

The Weekly Farbrenge



למן ישמען • שמות תשפ"ג
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ב"ה

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 הנגואה, כ"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*.

(שיחות תשל"ח ח"ג ע' 215, לkipush 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.

(ובחחים ט ע' א. לkipush 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.

(עמ"ז ע' יב, לkipush חכ"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."

(משבחו 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)



