

The Weekly Farbrenge


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TOILING IN TORAH (I)

THE NEED TO TOIL

Rebbi Yitzchok said: "If someone says that he toiled in Torah but did not find (meaning that he was not successful), do not believe him. If someone says that he did not work hard but did find, do not believe him either. Believe the person who claims to have toiled and found (*Yagati u'matzasi - taamin*)."

Rava said: "Every physical body was created to work. Fortunate is he who merits having his work and effort in Torah."

(מגילה ו' ע"ב, סנהדרין צ"ט ע"ב)

Eliyahu HaNavi related: A *talmid* who was not well versed in *halacha* once complained to me, "I learn Torah and strongly desire it, and wait that it come to me, but it does not." I explained to him that only a person who gives up his life for Torah, for the honor of *HaShem*, merits this.

(תנא דבי אליהו רבה פכ"ב)

Based on the *Zohar*, the Alter Rebbe explains that just as the Yidden toiled physically and then went out to receive the Torah, so too we must toil in learning Torah, to bring about the final *Geula*. The Rebbe adds that even the laziest person would choose such work over the labor in Mitzrayim.

(תורה אור פ' וארא, שיחור"ק תשמ"ח ע' 636)

NO SHORTCUTS!

The Alter Rebbe writes that since *HaShem* demands of us to serve Him "with all [our] *nefesh*," every individual is required to learn to use his skills to the utmost. One who is capable of learning something difficult cannot discharge his duty by learning something easy. The Frierdiker Rebbe directed that everyone must have an in-depth *shiur* in *Gemara* (*l'iyun*) and not be satisfied with simply learning *Mishnayos*, important though it is. The Rebbe explained that learning that takes place without effort is essentially insufficient, since it does not involve the entire person.

(מאמרי אדה"ז ענינים א' ע' קנה, לקו"ש ח"ב ע' 566)

At the Rebbe's *chassuna*, the Frierdiker Rebbe went around greeting the guests and pouring them *L'chaim*. Approaching the standing area of the *bochurim*, he said: "*Temimim!* Torah can only succeed through great effort. A person who toils will understand what he studies even better than another who has a stronger head. You must dedicate yourselves to learn *with effort!*"

As he later related, "I was then forty years old. For fifteen years I had often traveled to visit the Alter Rebbe and when I was there I studied with all my *kochos*. Yet when this *yungerman* sat and *chazered* the *maamarim*, I didn't grasp them. Every *maamar* I heard made me feel utterly crushed. Because of my burning desire to know the *maamarim* and understand them, I asked the *yungerman* to review them over and over again for me. This he did, but despite his repeated explanations, my mind remained like a block of wood. It was closed to it all.

"For three weeks I held him back from continuing his journey home, and let my family run the store. Days and nights I toiled to understand what the *yungerman* taught me, but it was all to no avail. He eventually left, and I was left like a stranded ship at sea. I fasted and said *Tehillim* with tears, but my mind didn't open, so I decided to travel to Lubavitch. "There I noticed that over the past nine months since my last visit, there was a new atmosphere. Fifty or sixty *yungeleit* sat for hours on end, learning *Chassidus* diligently. On my first *Shabbos* there, the Mitteler Rebbe delivered a *maamar*, and I understood it. But unlike the *yungeleit*, I couldn't understand the Rebbe's additional explanation. This caused me such intense pain that I cried all night and fasted the next day.

"When I went to *yechidus* with the Rebbe, I told him all that had transpired. He told me that nothing can stand in the way of a person's will. Indeed, a strong desire can actually change his capabilities. When I heard that everything depended on my desire, I decided to remain in Lubavitch until I would begin to understand, and sent a message to my family to continue running the store on their own. I spent about four months working intensely, training myself to think about a subject for hours at a time and reviewing each topic dozens of times.

"That Tishrei I felt like a new creation, as if I had 'washed out the pot' and had become a proper recipient for receiving what I truly desired to receive. Only then did I go home."

(אג"ק אדהר"י צ"ח ע' ג' שט"ד)

CONSIDER

**How does effort in Torah
replace toiling in worldly
labor?**

**Did Reb Yekusiel not exert
himself in his hometown? How
much effort must one apply?**

(סה"ש תרפ"ט ע' 53)

The Rebbe once said that everyone ought to become a *talmid chacham*. He explained that there is no shortcut to this, and it is only attainable through hard effort. A person who thinks of excuses as to why he is unable to do so is really only fooling himself, and unfortunately he will remain ignorant (*an am haaretz*)...

(שיחור"ק תשמ"א ח"ב ע' 565)

THE FRUITS OF TOIL

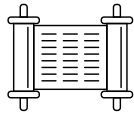
Reb Yekusiel, a salt merchant from Liepli who had been a *chossid* from the time of the Alter Rebbe, was a great *oved*, but with a limited understanding of Torah, especially of *Chassidus*. Once, a young *mashpia* traveling through Liepli stayed there for a few days, and every day he *chazered* a *maamar* of the Mitteler Rebbe. His sharp mind and articulateness left a strong impression on all those who heard him, but Reb Yekusiel didn't grasp the *maamarim* and was greatly disheartened.

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SAFEGUARDING A TRAMPOLINE

Does a trampoline need to have a fence around it?

