

The Weekly *Farbrengens*


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ENERGIZING JOY (II)

THE POWER OF JOY

The *Zohar* teaches that the way a person conducts himself in This World determines how he is dealt with Above. In the words of the *Zohar*, "If a person down here shows a luminous face, in the same way a luminous Face shines upon him from Above."

(זהר ח"ב קפ"ד ע"ב)

One *Motzaei* Yom Kippur, the Baal Shem Tov went out with his chassidim to recite *Kiddush Levana*, but the moon was covered by clouds. Returning to his room, the Baal Shem Tov immersed himself in *davening* and tearfully pleaded that the moon be revealed – but the clouds did not part. The chassidim, waiting outside for their Rebbe, broke out in joyful dancing, thanking *HaShem* for the Yom Kippur they had properly spent. The Baal Shem Tov, drawn by their *simcha*, joined them. The clouds suddenly moved aside, the moon came out, and with great ecstasy, the chassidim recited *Kiddush Levana*.

Regarding this episode, the Baal Shem Tov would say, "What I could not bring about with my *tefilos* and *yichudim*, the chassidim were able to accomplish with the power of *simcha*."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין תורה ע' 115)

SWEETENING WITH SIMCHA

Crossing over a bridge in Danzig, Reb Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha saw a man floundering in the waters below. Seeing no way of saving the Yid, he called out to him, "Send regards to the Livyasan!" At that moment, *HaShem* came to the man's aid: he managed to catch on to a plank and save himself.

Reb Simcha Bunim later explained that due to the man's broken spirit, he could not be helped. "But when I made that humorous comment he was slightly gladdened, he was able to save himself with the power of his *simcha*."

(שיח שרפי קודש עניני שמחה אות ט)

Reb Elimelech of Lyzhansk would often undertake harsh *siggufim* as a *kapara*, such as rolling in the

snow without warm clothes. On one such night, Reb Elimelech did not notice a nail sticking out of a board that was covered in snow. As he rolled over it, it pierced his hand. When he arrived home, his relatives excitedly gave their advice on how to stop the bleeding. Reb Elimelech's daughter, overhearing snippets of the lively conversation, thought they were discussing a hole in the wall, and called out, "What's the big deal? Take some straw and stuff it up!" Hearing this, everyone laughed, and suddenly Reb Elimelech stopped bleeding. With this distraction taken care of, he returned to his *avoda*.

He later explained that an unfavorable decree had been issued Above, but through the *simcha* his daughter had caused, *simcha* was aroused Above, and this nullified the decree.

(סיפורים למעשה ח"א)

"Why don't you ask the reason for calling for a performance on a regular day?" responded the Rebbe, and he explained: "I became aware of a harsh decree being issued in *Shamayim* on my son, and since *simcha* sweetens stern decrees, I called for the *kapelia*. The *simcha* helped, for his fall turned out much less harmful than what had been planned for him. Then, to ensure a complete recovery, I instructed that the festivities continue. With *HaShem's* help, he will recover completely."

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' צד)

IN THE MERIT OF JOY

Walking around the marketplace, the *amora* Rav Broka asked Eliyahu HaNavi if anyone who was there was deserving of *Olam HaBa*. Eliyahu HaNavi answered in the negative. Soon two brothers appeared on the scene. Eliyahu HaNavi said, "These men will merit *Olam HaBa*," and went on his way.

Curious, Rav Broka approached the strangers and asked them, "What do you do?"

Their answer was simple: "We're just a couple of lively guys. We cheer up folks who are sad. And if we see two people arguing angrily, we joke around with them until they give up quarreling."

(תענית כ"ב ע"א)

At a *farbrengens* the Rebbe once quoted a *derush-vort* of Reb Shimon of Yerislav, a *talmid* of the Chozeh of Lublin:

"אז, when *Moshiach* comes,

the *goyim* will express their surprise:

with what have you merited such great miracles?"

We will tell them:

It was in the *zechus* of our *simcha!*"

The Rebbe concluded that Yidden should rejoice out of trust that *HaShem* will bring *Moshiach* soon. This will then urge *HaShem* to do so.

(תורת מנחם חט"ו ע' 51, מס' תורת שמעון, לקו"ש ח"כ ע' 384)

CONSIDER

What is the special power of *simcha*: that it motivates the person to work better or that it draws down a *bracha* from above?

The Mittlerer Rebbe's *kapelia* included two groups of chassidim, musicians and horse riders, who would enliven joyous occasions. The Rebbe's son Reb Nachum was one of the horse riders. One ordinary day, the Rebbe called for a performance and stood by his window to watch. Suddenly, Reb Nachum was flung from his horse and was badly hurt, but surprisingly, the Rebbe motioned that the performance should continue. Meanwhile, a doctor was called, and after examining Reb Nachum, concluded, "He has only broken his leg."

Some chassidim later asked the Mittlerer Rebbe why he had ordered that the performance continue, despite the accident.

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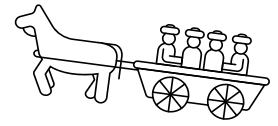
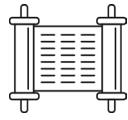
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MACHINE-MADE TZITZIS

Is it worth it to spend extra money on handmade tzitzis strings?

The halacha, based on *pesukim*, is that each individual string for *tzitzis* must be spun and twined from multiple threads, and these processes — like the knots of the *tzitzis* — must be done *lishma*. A non-Jew can't be relied upon to have this intent while spinning *tzitzis* strings, even if instructed to do so, unless a Jew actually assists him in the process. While some are stringent that even the earlier stage of combing the wool (*niputz*) be done *lishma*, the Alter Rebbe concludes that it isn't the prevailing custom.

Before beginning to spin or twine the string, the one working it must proclaim that he or she is doing so for the sake of the *mitzva* of *tzitzis*. Theoretically, it is sufficient for the person to hear it being said, but the Alter Rebbe in the Siddur writes that the workers should verbalize this intention themselves.¹

If a machine is used to process the strings, is the intent of the person working the machine sufficient?

Many *poskim* hold that there is no explicit requirement for *tzitzis* strings to be processed by *koach gavra* (direct human force), but the question is whether a person's intent can extend to the machine's process if it was only started by him.

If it would be a purely mechanical machine — i.e., a crank or peddles must be rotated continuously for the gears in the machine to operate — then the entire process is clearly attributed to the one turning it. Therefore, as long as a Jew is doing so with the proper intention *lishma*, it is kosher and, in many cases, even *l'mehadrin*.²

But by electric machines that are started by the press of a button and continue on their own, there is debate amongst the *poskim* if this can be considered *lishma*. While some outright invalidate such *tzitzis*, others permit if the machine is turned on each time by a Jew with intention for the *mitzva*, including whenever the machine stops or the power goes out.³

The Rebbe notes that during World War I, the Rebbe Rashab had *tzitzis* made by machines for the refugees who needed *tzitzis*, and this is proof that they are at least minimally kosher. Yet, the Rebbe makes two distinctions: (1) those machines were less sophisticated than today and required more human intervention;⁴ (2) at that time, this was the only feasible option to create the number of *tzitzis* needed, and it was not considered *mehudar*. When handmade *tzitzis* are available, writes the Rebbe, it isn't proper to rely on machine-made ones.⁵

In practice, when possible, adults should endeavor to acquire *tzitzis* that use hand-spun *tzitzis* strings.

R. SHMUEL SOFER

R. Shmuel Rabinovitch (d. 5675), known as R. Shmuel Sofer or R. Shmuel der Shreiber, lived in Lubavitch where he made a living as a copyist of *maamorim*, like his father, R. Meir, before him. During this period, the Rebbeim's *maamorim* were not published, instead circulating among the chassidim in handwritten copies. R. Shmuel was the considered the premier copyist due to his precision and neat script, and the Rebbeim commissioned his work constantly. Until recently, many of the *maamorim* of the Rebbe Maharash were only available in photocopies of R. Shmuel's handwriting.

Having just spent Shabbos by the Tzemach Tzedek, the chossid R. Leib Moninsohn, asked the Rebbe if he could get a copy of the *maamar* right away, as he was pressed to leave town the next day. The Rebbe agreed and told him to call R. Meir der Shreiber. When R. Meir arrived, the Rebbe showed him where to sit and what to copy from a manuscript.

Meanwhile, the Rebbe sat at another table in the same room and began learning Gemara aloud, with a tune. After learning the *sugya* according to Rashi's commentary, exclaiming "*dus iz noch Rashi*," he proceeded to learn it according to Tosefos. Then he learned it according to the Rosh and then the Rif and Ran, each time noting which commentary it was. Finally, the Rebbe enumerated all the *halachos* deduced from the *sugya*, and the Gemara's meaning according to Kaballah.

As he ran out of space on the table, the Rebbe spread out more *seforim* on a surface on the ground. With a candle in his hand, he walked around looking through them, clarifying the various opinions and *halachos*. Upon clarifying the entire *sugya*, the Rebbe started singing the Alter Rebbe's niggun and began dancing.

The entire time, R. Meir sat there in awe watching the Tzemach Tzedek. When the Rebbe finished his dance, he approached R. Meir to see how much he's done and discovered that he only wrote a few lines. "*Petach, fool!*" said the Rebbe, "you can go home."

When R. Meir shared with the Tzemach Tzedek's sons what he had seen, they weren't amazed. "Our father does that every night," they told him.

(רשימות דברים חדש ע' 123)

For many years, the Rebbe Maharash's *maamorim* were only available in R. Shmuel's handwriting, which wasn't easy to read for those unfamiliar with his handwriting. Regarding this, the Rebbe once told the chassidische printer, R. Mottel Shusterman, that the Frierdiker Rebbe had said, "Enough has been done to lead the well to the horse, it's time now to lead the horse to well..."

Later, though, the Rebbe gave instructions to publish these volumes in regular typeset, to make Chassidus as accessible as possible to our generation.

(למען ידעו ע' 151)

A Moment with The Rebbe



AN UPLIFTING APPROACH

Even as he was being drawn to *Yiddishkeit* through the efforts of Reb Berel Baumgarten, a certain *Yid* kept contact with a *goyishe* girl. Despite Reb Berel's best efforts, he would not leave her, and actually began the process of arranging for her conversion.

However, matters complicated when this *Yid* discovered that he was a *Kohen*, who is forbidden from marrying a *giyores*. But he still refused to sever their relationship.

At this point Reb Berel convinced him to have a private talk with the Rebbe. To his surprise, the Rebbe did not discuss the transgression or its implications.

The Rebbe said to him, "You may have heard that I am knowledgeable in Torah. Now there are others who are greater than me — far greater. However, all of us could never in our lives reach the level of a *Kohen*."

"The sanctity of a *Kohen* cannot be reached by man's work. It is a gift granted only by Hashem Himself, upon whom He wishes."

This fellow was taken by the Rebbe's words. As he exited the *yechidus*, he said, "There is no way I could marry her. How could I violate my *kedusha*?"

(Otzar Hachissidim Berachvei Tevel, Page 83)

1. ראה סוכה ט' ע"א. וראה שו"ע י"ד או"ח סי' י"א אות ב'.
 2. סי' י"א ס"ג-ד, ופסקי הסיידור, וראה שו"ת צ"צ או"ח סי' ב' אות ד'.
 3. ראה פסק"ת או"ח סי' י"א אות ב'.
 4. אג"ק ח"ג ע' תכ"ו.
 5. אג"ק ח"ו ע' רצ"ג.
 2. ראה שו"ת קנין תורה ח"ה סי' ב'.

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