

## RELIVING THE PAST (2)

### The Value of Stories

The Rambam writes that speaking highly of the noble qualities of *tzaddikim* is beneficial, for it encourages one's listeners to want to follow their ways. Rabbeinu Yonah writes that by praising *tzaddikim* one is praising *HaShem*, and doing so also brings out the good within the speaker.

(פיהמ"ש אבות א,ט, שער תשובת שער ז)

Sent by the *Tzemach Tzedek* to Ruzhin to take care of a public matter, the chossid and *gaon* Reb Aizik Homiler used the opportunity to observe the ways of the Ruzhiner chassidim and of their Rebbe, the *tzaddik* Reb Yisroel. At that time, two chassidim came to Ruzhin to receive the Rebbe's *haskama* for *seforim* they had written. One was filled with *chiddushei Torah* and the other recounted *sippurim* of *tzaddikim* and notable chassidim. The Rebbe instructed that part of each *sefer* be read aloud. After sitting in *dveikus* for some time, he proceeded to praise the telling of *sippurei tzaddikim*, an activity in this world that arouses echoes in the *heichalos* of *tzaddikim* in *Olam HaBa*, and then delivered a *pilpul* on some of the *chiddushei Torah* that appeared in the first *sefer*. Having done that, he instructed his *gabbai* to write *haskamos* for the *seforim*, first for the *sippurim* and then for the *chiddushim*.

Reb Aizik was impressed with the *tzaddik*'s *pilpul* on the second *sefer*, but was puzzled by the precedence he had given to the *sippurei tzaddikim*. A few days later, at a *Rosh Chodesh seuda*, the *tzaddik* suddenly said, "This *gaon* is surprised at the priority I gave to the *sippurim*. In fact, this was addressed long ago by *Rashi*, who asks why the Torah begins with the story of the *Avos*, before listing the *mitzvos*. This is because the *sippurim* tell us about the greatness of *HaShem*'s involvement in the world."

Turning to Reb Aizik, he concluded, "I followed the same order the Torah used."

(אג"ק מורה ר' צ"ח י"ע עז)

### Sippurim for Everyone

The Friediker Rebbe related: "It was a *Shabbos* afternoon in תרנ"ו (1896). After my father finished *davening*, he went to the home of his

mother, *Rebbetzin Rivkah*, to make *Kiddush*. There, my father asked his mother, "Do you recall how the picture of the Alter Rebbe was brought to the *Tzemach Tzedek* and what he said about it?"

"Sure," she replied, "I remember it clearly."

My father then asked her to tell it to me, so that I would hear it from a first source. My grandmother readily agreed, and turning to me she said, "Come at a calmer time and I will tell it to you."

She then added, "At one *Seder* I heard my father-in-law, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, say: 'Mitzva lesaper biyetzias Mitzrayim' – by telling *sippurim* we can get out of Mitzrayim. 'Veafilu kulanu chachomim u'nevonim veyodim' – even a person who is a true *Chabadnik* (meaning a chossid steeped in the insights of *Chassidus*) is obligated to tell *chassidishe sippurim*, for these will take him out of his Mitzrayim (that is, out of his *ruchniyuslike* limitations)." My grandmother concluded, "Since then, I make a point of recounting *sippurim* only when I'm completely focused."

(התמים ח"ב ע' 760)

In the year תרס"ג (1903), the Rebbe Rashab told his son, the Friediker Rebbe, "For a long time I have been complaining at the *Ohel* of my father, the Rebbe Maharash, about my lack of participation in *chassidishe farbrengens*, as a result of spending my time catering to the cause and *avoda* of *Chassidus*. I asked to receive this as a gift, and my father agreed. From then on, I began to hear *sippurim* at nighttime visions."

Later on, the Friediker Rebbe said, "From that time on, I heard numerous stories from my father, the Rebbe Rashab, but I wouldn't ask where he had heard them or when he had heard them."

(ספר השיחות תש"ה ע' 24)

### Special Stories

Before the Alter Rebbe relayed a *Torah* of the Baal Shem Tov, he would say, "The words of *Torah* from 'the Zeide' (as he called the Baal Shem Tov) are a *segula* to increase one's understanding and *yiras Shamayim*, and the stories of 'the Zeide' are a *segula* for long life and abundant *parnasa*."

