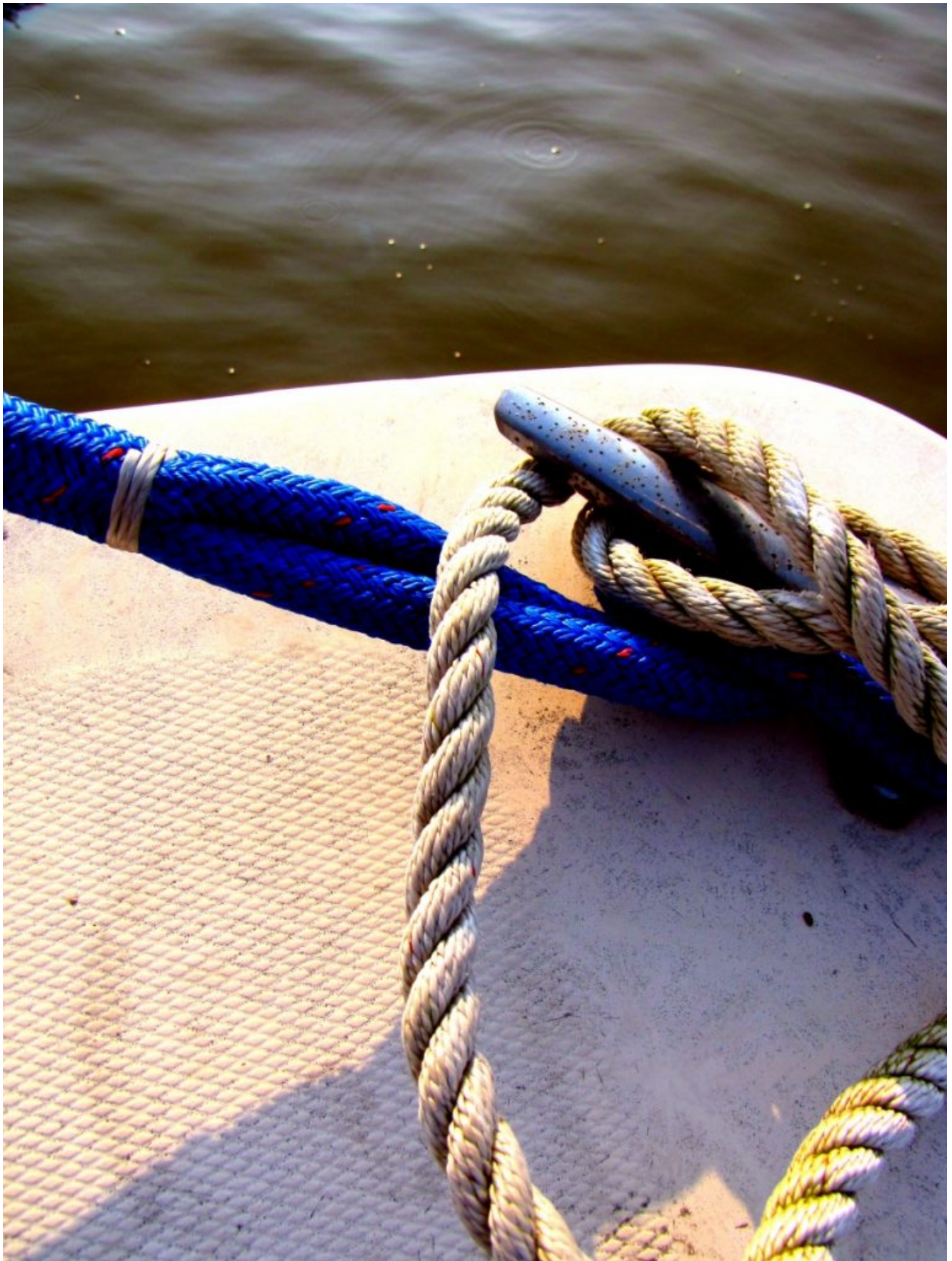


Dvar Torah Parshat Shlach

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Dvar Torah for Parshat Shlach

