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SIGNS OF A NATION

From the Talks of
The Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

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General Editor:
Rabbi Levi Sudak



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1.

Signs and Gifts

The *Gemara*¹ states:

There are three signs that mark this [Jewish] nation: they are merciful, bashful,² and do kindness. Merciful — as it is written, “He shall grant you mercy, and be merciful to you, and multiply you”;³ bashful — as it is written, “in order that His awe shall be upon your faces”⁴ [as we say⁵ in Nedarim:⁶ “in order that His awe shall be upon your faces...” — this is bashfulness, etc. — for the awe which is discernible on the face is bashfulness]; doers of kindness — as it is written, “so that he will command his children and his household [after him]...”⁷ Anyone who possesses these three signs is fit to cling to this nation.⁸

This is likewise codified as *halachah* in the Rambam, with regard to families of valid lineage (as discussed below, Section 2).

Now, this teaching is also cited in the *Yerushalmi*,⁹ but there (as in several *midrashim*¹⁰) the sign of “doers of kindness” (*gomlei chasadim*) is derived not from the verse (concerning Avraham), “so that he will command his children and his household,” but from the verse,¹¹ “And the L-rd your G-d will keep for you the covenant and the kindness.”¹²

It may be said that this disparity is connected to another distinction between the exposition of the *Bavli* and that of the *Yerushalmi*: the *Bavli* states, “there are three signs in

1) *Yevamos* 79a.

2) Thus in our text of the *Gemara*; in *Ein Yaakov*, “*rachmanin v’bayshanin*.”

3) *Devarim* 13:18.

4) *Shemos* 20:17.

5) The wording of *Maharsha*, *Chiddushei Aggados* to *Yevamos*, ad loc.

6) *Nedarim* 20a.

7) Our parsha, *Bereishis* 18:19.

8) Thus in our text of the *Gemara*. In *Ein Yaakov*: “to cling to him,” concluding, “one who does not have these three signs is not fit to cling to him.” See below, Section 2.

9) *Yerushalmi*, *Kiddushin* 4:1.

10) *Devarim Rabbah* 3:4; *Midrash Tehillim*, Psalms 1 and 17; *Midrash Shmuel*, ch. 28. — And in *Bamidbar Rabbah* 8:4 both verses are cited (and see *Kli Yakar* on *Shmuel* I 21:2 — noted in *Ohr HaTorah*, our parsha, p. 96, beginning of col. b).

11) *Devarim* 7:12.

12) One might argue that the *Yerushalmi* rejects “so that he will command” as proof because it lacks explicit mention of *chesed*, listing only justice and *tzedakah*. Conversely, “And He will keep” is a weaker proof since it refers to divine kindness, whereas “He shall grant you mercy” is clearer, as “He shall grant you” poorly describes divine mercy — though *Ohr HaChaim* and *Alshich* (*Devarim* 7:12) resolve this using the amplification of *es*.

this nation,” whereas the *Yerushalmi* (and likewise several of the *midrashim* just mentioned¹³) uses the expression, “three good gifts G-d gave to the Jewish people.”

For the *Bavli*, the main emphasis lies in the fact that these traits are “signs” of the intrinsic character of the members of “this nation.” It therefore brings its proof from what is said concerning Avraham (“so that he will command...”): that Avraham, **of his own accord**, was a doer of kindness, and that he likewise charged his household after him {to do the same}.¹⁴ This proves that Avraham was intrinsically kind by his very nature;¹⁵ and consequently, that kindness is a sign of the nature of the soul of the members of this nation.¹⁶

The *Yerushalmi*, by contrast, **makes a point** of stating that these traits are “good gifts [that] **G-d** gave to the Jewish people.” If so, the subject is not the trait of kindness inherent in Avraham’s soul (and in his descendants after him) in and of itself, but rather a trait of kindness that is a special gift from G-d to the Jewish people. It therefore brings the verse, “And the **L-rd your G-d** will keep for you the covenant and the kindness.”

