

The Weekly Farbrengens


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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."

(סה"ש תש"ז ע' 142, סה"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)

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.

(סה"ש 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 *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, Yiddishe 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 10)

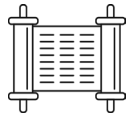

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MIKVEH ON SHABBOS

Can I immerse myself in a lake or pool on Shabbos?

Chazal prohibited swimming in a lake or pond as a decree lest one make a swimmer's barrel to hold onto while swimming (like the modern-day swimming tube). As an extension of this decree, it is prohibited to cause anything to float in such bodies of water, like to push debris on the water surface to either side so that the water will be cleaner.¹

They excluded from their decree swimming in a vessel, since it isn't common to make a swimming aid in that case. A pool is considered like a lake if the water flows out when a person swims in it, but if the wall or rim stops the water from leaving, it is considered like swimming in a vessel.²

There are other issues that arise when dipping on Shabbos: When drying hair, one must avoid actively squeezing water from the hair and only use a towel gently (see issue 486), and since a lake is a karmelis where there is a rabbinic prohibition against carrying 4 amos on Shabbos and walking with water on one's body is considered carrying the water, one must dry his body right at the edge of the lake (this concern doesn't apply on yom tov).³

Due to these potential Shabbos issues, Shulchan Aruch records the widespread practice not to bathe at all on Shabbos, even in cold water. Immersing for mikvah is permitted, but swimming in the water is prohibited, since this is an actual prohibition miderabanan.⁴

It is prohibited on Shabbos to immerse a dish since it is considered "fixing" it. Why then can a person go to the mikvah?

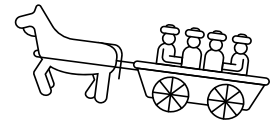
When a person immerses, it's not clearly apparent that he is fixing himself, since he may just be going in the water to cool off (though the widespread custom against bathing does make this possibility less probable). In addition, tevilas ezra for extra purity is not considered "fixing." Although strongly recommended according to sources in both nigleh and Chassidus, it is not obligatory and is not considered "fixing" a situation per se.⁵

1. שוע"ר או"ח סי' של"ט ס"ט.
2. שוע"ר סי' של"ט ס"א.
3. שוע"ר או"ח סי' ש"א סס"א.
4. ראה שוע"ר שם סי' שכ"ו ס"ז.
5. ראה שוע"ר שם. ועל חשיבות הטבילה - ראה לקו"ת תבא דף מ"ג סע"ב, וראה לקו"ש ח"כ ע' 345.

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

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Our Heroes



R. SHLOMO CHAIM KUTAIN

R. Shlomo Chaim Kutain (d. 5688), a chossid of the Rebbe Rashab, served as the shochet and mohel in Lubavitch. As a full-time resident of Lubavitch, he was very close to the Rebbe Rashab, and to the Friediker Rebbe in his youth. Continuing the family tradition of his father and grandfather before him, R. Shlomo Chaim was an expert shochet, and taught shechita to many of the temimim in Lubavitch, and the Friediker Rebbe himself.

R. Shlomo Chaim's grandfather, R. Tzvi Hirsh was the shochet in Lubavitch during the Tzemach Tzedek's lifetime. When he reached seventy years of age, the Tzemach Tzedek called for him and said, "Hirshel, people are saying things about you" [that he had unsteady hands and should discontinue shechita]. "Rebbe," he replied, "If you tell me to put the knife down, I will."

The Rebbe, knowing that R. Tzvi Hirsh would refrain from shechting if he felt weak, did not require him to stop, yet he called for a water test. A cup of water was brought, and R. Tzvi Hirsh held it perfectly steady, like a young man.

(לקוטי סיפורים פרלוב ע' קצה)

When he was still a young bochur of fifteen, the Rebbe Maharash chose Shlomo Chaim

to be the shochet, though he instructed him to marry first. Until he was eighteen years old, an older shochet would be there as well, but the main shochet was the young Shlomo Chaim.

(רשימת היומן ע' שנו)

R. Yisroel Jacobson recalls his experience learning shechita from R. Shlomo Chaim:

In Lubavitch, the practice was for many bochurim to learn shechita. It seems that this was one of missions of Tomchei Temimim, to produce G-d fearing shochem. Many of these bochurim were the ovdim, who would daven at great length, and would come to him at around 3 pm after lunch.

Back then, the pace of life was slower especially in the small towns, people didn't have ambitions to move ahead, and everything took time. For this reason, the bochurim learned shechita for two or three years before becoming a shochet.

(זכרון לבני ישראל ע' 9)

R. Shlomo Chaim would say, "Do you know why the shechita knife is called a 'chalaf'? Since it makes the switch (chiluf) between 'life' and 'death' (a kosher or unkosher animal).

(לקוטי סיפורים פרלוב ע' רכא)

A Moment with The Rebbe



HE SENDS HASHEM AWAY AND LAMENTS...

At a farbrengen on the final day of Chanukah 5713 (1952), the Rebbe spoke emotionally about the struggle of a Yid: how he can daven with inspiration, but it doesn't affect the rest of the day.

"After davening, he says Tehillim, learns the daily Chumash and reads a few lines of Tanya, and that's it."

The Rebbe's voice cracked, and tears began to fall, "When he sits down to eat, he chooses a nice portion, and then he adds salt to his food...There's no recognizable difference between this chossid and a non-chossid, or even between him and a non-Jew. In fact, he

does just as he wishes, like an animal...

"And then," continued the Rebbe through uncontrollable sobs, "he complains why he doesn't have an appreciation for davening, why he doesn't learn well - as if it's the Aibershter's fault. He sends Hashem away, and then laments his lack of pleasure in davening..."

Suddenly, the Rebbe abruptly stopped crying, "The Gemara tells of great things that are awarded to merrymakers. Why should I bring out the gloom in people?"

"Sing a freiliche niggun!"

(Toras Menachem, Vol, 7, Page 256)