

The Weekly *Farbrenge*



לחמן ישמעו • נציבים-וילך תשע"ז • 427
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

HEARTFELT PLEADING (II)

SIMPLE TEHILLIM

The Friediker Rebbe related: Reb Ber, the father of Reb Mendel the *meshares*, was a simple Yid who constantly recited *Tehillim* while delivering milk. At his *bar-mitzva* he had been by the *Tzemach Tzedek*, who instructed him to say the entire *Tehillim* daily, as well as while he traveled. Years later, before his *chassuna*, the Rebbe reminded him, "Remember to say *Tehillim* at all times."

He once told the *Tzemach Tzedek*: "I wake up every day at a quarter to 12 a.m. and read *Tikkun Chatzos*, *Tehillim* and *Zohar*. I don't understand what I'm reading, but saying it all gives me such pleasure! I'm a wagon-driver, so I know that a man can travel only when the horses are harnessed..."

When I related the above to my father, he remarked: "The world stands on the *Tehillim* of these simple Yidden. The pleasure it brings *HaShem* is beyond description."

(ס"ה ש"ש תש"ז ע' 142, ס"ה ש"ש תש"א ע' 86)

A number of simple, unlearned businessmen and farmers once arrived to spend *Shabbos* in *Mezhibuzh*. On Friday night they joined the *seuda* of the Baal Shem Tov, who showered them with attention. To one of them, the *tzaddik* gave the wine remaining in his *becher*, another was given slices of *challa*, and some had the *zechus* of receiving fish and meat from his plate. Watching this conduct of the Baal Shem Tov and seeing the attention he was giving to these simple folk, his *talmidim* were perplexed.

On *Shabbos*, as usual, the Baal Shem Tov had the *seuda* alone with his *talmidim*. The unlettered guests had their own hurried *seuda* and returned to *shul* to read *Tehillim*, while at the *seuda* the Baal Shem Tov delivered a *maamar*. Inspired by the profound teachings of their Rebbe, the *talmidim* sang a meditative *niggun*. Feeling so greatly uplifted, some of them were relieved that this time they did not have to share their *seuda* with ignorant people. They still wondered about the affection shown to them by the Baal Shem Tov.

Hardly had the thought crossed their minds when the *tzaddik* became deeply serious, and began to describe the unique quality of the *avoda* of a simple, sincere Yid. The *talmidim* resumed the *niggun* while the Baal Shem Tov sat deep in thought. Suddenly he opened his eyes, and told his *talmidim* that each of them should place his right hand on his neighbor's shoulder. He then told them to close their eyes, and he closed the circle by placing his holy hands on the shoulders of

those near him. The *talmidim* suddenly felt themselves transported to the highest worlds by sweet music. This was the music of familiar *pesukim* of *Tehillim*, interspersed with requests in informal Yiddish that sprang spontaneously from warm and humble hearts. The *talmidim*, overcome by the devout sincerity of these *tefilos*, sat entranced and trembling, their eyes closed, tears coursing down their faces. They wished that they too could attain such heights.

When the Baal Shem Tov removed his hands, breaking the circle, the music was no longer to be heard. The *talmidim* were instructed to open their eyes and continue singing. Soon after, the *tzaddik* explained that the spiritual bliss that they had experienced had been aroused by the *Tehillim* being recited in the next room by the simple Yidden. Their words, springing from the deep faith that is their very essence, were bringing *HaShem* indescribable pleasure.

(קבוץ מכתבים אודות אמירת תהלים ע' 194)

Tehillim every day, humbly and without interruption, and he will be saved. Also, nothing protects a person from evil more than the *Kaddish* recited after the *tzibbur* says *Tehillim*.

However, these qualities apply to those who read *Tehillim* as it ought to be read, word by word, with a *niggun* of gratitude and of request to *HaShem*. We should put our heart into understanding those *tefilos*, even though we are unable to perceive their true depth, for they were revealed to Dovid HaMelech by *Ruach HaKodesh* to ward off trouble. Nevertheless, a person who does not understand them can also merit their positive effect, provided that they are recited slowly and carefully.

(פלא יועץ ערך תהלים)

The Friediker Rebbe writes: Whoever says *Tehillim* every day, pleasantly and deliberately, grants the public protection and salvation. His words are precious in the eyes of *HaShem*. The *malochim* embrace and kiss the letters of his words and carry them before His throne with joy and awe, where they intercede on his behalf, on behalf of his family, and on behalf of his entire community.

(אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ה ע' רמב)

In the days of czarist Russia, Yiddish children were often snatched and taken off to be trained in the militia. Many such six- and seven-year-olds from various cities were once conscripted as a group, and their parents, wailing fathers and mothers, followed them until the officers drove them away.