This requires explanation:

- a) What is the **substance** of the distinction between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi* — whether the subject is Avraham’s natural trait of kindness, or a trait of kindness bestowed as a gift from Above? What practical difference does this make?
- b) With regard to mercy and bashfulness: here too the *Bavli* cites verses indicating that they are **a gift from G-d** to the Jewish people. For mercy — “He shall grant you mercy”; and for bashfulness — “in order that His awe shall be upon your faces,” which refers to the Giving of the Torah, whose thunder, lightning, and the like brought it about that “His awe shall be upon your faces.”

Granted, with regard to bashfulness this is understandable, in light of what the Maharsha explains¹⁷ — that the trait of bashfulness was indeed fixed in the soul of the

13) *Bamidbar Rabbah*, *Midrash Tehillim*, and *Midrash Shmuel*, as above (except that in our text of *Midrash Shmuel* it reads “*midos*” {traits} in place of “*matnos*” {gifts}, though in the Buber edition there, “*matnos*”). — And in *Devarim Rabbah* there: “three good traits are in the hand of the Jewish people.”

14) See *Kesubos* 8b: “doers of kindness, children of doers of kindness, who hold fast to the covenant of Avraham Avinu, as it is said, ‘For I have known him...’”; and see *Rashi* and *Maharsha*, *Chiddushei Aggados*, ad loc.

15) See *Sefer HaArachim-Chabad*, entry “Avraham Avinu,” sec. 3, and the sources noted there. And see

Tanya, end of ch. 1, that this is the nature also of the animal soul within a Jew.

16) That is: even if these three traits come as a gift from G-d, they would still be signs of this nation; nevertheless, it is preferable to bring proof that this is the character of the nation’s members by virtue of the nature of their souls, rather than that they come by way of a gift (something additional to their very existence).

17) *Maharsha*, *Chiddushei Aggados* to *Yevamos*, ad loc. See also *Ohr HaTorah*, our parsha (there, end of col. a); *Likut Peirushim* etc. on *Tanya*, ch. 1 (p. 46).

Jewish people solely through the Giving of the Torah. For the Jewish people, of themselves, are, on the contrary, the “**boldest**” of the nations¹⁸ [which is why the Sages inferred¹⁹ that “one who has no sense of shame — it is certain that his ancestors did not stand **at Mount Sinai**”].

But with regard to mercy — this is the very nature of the soul of the members of this nation, which they inherited from Avraham Avinu, as the Sages state explicitly,²⁰ “Anyone who is merciful to others, it is certain that he is of **the seed of Avraham Avinu**.” In the simple sense, [the *Gemara*] specified “the seed of Avraham Avinu” because Avraham Avinu was merciful by nature — as the Maharsha explains,²¹ that “[the *Gemara*] specified in its statement ‘the seed of Avraham’... for with Avraham the trait of *tzedakah* is stated explicitly: ‘For I have known him, so that he will command his children...’”²² Yet the *Bavli* brought the verse “He shall grant you mercy...” (which implies that the subject is the trait of mercy as a gift from Above).

2.

Not One of the Three

There is a further difference between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi*:

The *Bavli* concludes, “Anyone who possesses these three signs is fit to cling to this nation.” The *Yerushalmi*,²³ by contrast, concludes, “and these [the Gibeonites] had not **one** of them; immediately [David] arose and distanced them” — that is, the *Yerushalmi* states explicitly that the Gibeonites possessed **not one** of these three signs.²⁴

On this basis, there would seem to be a practical halachic difference between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi*: according to the *Yerushalmi*, one distances a person only when he possesses not one of these three traits (but if he lacks only one of them — or even two — one does not distance him);²⁵ whereas the simple meaning of the *Bavli*’s wording,

18) Beitzah 25b.

19) Nedarim 20a. Cited also in the *Yerushalmi*, *Kiddushin*, ad loc.; and in *Bamidbar Rabbah*, *Midrash Tehillim*, and *Midrash Shmuel* noted in note 10.

20) Beitzah 32b.

21) Maharsha, *Chiddushei Aggados* to Beitzah, ad loc.

22) See also Rambam, *Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*, beginning of ch. 10; *Tur*, *Yoreh De’ah*, beginning of

siman 247, and the *Prishah* there, note 4; Maharzu on *Devarim Rabbah*, ad loc.

23) So too in the *midrashim* cited in note 19.

24) See *Korban HaEidah* ad loc.; *Yefei To’ar* on *Bamidbar Rabbah* ad loc. (reproduced in *Etz Yosef* on *Ein Yaakov*, *Yevamos* ad loc.). And see the following note.