There is a *mitzva* from the Torah to erect a fence (*maakeh*) around a roof on one's property—owned or rented¹—to prevent people from falling. The fence must be at least 10 *tefachim* and be sturdy enough to support the weight of a person leaning on it.²

The Alter Rebbe writes that the roofs of houses in his time did not require a *maakeh* since people didn't use them. The door leading to a roof that isn't generally used and does not have a *maakeh* must be securely locked.³ Roofs that are used are obligated today as well.⁴

In addition to the *mitzva* of *maakeh*, there is a *lav* (biblical prohibition) not to allow danger in one's home. Thus, any potentially harmful element on his property that can lead to fatal consequences must be removed or taken care of to ensure it doesn't cause any harm.⁵ However, a *bracha* is not recited on these measures which are taken to avoid a prohibition.

Poskim debate the status of a staircase and the roof of a non-dwelling structure (e.g. shul or storage) that is used.⁶ Some hold that it is obligated by *maakeh* and a *bracha* is recited, while others hold it is merely preventative and a *bracha* is not needed.⁷

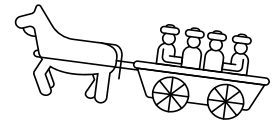
Common examples where the *lav* applies include:

- A pool must be properly covered or gated.⁸
- Sharp tools, knives or toxic substances mustn't be left accessible to young children.
- The top bunk of a bunk bed should have railing sufficient to prevent the particular sleeper from falling.
- Windows should be properly gated to prevent children who sit or stand on the windowsill from falling out.
- A trampoline must be properly fenced to protect those jumping on it even if it isn't ten *tefachim* high.

1. שו"ע חו"מ סי' ש"ד ס"ב ושקו"ט. באחרונים, ונפק"מ כשהבעלים גוי.
 2. שו"ע חו"מ סי' תכ"ז ס"ה-ו. שו"ע"ר הל' שמירת הגוף ונפש ס"א-ג.
 3. ויהי בנסוע ע' תקט"ו הע' ב' בשם הגר"ח"ק שליט"א.
 4. אמרי יעקב חו"מ סי' ל' אות ה'.
 5. שו"ע חו"מ סי' תכ"ז ס"ז וס"ח. שו"ע"ר דיני שמירת הגוף ונפש ס"ג.
 6. ובשו"ע"ר דיני שמירת הגוף ונפש ס"א ב', ושול"ת שבה"ל ח"ז סי' רכ"ט אות ה', וראה אמרי יעקב שם ביאורים ד"ה גגו.
 8. שו"ת דבר אברהם סי' ל"ז (וראה שם שה"ה שמקום ציבורי כמו חצר ביה"כ).

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REB PINCHAS REIZES

Reb Pinchas Reizes, one of the greatest chasidim of the Alter Rebbe, was an incredible *gaon* in learning. The Rabbeim trusted him fully, involving him in many private and clandestine activities having to do with them and the chasidim. He was also a wealthy and influential resident of Shklov and did a great deal for the Alter Rebbe in that respect. He was a *chozer* during the time of the Alter Rebbe who was known for the preciseness of his *hanachos* (transcriptions). The Mittlerer Rebbe called Reb Pinchas the "field marshal" of *chasidei* Chabad.

Reb Pinchas traveled to the Alter Rebbe for four months during the year: Elul, Tishrei, Nissan and Sivan. Once, Reb Pinchas fell ill and was unable to make the journey for Tishrei. Later on during the month, he felt better, but because the winter had already set in, he remained in Shklov. While sitting in his *sukkah* on Shmini Atzeres, he suddenly cried out, "Oy Rebbe!" and said to those sitting with him that the Rebbe had just thought of him.

At this same time, the Alter Rebbe was sitting at his *seudah* in his *sukkah*, and he said: "Pinchas Reizes needs his body to be cured. That which I cannot give him, I cannot give, but a bodily *refua* I can

give him."

The *chassidische* young men from Shklov were very surprised to hear the Rebbe suddenly mention Reb Pinchas in middle of the Shmini Atzeres meal. After Yom Tov, upon their return home, they immediately went to the home of Reb Pinchas and asked him for *mashke*, which he supplied. As they were speaking, they discovered that at the same time the Alter Rebbe had mentioned him, Reb Pinchas had screamed, "Oy Rebbe!"

Chasidim have always been averse to an outwardly showing of greatness by displaying *ruach hakodesh* and the like, and reprimanded him for such behavior. Reb Pinchas declared, "It was not me. The first time I went for *yechidus*, I gave the Rebbe my *nefesh*. The second time, I gave him my *ruach*, and the third time, I gave over my *neschama*. Being that my entire *neschama* had been given over to the Rebbe, it was not my powers that did this."

The Rebbe explained some aspect of this relevant today through total dedication of the *neschama* to the Rebbe. However, this level was reached only after the intense learning and toiling in *avoda* as Reb Pinchas would do.

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' נב, חסידים הראשונים ח"א ע' 64)

A Moment with The Rebbe



TRANSFORM YOUR HOMES

As a father rebukes his child, the Rebbe lovingly rebuked his chasidim. In a letter to the *anash* community of Montreal dated Shevat 5714 (1954), the Rebbe expressed deep disappointment with the status of the *yeshiva* – how it should be on a different level in every way.

"The reason for this is the state of *anash* families. One thinks highly of himself since he hasn't touched his beard, and that he learns *nigleh* and Chasidus, but doesn't realize how deep he has sunk in *hanachos ha'olam* (the ways of the world), and how it is affecting the *yeshiva*.

"In order to sink you into materialism, the *yetzer hara* had to work hard, to detach you from your years in Otvotzk, Warsaw and Lubavitch; but for the next generation it's quite simple, since they just follow the path of the parents, as a given.

"It is not my nature or occupation to scold, but I attempt with my last strengths to arouse you. It's already high time that you transform your homes to *chassidisher* homes, homes like the [Friediker] Rebbe wants. As a result, the *mosad* will also be as the Rebbe wishes."