ פ' קדושים)

### The Need to Forgive

Rava said: "If someone is forgiving, all his *aveiros* are forgiven." Rashi explains that since such a person is not so particular with the faults of others, *HaShem* is not so particular with him.

Rav Huna fell ill and Rav Papa visited him. Seeing his hopeless situation, he instructed those around him to begin preparing *tachrichin* (shrouds). Rav Huna, however, recovered, leaving Rav Papa quite embarrassed. When they questioned Rav Huna he told them that indeed he was about to die, but he heard *HaShem* say: "Since he is not particular with others, we will not be particular with him."

If, instead, a person is unforgiving to those who make him angry, the Shelah HaKadosh

warns that the *malochim* will demand that he be repaid exactly, measure for measure.

(ראש השנה י"ז ע"א, של"ה שער אותיות עונה)

At a *farbrengen* the Friediker Rebbe said that a *chossid* is one who overlooks wrongdoing done to him and forgives. This level can be reached only through translating *haskalah*, one's intellectual grasp of the concepts of *Chassidus*, into *avodah*, so that it affects the *middos* of the heart.

(סה"ש תרפ"ז ע' 174)

### Responses to Insult

Our *Chachomim* teach: "Those who are insulted but do not insult in return, who hear their disgrace but do not retort, who act with love and who rejoice in their own suffering, – concerning them it is written that 'Those who love Him shall be as the sun when it comes out in its might.'" That is, they will merit the revelation of the *Shechinah*.

(שבת פ"ה ע"ב)

Rabi Elozor, the *tanna*, faithful to his task as the *parnas tzedoko* of his community, would always have guests visiting his home. Once, returning from the *beis midrash*, he asked his family what had occurred while he was out. They told him that the people whom they had just served had praised him highly. This left him unhappy. On another occasion, he was told that a group of guests, after being served food and drink, had spoken of him nastily.

He cheerfully responded: "Now we've received a good reward!"

(ירושלמי פאה פ"ח ה"ו)

The Ramak would say that suffering from insult provides the most effective atonement, more than can be attained by all other kinds of *teshuvah*. If people would realize this, they would even ask others to insult and embarrass them.

(קול בוכים לר"א גאלאנטי)

The Chida relates a story which he personally heard from the Or HaChayim HaKadosh, Rabeinu Chaim Ben Atar:

A wealthy man with powerful influence in the kingdom once insulted a *talmid chochom*. Fearing the possible repercussions, the Or HaChayim asked the *talmid chochom* to forgive the rich man.

He replied: "I did so on the spot, because the *Zohar* says that the *aveiros* of the Yidden are a burden for the wings of the *Shechinah*. I didn't want to burden *HaShem*, so I quickly forgave him."

The Chida was so pleased with this story that in his *seforim* he repeated it numerous times – "because it is precious to me, and it is a fundamental in *avodas HaShem*."

(דבש לפי מערכת ח)

The Rebbe writes in a letter that the appropriate way to respond to a verbal attack is by acting as if it was not noticed.

In another letter, the Rebbe directs a person who was embarrassed by another to undertake an additional measure of *zehirus*, vigilance, in his observance of *mitzvos*, because through him an *aveirah* was brought upon his friend.

(אג"ק ח"ב ע' ס"ב, לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 598)

## CONSIDER THIS!

- Why are we inclined to take revenge? How will digesting the abovementioned concepts hold us back from *wanting* to take revenge?
- Who stands to benefit from forgiving another?

# OUR HEROES

## Reb Aizik Homiler



Reb Yitzchak Aizik of Homil, Reb Aizil Homiler, was one of the most famous and greatest Chabad chassidim ever to live. As a young man, he came to the Alter Rebbe, and after the Alter Rebbe's *histalkus*, he became a dedicated chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzeddek. He was an exceptional *gaon* in *nigleh* and *maskil* in Chassidus, and wrote *seforim* in Chassidus. Reb Aizil served as the Rov in Homil for 58 years, and passed away on the 26<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, תרי"ז (1857).



A *vid* once came to Reb Aizil and asked him to teach him *Chassidus* since he had heard that *Chassidus* is a *segula* to counter *machshavos zaros* (unwelcome thoughts). Reb Aizil replied with a *meshal*:

"The king's treasure houses contain a collection of all sorts of vessels made of pure gold, even a manure shovel. Now, if someone tried to take that gold shovel to clear away manure, he will be the subject of immense ridicule.

"The same is true of *Chassidus*. To use it against *machshavos zaros* is like to use the king's golden shovel for manure. It works, but is that what it is for? *Chassidus* is far beyond that!"