25) So too the *Beis Shmuel* rules, *Even HaEzer* 2:5 — except that “he stated this on his own reasoning” (*Etz Yosef*, cited in the previous note).

“Anyone who possesses these three signs is fit to cling to this nation,” is that a person must possess all three signs.²⁶

However, it may be argued that this is not necessarily so, because:

- a) The reading in *Ein Yaakov* is: “(Anyone who possesses... is fit...) one who **does not have these three signs** is not fit to cling to him”²⁷ — which can be interpreted (like the *Yerushalmi*) to mean that only if he possesses none of the three signs is he unfit to cling to. And one ought not to multiply disputes between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi*, as is known from the established principle in this regard.²⁸
- b) The Rambam²⁹ writes that “the signs of the Jewish people, the holy nation, are: bashful, merciful, and doers of kindness; but of the Gibeonites it says,³⁰ ‘And the Gibeonites were not of the Jewish nation,’ because they were brazen-faced... and did not have mercy on the sons of Shaul and did not act kindly toward the Jewish people, etc.” Thus the Rambam is precise (like the *Yerushalmi*) that the Gibeonites possessed not “**one** of them” — which implies that one does not distance [a person] unless all three of these traits are lacking.

[And so the Rambam writes there, according to the accurate manuscripts:³¹ “anyone who has brazenness of face **and** cruelty [not ‘or cruelty,’ as in the widespread printings of the *Rambam*] **and** hates people **and** does not act kindly toward them — we strongly suspect that he may be a Gibeonite” (and so is the reading of the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch*³²) — for we suspect him only if he possesses not one of the three traits.³³]

If so — assuming this is a dispute between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi* — why did the Rambam rule like the *Yerushalmi* against the *Bavli* (especially since he adopted the *Bavli*’s wording, “the **signs** of the Jewish people”)?

It is therefore reasonable to say that the *Bavli*, too, holds that the reason David distanced the Gibeonites was that “they had not [even] one of them.” On this basis,

26) See also *Apei Zutrei* on *Shulchan Aruch*, *Even HaEzer* ad loc., who infers this from *Rashi*, *Yevamos* ad loc. — “and these Gibeonites, since they are not merciful,” and no more.

27) So too in *Beis Shmuel* ad loc.

28) *Yad Malachi*, “Rules of the Two Talmuds,” sec. 10.

29) *Hilchos Issurei Biah* 19:17.

30) *Shmuel II* 21:2.

31) See the Frankel edition of the Rambam ad loc. (cf. *Rambam*, *Hilchos Issurei Biah* 12:24,

“brazenness and cruelty”; and end of *Hilchos Avadim*, “cruelty and brazenness are not common”). See the discussion in *Apei Zutrei* ad loc., also per the widespread reading, “or cruelty.”

32) *Even HaEzer* 2:2.

33) Only one who is “exceedingly brazen-faced” is suspected (*Rambam*, *Hilchos Issurei Biah* 19, ad loc.; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* ad loc.). The Rambam in *Hilchos Matnos Aniyim* 10:2 — “anyone who is cruel and unmerciful, one should suspect his lineage” — omits the rest, which is difficult (see note 48).

however, there remains a difficulty: why do we not find this emphasis stated explicitly in the *Bavli*, but only in the *Yerushalmi*?

One should also note the Rambam's wording just cited — “the signs of the Jewish people... bashful, merciful, etc.” — in which he differed from the order of the traits found in the Talmud (both *Bavli* and *Yerushalmi*), placing “bashful” before “merciful.”³⁴ And although we do find such a version in one place in a *midrash*,³⁵ it is puzzling: why did the Rambam not adopt the version prevalent in the Talmud (and the *midrashim*)?

3.

Bound Together or Apart

The explanation of all this may be proposed as follows:

The crux of the distinction between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi* is this: the *Bavli* is precise in stating, “there are three **signs** in this nation” (and not “three traits,”³⁶ or the like) — meaning that the point is not the merit of these traits in themselves, but rather that they serve as “**signs**” (of something **else**). And since all three are a sign of one thing, it follows that all three traits stem from a single, particular quality. The *Yerushalmi*, by contrast, says, “**three** good gifts G-d gave to the Jewish people” — meaning that the point is these three traits in themselves; and if so, each can be a virtue in its own right (for otherwise it would be a single quality merely subdivided into three gifts).