At some point during their lengthy trek, the children were temporarily confined in a fortified house. They began to talk about their unfortunate circumstances, how they were being forcibly taken with the intention of eventual conversion, with no opportunity for escape. They knew that if they were to fake illness, they would be abandoned or poisoned. The tearful parting of their parents pained them as well. Then they reminded each other: "At home, whenever there was a *tzara*, people always said *Tehillim*. There's no greater calamity than what is happening to us, so let us *daven*."

However, they had no *seforim* and didn't know any *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* by heart - but from their days in *cheder* they remembered the tune to which they used to sing their way through the *pesukim* of *Tehillim*. Their cries pierced the heavens, and through a quick turn of salvation, they were all returned to their homes.

(שער יששכר תקע בשופר אות טו)

CONSIDER

What does it mean to say *Tehillim* with "inner sincerity"? How is that different than *kavana*?

What new understanding did the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov learn about the simple Yidden? Had they never before heard them recite *Tehillim*?

The Friediker Rebbe described how in the past, even ordinary Chabad chassidim had a *pnimiyus* to them. Even those who did not understand the meaning of the words said *Tehillim* with an inner sincerity that was superior even to the *Tehillim* with tears that is said today.

(ס"ה קי"ז ת"ש ע' 101)

READING WITH EMOTION

The reading of *Tehillim* has tremendous power, repelling evil decrees from a person, his family and even his entire generation, and generously drawing down *beracha* and *hatzlacha*. There is a tradition that a person in need of a *yeshua* should recite the entire

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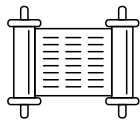
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RABBI CHAIM HILLEL RASKIN ROV - K FAR CHABAD BEIS

YANOVER ESROGIM

How much more am I required to spend for a Yanover esrog?

An esrog tree is very vulnerable, and it is commonly grafted with a lemon tree to prolong its life. (In Eretz Yisroel, for example, an esrog tree has a life span of 8-10 years, but when grafted with a lemon tree, it can reach a life span of 25 years).¹

Poskim rule that an esrog that is crossbred (*murkav*) is invalid,² and various reasons are given: (1) Cross breeding is prohibited, and the product is unfit for a mitzva (in which case a descendant of that fruit would be acceptable);³ (2) Since it is only part esrog, it is "incomplete" and may even be lacking the minimum size (in which case a large esrog during *chol hamoed* would be okay);⁴ (3) It is a new entity and not an esrog, invalidating it completely.⁵ The Alter Rebbe rules like the third reason.⁶

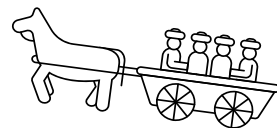
The Alter Rebbe lists four signs that distinguish a pure esrog from a crossbred one: (1) Surface is bumpy; (2) Stem (*oketz*) sinks in; (3) Peel is very thick and the fruity part is small; (4) Seeds are vertical, while in a grafted one they are horizontal. However, *poskim* explain that these signs are only helpful to ascertain whether it was grafted in the classic manner with a lemon; an esrog grafted with other fruits (e.g. a quince) or using more sophisticated methods may exhibit some or all of the signs and still be invalid.⁷ Thus the Chasam Sofer writes that esrogim require a definite tradition (*masorah*) just like kosher birds.⁸

The esrogim from Calabria, Italy – also known as "Yanover" because of the port they were sent from – had a strong tradition of being pure, since their potential profitability was not well known, they grew in large forests (as opposed to specifically grown orchards), and workers were paid for their work, not per esrog.⁹ In recent decades, however, since farmers began making a business out of them, the *chazaka* has been tinged, and one should only buy them with a reliable *hechsher*.¹⁰

There are additional advantages to Italian esrogim as well. Yitzchok blessed Esav with "the fats of the land," which Chazal interpret as Italy, presumably causing it to provide better fruits, and there is also a tradition that Moshe Rabbeinu had an esrog brought to him from there.¹¹ Yanover seeds that are planted elsewhere are assured not to be *murkav* and are halachically suitable, (especially when they are grown under Jewish ownership and constant surveillance – something that the Italian esrogim lack), but they lack the *hiddur* of a more beautiful esrog.¹²

How much is one required to spend on a *hiddur*? Halacha states that one is obligated to spend a third more for a *mehudar mitzva* over a non-*mehudar* one.¹³ For example, if one can buy a non-*mehudar* esrog for \$60, he should pay \$90 for a *mehudar* one. Thus, one should be willing to pay a third more for an Italian grown Yanover over a Yanover esrog grown elsewhere. Alternatively, one may "borrow" – with a *matana al menas l'hachzir* (conditional gift) – an Italian grown Yanover for the *bracha*, and use the other Yanover for the *na'anu'im* (waving) and *hallel*.

However, one should not focus on this *hiddur* at the expense of more essential *hiddurim* or a concern of *murkav*, and one should seek advice from someone knowledgeable in *halacha* regarding the proper order of priorities.