Based on *Likutey Halakhot*, P'ru u'R'vu 5:5

“... Moshe [renamed] Hoshea bin Nun, Yehoshua” (Numbers 13:16). “They came up via the Negev. He came to Chevron (aka Hebron) ... (ibid. v.22). On the first verse Rashi reminds us of the Talmud’s teaching (*Sotah* 34b), that Moshe prayed for his disciple Yehoshua: May God save you from the spies’ conspiracy. On the latter Rashi tells us that it was Kaleb (aka Caleb) alone who went to Chevron. Where in Chevron did he go? To the grave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs, to pray, that in their merit he not be lured into joining the conspiracy. In fact, both Yehoshua and Kaleb remained loyal to God, to their mission and to the Jewish people.

Let’s talk about a crucial, but little understood—often misunderstood—concept found in Rebbe Nachman’s teachings: *hiskashrut l’tzaddik*, being “bound” to a tzaddik. I will offer a few translations of the Hebrew word *l’hitkasher/hiskashrut*. Each English word touches on a different facet and/or level of connection. Not every word works in every use of *hiskashrut*. (This is what makes it so much fun to be a translator!) *Hareini m’kasher atzmi l’khol hatzaddikim ha’amitiyim* becomes:

I hereby associate/affiliate/bind/attach/identify/align myself with the genuine tzaddikim.

However, there are meanings that no literal translation captures which need to be borne in mind. One I heard from Reb Tzvi Cheshin: I *submit* myself to the genuine tzaddikim. This is a pledge (an affirmation, if you like) to submit my thinking, speaking and behavior to the teachings—i.e., the *standards*—of the tzaddikim. How do my attitude and specific thoughts, my conversations and choice of words, my behavior and actions agree with how the tzaddik teaches to live life?

(Don’t look now, Mister Nota Chassid, but you already be connected to a tzaddik! How so? Anybody who lives by, i.e., submits himself to, *Shulchan Arukh* is *m’kushar* to Reb Yosef Karo. This I heard a number of times from Reb Chaim Kramer.)

We're not finished. There is another degree (or type) of *hitkashrut*. Rebbe Nachman once said that he had three different types of chassidim. The first came to his Shabbat meal to eat from his "leftovers" (aka *shirayim*, a chassidic custom that began with the Baal Shem Tov). The second type came to hear his teachings. There are two versions of what he about the third type. Either Rebbe Nachman said, "The third type have me *arein g'bakt in hartz* (baked into their hearts)." or, "The third type are *arein g'bakt in hartz* (baked into his heart)."

Either way, this observation reflects directly how Rebbe Nachman defined *hitkashrut l'tzaddik* (*Likutey Moharan* I, Lesson #135):

"The sign that one is attached (*m'kushar*) [to the tzaddik] is if one possesses unpretentiousness ... and the main bond (*hitkashrut*) is love: one should love the tzaddik with a complete love, as is written (Genesis 44:30), "His soul was bound (*keshurah*) with his soul." The Targum translates this: "He loves him as his own soul."

There are many good and important reasons to be connected with a tzaddik (or tzaddikim). Their prayer may save your eternal life, as Moshe's saved Yehoshua. Or, like Kaleb, your prayers reinforced by their merit may save your eternal life. The desire to be (or remain) a "chassid in good standing" pushes one to go the extra mile to maintain standards. (You're thinking, "Am I not already pledged to God to keep the standards of His Torah?" The answer is what Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakkai told his students: If only our fear of God was as great as our fear of people! [*Berakhot* 28b], and what Rebbe Elazar ben Yaakov teaches, "The fear of your rebbe should be like fear of Heaven!" [*Avot* 4:14].)

But being in love, being baked into the heart, is beyond needing a reason. It is sharing essence and existence with the one you love.

agutn Shabbos!

Shabbat Shalom!

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