Now, this corresponds to a distinction in the way these three traits function as well, which can be in one of two ways (as we plainly observe):

- a) In the usual manner, the three traits are interdependent, such that one trait brings about the next of its own accord — for example, one who possesses bashfulness and tenderness of soul is thereby merciful, and by virtue of his trait of mercy he does kindness to those in need.
- b) At times these three traits are independent of one another — a person does kindness to his fellow because he wishes to benefit him, and not because he has mercy on him

34) So too in the Rambam's *Commentary on the Mishnah*, *Avos* 5:20 (though it may be said that there he placed “bashful” first because it relates to the Mishnah's dictum there, “the brazen-faced — [destined] for *Gehinnom*”).

35) *Devarim Rabbah* ad loc.; so too the order in the *Beis Shmuel*, *Even HaEzer* ad loc. — *Alshich* (on *Devarim* 7:12) explains that he listed the traits in the order of the verses cited [per the version deriving

acts of kindness from *Devarim* 7:12]. Yet this is puzzling, since “He shall grant you mercy” comes later, at *Devarim* 13:18, so kindness should precede mercy. In any case this cannot resolve the *Rambam*, who did not cite the proof-verses at all.

36) As in the wording of *Devarim Rabbah* there: “three good traits (are in the hand of the Jewish people).” So too in *Midrash Shmuel* *ibid.* (see note 13).

(and likewise with the rest) — for ultimately bashfulness, mercy, and kindness are three distinct traits, and one trait can therefore exist without another.

And this is the distinction between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi*: the *Yerushalmi* emphasizes that each of the three traits is a virtue (and gift) **in its own right**, since it is speaking of the traits themselves, each one distinct from the others; whereas in the *Bavli* they are “three signs” of a single characteristic, in which case the traits (as a rule) all come together in a chain of cause and effect, one from another.³⁷

4.

One Inseparable Entity

It may be said that this is the reason the *Bavli* brought the verse “so that he will command...” (concerning Avraham) only with regard to “doers of kindness,” and not with regard to “the merciful”:

The relationship of “doers of kindness” to the traits of mercy and bashfulness (when they come together in a chain of cause and effect) is such that the doing of kindness is the **result** of mercy and bashfulness. That is, the intent of “doers of kindness” is not the feeling of kindness in the **heart**, but rather the **practical** act of kindness³⁸ that one performs with his fellow (as is the simple meaning of “**doers** of kindness”) — for the cause of performing kindness is the feeling of mercy in the heart and the trait of bashfulness in the soul (as will be explained at length below, Section 5).

The verse “so that he will **command** his children and his household...” can therefore be brought only with regard to doers of kindness (which is the **act** of kindness, as above) and not with regard to mercy and bashfulness (which are the feeling in the heart and the nature of the soul³⁹) — for in the simple sense, Avraham’s command to his household after him was that they **conduct** themselves with kindness and mercy, etc. (and not regarding the feeling in the heart and the nature of the soul, to which a command is not applicable).⁴⁰

[This also clarifies why the *Yerushalmi* did not bring the verse “so that he will command...” as proof for “doers of kindness”: because in the *Yerushalmi* the intent of “doers of kindness” is the trait of kindness in the heart. For the fact that every Jew has a

37) See also *Kli Yakar* on *Shmuel I* ibid.

38) See also *Maharzu* on *Devarim Rabbah* ad loc.

39) “Merciful and bashful” refers to manifest conduct—as seen in *Rambam* on the Gibeonites’ three distinct acts—since “signs” apply only to visible behavior, not the heart. Still, it includes the internal traits that drive kindness.

40) This may explain the distinction between *Rambam* in *Hilchos Issurei Biah* 19 and *Hilchos Avadim* (where he notes that cruelty is found among the nations, whereas Avraham’s seed are merciful): in *Avadim*, mercy refers to commanded conduct, whereas in *Issurei Biah*, it refers to an innate feeling of mercy (see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 37, Behar).

feeling of kindness in his heart is not due to Avraham's **command** to his children and household after him, but because **G-d** implanted it in the heart of every Jew — “And the L-rd your G-d will keep for you the covenant and the kindness.”]

