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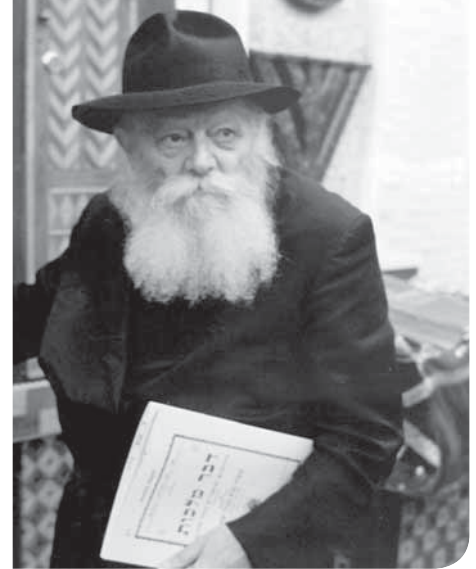
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BASI L'GANI 5731

In honor of Yud Shvat, Beis Moshiach presents a selection of the maamer the Rebbe MH”M delivered on Yud-Alef Shvat 5731, which is being studied this year by chassidim all over the world, in accordance with the custom established by the Rebbe to review each year a section of the Rebbe Rayatz’s maamer “Basi L’Gani” of 5710. • This year we begin the 20-year cycle anew, focussing on the first section of the profound and foundational chassidic discourse. • Part 2



Translated by Boruch Merkur

3. The dynamic of how repentance corrects for and transforms sin is illuminated by what the Mittlerer Rebbe cites in *Toras Chayim*, the saying in the Midrash on the verse,

“‘[Go and see the works of G-d] awesome in His deeds (*nora alila*) toward mankind’ – G-d conceives of plots (*oseh alilos*) upon mankind, approaching Man with a plot of entrapment. Indeed, Adam, the first man, was created on the Sixth Day, and a plot was set upon him, bringing death unto the world, as it is said, ‘for on the day that you eat of it [the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge], you shall surely die, etc.’ Adam said before G-d, ‘Master of the Universe, two thousand years prior to the creation of Your world the Torah was ‘as a nursling with You [for G-d alone to enjoy —Even Yechiya], etc.’ And in the Torah it is written, ‘This is the Torah: A man (*adam*) who perishes in a tent.’ Were it not that You have established death for the

creatures of the world, would You write such a thing in the Torah? Indeed, You have come to entrap me with a contrivance, etc.”

According to this Midrash it is understood that the descent that was brought about through the sin of the Tree of Knowledge – as well as the subsequent transgressions – was also (that is, in addition to the general descent of the soul into a body) a descent that was established as part of the plan of Creation. Of force we must say then that the ascent engendered by this descent – meaning the height attained through repentance – is likewise greater than prior to the sin.

A similar message is derived from the commentary of the Baal Shem Tov on the verse, “And there was evening and there was morning,” based on the saying of the Midrash, “‘And there was evening’ – these are the deeds of the wicked; ‘and there was morning’ – these are

the deeds of the righteous, etc. I don’t know which of them He desires, etc.” The Baal Shem Tov explains that there is a benefit and an “advantage of light from darkness,” meaning the virtue of light is recognized when juxtaposed to darkness, etc., the virtue of the righteous is recognized in contrast with the wicked, and pleasure (*taanug*) is recognized from the capacity for there to be affliction (*nega*) and suffering. Thus, the Midrash states, “I don’t know which of them He desires, etc.,” insofar as even the deeds of the wicked serve as a pedestal for the deeds of the righteous. Thus, everything [even evil itself] contributes to sublime unity, which is what is meant by “the advantage of light from darkness.”

Indeed, the ultimate pleasure On High is derived from our transforming [the darkness of] affliction (*nega*) to [the light of] pleasure (*oneg*), both with regard to transforming one’s own darkness and from transforming the darkness of another. Thus, it is written, “And there was evening and there was morning – day one.” That is, oneness is established specifically through the inclusion of both evening and morning, day and night, for on that day – referred to as “day

one” [i.e., a day of oneness] – G-d was the sole inhabitant of His world, as it were.

Thus, in addition to the proof derived from the Mittlerer Rebbe’s teaching, we likewise derive from the Baal Shem Tov’s teaching the concept that sin was part of G-d’s plan for Creation (“these are the deeds of the wicked”), and in a manner that from sin the virtue of repentance is derived, as the advantage of light that comes from darkness.

The origin of the possibility for sin, in particular the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, is further elucidated in the *maamarim* of redemption of the Rebbe Rayatz (beginning with the words “*Al Ken Yomru HaMoshlim*”). Namely, the end result, the establishment of the source of sin and iniquity in the world, was the motivation behind the diminishment of the moon, the reduction of its light [for originally it shone as bright as the sun]. The latter thus provides additional support for the notion that sin was predetermined as part of the Divine plan.

The truth is, however, that from the diminution of the moon alone, there is not such irrefutable proof for the “Divine origin” of sin, for it was actually the result of a decree from On High against the moon, etc. [and not necessarily a state that was desired from the onset]. But [evidence is gleaned upon looking more deeply into the matter, noting] the antecedent for the diminution of the moon was the Shattering of the Vessels, etc. For G-d was creating worlds and destroying them – building for the sake of destroying and destroying for the sake of building. It is obvious that the concept of building and [then] destroying [these] worlds was

“Even the deeds of the wicked serve as a pedestal for the deeds of the righteous. Thus, everything [even evil itself] contributes to sublime unity, which is what is meant by “the advantage of light from darkness.”

the initial intent from Above. It is also self-evident that the building that followed the annihilation surpassed the preceding creation.

