

# SIMPLICITY IN TORAH AND MITZVOT

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December 2, 2020



**“My achievements came mainly through simplicity. I spent much time simply conversing with God...” (Rebbe Nachman)**

Rebbe Nachman remarked: “My achievements came mainly through simplicity. I spent much time simply conversing with God and reciting the Psalms”...The Rebbe yearned to serve God like the simple, common people. He often said, “Ay! Ay! SIMPLICITY!” (*Rebbe Nachman’s Wisdom* #154).

The Rebbe wanted us to make every attempt to simplify our lives and our devotions to God. Thus, Reb Noson wrote: The Rebbe’s desire was for us to serve God simply, to the very best of our ability, each and every day. He said that our main



goal should be to do good and serve Him without any sophistication whatsoever. Every good and holy thing can be done with absolute simplicity. We should study Torah, pray, recite Psalms and other prayers, and perform mitzvot all with the utmost simplicity and sincerity, and with great joy (*Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom* #19). The Rebbe loved and praised the simple acts of people: reciting the Psalms, singing zemirot at the Shabbat table, and so on. He would deride those who thought themselves too smart and clever to act simply. Until he became terminally ill, the Rebbe himself would sing a lot at the Shabbat table (*Likutey Moharan* II, 104).

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Every word of Psalms recited is a mitzvah, every word of Torah study is a mitzvah, every song sung at the Shabbat table is a mitzvah. The more we do, the more we accomplish. Simplicity, therefore, is the foundation for all our devotions. With it, we can be constantly occupied doing mitzvot and good deeds. Without it, our deeds are always subject to the philosophical reasoning and equivocations of our minds. If we are always “thinking” and trying to figure out if we are doing the right thing, as opposed to actually doing it, then we cannot accomplish much – we are too busy “thinking”. But, if we approach the mitzvot and good deeds with simplicity, we can always find something to do.





*The achievements came mainly through simplicity!*

Simplicity is also a necessary ingredient in the performance of the mitzvot themselves. Reb Noson, always the careful observer of human nature, once remarked: Often, because a person insists upon performing a mitzvah in the very best way possible, he ends up not performing the mitzvah at all (*Siach Sarfei Kodesh* 1-571). This can be seen from the following: Ideally, the mitzvah of Sanctifying the New Moon is performed on a clear night. However, even if the sky is cloudy, as long as one can see the moon through the clouds, one should not delay, but recite the blessing (see *Mishnah Berurah* 426:3). Reb Noson asks: What if, as is often the case in the middle of winter, one has reason to believe that there may not be any more clear nights before the full moon is reached and the time for sanctifying the moon has passed? Should one nonetheless wait for a clear night, as this is the ideal way to perform the mitzvah? Reb Noson rejects this argument. Granted, it would be wonderful if we could perform every mitzvah perfectly and in the precisely prescribed manner. But if we did wait to perform each mitzvah perfectly – with all its fine points, with the specific intentions, and with us in the proper frame of mind – there is good reason to believe that we would end up



not performing it at all (*Likutey Halakhot, K'riat HaTorah* 6:6).

(taken from the book: [\*Crossing the Narrow Bridge\*](#): A Practical Guide to Rebbe Nachman's Teachings, chapter 1: Simplicity pp. 14-15)

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