

The Weekly Farbrengens



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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

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, כ"ט אות טח)

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*.

(שיח"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 י"ט 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

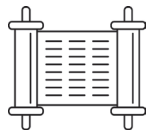
During the era of the communist regime, a group of American Rabbis traveled to Russia, to bring encouragement and support to Yidden living there. Arriving in Moscow, the delegates met the locals and prided themselves on their worldliness, such as their ability to play ball, and so on. The Russian Yidden 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' קיח)





PREGNANCY PRACTICES

What are some appropriate practices during pregnancy?

Holy *seforim* say that a woman's conduct during pregnancy affects her unborn child.¹ Therefore, the Rebbe encouraged pregnant women to increase their care and attention to matters of Torah and mitzvos. They should also be cautious not to gaze upon improper and unholy sights.²

The pregnancy is kept private and not publicized until entering the fifth month, though close family and friends may be privately told earlier.³ Though there is a tradition from the Baal Shem Tov not to mention the pregnancy in a *pan* to a Rebbe, the Rebbe writes that one should notify the Rebbe from the beginning.⁴

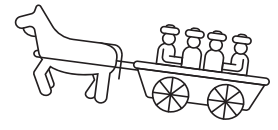
To various people, the Rebbe advised specific positive practices during this period, such as checking tefillin and mezuzos (especially if they weren't checked within the year),⁵ and giving tzedaka every morning and before candle lighting,⁶ and sometimes suggested that the husband recite *kapitel chof* before *hamapil* in a specific manner.⁷

Some have a custom that during the ninth month of pregnancy, the husband seeks to open the *aron kodesh*, remove the *sifrei* Torah for *kriah*, and then close the *aron*.⁸ Kabbalistic sources offer spiritual explanations, such as a *segula* for an easy birth at the right time.⁹ Indeed, the time of *pesicha* is generally regarded as an especially auspicious time for *davening*.¹⁰

In a few letters, the Rebbe advised individual husbands to endeavor to follow this custom only if it could be done discreetly without drawing attention.¹¹ However, when the author of *Kovetz Minhagim* on pregnancy and birth consulted the Rebbe about the custom's details, the Rebbe deleted the entire custom from the draft, indicating that it's not intended as a directive for the general public.¹²

1. ראה לדוגמא קהלת רבה פ"ז סי"ח.
2. דרכי משה או"ח סי' תרי"ח. ש"ך עה"ת ריש פ' תזריע.
3. ראה סה"ש תשמ"ז ח"א ע"א 146 הע' 6.
4. ת"מ תשמ"ב ח"ד ע' 2190. סה"ש תש"נ ח"ג ע' 179.
5. ראה לדוגמא אג"ק ח"ז ע' שג וח"ח ע' רט וח"א ע' רעח.
6. ראה אג"ק מוהרי"צ ח"ט ע' תנא (ענד חודש הרביעי). אג"ק ח"ג ע' שפז וח"ח ע' רכא וח"ו ע' גט.
7. ראה לדוגמא אג"ק ח"א ע' קסב ועוד הרבה אגרות.
8. ראה לדוגמא אג"ק ח"ה ע' קה וח"ו ע' קה וע' שיג ועוד הרבה אגרות.
9. ראה לדוגמא אג"ק ח"ה ע' קה וע' רכא וח"ו ע' קה. ויש שהביאו מענה מריבנו שאין נוהגים כך עכשיו ושלא לפרסם ע"ד מנהג זה - ראה אוצר סגולות הרב
10. פ"ה הע' 10.
11. ראה עבודת הקודש מורה באצבע (חיד"א) סי' ג אות צ. כף החיים סי' קל"ד סי"ק יב. ולהעיר מליובאוויטש וחיי"לה ע' 3 הע' 3 שהוצאת התורה בכלל לא נוגעת להכנסתה בחזרה וא"צ לעשות שניהן.
12. ראה ספר החיים (חיים פאלאג') סי' א אות ה. שו"ת אהל יששכר סי' פ"ח אות ב'.

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



THE SFAS EMES

Reb Yehuda Aryeh Leib Alter was the third Rebbe in the Ger dynasty, and under his leadership, the Chassidus of Ger flourished, becoming the stronghold of Chassidus in all of Poland. He became the Rebbe at the age of 23, after the passing of his grandfather the Chidushei Harim. He is known by the title of his sefer "Sfas Emes", which contains *perushim* on the Torah and Shas. He passed away at the young age of 58, on the 5th of Shvat, תרס"ה (1905) and is buried in Ger.

When the Sfas Emes was young, he and his friend once spent the whole night learning, and only at daybreak did they go to sleep. The following day, the Sfas Emes arrived a bit late to his learning session, and his grandfather reprimanded him. All the while, he sat listening without saying a word. When his friend asked him why he had not told his grandfather that he had stayed up late to learn, the Sfas Emes said, "Yes,

but then I would have missed out on the admonishment of my grandfather..."

A Rebbe came to visit the Sfas Emes, and as they parted, the Rebbe expressed his hope that there should always be an *ahava rabba* (great love) between them. The Sfas Emes responded with a smile, "Besides for *ahava rabba*, we should also wish for an *ahavas olam* (literally: a love of the world); for often, there can be a great love between two Rebbes, yet among their chassidim there is no peace..."

In the Shul of the Sfas Emes, two daily *minyanim* for *shachris* took place successively. When the second *minyan* would begin to daven, the *mispalelim* from the first would stay to talk. When word of this reached the Sfas Emes, he rescheduled the *minyanim* so that the first group would finish socializing before the second *minyan* would begin.

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכר נשמת מרת חוה לאה בת ר' שמשון הכהן ע"ה



THE ALTER REBBE'S SHULCHAN ORUCH

Ever since being entrusted by the Maggid with writing the Shulchan Oruch, the Alter Rebbe's monumental work has served as a guiding light for Chassidim in how to preform halacha. The Rebbe saw its study and proliferation as part and parcel of *hafotzas hamoyonos*.

"Please do me a favor," the Rebbe requested from a surprised Rabbi Yisroel Yitzchok Piekarsky, a Rosh Yeshiva at 770 who was from a Sochatchov background.

"In Sochatchov, they held the Alter Rebbe in high esteem. I therefore ask you to please write explanations on the Alter Rebbes Shulchan Oruch."

In a Sivan 5735 *Yechidus*, the Rebbe said to Reb Mordechai Ashkenazi, then

a *moreh tzedek* in Kfar Chabad. "You must dedicate a specific time every week to engross yourself in the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch. If this means that you need to lock the door for some time, so be it..."

Similarly, in a 14 Sivan 5739 *yechidus*, the Rebbe told Reb Levi Bistrizki, the rov of Anash in Tzfas, to publish notes on Halacha, either from the Alter Rebbe or the Tzemach Tzedek.

"Although you are also capable of writing in Chassidus," the Rebbe told him, "You should write in Halacha, and this will be your part in *hafotzas hamoyonos*!"

(Kfar Chabad issue 520 and 685; Halev Shel Tzefas p. 142)