בס"ד. חדר מנחם לאס אנדזשעלעס. סיפור לשבת פרשת כי תצא, י"א אלול, ה'תשע"א

חסידים הראשונים

Stories of the Early Chassidim

This year's Stories for Shabbos will אי"ה be focusing on stories of the early Chassidim, from which we can learn a lot about the ways of Chassidus and how a Yid and Chossid should act

Reb Binyomin Kletzker

This week's story is about Reb Binyomin Kletzker. He was a chossid of the Alter Rebbe and the Mitteler Rebbe. He had Mesirus Nefesh for the Rabbeim, and he was also related to them by marriage. His daughter married the Alter Rebbe's grandson (Reb Boruch the son of Rebbetzin Freide)

Reb Binyomin Kletzker was a wood merchant. His business was with forests. Reb Binyomin would hire workers to chop down trees in the forest, and make them into logs. Then they would tie the logs together, and make them into a raft and ship them down the river to their destination, where they would be picked up and sold.

(This is why he is called Reb Binyomin Kletzker – because his business was with logs called "kletz" in Yiddish".)

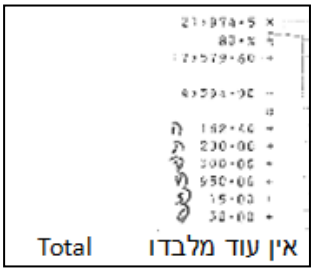
One time, he was standing next to the wood piles on the side of the river, and he started thinking Chassidus. He got so involved in his thoughts, and he stood like that for five hours!

People who saw him were very surprised. They said, "There's a time for thinking Chassidus, which is at the time of Davening, and there's a time for doing businees. Now is the time for business, so why are you thinking Chassidus?"

Reb Binyomin answered, "We know that many people, in the middle of Davening, start thinking about their business, instead of Davening properly, with Kavvono. So what's wrong if I think about Davening during the time that I'm doing business?!

The Alter Rebbe said about him that he fulfills the posuk of בכל דרכיך דעהו, that in every thing you do, you should know Hashem, because his business does not take him away from serving Hashem. [adapted from Toras Sholom page 6]

One day, Reb Binyomin was reviewing his accounts, seeing what was going on with his business. He had a long list of numbers with many details. He was counting how much wood he had, and where he sent it. How much money he made from selling the wood, and how much he spent paying the workers etc. At the bottom of the page there was a line to write the total.



Reb Binyomin wrote everything down, but when he came to write the total, instead of writing the correct number, he wroteאין עוד מלבדו, that there is nothing else besides Hashem.

The Rebbe explains this story: Reb Binyomin was doing business, because there's a Mitzvah in the Torah to work, to be able to support yourself and your family, so you will be able to serve Hashem properly and give your children a good Chinuch and so on. Therefore he filled in all the lines properly with the amounts and numbers etc.

But when he came to write the total, to see what the point of all this business is, he realized that the point is אין עוד מלבדו, because the reason why we work in the world is to reveal Hashem in everything that is in the world. [This will be seen in full when Moshiach comes].

[Likkutei Sichos Vol 34, page 112-3]