On the basis of the aforementioned distinction between the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi*, we can also understand why specifically the *Yerushalmi* needed to specify that the Gibeonites “had not even one of them,” whereas in the *Bavli* there is no such emphasis:

Even according to the *Bavli*, the Gibeonites did not have even “one of them.” But since [the *Bavli*] is precise that they are “three **signs**” — that is, as above, that all of them are the result of a single point [and the distinction between the three signs is only in their “place” within the person’s soul: doers of kindness is in deed; merciful — the feeling in the heart; and bashfulness — the nature of the soul] — it is self-understood that they are a **single** entity that cannot be separated one from another.

For when this point (quality) is present, all three “signs” — the traits (in all parts of the soul) — come of their own accord; and if it is lacking, the opposite comes about: the brazenness in him begets a feeling of cruelty in the heart, which in turn causes hatred of others and the absence of performing kindness.⁴¹ Consequently, there is no need to emphasize that the Gibeonites “had not [even] one of them,” because they are all one single entity.

Whereas in the *Yerushalmi*, which speaks of these traits as each being a (virtue and) gift in its own right — there it is necessary to emphasize that the Gibeonites did not have even one of the three traits, for it is possible for one to be found without the other two.

5.

Dust and Ashes

In light of all the above, it may be said that this is the Rambam’s intent in changing the order of the traits and placing “bashful” before “merciful” — in order to emphasize that what is being discussed here (in the “signs of the Jewish people”) is the three traits as they come in a chain of cause and effect, one from another. In that case their order is: bashful, merciful, and doers of kindness — for, as above, **doers** of kindness refers to the act of kindness, whose cause is the **feeling** of mercy in the **heart**, and the thing that causes the heart to be aroused with mercy for another is the very nature of the tenderness within the soul — bashfulness.

41) As stressed in the *Ein Yaakov* version — “anyone who has these three signs... one who does

not have these three signs...” — i.e., either he has all or not even one.

It may be said that this order is also relevant to the **content** of what the “signs” signify: these three traits are signs of the Jewish people only when the doing of kindness is a result of **mercy**, and the mercy is the offspring of **bashfulness**.

For it is possible for the doing of kindness to come (not from mercy and bashfulness, but, on the contrary) from a sense of self and from pride — like the kindness of Yishmael,⁴² and as the Sages said⁴³ that all the charity and kindness the nations do is only to **aggrandize** themselves and to **glorify** themselves with it. And in a similar vein, there is mercy that comes specifically from pride, for since one regards himself as great and exalted above the people, he therefore sees another as a lowly person who is to be pitied.⁴⁴

This is what the Rambam teaches us — that the signs of “the **holy** nation” depend upon this: that the cause of the kindness is mercy, and the source of the mercy is the nature of a person’s **bashfulness** and **tenderness**.⁴⁵

On a deeper level it may be said: as explained above, the three traits are “signs” of a **single** point — which is the point of the essence of a Jew. And this point is the concept of **bittul** {self-nullification} — that he is not an entity unto himself, but rather his entire being is to serve his Maker, as Avraham Avinu said,⁴⁶ “and I am but **dust** and **ashes**.”

This is why the Rambam placed the trait of bashfulness before mercy and kindness — for the feeling of bashfulness (which indicates the nature of tenderness and the negation of brazenness, etc.) expresses the point of *bittul* in a revealed way. It is therefore the **first** and **primary** sign of the Jewish people; and the completeness of the sign is when the point of *bittul* permeates one’s entire being, to the extent that even his mercy and his kindness are not from pride but solely from *bittul* — “and I am but dust and ashes.”⁴⁷

42) See *Likkutei Torah, Eikev* 17c ff.; *Toras Chaim, Toldos* 4b ff.; *Ohr HaTorah*, our parsha, 93a ff.; and elsewhere.

43) *Bava Basra* 10b.

44) See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5701, p. 37 ff. — the difference between mercy that stems from loftiness and mercy that stems from feeling. See there.

