

# The Weekly Farbrengens



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## FEELING PROUD (I)

### PROUD TO BE GREAT

Pride is usually a negative trait, but when it concerns the service of *HaShem*, it is praiseworthy. One should be proud of his achievements and aspire to further heights.

*Chazal* say that one should thank *HaShem* for placing him amongst those who study Torah, and King Yehoshafat is praised for taking pride in the ways of *HaShem*. This kind of pride does not detract from humility; rather, it makes a person be happy with good virtues, while enjoying and caring for the honor of his peers.

This pride also helps one stand strong in face of wrongdoings and evildoers. In such circumstances, a person should act proudly even if he will be suspected of arrogance. However, in material matters, he should concede to others, beyond the letter of the law.

In this spirit, the Baal Shem Tov taught that Yidden should use their pride for Torah matters and their humility for worldly matters.

(ארחות צדיקים שער הגאון, כש"ט אות סח)

The Rebbe often emphasized that the way a Yid gains respect in the eyes of others is by showing unwavering commitment to his standards. There have been people who thought that by bending their standards they would be accepted and well liked, but the outcome was the opposite. When others saw that a Yid felt inferior, they treated him as such.

The Rebbe pointed out that this message may be learned from the words of the *meraglim*: "We were like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so" – that is, *and therefore* – "we were like that in their eyes," in the eyes of the *goyim*.

(שיחור"ק תשל"ח ח"ג ע' 215, לקו"ש חכ"ג ע' 479)

### STANDING TALL

Once, while standing before Izgadar, the King of Persia, the *amora* Huna bar Nassan was wearing his *gartl* too high. Noticing this, the king reached over, personally moved it to its place, and said,

"You belong to a royal and holy nation, so you must look regal."

When Huna bar Nassan shared this story with Ameimar, he replied, "With you, a *possuk* was fulfilled: 'Kings will be your servants.'"

The Rebbe notes that when a Yid stands confidently with the Torah and is not fazed by the non-Jews around him, even kings will come to his aid.

(זבחים יט ע"א, לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 175)

### CONSIDER

Why doesn't holy pride lead to arrogance?

Where does a lack of Yiddishe pride come from?

The *amora* Rav Yehuda and Batti bar Tuvi were once sitting before the Persian king Shvor Malka, when a fruit was brought before them. The king took an unkosher knife and cut a slice for Batti. He then stabbed the knife in hard earth to *kasher* it, and cut another slice for Rav Yehuda. Surprised that the king didn't do so for him, Batti asked the king, "Am I not a Yid?!" The king responded, "With Rav Yehuda, I am sure that he will not eat it, no matter what the consequence may be. You will eat it, out of fear of me."

From here we see, says the Rebbe, that when a *goy* sees how a Yid is firm in his observance of *mitzvos*, he considers it an honor to personally serve the Yid with his needs.

(ע"ז עו ע"ב, לקו"ש ח"ט ע' 31)

The Rebbe once told someone at *yechidus*: "The fact that many rabbis in America don't have beards, and that Yidden flee from a community when *goyim* move nearby, and that land in *Eretz Yisroel* is being given away, – these are all rooted in the same problem: the inferiority complex the Yidden have with regard to *goyim*. If only Yiddishe

pride would be strong, all these issues would be resolved."

(משבחי רבי ע' 173)

A Yiddisher store-owner in Crown Heights noticed that when the Rebbe walked by his store daily, he greeted his *goyisher* neighbor with a few words, whereas to him the Rebbe would simply nod his head. When he asked the Rebbe about this, the Rebbe responded, "I never bow my head to a *goy*."

(כפר חב"ד גליון האלף)

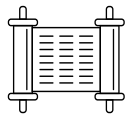
### NO NEED TO IMPRESS

During the era of the communist regime, a group of American Rabbis traveled to Russia, to bring encouragement and support to Yidden living there. Arriving in Moscow, the delegates met the locals and prided themselves on their worldliness, such as their ability to play ball, and so on. The Russian Yidden were not impressed: "We have soccer players here as well, and for that, we do not need a delegation from America."