Thus, from [this third proof amongst] all of the above proofs it is understood that the revelation that resulted from the repentance for the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, which derived spiritually from [the diminution of the moon and ultimately from] the Shattering of the Vessels, was higher than it was prior to the sin.

4. However, we must understand: Since the *ikar Sh’china* was in the lower worlds even prior to the sin – and as explained above, it was the inner aspect of the *Sh’china*, its very essence – how is it possible to say that repentance for the sin evokes an even higher revelation? For at first glance: how can there possibly be a revelation that surpasses that of the *ikar Sh’china*?

An answer emerges from the discussion found in the beginning of Hemshech 5666. There the Rebbe Rashab points out a difficulty in understanding the effect engendered through Torah study and the observance of Mitzvos. Torah and Mitzvos draw down additional revelations through the Kav. These revelations [presently remain undetected by the masses, during the time of exile, but they] will be revealed in the era of the future redemption. Then, the Infinite Light of G-d will shine in the place of the Void

[i.e., the space G-d established prior to Creation to be void of G-dly revelation, enabling the possibility for the existence of finite worlds]. The difficulty the Rebbe Rashab focuses on here is: What is innovative in saying that through the Divine service of Man – through our Torah study and the performance of Mitzvos – additional light shines in the Void? Prior to G-d’s establishment of the Void, which was accomplished through the concealment of His Infinite Light, His light in fact filled the Void. [So what is gained through the service of Man? It seems as though Man only succeeds in filling the darkness of the Void with a revelation of light that had already shone prior to the Concealment.]

However, simple reasoning suggests that in the beginning, when the Infinite Light filled the Void, it was impossible for there to be the existence of the [finite] worlds, and so there could obviously be no revelation in the worlds, etc. But after the worlds were created, when the revelation of the Infinite Light as it was prior to the Concealment is drawn down [through Torah and Mitzvos], then this revelation does extend to the worlds, etc. And notwithstanding the fact that it was at first impossible for these worlds to be created prior to the Concealment, when G-dliness was revealed, nevertheless after the worlds were created it became possible for them to receive even this [lofty,

“ Since the *ikar Sh'china* was in the lower worlds even prior to the sin – and as explained above, it was the inner aspect of the *Sh'china*, its very essence – how is it possible to say that repentance for the sin evokes an even higher revelation? For at first glance: how can there possibly be a revelation that surpasses that of the *ikar Sh'china*?

primordial] light, etc.

The Rebbe Rashab continues there (in Hemshech 5666) that we may further answer that Torah and Mitzvos engender a revelation of supernal light that exceeds the Primordial Light [that shone prior to the Concealment]. This unprecedented light is what the Rebbe Rashab means when referring to the “additional revelations” that are drawn down through Torah and Mitzvos; it is the inner and essential Infinite

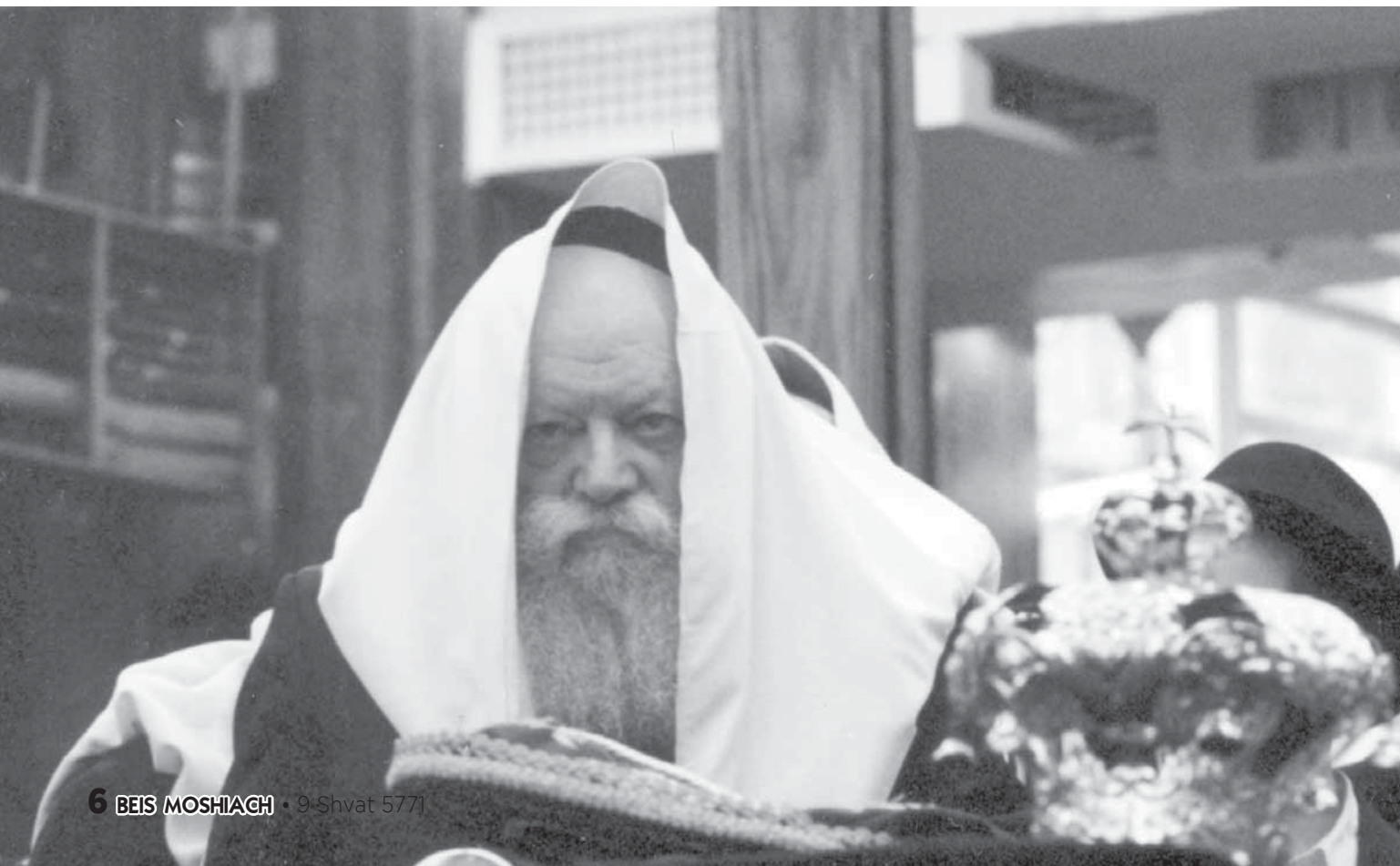
Light, which is even higher than the light that filled the Void, etc.

