

The Weekly Farbrengens

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SIMPLE SINCERITY (II)

ARTLESS DEVOTION

When *Moshiach* comes, the lofty value of the simplicity and artless devotion of the common folk who *daven* and recite *Tehillim* with heartfelt sincerity will become apparent.

(היום יום כ"ד אייר)

The Baal Shem Tov once invited his *talmidim*: "Come with me and we will learn a lesson about how to love *HaShem*." He led them to a large field where a young shepherd was tending his flock. Spontaneously, the shepherd called out, "Master of the world, I love you!" He then questioned aloud, "How shall I serve you?" And he answered his own question: "I will dance for you!" And with that, he broke into a long and joyful dance.

A short while later he called out again, "Master of the world, I love you! What shall I do for you? I will jump back and forth over this little pond for you!" And so, he repeatedly jumped over the pond out of his love for *HaShem*.

After some time, he once again called out, "Master of the world! What can I offer you? Here, I have a coin in my pocket and I will give it to you." He took the coin and cast it heavenward.

Some tell that the coin never descended.

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 49)

In the Baal Shem Tov's time a certain Jewish community was under a decree of destruction issued by the Heavenly Court. The Baal Shem Tov summoned two of his colleagues, hidden *tzaddikim* named Reb Mordechai and Reb Kehos, to join him in constituting a *beis din*, to consider how to nullify the decree.

However, when the Baal Shem Tov experienced *aliyas haneshama*, he learned that the decree was final and not to be annulled. Returning past the chambers of Gan Eden, he passed a chamber that shone with unusual brilliance. This was the chamber of a villager who said all of *Tehillim* five times every day, and the words of his *Tehillim* sparkled.

The Baal Shem Tov traveled to the home of this villager and said to him, "If you knew that by sacrificing your share in the World to Come you

could save a Jewish community, what would you do?"

"If I have any share in the World to Come, I give it up," was his prompt response. The decree was annulled.

It had been the custom of this villager to say *Tehillim* always, incessantly. While chopping wood he kept reciting *Tehillim*, and so too while doing any work. It is quite conceivable that he wasn't scrupulous about his immediate environment, even saying *Tehillim* where one should not, since he was uneducated. But he didn't know the *din* and his intentions were pure, so his *Tehillim* was effective.

(סה"ש תרצ"ז ע' 203)

CONSIDER

Why does a simpleton have more sincerity than a scholar? What can a scholar do?

If mispronounced words are just as beloved before *HaShem*, does that mean that the correct pronunciation is insignificant?

Do not be surprised that *HaShem* also accepts the prayers of those who mispronounce words of *davening*. For He seeks integrity: He only asks that a person's heart be sincere with Him, and since he can't do better, *HaShem* considers it as if he did. That person's *tefillos* and songs of praise are as acceptable Above as a *korbon*, and bring *HaShem* great joy.

Indeed, there was once a not-very-learned *kohen* who during the Priestly Blessing, instead of saying *veyishmerecha* ("and may He protect you"), said *veyishmedecha* ("and may He destroy you," *R"L*). A certain scholar had him step down from his place, but was soon shown from Heaven that if he did not reinstate that *kohen*, he would be punished.

(ספר חסידים סי' יח)

Rebbi Akiva once heard someone reciting *Shema* but he mispronounced the last word slightly: instead of saying *echad*, which means that *HaShem* is "one," he said *acher*, which means that there is "another." When Rebbi Akiva explained the distorted meaning of his pronunciation, the poor fellow was in a dilemma. He couldn't continue with his pronunciation and couldn't master the proper one, so he simply stopped saying *Shema*. This diminished the delight he aroused Above, the pleasure in his original way of saying *Shema* – because his intention was so pure.

(סה"ש תרצ"ז ע' 204)

HEARTFELT BLUNDERS

The Baal Shem tov showed that a *ben Torah* should be shamefaced in the presence of the ordinary, unlearned *Yidden* who mispronounce their *davening*, for their artless *temimus* is immeasurably superior to that of a learned person.

(סה"ש תש"ב ע' 8)

The *Midrash* records a teaching of Rav Acha: "Even if instead of saying *ve'ahavta* ("and you shall love"), an illiterate *davener* says *ve'ayavta* ("and you should hate"), his error is loved by *HaShem* since it comes from a pure heart."

(שהש"ד ב, ד)

The 12th-century ethical mentor, Rebbi Yehuda HaChassid, writes in his *Sefer Chassidim*:

There was once a simple, unlettered fellow who would recite just three of the morning *brachos* – "*shelo asani goy*", "*shelo asani eved*", and "*shelo asani isha*" – with exceptional excitement and concentration.

Now, the word *shelo* in the *bracha* is of course written with an *alef* (שלא), which means "that He did not." However, this fellow translated them as if they were written with a *vov* (שו), meaning "to Him."

So, when he was prompted for an explanation, he said, "These *brachos* thank *HaShem* for having chosen us. In the first *bracha* we thank Him for having made us His nation (*goy*); in the second, for making us His servants (*eved*); and in the third, we thank Him for giving us the fire (*isheh*) with which to serve Him..."

(רשימו"ד חדש ע' 306)

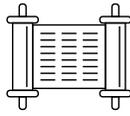


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BORROWING SHUL FURNITURE

May I borrow tables and chairs from a shul for a *simcha* I am hosting at home?

