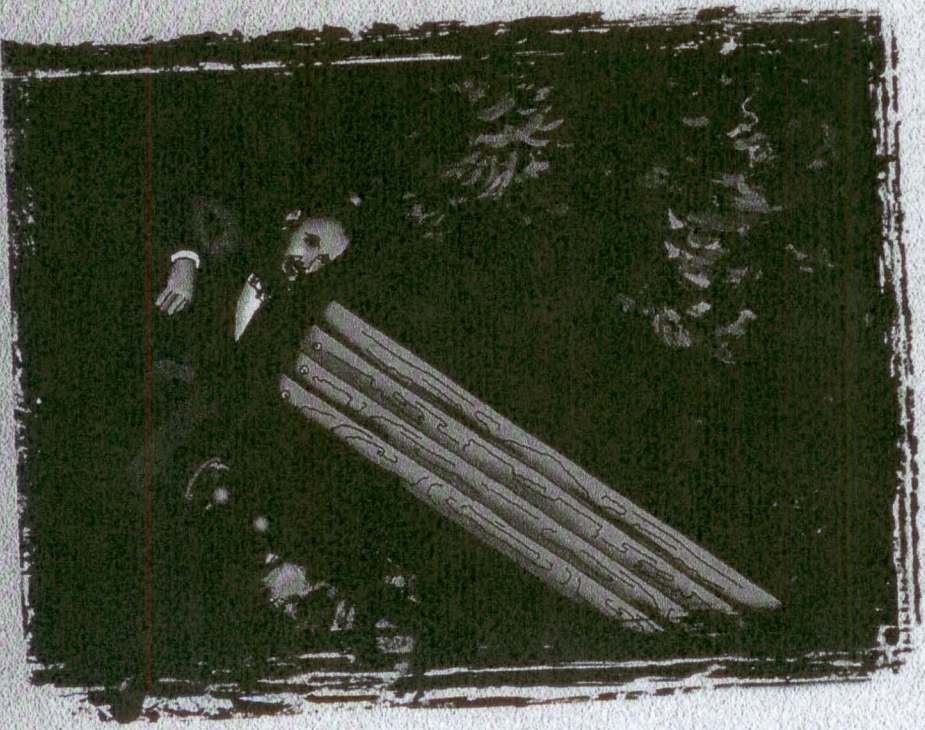


EARLY CHASSIDIC PERSONALITIES

# Reb Hillel <sup>4TH</sup> Paritcher



Rabbi Sholom DovBer Avtzon

2 year when he came, my father went to him and bemoaned his dire situation. "The *poritz* informed me that he won't be renewing my lease and I must find a new source of livelihood. I tried to find another business or job, but I was unsuccessful. The time is running out and I don't know what to do."

"Don't worry," replied Reb Hillel. "Tonight, when I *daven*, I will have in mind that the *poritz* withdraws his demand."

My father felt assured by these words, knowing that somehow everything would work out. Indeed, the *poritz* never brought up the subject again and we remained there for many more years.

From *My Father's Shabbos Table*, p. 148

There is an interesting story about Reb Hillel's profound understanding of *Chassidus*. After the Rebbe would say a *maamar*, *chassidim* typically reviewed the *maamar* to make sure they understood it properly. If something wasn't comprehended, they would discuss it amongst themselves until it became clear. If even after discussing it with the Rebbe's sons they couldn't come to a conclusion, they would ask the Rebbe directly for an explanation.

One time, the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek said a *maamar* and there was a disagreement amongst the *chassidim* as to its true meaning. Some of the Rebbe's sons explained it one way, while Reb Hillel explained it differently. Each one brought persuasive proofs for their point of view.

Seeing that they were hopelessly deadlocked, the *chassidim* wrote to the Rebbe explaining the two opinions of the *maamar's* meaning, without disclosing who said what. The Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek's reply sided with the explanation of his sons.

Reb Hillel stood firm in his opinion. "When the Rebbe says a *maamar Chassidus*, it is not he who is saying it, rather the *Shechinah* is speaking through him.<sup>36</sup> However, once he said it, it is Torah and one is obligated to understand Torah to the best of his abilities and not through accepting explanations on *kabbolas ol*. So now the Rebbe understands this Torah this way and I understand it another way."

The [Rebbe] Maharash, the Tzemach Tzedek's youngest son, responded to Reb Hillel, "Don't you think that the one the *Shechinah* chooses to speak

36. It is for this reason that the Rebbe would hold onto a handkerchief wrapped around his fingers when he would begin to prepare to say a *maamar* and during its recitation. He wanted to remain connected to something in the physical world while the *Shechinah* was resting on him.

through is the one most capable of understanding what was said in the *maamar*?!"

However, the Rebbeim explain, this is the way of the Torah. For example, we know that the *halachah* is like *Beis Hillel* over *Beis Shammai*, but that didn't cause *Beis Shammai* to change his approach. One must exert himself to learn and understand to the best of his abilities.

#### HIS PERCEPTION

When Reb Hillel would visit the city of Homil, he would frequently stay with Reb Isaac, the Rov of the town, who considered it an honor to be the host. One Shabbos, Reb Isaac decided to let Reb Hillel make *kiddish* using his cup.

Reb Hillel picked up the *becher*, looked at it from different angles, and put it down. Seeing this, Reb Isaac realized that there must be a reason why Reb Hillel would refuse to use it, and if it wasn't good for him, he shouldn't be using it either. So, very discreetly, he removed it from the table.

Later, upon examination, he saw there was no problem with the cup itself. It had no nicks on the top and it was sufficiently large. He reasoned that perhaps something went awry when it was made.