(שמועות וסיפורים ח"א ע' 225)

At a *Yud-Tes Kislev farbrengen* Reb Aizil once posed the following question:

"Who was granted a salvation on *Yud-Tes Kislev*? The Alter Rebbe? – For him it made no difference where he was. Even in the rigors of Tainy Soviet he lacked nothing. Did someone say that he didn't have Shabbos clothes to change into? – Even that he was not lacking, because he had a handkerchief, and every Friday afternoon he would tear off two tiny strips with which to keep his socks up, so you see that each week he had new garters in honor of Shabbos.

"Who then was granted a salvation on *Yud-Tes Kislev*? – it was the Almighty who was granted a salvation - *laHashem hayeshua*, because through the Alter Rebbe's release the light of G-dliness has been revealed and disseminated far and wide in this world! Let us then dance together..."

And at that, the chassidim went off in a lively dance.

(ספר התולדות אדמו"ר הזקן ח"ג ע' 810)

## Workers' Strike

May employees strike for better pay?

In the previous issue we discussed the permission for a worker to break a job commitment if others are available to replace him. However, striking temporarily while barring the employer from hiring others has no basis in *halacha*.<sup>1</sup> Yet, contemporary *poskim* permit striking for valid claims for these reasons:

1. Town members can appoint lay-leaders (*tuvei ha'ir*) who can establish business rules for the town, and fine those who don't abide by them.<sup>2</sup> The *tuvei ha'ir* may thus fine an employer who isn't paying his workers fairly by allowing them to strike.<sup>3</sup>
2. Likewise, members of a craft (*baalei umanus*) may together establish rules in their own field based on a majority vote which will bind them all, and they may then fine those who break them.<sup>4</sup>

Some *acharonim* propose that workers of a company, like members of a craft, may form a union and establish that if their employer doesn't treat them fairly they may strike.<sup>5</sup> Some add that this agreement prohibits even non-union members from replacing them during a strike (strike-breakers), since by doing so they are ruining the employees' jobs.<sup>6</sup>

3. Some *poskim* permit striking if local law permits it,<sup>7</sup> since the rules of the land are binding (*dina d'malchusa dina*) regarding all monetary matters (when not in conflict with Torah).<sup>8</sup> Others argue that *dina d'malchusa* is limited to tax related issues.<sup>9</sup>

If the employees aren't barring the owner from hiring others, they cannot be held back from stopping mid-contract for better conditions (if they cause a loss by leaving – see previous issue). If the employer isn't living up to his commitments, they may stop working even if it will result in a loss for the employer.

The right to strike is specifically when the owner isn't paying as he had committed or when the cost of living has unexpectedly risen in a significant manner, but not to demand higher wages in middle of a term. Moreover, a worker who strikes when it is not permitted may be fired.<sup>10</sup>

1. קובץ תשובות ח"ב סי' נ'.
2. שו"ע חו"מ סי' רל"א סכ"ז, וראה שו"ת הרא"ש כלל ו' סי' כ"ז, שו"ת ריב"ש סי' שצ"ט.
3. שו"ת ציץ אליעזר ח"ב סי' כ"ג.
4. שו"ע חו"מ סי' רל"א סכ"ח (ולפי"ז צ"ל שנסתכלים על הבעלים ג"כ כפועל).
5. משפט הפועלים פ"ט סי"א ע"פ שו"ת רשב"א ח"ה סי' קכ"ה. ראה אג"מ ח"א סי' נ"ט.
6. ראה אג"מ שם וראה רמ"א חו"מ סי' קנ"ו ס"ה.
7. ראה ס' הלכה ברורה שכירת פועלים קונטרס ענינים בדיני שביתת פועלים.
8. מרדכי ב"ק קנ"ד, וכן הכריע הרמ"א חו"מ סי' שס"ט ס"ח. דד"מ נגד דיני התורה – שו"ת הרשב"א חו"מ סי' רנ"ד.
9. ראה טור וב"י סו"ס שס"ט בשם הרא"ש נדרים דף כ"ח ע"א. וראה רמ"א שם – כיון שהקרקע שייך אליו. וראה ש"ך חו"מ סי' ע"ג סקל"ט בארוכה – שדוקא במה שקשור להמלך.
10. משפט הפועלים פ"ט סי' ט"ז.

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

## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### Kosher Fundraising

The Rebbe taught that all mediums are to be utilized for the spreading of *Yiddishkeit*. However, a breach in the boundaries of *halacha* is self-defeating.

Repeatedly, the Rebbe would say, "Bring unaffiliated *Yidden* to Torah, not the Torah to their level..."

A *moisad* strapped for funds wanted to make a fundraising dinner with mixed seating. They wrote their plan to the Rebbe, and explained that if they will be particular with the *mechitzah*, they may lose some supporters.

In a sharp response, in his holy handwriting, the Rebbe pointed out the fallacy in the argument:

"If you will *chas vesholom* make a mixed dinner, you will **certainly** impose leniencies on **all** the guests; whereas through making a *mechitzah*, **perhaps** only **some** of the guests will be turned off."

(Copy of the handwritten response)

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