In general, this “additional” revelation refers to the Transcendent Light. This revelation is of such consequence that G-d created the worlds for the sake of its revelation.

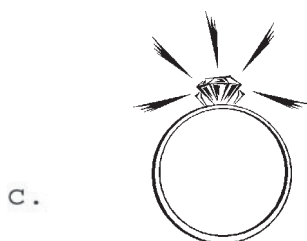
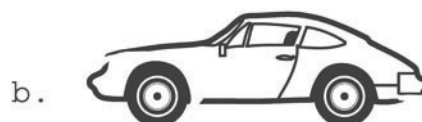
The Primordial Light, on the other hand, which filled the Void prior to Creation, has some connection with the “space” the worlds occupy. Indeed, it is the origin and source of the dimension of space that emerged

in the wake of the Concealment. This Primordial Light is at the level of the Light that Fills the Worlds but at its greatest possible height.

According to the second explanation in Hemshech 5666 it is understood that the light drawn down [through our Divine service] entirely transcends the worlds, etc. [surpassing even this Primordial Light, the loftiest manifestation of the Light that Fills the Worlds], meaning that it is at the level of the Transcendent Light. Thus, we may assert that when we say that the *Ikar Sh'china* was in the lower worlds at the beginning, this is referring to the Primordial Light that filled the Void. But through the Divine service of Man, especially the service of repentance, additional revelations [at the level of the Transcendent Light] are drawn down that even surpass the Primordial Light that filled the Void. ■



QUIZ



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THE REBBE'S PASSPORT

We need to internalize that everything the Rebbe says is something that effects Klal Yisroel. When the Rebbe asks for something to be done, it should be fulfilled with the utmost alacrity • On the third of Nissan 5739/1979, the Rebbe's secretary, Rabbi Leibel Groner, led a Chassidishe farbrengen in the shul in Nachalat Har Chabad. The following is a transcript from the tape recording of the farbrengen. We left the style in its original form, in the spirit of a Chassidishe farbrengen that follows a hearty "L'chaim!" • Presented in honor of Yud Shvat

THE REBBE SITS IN NEW YORK AND KNOWS WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH EVERY CHASSID

L'chaim, Chassidim! L'chaim, yungelait!

Rashbatz (Reb Shmuel Betzalel) was a *shadar* (fundraiser), and he would visit places where Chassidim from different groups lived. He was once asked if the Rebbe has *ruach ha'kodesh* (prophetic spirit). He said: If a Rebbe needs *ruach ha'kodesh*, then he has it; if he doesn't need it, then what do I care if he has it or not? The main thing is he's the Rebbe, so relevance does *ruach ha'kodesh* have?

The Gemara says that for twenty years after Rabbeinu HaKadosh passed away he would

go to his house on Friday nights and recite Kiddush for his family. This continued until it happened that his wife told a neighbor etc. If Rabbi could go to his house for twenty years after he passed away even though there the a halachic question remained as to whether or not he could be *motzi* his family with their obligation of Kiddush by reciting it for them – then what about over here? Everybody made Kiddush, and why didn't they say, "*b'r'shus Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu?*" To me it's clear that the Rebbe is here.

Why do I say this? I spoke with R' Mendel Futerfas about how Chassidim have the custom of telling stories of the Rebbe, especially stories that are miraculous in nature or involve *ruach ha'kodesh*. The question

is, why is this so? Does it add to the Rebbe's holiness? Or is it that this is the reality and so we need to talk about it ...

Practically speaking, this is what people like us do. When we hear something amazing about the Rebbe, then it becomes news. Like the Rebbe once said, that when people hear that a famous general or commander visited the Rebbe and spoke to him for an hour, then "I become bigger by the Chassidim. It's not that the general became bigger because he came to me, but that I became bigger by the Chassidim because the general came to me."

An Israeli woman once came to the Rebbe. She sat in *Gan Eden HaTachton* (the foyer outside the Rebbe's room), and waited her turn to see the Rebbe. Near her sat an older couple



from a different city in the US. While they waited there, they spoke to her for hours.

They asked her where she was from. She said she was from Eretz Yisroel. “Why did you come?” they asked her. She said that a few months earlier they had found a kidney stone in her body, and the doctors wanted to operate on her. She had sent a telegram to the Rebbe to ask what she should do, and the Rebbe said that she should agree with the doctors. However this would be on one condition: that on the day of the operation they should take another X-ray and decide what to do based on this X-ray.

