

STANDING BEFORE THE KING

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לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי ש"י בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

STANDING BEFORE HASHEM

Traveling on the road, a righteous Yid stopped to daven. Soon, a minister came riding by, and greeted him, but he did not reply. The minister waited for him to conclude and then screamed at him out, "Empty one! Doesn't it say in your Torah that you should guard your life? So why did you not return my greeting? I could have chopped off your head with a sword!"

The Yid replied with a question, "If you would be standing in front of a king, and your friend would pass by and greet you, would you return the greeting?" The minister replied in the negative. The Yid continued, "And if you would reply, what would be done to you?" "My head would be cut off!" said the minister. The Yid concluded, "How much more so does this apply to the King of Kings, Who is eternal!" The minister was appeased and the Yid continued his journey in peace.

(ברכות לב ע"ב)

In a letter to the chassidim, the Alter Rebbe explains the similarity of davening and standing before a king. If while standing before a king, one busies himself with his own matters, he is publicly displaying his foolishness, and moreover, is insulting the king, thereby forfeiting his life. Similarly, one must stand respectfully before Hashem, for even one who does not feel so; he must nevertheless act as such, out of respect.

(אגה"ק סי' כד)

Great care must be taken to answer Kaddish, for its holiness is even greater than that of Kedusha. Even during Shemoneh Esreh one should stop and listen to Kaddish (until after "Yehei shmei raboh..."). Those who speak during Kaddish should be rebuked, even if there is a minyan without them.

During Chazoras Hashatz one should listen and concentrate on the brachos of the chazzan. It is forbidden to talk, recite Tehillim or learn, even if one answers Amen. Those who do should be rebuked.

One who engages in mundane conversation during Chazoras Hashatz is sinning and his transgression is too great to bear. For by speaking while the congregation is involved in praising Hashem, he is showing that he has no connection to Hashem.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' נו"א וס"ד, סי' קד"ה, סי' קכ"ד וס"ו)

During Krias Hatorah and between aliyos it is forbidden to speak, even something associated with learning. The same applies to the Haftarah.

In order to ensure silence during davening, the Alter Rebbe enacted a decree that no idle talk should be spoken from the moment the Shliach Tzibur begins until the end of the last Kaddish during Shachris, Mincha and Mairiv.

(שו"ע סי' קמו"ב וס"ג, שו"ע אדה"ז סי' רפד סי"א, אגה"ק סי' כד)

Young children must be trained to stand with reverence and awe. Those children who run around in Shul, should not be brought at all.

One who talks of worldly matters in shul, it would be better that he not come at all, because he is sinning and causing others to sin.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' קכ"ד סי', פתח עינים להחיד"א)

The Zohar writes that by speaking during davening one implies that he does not believe Hashem is in Shul, for if he did he surely would not talk. The Smak says that we must deduce a kal v'chomer from the idolaters' behavior in their places of worship, who stand in silence throughout their prayers. How much more so does this apply to us, we, who standing in the presence of Hashem.

(זהר תרומה קלא ע"ב, סמ"ק מצוה יא, ועד"ז בס' חסידים אות יח)

When the Satan complains that the Yidden commit aveiros, Hashem rejoins that had the goyim accepted the Torah, they would have been far worse. But when the Satan complains about the Yidden's talking during davening, this rejoinder does not apply. A hint for this can be found in the possuk, "ה' ילחם לכם ואתם תחרישון", that Hashem will protect us, on condition that we are silent during davening.

(דרך משה, רב י"ב בקונ' מורא מקדש)

SHOWING REVERENCE

A difference of opinion existed between the tzaddikim Reb Yaakov Yosef ("Reb Yeivi") of Ostroho and Reb Pinchas of Koretz regarding the issue requiring the most attention. Reb Yaakov Yosef held that it was the habit of speaking idly during davening, and would therefore go around and arouse people to refrain from talking in shul at all times. Reb Pinchas was of the opinion that the most widespread problem was the lack of tznius, and he put in much effort to mend that.

Once, a debate sprang up between them on the matter, while and

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they each tried to convince the other that he was right. It was finally agreed upon that they would open a Chumash at random, and the first possuk to catch their eye would indicate who was right.

