



## ITS IN THE SMALL STUFF

*Harav Y. Ruven Rubin Shlita*

It's all in the small bits, trust me I have just been reminded of this with a bit of a jolt. Like all of us, I no longer write cheques, nor see real cash. No, like so many, I have a small card, and with the wonder of technology this sliver of plastic passes as the key to all my worldly goods. Well, at least that which my friends at the bank deem me worthy of holding. I'm used to slowly perusing my monthly statements seeing only the big numbers, small stuff is usually interest payments on my overdraft or credit card, (another plastic miscreant in my life). Anyway, yesterday, for some reason I saw a small payment to 'Uber London', nothing big, mind, just £5. I was a bit incredulous, first of all, I haven't been in an Uber vehicle for a number of years, nor have I been in London of late. Besides, £5 what Uber trip costs that little? So, my hackles were raised, some chutzpa, Uber is starting up with the wrong Rabbi, I'll put a stop to this larceny immediately! I called my bank, and of course was put through the regular irritant of waiting for my call to be:

1. Answered
2. Told to state my business
3. Having to say everything over three times (my American twang doesn't do it for British auto answering machines)
4. Explaining the horrendous crime that has been perpetrated
5. Being shunted to the criminal branch

Etc. etc. etc.

Finally, a kindly friendly voice chirped on the other end of the call, and asked me to hold on as he rustled together all the records of the banditry that I have suffered from. A long pause, back came my new found crime buster, "well rabbi, over the last year or so, someone at Uber has done you for £600!" Gulp,

בס"ד



## Adass Aish Kodesh

Harav Y. R. Rubin Shlita  
36 Bury Old Road  
Prestwich – Manchester  
M25 0FT



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£600, and all in dribs and drabs of between £2 and £4. Whew, that's almost enough money to buy, well not a lot, but surely something. I drew my breath, I had now joined the ranks of "the oldies who are being scammed," trust me it's an acclamation I didn't want to earn, but, well there it is. I had to cancel my card, and was pleased that the hard-earned dosh that was so ruthlessly stolen from was returned. I admit, in the glee of that moment, I probably spent more than was retrieved, but that's for another article.

I share this tale of urban life for a purpose, to highlight the fact that it's the little stuff that can add up to make a big difference. The scoundrels that had fleeced me didn't go for the mega bucks, (they would soon realise they had chosen the wrong victim) rather, they chewed on the small bits and pieces, knowing full well that I most likely would never notice.

I'm sure my readership have figured out where this tale is going. Sweet Yidden, the gelt in my story is just a woeful example. More than anything, we should learn that in Yiddishkiet, it's the small mishaps and moments of forgetfulness that soon add up to large chunks of debris that block our hearts and souls. We all want to be true to our calling as Children of Hashem, however, life gets in the way, and although we try to focus on the big stuff, it is the small mishaps that add up to huge boulders. How often do we run to shul to daven, then tallis draped over our shoulder we fall into a schmooze at the coffee table. Nothing major, just a "vous machst dee" as you stir your hot drink, twenty minutes later you are shocked, inside they are saying kedushah and you haven't started brochos. This shock only lasts the first few times, because these habits easily become habitual, and soon you are one of the well regarded shmoozers who never seem to say kriyas shemah with the minyon. Slowly, slowly the missteps add up. You find yourself one of the sagely clever clogs of the shtieble, one who has something to say about anything, as long as your siddur's page stays stationary. A by-product of all this? Your son, the one who you try to teach to daven "like a Mench" stands to the side, silently absorbing his Tatti's misplaced wisdom, soaking up how his hero is a shmoozer, and hopes to attain this highly regarded position as well.

It's all in the small incremental steps, the account silently grows, and the bren for davening dissipates. Soon you find yourself complaining that the davening takes too long, after all it takes away time from the main purpose of our venturing out, the schmooze by the coffee!

I know that we all are guilty of these shtiebledika misdemeanors, and it often comes from a noble need to share and give chizuk to others. But like the ganovim who tried to steal my hard-earned money, we have to keep an eye on the small stuff, so that they don't become a stumbling block to our connection to what is real in our lives.

The Yetzer Horah knows his business well. Not everyone will be a shmoozer, no we are all human and vulnerable to our own individual foibles. My point is that our failure to pick up on the little mishaps can add up, and with each step we become less sensitised to all this. The Eibishter seeks our closeness, and these minor obstacles are meant to train us in overcoming life's challenges.

May Hashem grant all of Klall Yisroel stamina to bring Hashem's illumination into our reality, and we be found worthy for our total Redemption soon.

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