She spoke with the doctor, and he said that could be arranged. On the day of the surgery the nurses came in and began preparing her for

the operation. She stopped them and asked what they were doing. They said she needed an operation. She told them that the doctor had promised that on the day of the operation they would take another X-ray, “and they haven’t done it yet.”

The nurses went to the doctor, and he told them the woman was right. They brought her to the room where X-rays are taken, and after taking an X-ray they sent her back to her room, where she waited to be taken for the operation. She waited an hour, two hours, and then three hours, but heard nothing. She rang for the nurse and asked what was going on. Would there be an operation or not? The nurse replied in surprise, “You don’t know that they’re not doing an operation?” She said, “No, nobody told me anything.

Why aren’t they operating?” The nurse said the X-ray showed no stone in the kidney and so there was no reason to do surgery.

The other couple asked her why she had come. She said she had come to thank the Rebbe. She did not want to do this in a letter. She thought the Rebbe had done her a favor so she wouldn’t need surgery and so she had come to express her gratitude.

She told me that the couple responded that they did not understand her. They thought that in America people asked the Rebbe about health matters and before the Rebbe answered, he called and consulted with the person’s doctor. After consulting with the doctor, he gave his answer. But for the Rebbe to pick up the phone to call Eretz Yisroel – that didn’t seem possible to them. Which did it mean that



the Rebbe answered about health matters without consulting with the doctor?! A This they considered astonishing. How was the Rebbe able to do that?

I asked the woman what she said to them. She said that she answered the following: I don't understand you. Why did I ask the Rebbe – is it because he's a doctor? The Rebbe is not a doctor! I asked the Rebbe because I believe that he has *ruach ha'kodesh*, and he will tell me what to do and what not to do. As for *ruach ha'kodesh*, she said, you don't need a passport.

A passport enables you to enter certain countries but not others, however when it comes to *ruach ha'kodesh* you don't need a passport. The Rebbe's *ruach*

ha'kodesh encompasses the entire world, and if it can be in New York and America, it can be elsewhere too.

This is the point. We need to know that the Rebbe sits in Brooklyn, New York but his vision covers the entire world.

When we were children, R' Berel Chaskind was our teacher, and one time he said: Children, you need to know, there are radio and television and all sorts of machines that don't need antennas because they are built-in; you don't need any additional wires. The Rebbe is like that; he doesn't need a phone or letters or telegrams. He doesn't need anything; he knows everything. He sits in Lubavitch, which is how the Rebbe Maharash put

it, "My father sits in Lubavitch, and he hears what is going on in Petersburg and also sees what is going on there."

Chassidim have to remember and need to constantly remind themselves: the Rebbe sits in Brooklyn but that doesn't mean that he doesn't know what is going on elsewhere. He knows everything, and like in the story of the Rebbe Rashab who said, "What do you think, we wait until you write to us? We think about the Chassidim, and by doing so we extricate them from the mud."

In other words, this is really a lesson for us. We need to see what the Rebbe wants from us at this time. That which the Rebbe demands and talks about – that

is what we should be occupied with, that is what we need to do now. We don't need to wait until the Rebbe writes a specific letter to someone saying – you do this and you do that – that's not how it works.

The way it works (or should work) is that we simply do, and we shouldn't say to ourselves that since we are here and the Rebbe is there, he doesn't know what is happening here. The Rebbe knows everything, and the Rebbe feels everything, and the Rebbe sees everything.

HOW TO BE MEKUSHAR TO THE REBBE

Starting from Yud Shvat 5710/1950, we see that whenever the occasion arises, the Rebbe talks about what a Rebbe is.


In the early years, a group of students, boys and girls, had a yechidus in which the Rebbe said a sicha, and they asked questions. Before they left, the Rebbe addressed the girls – they hadn't asked anything, because they were intimidated, and they didn't think it was proper to speak up – and asked: "It's all understood by you? You understand everything? Surely you have questions."

One girl said, "Yes, I have a question. I have a serious question, and I need to clarify matters." The Rebbe encouraged her to ask, and she said, "I want to know what a Rebbe is."

The Rebbe answered her in English: If you won't speak about me, I will respond.

She said, "No, explain to us what the previous Rebbe was, your father-in-law, the zeide or great-grandfather, explain what a Rebbe is."

The Rebbe said, "You see a

 The Rebbe concluded: "That's what a Rebbe, and the Chassidim, and all the Jewish people are. The Rebbe is the generator and we are the lamps. and we need to look for the right wires to connect us to the generator."

lamp here that is on. How does it give light? There are wires, and the wires can contain electricity. and when the electricity comes in contact with the wires, it lights up the lamp. Where does the electricity come from? You see how the wires continue on and on? Where do they go? There is a generator, and when there is a wire connecting it to the generator, the generator conveys the electricity within to wherever it is needed."

The Rebbe continued, "A Rebbe is a generator, and I and everyone present are lamps. We need *chayus* (energy) in order to live. How do we live? Because we have *chayus*. Where do we get it from? We have a *neshama*, and there is a verse that says that every soul is the candle of G-d, that is the lamp; but the lamp also need a wire that brings the electricity, and without it, it won't illuminate. How does it illuminate? Through the power of electricity. When there is no interruption between the generator and the lamp.

The Rebbe concluded: "That's what a Rebbe, and the Chassidim, and all the Jewish people are. The Rebbe is the generator and we are the lamps. and we need to look for the right wires to connect us to the generator."

Then the Rebbe said, "There are wires. but if we don't know how to connect them to the generator, it won't work. We need to know precisely how

to connect the wires to the generator. If the wire is not connected, it won't do anything, and even if it's a very good wire and a very good lamp and the generator is also very good, you need the connection to be good too."

