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Whose Shortcomings?

At the farbrengen of Vov Tishrei 5742 (see “Step Inside” column in this issue), the Rebbe mentioned a famous teaching of the Rabbeim:

“אזוי ווי מען דארף וויסן די חסרונות, אזוי דארף מען וויסן די אייגענע מעלות...”

“Just as one must know [one’s] shortcomings, so too must one know one’s own good qualities.”

The Rebbe pointed out that in the original Yiddish quote, the term “*chesronos*” (shortcomings) stands alone, whereas the “*maalos*” (good qualities) are stated as attached to the person (“one’s own good qualities...”). The reason is that the essence of a Jew has only good qualities; the shortcomings are merely external factors that it picks up from the outside world.¹

The next day, Rabbi Sholom Ber Levine wrote a note to the Rebbe attaching a facsimile of a handwritten letter from the Rebbe Rashab² where he uses the term “*chesronei atzmo*” (one’s own shortcomings). The Rebbe replied³:

כבר קדמוהו כו' [Others] have already [asked this question] etc.

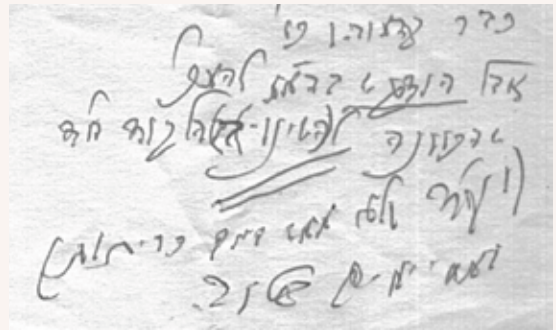
אבל הודגש בהמ"מ להמכ' שהכוונה ל(השינוי - ב)הלקו"ד ח"ד

However, it was **emphasized** in the [sources] referenced [in] the letter [i.e. the *michtav kloli*⁴] that the intention was to [quote the Friediker Rebbe’s] (**modification** [of this quote, as published] in) Likkutei Dibburim vol. 4.⁵

(וע"ד ולא ממש סיום כריתות)

(This is similar to, though not exactly like, the ending of Maseches Krisos.)⁶

ומסיימים בטוב. We conclude on a positive note.⁷



1. Hisvaaduyos 5742 vol. 1, pp. 53–4.

2. Published in Igros Kodesh Admur HaRashab vol. 2, p. 836.

3. Published in Avodas Hakodesh B’Sifriyas Lubavitch, item #119.

4. Dated Chai Elul 5741; Likkutei Sichos vol. 24, p. 601.

5. P. 1125 in the new edition.

6. The final Mishna in Krisos says: The Torah almost always states “lamb” before “goat.” One might have thought that it is due to the fact that sheep are better than goats. Therefore, the Torah states [in one place]: “And he shall bring for his offering a goat” (Vayikra 4:28), and

afterwards, “And if he brings a lamb...” which teaches that both of them are equal. From this Mishna we see that although the Torah reverses the order only one time, we still deduce a general rule from this single statement. Similarly, the Friediker Rebbe may have stated this phrase only one time with these exact words, however it is still enough to teach us this important lesson.

7. The Rebbe added this line presumably so that, rather than the last word of the note reading “Krisos,” referring to something negative (sins that are punished by Koreis), the note concludes with the word “good.”