REB ALTER SIMCHOVITCH

Reb Chaim Alter Nissan Shimon Simchovitch (known as Reb Alter Potchiper) was an outstanding *chosid* of the Rebbe Rashab and Frierdiker Rebbe. He served as a *maspia* in various branches of Tomchei Temimim, including Toras Emes in Yerushalayim and Tomchei Temimim in Warsaw. For a while, he was the *chozer* of the Rebbe Rashab. Reb Alter passed away on the 7th of Nissan תרצ"ט (1939).

The *bochurim* in Toras Emes once asked Reb Alter to repeat for them a *maamar* and to *farbreng* with them. Reb Alter replied that he could only do one of the two, since each one required eight hours of internal preparation.

At one point, Reb Alter contracted

tuberculosis and he suffered terribly. He once turned to the students sitting around his bed and shared what he was thinking, "Hashem! You create the world every moment anew. Does the fact that yesterday you created a sick set of lungs mean that you should continue to do so every moment?"

Once, while in Yerushalayim, someone referred to the Lithuanian Yidden who lived in Batei Broida as "*misnagdim*."

Reb Alter retorted: Those aren't "*misnagdim*"! In Russia we saw *misnagdim* who weren't particular about wearing a *talis katan* and other "small" *mitzvos*. These people are very particular with *mitzvos*; they are careful to avoid speaking *lashon hara* and they study Torah diligently. These are "*baal-shemske Yidden*"!

(אוצר החסידים - רוסיה ופולין ע' 361, 335, 464)

A Moment with The Rebbe



WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Before Reb Yitzchok Dovid Groner left on *shlichus* to Australia, he went through much deliberation. The distance from family, from the Rebbe, from community. The daunting responsibility and great work overwhelmed him.

However, the Rebbe was very demanding of him. At one point Reb Yitzchok Dovid gave a note into the Rebbe and received a sharp answer,

read to him over the phone by Rabbi Chodakov.

Among other things the Rebbe wrote, "You know very well what I want..."

The response ended with these words: "Vos vilstu? *Shetuchal loimar shekoniso begodim le'ishtecho al Shidrah Hachamishis beManhattan?*" (What do you want? To be able to say that you bought your wife clothes on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan?)

1. מהג"ר אפרתי שמעתי 8-6 שנים, ומהמגדל ר"ק שמעתי שיש אצלו כאלה שמתקרבם לעשר שנים.
2. ראה שו"ע סי' תרמ"ח ס"א ומשנ"ב סי' תרמ"ח סק"ח ובשעה צ"ש שם סק"ג א" מביא רשימה של אחרונים האוסרים.
3. לבוש סי' תרמ"ט ס"ד. וטעם זה צ"ע שהרי יש ספק אם מותר להרכיב פירות הדר, וכן צ"ע בנוגע הצאצאים אם יאסרו, וח"ו מזה ישנם אופני הרכבה שאין איסורי מדאורייתא. וכן יש לדון האם אסור לעכו"ם להרכיב, וראה בט"ז סי' תרמ"ט ס"ק ג שהקשה מהד"ס שנקנה מעכו"ם יש שם עבדות גזל.
4. ראה מהר"ם אילשך סי' ק"י ולפי טעם זה יכול להיכשר בימים הנוספים של החג ראה סי' תרמ"ט סק"ג.
5. שו"ת הרמ"א סי' ק"ז.
6. שו"ע אור"ח סי' תרמ"ח ס"א. ולפי צ"ע איך יש מגדלי אתרוג קאלבריא שמשמנים על ההיתר הגר"א קוק שמותר להרכיב אתרוג עם אתרוג שהורכב עם לימון כיון

שהרוב הוא אתרוג. דלשיטת רבינו הוא מין אחר.
7. ראה סי' מנחת יהודה וירושלים להר"י קעלער ע"ה בקונטרס פרי עץ הדר.
8. שו"ת אור"ח סי' ר"ז וכן שער הכולל פל"ו.
9. שה"ש תרצ"ט ע' 295. וראה אג"ק רבינו ח"י ע' קפ"ג שיקחו מיער ולא מחלקה שנמצא בטיפול בנ"א.
10. רבינו הורה שכל אתרוג יולקט ע"י ב' מומחים - מובא בס' מנחת יהודה וירושלים שם.
11. ראה ספר המנהגים - חב"ד ע' 65 הל' 5, ובארוכה אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' רד"ע ואילך. וראה אג"ק ח"ד ע' כ"ד שאין לנו אלא מנהג אדה"ו והוא לברך על אתרוגי קאלבריא.
12. וראה אג"ק ח"י ע' צ"ד.
13. שו"ע אור"ח סי' תרנ"ו ס"א. וראה משנ"ב שם סק"ג שיש מחמירים שהשליש תהיה מלבר וכן נקטנו בנינים. אבל בשו"ע פוסק שליש מלגו והיינו להוסיף לאתרוג של 60 עוד עשרים דולר בלבד.