What does this tell us? The Rebbe is the generator, and the *chayus* we receive comes from the generator. We need to find the wires. Afterward, when we have the wires, what do we do with them? How do we connect them to the generator? What are our wires? The Rebbe's *sichos* – these are our wires! This is what connects us to the Rebbe.

There's the story about the Rebbe Rashab which the Rebbe told, about the time when the Chassid R' Yaakov Mordechai Poltaver attended the Rebbe Rashab's *farbrengen*, and in the middle of the *farbrengen* he began to cry. It's a story that has been printed. The Rebbe Rashab asked him why he was crying, and R' Yaakov Mordechai said, "I want to be *mekushar* (connected) to the Rebbe, and I don't know how." The Rebbe Rashab said, "Learn my *maamarim*." And the Rebbe once added that the Rebbe Rashab did not mean to just learn the *maamarim* and then since you learned them, this will lead to action. What he meant was, learn the *maamarim* and do what the *maamarim* say.

This tells us that the *sichos* are that which connect us to the Rebbe, and we need to value the

Rebbe's sichos above all else. No Rebbe spoke about the other Rebbeim; just the Rebbe.

THIS IS WHAT I HEARD THEM SAY IN GAN EDEN

The maamarim of 5679/1918/19 of the Rebbe Rashab were recently printed for the first time. At the end of the book there are sichos of the Rebbe Rashab from 5679 as well as sichos from the Rebbe Rayatz that he said or quoted from things that happened that year.

One of the things the Rebbe Rayatz said about 5679 is that in public, his father – the Rebbe Rashab – would be very careful not to talk about “general matters” [matters pertaining to himself as Rebbe]. He did not speak about them in public but at home; there it was usual for the Rebbe Rashab to talk about these things as though they were commonplace. He met with this Rebbe or that Rebbe [i.e. from the next world]; he heard this from him, that from him.

There's the story with the verse in T'hillim. I heard it from R' Yisroel Jacobson to whom it happened. The Rebbe Rashab once said a maamer, and in the middle of the maamer he quoted a pasuk from T'hillim, but he said it differently than it

is written. When it came time to review the maamer, they looked into a T'hillim and saw that it was written differently than the Rebbe said it. When the chozer reviewed the maamer to the Rebbe he quoted the pasuk as it appears in T'hillim. R' Yisroel Jacobson said that when they got up to this pasuk the Rebbe stopped the chozer and asked him: Is that what I said?

The chozer said: No

Then why do you say differently? asked the Rebbe.

The chozer said: I looked in the T'hillim.

The Rebbe Rashab said to the chozer: Oh? Really? (as though he didn't know). This is what I heard in Gan Eden and therefore, you need to say it the way I said it.

By the Rebbe Shlita there are times he says things publicly and times he doesn't, and it happens that you hear it only “on the inside”... This is along the lines of what we are discussing here.

One time it was the day after one of the Rebbe's farbrengens (the farbrengen was on Shabbos day as it normally was [this farbrengen with R' Groner took place after 5738, and throughout that year the Rebbe farbrenged on Motzaei Shabbos]), and the Rebbe spoke about something

he wanted done. The next day the Rebbe asked me what had happened with it, and I said the people in charge had a question and were unsure about how to proceed.

The Rebbe said, “Ach, why do they ask questions? Why don't they do as I said? If they would do everything, it would be successful! What do you think, when the Jewish people approached the sea, Moshe Rabbeinu could have transported them all over the water as though walking on dry land, and they didn't need anything, and they didn't need ‘stretch out your hand’, and the stick, and Hashem making the wind blow all night in order to split the sea, and the splitting of the sea. They didn't need any of this. If the Jewish people had believed in Moshe, then when Moshe commanded them to walk towards the sea, they would not have needed Nachshon ben Aminadav or ‘stretch out your hand.’ The Jewish people would have walked on the water like you walk on dry land. Why do they ask questions? With Moshe Rabbeinu they started with questions – and the Jewish people cried out. Who needs the ‘and they cried out?’ When you start with the ‘crying out’ you need to find other methods ...”

The Rebbe said that if the Jewish people had not asked questions at the sea, no questions and no crying out, with Moshe saying we need to cross the sea – they would have walked on the water like you walk on land. When they began crying out, one questioning, another one complaining etc., then they needed to find ways of doing it.

What is the Rebbe telling us? The Rebbe is Moshe Rabbeinu and like Moshe, he can transport



The Rebbe said, “Ach, why do they ask questions? Why don't they do as I said?... When the Jewish people approached the sea, Moshe Rabbeinu could have transported them over the water as though walking on dry land, and they would not have needed ‘stretch out your hand’, and the staff, and the wind ... and the splitting of the sea. If the Jewish people had believed in Moshe..., When you start with the ‘crying out’ you need to find other methods.”



the Jewish people over the water, if they don't ask questions. This seems to us – to our physical eyes – to be something like water, something difficult, and yet the Rebbe says to do it. So we need to do it.

The Rebbe knows that Chassidim think and talk about the Rebbe as if they are referring to "something higher." We need to know this.

In a sicha, the Rebbe says that the difference between a Kohen Gadol and a Nasi is that a Kohen Gadol (High Priest) brings korbanos (sacrifices) which atone for what the Jewish people did, meaning that it's possible to do the wrong thing, and we would need atonement for this. What does a Nasi do? The avoda of a Nasi is to not to get to a point where you need atonement!