When the *Tzemach Tzedek*'s daughter once fell ill with high fever, he suggested that someone read her stories of the Baal Shem Tov, for they are a superb *segula* to heal fever.

(לקוטי דבריהם ח"א ע' 508, רישומו"ד החדש ע' 135)

The Rebbe Maharash once said: "People say that relating a story of the Baal Shem Tov on *Motzaei Shabbos* is a *segula* for *parnasa*. The truth is that these three points are not necessarily so – *lav davka*. It does not necessarily have to be about the Baal Shem Tov – it can be about any *tzaddik*; and it is not only applicable on *Motzaei Shabbos* – it can be at any time; and the *segula* is not only for *parnasa* – but for all good things as well."

(רישומו"ד החדש ע' 211, וראה שמנו"ס ר"א ע' 4)

*Rebbetzin Rivkah* related: "In תר"ט (1849), when I was newly married, my father-in-law, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, called in all his daughters-in-law who lived in Lubavitch and instructed them to gather every *Motzaei Shabbos* and relate a *sippur* of the holy Baal Shem Tov. We asked whether it was enough to just mention the Baal Shem Tov's name. My father-in-law replied, 'Definitely – a story!'

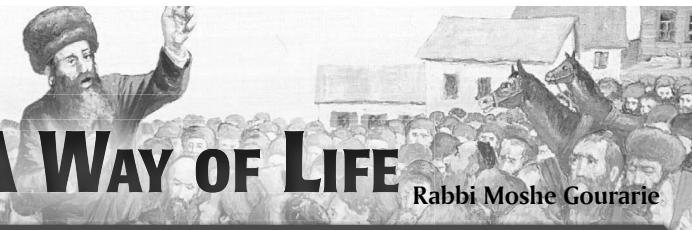
After that, every *Motzaei Shabbos*, one of the daughters-in-law would visit the *Tzemach Tzedek*, where she would hear a story of the Baal Shem Tov, and this she would then share with the rest of us."

(סה"ש ת"ש ע' 173)

### CONSIDER THIS!

Is the advantage of stories in their results or in the stories themselves?

Why can't the same benefits be acquired through learning *Chassidus*?



## Swimming in Halochos

Are there any *halachos* that one should know before going swimming?

As in every other area of life, there are *halachos* relevant to swimming. Here are some of them:

- 1) The *halachos* of *tznius* apply, to men and women, even when no one is present. This requires that one should always remain covered at all times except when otherwise necessary. Therefore, one should endeavor to remove the clothing of body parts normally covered, as close to the pool as possible.<sup>1</sup>
- 2) The *halacha* is<sup>2</sup> that one who removes his *tzitzis* with the intent of putting them back on after a few hours, must make a new *bracha* when he puts them back on (even he changed his mind and put them back right away). The exact definition of "a few hours" is not clear. However, it is surely not less than a little over two hours, and not more than a considerable amount longer than three hours<sup>3</sup>.
- If one is planning to swim for a length of time that is questionable, some *Acharonim*<sup>4</sup> suggest that, when reciting the *bracha* in the morning, he should have in mind that it extends only until he removes them for swimming. Then he can recite the *bracha* again, after swimming, without a doubt.
- 3) When swimming at public pools, it is common that one's clothes are mistakenly taken by someone else. Nevertheless, *halacha* states that he may not take the clothing of the one who took his clothing, unless it is clear to him that the one who took his clothing realized his mistake, and still did not bother to retrieve his own clothes. In this case one can assume that the one who made the mistake is fine with his clothes being switched. Nevertheless, if one knows the owner, he should contact him to switch back<sup>5</sup>.
- Some however argue<sup>6</sup> that it is permissible to use the clothes of the person who mistakenly took his, since nowadays people do not mind if their clothes are used in case of a switch (provided of course that it is clear that he is now taking the clothes of the one who took his). However, he should still attempt to notify the owner by posting a sign about the swap.

The above is for discussion only. For 'halacha lemaaseh' one should consult his *Rov*.