They opened a Chumash Breishis, and immediately saw the words of Shimon and Levi concerning Dina: "Should he deal with our sister inappropriately?" A victory for Reb Pinchas! "Wait," said Reb Yaakov Yosef. "Let us look at the explanation written in the Targum Yonasan." There it was written: "It is not proper that it be talked about in the shuls that... idolators defiled the daughter of Yaakov Avinu."

(סיפורי חסידים זיין תורה ע' 125)

Sometime around the year תש"ה, the Rebbe entered the shul in 770, stood at the bimah and announced that he is now coming from his Father-in-law (the Friediker Rebbe), and has been asked to give over the following message: "My father (the Rebbe Rashab) was by me and asked, 'How does it come to pass that by you, in the Beis Medrash, they talk during Krias Hatorah?'"

(כפ"ח הובא בקדושת הדיבור ח"ג ע' 129)

Eliyahu Hanavi was once seen together with 4000 laden camels. When he was asked what they were loaded with, he replied, "With fury and wrath." "Why?" the people questioned. "To wreak fury and wrath upon those who converse between Amen, Yehei Shmei Rabba and Yisbareich."

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' נו ס"ז)

A story is told about a Yid who dreamt of his deceased friend whose face appeared to be jaundiced. He asked him why he was being punished so and he answered, "Because I used to speak when the shliach tzibbur was saying Kaddish and I did not listen."

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' רסח ס"יז)

After the terrible massacres during the years ת"ח ות"ט, when tens of thousands of Yidden across Poland and Ukraine were killed, the author of the Tosfos Yom Tov fasted and davened so that he be told why this had occurred. In a dream it was revealed to him that this was due to the talking during davening, for this destroyed the letter ך from the word דבור (speech), leaving דבר (plague). The Tosfos Yom Tov then composed a special Mi Shebeirach to be recited each Shabbos, giving a bracha to all those that refrain from speaking during davening, blessing them with health, all the brachos listed in Tanach, and much nachas from their children.

(שי למורא ע' כה)

ENSURING RESPECT

Once when protesting regarding the talking in Shul, the Rebbe said: "If a person chooses to talk during davening, that is his business; let him go in another room and fulfill his 'minhag' of talking during davening. But why should I be forced to daven in a minyan where there is talking?!"

On another occasion, the Rebbe said that it is not the children that need to be silenced, but the adults. "A child knows that he comes to shul to daven to Hashem, and if he did not see adults speaking, he would not learn to speak..."

(תשורה סיום הרמב"ם כפ"ח תשנ"ו, התועודיות תשמ"ג ח"ב ע' 1131)

In the Shul of the Sfas Emes of Ger, 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...

(שיח שרפי קודש ח"ב ע' לב)

In the summer of תקפ"ג, the community of Paritch requested of the Mittlerer Rebbe that he visit them for a few weeks during the upcoming winter, as was the custom. The Rebbe replied that although he is not in perfect health, he will fulfill their request, on the condition that they resolve an issue which he is extremely bitter about – the talking in shul. In his letter, the Rebbe recalls the numerous warnings which have been received from his father the Alter Rebbe, but unfortunately have gone unheeded.

"Therefore let it be known in my name, in every city and Minyan, that they ought to make a firm decision, with a vow, not to speak during davening, from when the Shliach Tzibur stands before the Amud. They should also appoint a trustworthy supervisor, who will not favor anyone and will be willing to disgrace any person who violates the vow. This will literally revive me from the tremendous pain that it is causing me."

The Mittlerer Rebbe then goes on to explain how, in his opinion, the many tragedies which have befallen the Yidden during that time, are a result of the talking in shul. Furthermore, due to the talking, even the tefilos of the other mispalelim in that shul are not being accepted above. The Rebbe concludes that he is waiting for the notice that they have begun to implement the abovementioned, and then he will come to visit.

(אג"ק אדהאמ"צ ח"א ע' רעא)

The Rebbe related how he once challenged a certain Rov of a Shul where people would walk around before davening was over, disturbing those that were still davening. To this the Rov replied: "Is that the only problem that we have?!" The Rebbe was not impressed, and indicated that the matter must be resolved.

(שיח"ק תשמ"א ח"א ע' 463)

The Zohar says that one of the final things holding up the geulah is the talking in Shul, which drives away the Shechinah. By keeping quiet, we invite the Shechinah and Moshiach will come.

(אגה"ק סי' כג)

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