We learn a sicha, and then we don't study it and pay attention to what the Rebbe is telling us. When there is a Nasi we need to know what he is trying to do for us. It's not that we do things for

which we need forgiveness and a tikkun (rectification) afterward. The job of a Nasi is to ensure that we don't reach that point. That's what the sicha says. What are we doing about it?

DOING WHAT THE REBBE WANTS

What the Rebbe does, when a Chassid comes to him and complains about things that need tikkun, is say, "Thank you for the "good news," and now you can go and *zai gezunt* (be well)!" But that would be *nahama d'chesufa* (bread of shame), i.e. a freebie. Hashem doesn't want us to be given handouts. He wants us to do something, and so the Rebbe says: "Do!" And who fasts? The Rebbe fasts for us! And who does t'shuva and cries? The Rebbe cries for us.

It's like the story the Rebbe said on Yud Shvat 5711, printed in the maamer Basi L'Gani. The Rebbe related stories about each of the Rebbeim. In the story

about the Mittlerer Rebbe he told about someone who went to the Mittlerer Rebbe, and the Rebbe showed him his arm and said to the Chassid, "See how my skin is stuck to my bones because of your issues."

R' Peretz (Mochkin) says that this explains what the Rebbe does for the Chassidim. You go to the Rebbe and tell him a problem, and then the Rebbe takes care of it. What is the Rebbe revealing to us now? The job of a Nasi is to ensure that there isn't a situation in which you need a tikkun. So the question is, what's happening? Where are we holding?

The Rebbe once said regarding a number of issues that people ought to understand that when he talks about a specific topic, the intention is for the matter to be implemented.

The Rebbe once said, "Woe to the alacrity of today's Chassidim. It would not have been this way in the past. Today their perspective is different,

and therefore their actions are different.”

The Rebbe said sadly, “This means that it’s as though they don’t appreciate what a Rebbe is. The person says, there is a verse, ‘His word races swiftly.’ This is the ‘racing swiftly’ of Chassidim today?! I have another explanation...” [The Rebbe didn’t say what his explanation his, but he clearly meant that the way they relate to me is how they ‘race swiftly.’]

This means, when the Rebbe speaks and he writes and he asks and he demands, we need to know that everything the Rebbe says is something that effects all of Klal Yisroel. When the Rebbe asks, we need to fulfill it with the greatest speed; there is no excuse. It’s not me who is telling young men what they need to do – this is what I’ve heard. Since the Rebbe said it, it’s something that effects Chassidim.

I don’t want to make things gloomy. We are talking together as a person speaks to his friend ...

We need to know that everything the Rebbe demands and what the Rebbe wants is something we need to be fully devoted to doing.

After [the heart attack in] 5738, every minute the Rebbe spends at the farbrengen is against the doctors’ wishes. The doctors don’t want the Rebbe to farbreng. Erev Rosh Chodesh [Adar 5739], the Rebbe went to the Ohel at 12:10 and returned to 770 at 6:50. Do you understand what this means? The Rebbe didn’t go to the Ohel for himself, “the neshama doesn’t need a tikun.” The Rebbe doesn’t need it. Why did he go? Because so-and-so wrote him a letter and the Rebbe answered, “I will mention it at the gravesite.”

so he had to do what he said.

He went for us. The Rebbe left at 12:10 and returned at 7. Figure it out – that’s six and a half hours. After 5738 this is something the doctors oppose. That means that the Rebbe does things that are “above limitations.” Why does he do this? Not for himself, because he doesn’t need it. He can sit in his room. He does it for us.

How do we reciprocate? Have we given this thought? When the Rebbe asks something of us, do we think about whether or not we have done as he wishes? Perhaps we have, but is it like the Alter Rebbe writes in chapter 30 of Tanya – does the person who sits on the street corner with a fire burning in his heart etc. and opposite him is the Jew sitting in the tent of Torah and t’filla – are the Torah and t’filla of this one with the same sacrifice as the other Jew [the one on the street corner]?

At least make a *balabatish’n cheshbon* (simple worldly accounting). You have an acquaintance, a friend, and you know that the friend is a person of stature and that he makes efforts on your behalf and goes over and beyond his abilities for you. Wouldn’t you ask him, “What can I do for you? How can I help you?”

Do you remember R’ Yitzchok Goldin? He was a Russian Jew, and he assisted the Rebbe Rayatz in his house from 5620-5621/1920-1921. When he came to the US, the Rebbe told me to allow him in for yechidus without an appointment – “Yitzchok Goldin is something different. He was like a ben bayis (member of the household) by the Rebbe.” The Rebbe told me something interesting then, perhaps I will tell it to you later.

When he came to the US, the Rebbe told the secretaries to let him in for yechidus at seven that night.

R’ Yitzchok had yechidus for half an hour. When he came out he stood near the wall and wept. I asked him, “Itche, why are you crying? You were with the Rebbe and should be happy! Go into the shul and farbreng with the people.”

He replied, “I saw the Rebbe, and he told me that by Chassidim it’s well-known that you don’t need to have mercy on the Rebbe. It’s an old principle, a well-known saying.

“That means, when there are matters you don’t want to tell the family, for example someone is seriously ill, and you don’t want to tell your wife or father or son or someone else, who do you tell? The Rebbe. But the Rebbe is most important of all; you don’t want to tell your mother or daughter, but you will tell the Rebbe? It’s because we know the Rebbe can accept it all, so we reveal all to him.”

I asked, “Nu ... “ R’ Itche told me that the Rebbe said, “But we saw differently. If we would have had mercy on the *Shver* (father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz), he would be with us now.”

That’s what he told me. That’s the first thing he said when he came out of the Rebbe’s room. What does this tell us? We don’t need to have mercy on the Rebbe.