A shul is a *mikdash me'at* and the *kedusha* of Hashem resides in it.¹ It is therefore important to maintain its cleanliness, including sweeping and mopping,² and interestingly enough, the *zechus* of Yehoshua bin Nun was that he set up the benches by Moshe Rabbeinu. Furniture items of a shul, including the tables and chairs, have *kedusha* which precludes their use for mundane purposes (and for example, mundane items shouldn't be placed on a *bima*).³

The permissibility of holding a *farbengen* or *siyum* in a shul is justified on the basis that they bring honor to Hashem, are considered *seudos mitzva*, provide food for poor people, and it is all for the purpose of serving Hashem. For this reason, we aren't concerned that people will act disrespectfully even after drinking some wine.⁴

Additionally, when a *shul* is built, a condition is generally made stating that certain behaviors which are usually prohibited in a halachic *shul* (*beis haknesses*) should be permitted, and this suffices to permit these things to be done. In some cases, even if a condition was not made explicitly, since such behaviors are common in a shul, we consider the condition as having been made implicitly.⁵

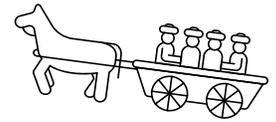
Since it is common practice to borrow tables and chairs from a shul for mundane uses, it is as if a condition has been made at the outset to allow for this. (Obviously this only applies where the local practice is to borrow tables and chairs from a shul; otherwise it will need to have been made clearly).⁶

Yet, this only applies if using these tables or chairs will not cause a distraction to those who frequent the *shul* for *davening* and learning. Otherwise, *poskim* write that it falls into the category of "destroying a house of Hashem."⁷

Needless to say, one may only borrow them with permission of the *gabbai*. Even one who pays membership towards the upkeep of the shul cannot borrow without permission of the *gabbaim*, because although the entire community are like 'partners' with regards to communal property, an individual desiring to make use of public property nonetheless requires authorization from those entrusted with safeguarding the property on behalf of the community.⁸

1. מגילה כ"ט ע"ב.
2. שו"ע או"ח סי' קנ"א ס"ט.
3. ראה שו"ע או"ח סי' קנ"ד ס"ח, ובערוה"ש שם סעי' י"ב, וביאור הלכה סוף סי' קנב.
4. קצוה"ש ח"ב סי' כ"ט בדה"ש ס"ק י"ב.
5. שו"ע שם סי' קנ"א ס"א, וראה בכ"ז בס' משנת יוסף הלכות ביהכ"נ (ליברמן) פכ"ז.
6. ספר צדקה ומשפט (בלוי) פ"ב הע' פא.
7. משנ"י סי' ט"ו (הו"ד פת"ש סי' קנ"ב סקי"א ובהע' 84 שם).
8. צדקה ומשפט פ"ב ס"ו.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



REB MOSHE YITZCHAK OF YASI

Reb Moshe Yitzchak (in some sources: Yitzchak Moshe) of Yasi was of the younger chassidim of the Alter Rebbe and later a chossid of the Mittlerer Rebbe. He was very *mekushar* to the Mittlerer Rebbe, and the Mittlerer Rebbe said that Reb Moshe Yitzchak was one of the three chassidim in whom he fulfilled Hashem's true intention ("*ehr hot oisgefirt di kavana Elyona*"). After the *histalkus* of the Mittlerer Rebbe, Reb Moshe Yitzchak became a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Tzemach Tzedek would recite *ma'amorim* for him in *yechidus*.

hour, leaning on his hands with his eyes closed. He then looked once more at the sky, got up, and carried on his way. To this day, we do not know what it was all about."

The Tzemach Tzedek inquired about the date of the event, and the Rebbe started to laugh at the answer. The Tzemach Tzedek explained, "At that time was the *Z'lobiner chassunah* (the famous *chassunah* of the grandchildren of the Alter Rebbe and Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev). While under the *chuppah*, the Alter Rebbe said the *ma'amar* "*Ki Al Kol Kovod Chuppah*". All the *malochim* gathered in *shomayim* to hear the *ma'amar*. Your father merited to hear the *ma'amar* as well..."

The Tzemach Tzedek once asked the son of Reb Moshe Yitzchak if he remembered anything about his father. The son shared a story to which he did not know the meaning.

"One Friday afternoon, when my father was returning from the *mikvah*, he was walking on the street when he suddenly looked up to the sky and became very excited. He asked to sit and a chair was brought from a nearby store. Bystanders thought that the hot bath had hurt him and they asked if he wanted a doctor. 'No need,' Reb Moshe replied, 'Just leave me alone'. He sat for about half an

At the time of the arrest of the Alter Rebbe, all the chassidim were busy trying various ways to save the Rebbe. Among other things, the chossid Reb Moshe Yitzchak bought potatoes and began making *mashke* from them. He explained, "It is beyond any doubt that the Rebbe will soon go out of jail and there will be a great and wondrous *geulah*. There will be a great need for *mashke*, so I am starting on it already..."

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE VALUE OF A MITZVAH

One frustrated community activist came to the Rebbe with a plan to resign. He had established a Jewish day school, and seen the institution flourish. However, he complained, whatever he taught was counteracted by the parents. The children went home and lost whatever they were taught. "I feel that I'm wasting my time!"

way to receive his sentence he asked for a cup of water, is he obligated to say a *bracha* on the water? And are others obligated to answer *omein*? Of course.

"This is because a *bracha* has infinite value, regardless of what happens before or after," said the Rebbe.

"Now," the Rebbe concluded, "how much more so pure *Yiddische* children. Irrespective of the results, their *mitzvah* performance and Torah study are infinitely valuable."

The Rebbe answered by way of illustration. If a criminal was sentenced to die by a *beis din*, he must be a terrible sinner. Now, if on the

