



THE KING'S PALACE (2)

The Kedusha of a Shul

When the stricken exiles in Bavel were beginning to despair, *HaShem* gave them a message of reassurance through the *Navi Yechezkel*: "Though I have sent them far away among the nations, and have scattered them throughout the lands, I have become for them a *mikdash me'at*, a miniature sanctuary, in the lands to which they have come."

Chazal explain that this refers to the *shuls* and *batei midrashim* outside *Eretz Yisroel*. When *Moshiach* comes, all these *shuls* and *batei midrashim* will be transplanted there.

(יחזקאל י"א, ט"ז, מגילה כ"ט ע"א)

Chazal teach that when a *Yid* is in *shul*, *HaShem* is closer to him. That is why one should always make an effort to *daven* in a *shul*, where *tefillos* are best accepted. *Abbaye* said, "In the past I would *daven* in *shul* and learn at home, but I have since learnt that one should learn in *shul* as well."

HaShem fills the entire world. Nevertheless, out of his love for us, He designated special places to reveal Himself, as in the *Beis HaMikdash*.

(ירושלמי ברכות פ"ה ה"א, ר"ח שער היראה פט"ו)

Showing Respect

A *shul* must be treated with great respect, for it is the resting place of the *Shechinah*.

When *Rebbi Elazar ben Shamua* was asked why he merited long life, he attributed it to his respect for *shuls*: he had never used a *shul* as a shortcut. Similarly, *Rebbi Zeira* was blessed with a long life for never having slept, even briefly, in the *beis midrash*.

When *Rebbi Yochanan* was informed that there were elderly people in Bavel, he was surprised, for the Torah only promises long life to those who live in *Eretz Yisroel*. However, when he heard that these people

spent long hours in *shul*, he said, "This was their merit."

Similarly, *Rav Assi* said, "When a *shul* is used for mundane activities, this shortens the lives of the city's inhabitants."

(מגילה כ"ז ע"ב, ברכות ח ע"א)

The *Smak*, one of the great *rishonim*, writes: Inappropriate behavior in *shul* will cause the *shul* to later become a place of negative conduct, such as *avoda zara*.

(סמ"ק מצוה י"א, מו"א סי' קנ"א סק"א)

Reb Chaim Vital writes that his *Rebbe*, the *AriZal*, would entirely refrain from speaking in *shul*, even words of inspiration, so that this should not lead to any mundane speech.

(שער הכוונות סוף דרושי כוונת הברכות, מו"א סי' קנ"א סק"ג)

In HaShem's Presence

The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that it is forbidden to behave frivolously while in *shul*. This includes joking and idle conversation.

A *shul* may not be used as a shortcut or as a refuge from the weather. Eating and sleeping in a *shul* is inappropriate, unless for the benefit of a *mitzva*.

Furthermore, one should not kiss young children in *shul*, in order to implant in one's own heart that no love is comparable to the love of *HaShem*.

(שו"ע סי' קנ"א ס"א, שו"ע אדה"ז סי' צ"ה ס"א)

On the occasion of his son's *opsherenish*, a young *chossid* brought his son to 770 and arrived in time for *Mincha*. During *davening* the little boy began to cry, so his father calmed him by stroking him warmly and then kissed him lightly on his forehead.

The following morning, the *chossid* received a phone call from the *Rebbe's* secretary: there was a note from the *Rebbe* waiting for him in the office. The young

man, quite surprised, hurried to 770. Together with the standard *bracha* for his son, there was a note: "See *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Siman 13, Se'if 1*." There the young father read: "One may not kiss his children in *shul*, in order not to show any love other than for *HaShem*..."

(כפר חב"ד גליון 300 ע' 24)

In our times, many *shuls* are made without the full *kedusha* of a "*Beis Haknesses*" so that mundane activities (such as eating and resting) are permitted there. However, it is still forbidden to perform frivolous activities there, for these are degrading to the holy environment.

(מו"א סי' קנ"א סק"ד, משנ"ב שם סקל"ב)

On one of his travels, the *Rebbe Rashab* once saw a young boy acting wildly and foolishly in *shul*. He called the child over and reprimanded him, explaining that since he was now in a *shul*, a *mikdash me'at*, he should behave properly.

(רשימות דברים ח"ב ע' ק")

In *shul*, as in a royal palace, one should act humbly. For example, one should not shout across a *shul* to call someone.

In an unsigned letter written by one of the first *Rebbeim*, it is written: "One should enter a *shul* with humility and with a fear of the King of kings, *HaShem*. The Torah tells us to stand in awe of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and the same applies to a *shul*, which is called a *mikdash me'at*. One should not engage in any idle talk the entire time he is there. Those who act in this way will merit many blessings, in this world and in the next – and we will merit the coming of *Moshiach*."

(ר"ח שער היראה פט"ו, אג"ק אדה"ז אדהאמ"צ אדה"צ ח"א ע' שעז)

CONSIDER THIS!

■ When is *HaShem* in *shul*: during *davening* or at all times?

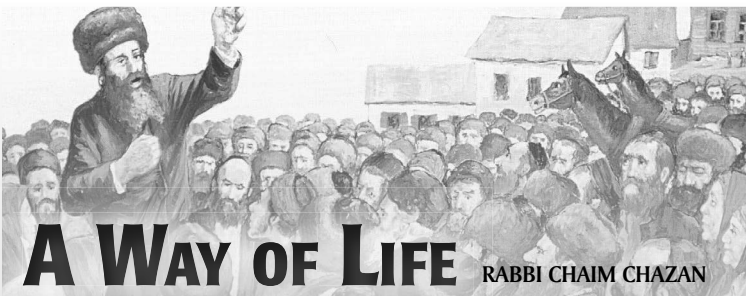
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A WAY OF LIFE

RABBI CHAIM CHAZAN

OUR HEROES

כ' טבת

Rambam



Rabeinu Moshe ben Maimon (the "Rambam") was of the greatest Rishonim. He is famous for his unprecedented work codifying the entire Torah, titled "Mishneh Torah," as well as Moreh Hanevuchim and other major works. He was a *sephardi* who lived the troubled life of the Jews in Morocco, Egypt, and neighboring countries. He was also a renowned physician and philosopher. The Rambam passed away on the 20th of Teves, ד'תתקס"ה (1205).

Here is an excerpt from a letter of the Rambam to his *talmid* Reb Shmuel Ibn Tibun, describing his daily schedule. It is an expression of the embodiment of absolute selflessness and tireless commitment:

"I live in Fostat, and the Sultan lives Cairo. The distance between them is 4000 cubits [a mile and a half]. My duties to the Sultan are very weighty. I must see him every morning to check on his health, and if one day he does not feel well or one of the princes or women of his harem do not feel well, I cannot leave Cairo that day.

"It often happens that there is an officer or two who needs me, and I have to attend to healing them all day. Therefore, as a rule, I am in Cairo early each day, and even if nothing unusual happens, by the time I come back to Fostat, half the day is gone. Under no circumstances do I come earlier. And I am ravenously hungry by then.

"When I come home, my foyer is always full of people: Yidden and non-Yidden, important people and ordinary, judges and policemen, people who love me and people who hate me. A mixture of people, all of whom have been waiting for me to arrive home.

"I get off of my donkey, wash my hands, and go out into the hall to see them. I apologize and ask that they be kind enough to give me a few minutes to eat. That is the only meal I take in during twenty-four hours. Then I go out to heal them, write prescriptions and instructions for treating their problems.

"Patients arrive and depart until nightfall, and sometimes – I swear to you by the Torah – it is two hours into the night before they have all gone. I talk to them and prescribe even while lying down on my back from exhaustion. And when night falls, I am so weak, I cannot even talk anymore.

"Because of all this, no Yid can come and speak with me wisdom or have a private audience with me because I have no time, except on Shabbos. On Shabbos, the whole congregation, or at least the majority of it, comes to my house after *tefilah* in the morning, and I instruct the members of the community as to what they should do during the entire week. "We learn together simple subjects until the afternoon, and then they all go home. Some of them come back and I teach deeper concepts between the afternoon and evening *tefilos*.

"This is my daily schedule, and I've only told you a little of what you would see if you would come."

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

Food Not Present During the Bracha

One who ate supper which included a *shehakol* food and then went to the refrigerator to get a drink; must he make another *shehakol* on the drink?

■ One who makes a *bracha* on a food, covers with that *bracha* all those foods in front of him that require that same *bracha*¹. If the foods were not before him while saying the *bracha*, in certain instances a new *bracha* would be required. These *halachos* are very detailed and complex and the Rema² therefore writes: It is worthy to be cautious and always have in mind that the *bracha* should include anything that will be later brought to him.

■ In the case of a drink during a meal: As mentioned, whatever one specifically had in mind to eat or drink is included in the original *bracha*³. Since it is common practice to drink during or immediately following a meal, even if he did not have explicit intention to include other food items, it is considered as if he planned to drink, and hence he need not make a new *bracha*⁴.

■ Another reason not to require another *bracha*: Most *poskim* hold that when one sits down to eat a fixed meal, even if he does not wash for bread, his intention is to include everything in the meal. Thus, he would be allowed to eat whatever is brought to him for it is included in the original *brachos*. The Alter Rebbe writes⁵ *lechatchila* not to rely on this, but rather to have explicit intention to include everything, since there are those who disagree.

1. סדר ברה"נ פרק ט סעי' ד-ז, שו"ע ר"י סי' 4. ערוה"ש שם סעי' טו, וכן משמע ר"י סעי' ט-י.
2. סי' לו סעי' ה.
3. סדה"נ ושוע"ר שם.
4. ערוה"ש שם סעי' טו, וכן משמע משו"ע ר"י סי' קעד סעי' ה.
5. שם.

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A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Yiddishkeit on the Spot

From a diary of a bochur learning in Seven Seventy, Sunday 23 Teves 5731:

Today, the popular, secular writer and novelist, Mr. Herman Wouk, was in yechidus. When he came out, we asked him if he would repeat anything he had heard from the Rebbe. He told us that the Rebbe had discussed with him the situation of the American youth, the 'hippies'. The Rebbe said that they are ready to hear, so we must provide them with *yiddishkeit*.

He told the Rebbe that they would not be interested, because they are impatient, and only go for things which are immediate, like 'instant coffee'. To this the Rebbe replied, "That's perfect! The '*Shulchan Aruch*' means 'a ready table!'"

Mr. Wouk was very inspired by the yechidus, and expressed great admiration for the Rebbe's insightful ideas.

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