Practically speaking, we need to know what the situation is. Despite everything, the Rebbe goes to the Ohel and stands for six and a half hours, the Rebbe farbrengs – the doctors gave him limitations on how many hours he can farbreng, and the Rebbe doesn’t follow this. The Rebbe

exceeds the limitations. Why? For himself? He doesn't need to for himself. He does it for us. How are we reciprocating?

Why did I tell all these stories? So that you wouldn't think for a moment that because we are sitting physically distant from the Rebbe, he doesn't know what's going on. He knows.

It once happened that someone called the office and said his wife's condition was critical, and he asked for a bracha. The Rebbe said to call the man.

What was the story? I'll tell you. The man called on Motzaei Shabbos and said: Do me a favor. I know it's Motzaei Shabbos and the Rebbe is not in his room, but you have his home number. Call the Rebbe at home and tell him the situation. We did so. We called the Rebbe at home and gave the message. The next day the Rebbe came to 770 and told us to call the man and ask him what happened at 5:00 Shabbos morning. I didn't know what happened at five in the morning since the man called after Shabbos and only said the situation was dire and asked for a bracha.

We called him and asked him, and he said that at that time the situation was critical to the point that the doctor had called him and told him to come and take leave of his wife. Afterward, the Rebbe said – why did I reveal that I knew what happened at five o'clock when he did not

say what happened at five? The Rebbe said he had a reason that he wanted him to know that he knew what the situation was at that time.

Don't think for a moment that the Rebbe sits in 770 Eastern Parkway or in 1304 President Street. Time and place have no limitation. They don't interfere at all. So if the Rebbe is sitting in 770, what would be if he appeared here now? The Rebbe would ask – what did you do about the matters I spoke

about? Did you do anything?

I think each of us should tremble a bit. We shouldn't think that because he is sitting there and we are sitting here, we don't need restraint. "Just as there it is with awe, fear, trembling and perspiration, so too here." We need to know, once and for all, the Rebbe demands and the Rebbe asks those things in which he is *kocht zich* (agitates about).



(from a t'shura for the wedding of R' Binyamin Wolf)



ADD IN ACTS OF GOODNESS & KINDNESS
TO BRING MOSHIACH NOW!

Torah, Reality and the Rebbe

Yud Shvat is our New Year for *hiskashrus*, but *hiskashrus* to whom and to what? Is our *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe's teachings, Chabad customs, *mivtzaim*, etc., or to the Rebbe himself? And if to the Rebbe, then how, since there was after all a Gimmel Tamuz? Here is a playful exploration of the issues involved and different perspectives on them. Reprinted with permission from the book "Living in the Age of Moshiach."

By Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd, PhD

"REALITY"/TORAH DIALOGUE

'Reality': I know you are distraught because the Rebbe died, but you have to get a grip on yourself. Face the facts. He's gone. Grieve and get on with your life.

Torah: I'm not frantic, so there's no need to fear that I'm losing my grip. You yourself must admit that perception is not the last word in 'reality'. Atoms are invisible; gravity is invisible; and the Rebbe is invisible. So is his influence, but invisible does not mean nonexistent.

'Reality': It's just a stage. You'll come to accept the Rebbe's passing with time.

Torah: I thought you are the one called 'Reality'. Did you ever notice that as time goes on, there are more believers in the Rebbe, not less? And from my point of view, time does not change the Jewish legal status of the Rebbe

as Moshiach. We are still the last generation of exile and the first of redemption.

'Reality': How long is a generation, then?

Torah: By Torah, a generation is the life of the leader of the generation.

'Reality': So the Rebbe's generation has ended. Just as when the previous Rebbe passed, the generation changed over.

Torah: Not immediately, only when the Rebbe took over a year later. Before then, the Rebbe made it painfully clear that the Rebbe Rayatz was still dispensing guidance and material and spiritual blessings as before, even though he seemed to have died. In our case, there is no successor, yet there is a promise that our generation merits redemption and that means under the generational leader, the Rebbe.

'Reality': But doesn't the fact

of being buried mean anything at all? After all, even according to Jewish law, the Rebbe died and had to be buried.

Torah: Wouldn't you say the Rebbe was familiar with Jewish law? And what did he say after the previous Rebbe's passing? He said that the real wonder was how a prayer for the dead could be said for a living person! So you see your concerns are quite the reverse of what the Rebbe taught us in this regard.

'Reality': This is very frustrating. . You make dying sound like a game of charades.

Torah: The truth is for a *Tzaddik* it is. Thus the patriarch Jacob did not die; Rabbi Yehudah the Prince did not die; Elijah the Prophet did not die; and the list goes on.

'Reality': Do you really believe those stories?

Torah: Look, some stories are not to be taken literally. But





those stories are brought down as practical cases, for example in Jewish law. Rabbi Yehudah, after his passing, came to his family every Friday evening to say the traditional blessings in honor of the Sabbath. The *Talmud* relates that Rabbi Yehudah effectively fulfilled the family's obligation of sanctifying the day, even though a disembodied soul or a ghost cannot fulfill an obligation for living people according to Torah law. The *Talmud* is clear that he came, soul in body. Other saintly rabbis were able to do the same.

'Reality': Fine, let's say that in those days it was possible to be physically alive after dying, whatever that means. But surely you don't think that someone in our times could be so great?

Torah: Moshiach is not great?

'Reality': That great?

Torah: Moshiach?

'Reality': My problem is that it's all in the realm of faith. There

is nothing in my experience that helps me conclude that a lack of vital signs could mean life and not death.