1. ש"ע אד"ז ס"ב ("מהדו"ב) ס"ב.  
שעתים ומשהו לא החיב הפסיק, ושהרבה יותר מוג' שעות בודאי מקורי הפסיק. ז"ע  
בזה.  
2. ש"ע אד"ז ס"ח ס"ג.  
3. בקצת"ש ס"ח 'בדי השולחן ס"ק ג' או מסתפק בכונה במ"ש בהל' תפילין 'מי או לי' שעות' דלאו' אם ב' שעות ההוה שעות מוגבנה כ"כ י, ע"ש דלמушה הכריו'ן דכ"ו  
דספק ברכות להקל אין לברך א"כ הפסיק בגין שעת. ובאג"ק ח"ג ע' ר"י 'כ' א"דו"ר דמל' אה"ר גב' יצית' 'מכה שעות' מוכחה זומן הפסיק מורה נבו' או ג' דתפילין. אבל כתבו עוד כמה מותבי דורוני, והוא ע"פ דברי העורו"ש ס"י קל"ב ס"ב.

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

לזכות הת' רפאל דובער גורעוויטש וב"ג ש"יניא חירש שיחיו  
לרגל נואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעתותם"צ

לזכות הת' אליעזר לאש וב"ג רבקה לאואר שיחיו  
לרגל נואם בקשרי שידוכין בשעתותם"צ

## OUR HEROES

### Reb Gershon Ber Paharer



Reb Gershon Ber was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and later of the Rebbe Maharash. Guided by Reb Hillel Paritcher, he became known as a great *maskil* and true *oived*.

Reb Gershon Ber is quoted for his heartfelt resolve "*Morgen vet zain gor andersh!*" (Tomorrow will be very different!), which he would proclaim after *Krias Shma She'al Hamita*, while rubbing his head with his *yarmulke*.

Reb Gershon Ber was acclaimed for relating stories. During his visits in Lubavitch, the Friediker Rebbe, then a young boy, would spend time listening to him gush forth tales and teachings of elder chassidim.

After one such evening with Reb Gershon Ber, the 17 year-old Friediker Rebbe penned a diary entry.

It is 2:00 A.M. Outside rain pours heavily. I pleaded with Reb Gershon Ber to stay in my home until morning. He agreed. I went to my room to contemplate what I had heard that night.

Is there a pen and scribe who can adequately describe the profound impression I have from Reb Gershon Ber? From his stories of elder chassidim, both of their personal lives as well as the way they interacted with the simple pure-emunah folk, followers of the ways of Chassidus.

...I look at the face of Reb Gershon Ber, the well-known *maskil*. He is distressed about his spiritual situation, which in his mind, leaves a lot to be desired.

I write the following in order that it should be as a witness for days to come:

On this past Motzoei Shabbos, I heard stories and talks of Reb Gershon Ber. Throughout my youth, I have seen many Chassidim. I have seen *maskilim*, *ovdim*, and *baalei middos tovos*. I have heard their stories and watched their conduct. For three years my father has been acquainting me with the wonderful and hidden gifts from the lives of great chassidim of the past, and (may they be separated for good and long life) of today. Of all the chassidim, Reb Gershon Ber is unique. In him I see the quality of a broken and crushed heart; broken like a shard of earthenware ("*tzubrochen vi a kinenle*") and '*botel*' like the dust of the earth.

While still sunken in my thoughts, a deep cry reaches me. I listen as Reb Gershon Ber reads *Krias Shma She'al Hamita*. He is saying the "ribono shel olam"; "shelo ashuv od lehachisecha, velo e'eseh hara be'einecha"... *May I not return to anger You anymore, nor do what is evil in Your eyes.*

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

## A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

### Eating and Sleeping Hours

Reb Tzvi Fuks, a former *talmid* of *Tomchei Temimim* in Poland, merited unique moments during the Rebbe's visits to the *yeshivah* in Ovtotzk.

"Knowing that the Rebbe was a great *gaon*, I would approach him with all my questions in learning. I would wait for him to leave his office, and pose my questions while he was walking. The Rebbe's answers came with lightning speed, 'Check that *Ritvah*... Try that *Tosfos*...'. The sources would roll out, while I held my breath."

"One day, after receiving my answers from the Rebbe, an elder chassid approached me. He told me of the Friediker Rebbe's request that *bochurim* should not take up the time of son-in-law, saying, 'He does not substitute the lost time with less work; it comes off his eating and sleeping hours.'

"That was the end of my discussions with the Rebbe."

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה