

# The Weekly Farbrengens



**MERKAZ ANASH**  
מרכז אנאש

למען ישמעו • יוחי תשפ"ה • 809  
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

## RECITING TEHILLIM (I)

### THE VALUE OF TEHILLIM

Once, in the time of the holy Baal Shem Tov, it was decreed in Heaven that a certain Jewish settlement should be destroyed, R"l. The Baal Shem Tov called upon his friends, the hidden *tzaddikim*, Reb Mordechai and Reb Kehos, to join him to form a *beis din* and find a way to nullify the decree.

The *beis din* convened, and the *neschama* of the Baal Shem Tov ascended to the heavenly worlds. There he saw that the decree had already been sealed and could not be annulled. However, as he passed through the heavenly spheres while descending back to the physical world, he saw a magnificent light created by the words of *Tehillim* that were being recited by a simple villager. This Yid would complete the entire *Sefer Tehillim* five times every day, but since he was quite ignorant, he sometimes said *Tehillim* in unclean places. Nevertheless, *HaShem* valued his *Tehillim* so much, that a privileged share in *Olam HaBa* awaited him.

The Baal Shem Tov immediately traveled to see this man and asked him, "Would you be willing to sacrifice your share in *Olam HaBa* in order to save an entire Jewish community?"

The simple Yid responded, "If I have a share in *Olam HaBa*, I am ready to forfeit it for such a cause."

And the decree was annulled.

(שמח"ת תרצ"ז - קובץ מכתבים ע' 201)

On the *pasuk* "*Yiheyu leratzon imrei fi*" (may the words of my mouth find favor before you), the *Medrash* teaches that Dovid HaMelech requested that his words of praise be written and engraved for all future generations. Furthermore, he asked *HaShem* that the recitation of *Tehillim* be considered just as worthy as the study of the most complex *halachos* of the Torah.

(מדרש תהלים א.ח.)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related: "When I was a little boy I once wondered whether *malochim* are able to calculate numbers. When I asked my father, he replied, 'That's a good question! But I am certain that Malach Michoel counts all the *Tehillim* that one says, and with it he creates a chandelier that lights up, Above and below, for that person and for his children.'

"Following this, my father would often ask me,

'How is your chandelier doing?' "

(סה"ש תש"ט ע' 336)

The Rebbe explains that even when *Tehillim* is said without particular *kavonos* and at a quick pace, as many do on *Shabbos Mevarchim*, this nevertheless has a tremendous effect. In fact, in the *Yehi Ratzon*, we ask that our reading be considered as if it came from the mouth of Dovid HaMelech himself.

The Frierdiker Rebbe emphasized that the *kedusha* of the words, even when they are not understood, is as precious in the eyes of *HaShem* as a *korbon*. One should learn the translation of the words, but not recite that instead of the original.

(התועדויות תשמ"ז ח"ג ע' 418, אגרות קודש מוהרי"צ ח"ד ע' תנט)

### CONSIDER

**What about *Tehillim* is so effective: the *kavonos* that one has or the intrinsic *kedusha* of the words?**

### GREAT POWERS

About 650 years ago, in a village in Germany, there lived a simple pious Yid who was able to study Torah only at its simplest level. Every day, year after year, he would recite the entire *Sefer Tehillim*.

Less than thirty days after he passed away, he appeared in a dream to a *chochom* from the nearby city of Worms. In the dream he stood holding a little *Tehillim*, and he cautioned the *chochom*, "Warn the people in my village to escape immediately to the surrounding towns. During my life I protected them with my recitation of *Tehillim*, but now they are in grave danger."

Early the next morning, the *chochom* sent a messenger with an urgent letter telling the villagers of the looming danger. The people heeded his words, and they were saved.

(מנהגי וורמייזא סדר תהלים)

The Baal Shem Tov would say that reciting the entire *Sefer Tehillim* is a *segula* for crushing any verdict on a person.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* once told his chassidim, "If only you knew the power of *pesukim* of *Tehillim* and their effect in Heaven, you would recite them at all times. The *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* break through all barriers as they soar aloft, higher and higher, uninterrupted. They prostrate themselves before the Master of the Universe, bringing results with kindness and mercy."

(הוספות לכש"ט ס' נז, היום יום כ"ד בט)

The Frierdiker Rebbe related how in all generations, whenever a decree was issued against Yidden, they would run to *shul* to recite *Tehillim*. The *melamid* would recite *Tehillim* with their young *talmidim*, for "their breath is sinless." The Frierdiker Rebbe added that the numerous Hamans in every generation are eliminated by the heartfelt *Tehillim* of a simple Yid - "not by sword or spear, but only by a heartfelt *kapitel* of *Tehillim*."

In the year תר"ג (1843), the interior minister of Russia summoned the *Tzemach Tzedek*, along with three other leaders representing the Yidden of Russia, in order to pass new decrees upon the Yidden. When they arrived in Petersburg and heard of the *gezeira*, they immediately ordered three *kapitlach* of *Tehillim* to be recited in all *shuls* and *chadorim* (כ.כ.ב, סט). This required *mesirus nefesh*, for the czar was likely to punish them for supposedly assuming control over Russian citizens. Shortly after, that evil minister fell ill and died, and was replaced by a neutral minister who canceled the decrees.

In the year תרמ"ב (1882), which became known as "a year of bloody pogroms," the Yiddishe leaders led by the Rebbe Maharash revealed a secret plot against the Yidden. They likewise called upon the Yidden to recite the above-mentioned *kapitlach*, and within one month the evil plan fell through.

In the year תרס"ו (1906), pogroms began to erupt throughout Russia. The Yiddishe leaders, led by the Rebbe Rashab and Reb Chaim of Brisk, gathered in Petersburg, where they heard of the czarist government's secret plan to instigate pogroms in 116 Yiddishe communities. At that time, too, they requested that the three *kapitlach* be recited by Yidden everywhere, and shortly afterwards the plan failed.

(אג"ק הרי"צ ח"ב ע' קלא, סה"ש תש"ט ע' 308)



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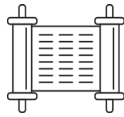
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MAYIM ACHARONIM

How much of the hand do we wash for mayim acharonim?

The Gemara teaches there's a mitzva to wash mayim acharonim because it's inappropriate to bentch with dirty hands. Elsewhere, the Gemara records that it's an obligation due to the danger involved with melach sedomis, a strong salt that could R"L cause blindness if it touches the eyes.

Some rishonim note that this washing isn't as relevant in post-Talmudic times since the strong salt of concern isn't commonly used, and people aren't as particular regarding food residue on their hands, removing its halachic "filth" status. Still, the Alter Rebbe concludes that a delicate person must wash his hands if the filth bothers him. Moreover, everyone should wash mayim acharonim based on its kabbalistic dimensions.

The Mekubalim explain that Mayim Acharonim serves to give the sitra achra (the negative forces) their due portion, "appeasing" them so they don't harm the person. Accordingly, some siddurim have the possuk, "Zeh cheilek adam rasha..." (This is the portion of the wicked one...) prior to the washing.

The Gemara mentions that an evil spirit rests on the water if it lands on the earth. One should therefore wash into a utensil, or at least avoid washing over bare earth (as flooring is considered a separation). It is customary to remove the utensil with the used water from the table before bentching (or to cover it).

How much should be washed? Some rishonim say one must wash until the second joint on the fingers since that is where food residue reaches (when eating with one's hands), while others hold one must wash the entire fingers until the palm. A third approach, following Kabbalah, is that one should minimize the amount of water used to minimize the "nourishment" given to the sitra achra.

Although the Alter Rebbe rules to wash until the second joint based on the food residue reason, the minhag Chabad, as recorded in Hayom Yom, is to wash just the fingertips, and then pass them while moist over the lips. Some explain the disparity, that since the original reasons aren't relevant in the present age, we follow the kabbalistic approach in order to limit the yenikas hachitzonim.

1. ברכות נ"ג, ע"ב (והיייתם קדושים). חולין ק"ה ע"ב ב (סכנה). וראה רא"ש ברכות פ"ח סי' ו. שוע"ר סי' קפ"א ס"א.
2. שוע"ר סי' קפ"א ס"ט.
3. ולהעיר מטה"ש תש"ב ע' 92 אודות מים אחרונים לע"ל. וראה תו"מ חל"ז ע' 203 אודות אמירת פסוק זה.
4. חולין ק"ה ע"א. שוע"ר שם ס"ב.
5. כה"ח סק"ח בשם כה"ח למרה"ח פלאג"י, הובא בבדי השלחו סי' מג אות י' (אע"פ שר"ר שורה עליהם רק ע"ג קרקע).
6. ראה ב"י או"ח סי' קפ"א.

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



R. KUSHE DOKSHITZER

R. Yekusiel Dietsch of Dokshitz, affectionately known amongst chassidim as Kushe Dokshitzer, was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, and in his old age, the Rebbe Rashab. He was a melamed and merited teaching the Friediker Rebbe Aleph Beis. For more than fifty year, he literally walked to Lubavitch each Tishrei. He passed away in the year תרס"ח (1908).

(לקוטי סיפורים עמ' רכ"א, רשימת נכדו ר' מ"מ דייטש ז"ל, רשימת ר' יוחנן גארדאן ע"ה)

R. Kushe became engaged to the daughter of a wealthy chossid. At the yechidus before his chassuna, R. Kushe understood from the Tzemach Tzedek that his life's mission was to be a melamed, and infuse his pupils with yiras shomayim and chassdishe warmth.

His wealthy future father-in-law though, thought otherwise. He wasn't comfortable with the prospect of his esteemed son in law being a "plain melamed," and he resolved to "sort it out" with the Tzemach Tzedek. In response, the Tzemach Tzedek gave permission for R. Kushe to go into business, and it

would not constitute a noncompliance of the Rebbe's orders.

Shortly after the chassuna, R. Kushe was sent off by his father-in-law to the fair in Leipzig to amass merchandise to sell in his hometown. But as R. Kushe got into the wagon loaded with the goods he had bought at the fair, the horses suddenly took off wildly and started galloping at high speed down the mountain slope. The wagon overturned and the sacks of merchandise landed on R. Kushe, pinning him down to the ground.

It dawned upon R. Kushe that although the Rebbe had said that going into business would not constitute disobedience, it still was not what the Rebbe wanted him to do. With his last strength, he called out: "Rebbe! I will listen. Rebbe, save me!"

He managed to free himself from the wagonload on top of him, and find his way home.

He proceeded immediately to carry out the Rebbe's instructions, and became a melamed bent on educating the next generation in the chassidische way.

(ר' מענדל עמ' 100)

A Moment with The Rebbe



לכות ר' שניאור זלמן בן רות חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות

THE REBBE'S SHABBOS

The majority of the Rebbes sichos and maamorim were said on Shabbos, at the farbrengen. Although this meant that it all had to be transcribed from memory, and that a hookup couldn't be arranged for Chassidim around the world, this is how the Rebbe wanted it. Indeed, often the Rebbe explained the value of holding a Farbrengen on Shabbos; how Shabbos itself enhances the farbrengen and how this impacts the entire week.

After the Rebbe suffered a heart attack on Shmini Atzeres 5738, a new setup was arranged. The Rebbe would farbreng on

Motzei Shabbos, on a microphone, so that it would be less strenuous.

After a while, the Rebbe asked the doctors permission that the farbrengens return to Shabbos afternoon.

Worried for the Rebbe's health, some Chassidim implored the Rebbe to stay with the new arrangement.

After their request was brought before the Rebbe, the Rebbe turned to his mazkir Reb Leibel Groner, and said, "Do they know what Shabbos means to me?"

(Teshura Groner Weingarten 5771)

לע"נ ר' משה יעקב ב"ר ישעי' ע"ה והילד תנחום ב"ר משה יעקב ע"ה
יאהרציט י"ד טבת