45) Yet one cannot always discern the cause of the kindness and mercy (since the feeling in the heart and the nature of the soul are not manifest), and

therefore the “signs” in practice are conduct in a manner of bashfulness, mercy, and kindness (as above, note 39). See above, Section 2 (and the notes), the discussion of whether one distances a person who has only one sign. This is not the place to elaborate.

46) Our parsha, *Bereishis* 18:27.

47) See at length *Likkutei Torah, Toras Chaim*, and *Ohr HaTorah* (93a ff.) cited above, on the kindness of Avraham. See *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, sec. 2.

6.

When Mercy Humbles

But on this basis a difficulty arises from the other direction — why does the *Gemara* place “merciful” before “bashful”?

Simply put, it may be said that the primary wrong of the Gibeonites, on account of which King David distanced them, was their **cruelty** — that they were not merciful, and killed the sons of Shaul.⁴⁸

But a further reason may be offered (in a manner of *mussar*):⁴⁹ that with this, the *Gemara* negates a feeling of pride that can come as a result of mercy (true mercy). When a person is aroused with a feeling of genuine mercy for another (to the point that he does kindness with him) — then, out of his contemplation of the other’s situation, he can come to a feeling of self-importance, since through this contemplation he sees and recognizes how far removed the other is in worth. Therefore, specifically after the mercy, one must arouse within himself a feeling of bashfulness and *bittul*.

And on a still deeper level it may be said — that there is a “bashfulness” which is a result, coming as a direct effect from the mercy itself. This is based on what is explained in the *Midrash*,⁵⁰ that the reason G-d created poor people in the world is that “kindness and truth preserve him”⁵¹ — “were all to be wealthy... who could do kindness?”

It results that the other’s being in a state of needing mercy is only in order to confer merit upon the wealthy, that they be able to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*;⁵² so that the wealthy person is himself the cause of his fellow’s being in a state of pain and distress!

And when one contemplates this well, he will at once be aroused with a measure of true bashfulness — for in order to confer upon himself the merit of the *mitzvah* of kindness, his fellow is made to suffer, that he be in a situation and state in which one must have mercy upon him!

48) See *Rambam* (*Hilchos Issurei Biah* 12:24) and *Rashi* (*Yevamos*) on the Gibeonites lacking mercy when seeking vengeance, leading David to distance them (*Midrash Tehillim* 17; *Bamidbar Rabbah*). Similarly, *Beitzah* 32b identifies mercy as the hallmark of Avraham’s seed, echoed by *Rambam* (*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim* 10:2; *Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:10), who attributes cruelty solely to the nations without mentioning brazenness or hatred.

49) According to Chassidus, these represent the three traits of the Patriarchs from below to above

(*Tzavaas HaRivash* 139; *Ohr Torah of the Maggid* 260; *Megaleh Amukos*; *Maharal*, *Nesiv HaBushah* 1), while the acronym of *gever* follows their order from above to below (*Shelah*, *Erchei HaKinuyim*).

50) *Tanchuma*, *Mishpatim* 9; *Shemos Rabbah* 31:5, and *Yedei Moshe* *ibid*.

51) *Tehillim* 61:8.

52) See at length *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5627, p. 399; *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntresim*, vol. 1, 119a ff.

I heard from the Frierdiker Rebbe, that when he was aboard the ship on his way back from his visit to the Holy Land (in the year 5689), and word reached him of the pogroms that occurred at that time in Chevron, may G-d protect us, he became ill from the intensity of the anguish. Aboard the ship there was a G-d-fearing doctor who attended to him with remedies, etc., until he recovered.⁵³

After some time, the doctor came in to my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, in order to ask for a rectification. To my revered father-in-law the Rebbe's question — for what, and why? — he replied: "It is obvious that the Rebbe, being a leader of the Jewish people, whom the public need, must be healthy; and if so, had I not been aboard the ship together with the Rebbe, and there would have been no possibility of healing by natural means, the Rebbe would not have fallen ill in the first place. It emerges that the fact that I was aboard the ship caused the Rebbe to suffer for a period of time — and for this (he concluded) I have come to ask for a rectification..."

And this is the order of "merciful" and then "bashful" — for when a Jew has *bittul* within him, the mercy itself begets in him a feeling of true bashfulness and *bittul*.

(From a sichah delivered on Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei 5747)

53) See *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 2, p. 201.