Two years later, a group of Yidden from *Eretz Yisroel* traveled there, on a similar mission. They were dressed in the modern fashion, trying not to appear too Jewish, and boasted of their sports and drama. The Russian Yidden were shocked: "We are here, *with mesirus nefesh* to observe Torah and *mitzvos* – and the Yidden in *Eretz HaKodesh* are investing their efforts in worldly culture?!" They then went their way, uninspired and in fact discouraged.

In a letter to a member of the second group, the Rebbe laments the lack of Yiddishe pride amongst the youth: "It is imperative that the youth walk the streets noticeably as Yidden, so that they are clearly recognized as being *frum*. When questioned how they spend their time, the obvious response should be, 'With learning Torah and keeping *mitzvos*, and a little work on the side to earn a *parnasa*.' Their energy should be devoted towards that which is unique to Yidden, and not the kinds of things that *goyim* are also excited about."

(אגרות קודש ח"ט ע' קיה)



SHEHECHEYANU ON A DAUGHTER

Should I make a bracha when I have a baby girl?

Whenever one experiences happiness of the heart from the goodness of this world, one is obligated to recite a bracha. If the goodness occurred to him alone - e.g. eating a new fruit (see issue 446) or seeing a friend after a lengthy period (see issue 565) - one recites shehecheyanu.<sup>1</sup>

The Rebbe notes that we don't customarily say shehecheyanu when reuniting with friends, and doesn't accept the reason that one's joy may not be full hearted - since even one in doubt about his level of joy may still say shehecheyanu (like on a new fruit) - and concludes that one who truly wishes can make the bracha.<sup>2</sup> (Based on this, chassidim recited shehecheyanu the first time they saw the Rebbe.)

When one hears that one's wife gave birth to a son, he recites hatov vehameitiv, and this exempts him from reciting shehecheyanu upon seeing the son if it is within thirty days. Hatov vehameitiv not said on the birth of a daughter, but what about shehecheyanu due to the excitement upon first seeing her?

Some poskim question whether it is a complete joy, in contrast to seeing a friend whom one knows already.<sup>3</sup> The Alter Rebbe, however, rules that one is to recite shehecheyanu upon seeing one's new daughter if he takes pleasure and rejoices in seeing her.<sup>4</sup> An important condition for reciting the bracha is that the surroundings must be clean and tzniusdik.

If one had twin girls, and he sees each one individually, he makes a bracha on each one. If the twins are a boy and a girl, then the hatov vehameitiv on the boy covers the girl as well.<sup>5</sup>

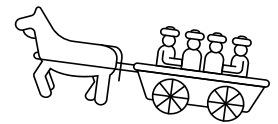
In many communities, they didn't recite these brachos upon birth, and some poskim ruled that the shehecheyanu is optional.<sup>6</sup> Even amongst Chabad rabbonim, some held not to say this bracha; either because the joy might be lacking, or due to some other unknown reason.

Other Chabad rabbonim feel that the Alter Rebbe's inclusion of these brachos in Seder Birkas Hanehenin demonstrates that this is what we should do, and the Alter Rebbe doesn't hold that the shehecheyanu is optional.<sup>7</sup> They attribute the lack of reciting the bracha by many to a mistake, influence of other communities, or since the area wasn't sufficiently clean.<sup>8</sup>

In practice, if one is excited and happy, he can surely recite the bracha.<sup>9</sup>

1. סדר ברכה"נ פי"ב ה"א. 2. סדר ברכה"נ פי"ב ה"א. 3. סה"ש תשמ"ט ח"ב ע' 738. 4. ראה לוח ברכה"נ פי"א סל"א וראה סדר ברכה"נ שאדה"ז משמית מה שכתב בלוח שם. 5. ראה הע"ב גליון תת"מ ותתמ"א (כ"ש הגר"י פרקש לברך) וכן שמעתי מהגמ"ל ע"ה לברך. מנגד שמעתי מהגרמ"ש א"א ע"ה (נראה לי בשם ר' שמואל) שלא מברכים מטעם כמסו. 6. ראה סדר ברכה"נ פי"ב ה"ב. 7. ראה תורת היולדת פל"ט ס"ג. 8. ראה רמ"א או"ח סי' רכ"ג סי' א', וראה כפה"ח שם שבלידת בן יברכו בברית. וראה שערי ברכה פכ"ב הע' ס"ה וס"ו דעות האחרונים בזה. 9. ע"ד מה שאמר כ"ק אדמו"ר שם לה"ד הרי בוודאי לא מקפידים על הרוצה לברך ועונים אמן בלב שלם. וראה הע"ב גליון תתמ"ג שהרי"ג כתב שלא היה לו הוראה מהר"ב בנידון.

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



REB YEKUSIEL LYEPLER

Reb Yekusiel Lyepler, a salt merchant from Lyeple, was one of the great chasidim of the Alter Rebbe, Mittlerer Rebbe, Tzemach Tzedek, and for a short while, the Rebbe Maharash. He was a baal midos and great baal hispaalus (full of life). Though a simple man by nature (he even found it difficult to learn Chumash with Rashi), he toiled tremendously until his understanding developed, and for him, the Mittlerer Rebbe wrote the sefer "Imrei Bina," a very profound essay in Chassidus.

When he first came to the Alter Rebbe, Reb Yekusiel heard a maamar about the chalal hasmali, the left ventricle of the heart where the nefesh habahamis resides. He climbed up to the second floor window, while the Alter Rebbe was wearing Rabbeinu Tam's tefilin, and cried out, "Rebbe! Cut out my left side! I cannot 'deal' with him!" The Alter Rebbe responded, "It says 'Ve'ata mechayah es kulam', and You give life to all."

From that moment onward, Reb Yekusiel became a different person and his heart opened, for the Alter Rebbe "shined" into his neshama the ability to see Elokus as one sees something physical.

This 'shine' of his neshama (which he would refer to as "the chossid") would come and go and his avoda would vary greatly depending on the current expression of his neshama. If while walking down the street, it would start to 'shine,' he would start to dance, exclaiming, "Chossid prishol, the chossid has

come!" Once while standing in the Borisov post office, waiting to have something done for him, his neshama began to shine, and he broke out in dance with the post office clerk...

Traveling through Lyeple, one of the young Chassidim stayed over for a number of days, and each day he chazered a maamar of the Mittlerer Rebbe. Due to his sharp mind and eloquence, he made a strong impression on his listeners, yet Reb Yekusiel was unable to grasp the maamorim.

Totally crushed, Reb Yekusiel kept the yungerman back for three weeks to teach him the maamorim, but it was to no avail. Out of desperation, he left his store in the hands of his family, and traveled to Lubavitch.

Upon arrival, he encountered tens of yungerleit learning Chassidus diligently, yet he could not comprehend the maamar the Rebbe delivered. Reb Yekusiel stayed up all night crying, fasted and said Tehillim. Afterwards, he went for yechidus and told the Rebbe what had been happening.

The Rebbe told him that ultimately everything was up to his desire; if there is a will there is a way. Reb Yekusiel decided to stay in Lubavitch, and for four months, he toiled tirelessly in the study and contemplation of the Mittlerer Rebbe's Chassidus. His efforts bore fruit, and his mind opened; as Reb Yekusiel later described, "I felt like a new creation."

(אג"ק אדהרי"צ ח"ג ע' שס"ד)

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE REBBE DETACHED HIMSELF FROM HIS INYANIM

When the Rebbe's mother fled Russia in 5707 (1947), the Rebbe made his way to Paris to greet her. Once there, the Rebbe spent many hours teaching, guiding and inspiring Holocaust survivors, who gathered to drink his words of wisdom.

Reb Nochum Yakobovitch recalls the Lag BaOmer farbrengen of that year:

The shul was packed. The Rebbe sat at the head of the table, flanked by rabbonim and sons of rebbes, including one from the family of the illustrious Mareh Yechezkel. Everyone sat openmouthed as the Rebbe spoke with an inner fire, yet so calm and collected. We couldn't take our eyes off his

pure face. At one point, the Rebbe began weeping openly, and said:

"The Alter Rebbe lived in Liozna, the Mittlerer Rebbe lived in Lubavitch... All the Rebbeim had great chassidim, giants in avoda and in chassidic thought.

"But my father-in-law, the Rebbe, has detached himself from all his own inyanim, from the realms of yichuda ila'a and yichuda tata'a (higher and lower unifications of G-dliness), and has dedicated himself to teaching American children alef-beis."

(Parshios Im Harebi, Bereishis, page 232)