Torah: Have you forgotten what happened to the Rebbe's heart monitor in 1977-78 whenever he would say a maamer in the months following his heart attack?

'Reality': Of course I remember. The first time it happened, the doctors came running into the lecture hall shouting that they had to get to the Rebbe because the monitor showed that his heart had stopped beating. I'll never forget their faces when they saw the Rebbe talking for over 20 minutes without his heart beating even once!

Torah: Is that called life?

'Reality': Of course he was alive.

Torah: Without a heartbeat?

'Reality': Well, he was breathing.

Torah: Picky, picky.

'Reality': Well, you're right. It was spooky.

Torah: Spooky? A Tzaddik is not spooky! A Tzaddik is a truly spiritual person, not limited by the normal constraints of physical life.

'Reality': Right.

Torah: So you agree.

'Reality': Yeah, but... being dead while alive is different then being alive while dead.

Torah: Rrreally!?

'Reality': Let's talk about something else.

Torah: Okay.

'Reality': How can you talk about the resurrection of Moshiach? That's not Judaism.

Torah: I'm surprised at you.

'Reality': Why?

Torah: You really should give up on the idea of getting married and having kids.

'Reality': What does that have to do with anything?

Torah: Well, that's what others believe in. Be fruitful and multiply.

'Reality': It's not the same.

Torah: Should we give up on our kosher faith in a resurrected Moshiach simply because another religion believes in something similar?

'Reality': Fine, you could believe it, but just don't talk about it. It's giving me a headache.

Torah: You mean you're embarrassed about what valid Torah sources say that Moshiach may come from the dead, for example, the Gemara in Sanhedrin 98b, especially the Rashi and the S'dei Chemed, and the Maharsha and the Ber Sheva, and the Navi in Jeremiah and Daniel, and Reb Aryeh Leib Lipkin (grandson of the Hagahos Ben Aryeh published in the Vilna

Shas) and the BaMidbar Rabba 11:3, and Rabbeinu Bachaye and the Chasam Sofer, both at the end of Shmos, and the Arizal on the Zohar Shmos 8b, and Zohar Balak 203b and the Yalkut Shimoni 499, and Yeshous Meshicho p. 104, besides all the Rebbe's Sichos and...

'Reality': Enough already!

Torah: Just don't be embarrassed.

'Reality': I'm not. I'm proud of our heritage, and I'm glad the Rebbe is Moshiach and I'm glad he's going to appear soon and the redemption is about to happen and everything. The only thing is... I don't want you to tell anybody.

Torah: You what?

'Reality': Just keep it quiet. Nobody wants to hear it. It's risky. People might not like us. Besides, it won't be good for business.

Torah: I see.

'Reality': So you agree.

Torah: Well, I wouldn't go that far.

'Reality': Let's talk about something else.

Torah: Let's talk about 'Reality'.

'Reality': Sounds safe.

Torah: Believe in G-d?

'Reality': Absolutely.

Torah: He runs the world?

'Reality': For sure.

Torah: Gave the Torah?

'Reality': Sure. Written Torah, Oral Torah, the whole deal.

Torah: What about the Rebbe's directives.

'Reality': Whatever the Rebbe says goes.

Torah: He said that you have to tell yourself, and your family, and your neighbors and the whole world about the

immediacy of redemption with Moshiach here and now.

'Reality': Forget it.

Torah: Cold feet? What are you afraid of? The Rebbe says the world is ready, that nature is ready, that the non-Jews are ready too.

'Reality': You tell them.

Torah: The Torah doesn't talk all by itself. The Rebbe doesn't talk all by himself, for now, either. The world needs you.

'Reality': Me?

Torah: Why else do you think you're here?

'Reality': For the ride?

Torah: Don't worry, its not so bad. Start by giving a shiur, at least to yourself. Sichos are good, especially those of 5710-11 where the Rebbe focuses on hiskashrus after Yud Shvat and how we need to maintain the shlichus we were given most recently. That of course will lead you to focus on the most recent sichos of the Rebbe and his most recent mitvza, Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach.. And don't forget. The Rebbe's watching you.

'Reality': Can he see me if I cover my eyes?

• • •

Torah:

"The suggestion is the study of Torah on the topics of Moshiach and the Redemption. For it is within the ability of Torah to transform human nature. It is possible that one may be, heaven forbid, 'outside' and far removed from the concept of redemption as far as one's own perception is concerned (since he has not yet emerged from his own internal exile). Yet, through Torah study in the topics of redemption, he uplifts himself to a redemption state of mind, and begins to 'live' with the concept of redemption,

amidst the realization and recognition that 'Behold, here he comes!'

The Rebbe's talk of Shabbos Balak, 5751-1991

"One may wonder, 'what will the world say if a Jew performs his Divine service... particularly trying to speed the redemption? Seemingly,' he argues, in 'in order to succeed, one must take into consideration how the world will view it.' The answer is that the world is ready and prepared! When a Jew goes about his Divine service properly, rising above all limitations and constraints, yet doing so in a way that his service can be clothed in the garments of nature, he will see how the world, nature, and non-Jews are indeed aiding him in his Service.

The Rebbe's talk of Shabbos Korach, 3rd Tamuz, 5751-1991

"A question has been asked with regard to the recent statements that the redemption is coming immediately. Some might suggest that it would not be so easy for this message to reach people and convince them. People are uncertain of how their families and the world at large will react to it. The response is that such concerns would only be valid if the idea of redemption was an innovation. However, the redemption is nothing new. Rather all its elements have already begun, and have already been brought down and accepted in the physical world, the level beyond which there is nothing lower. Therefore it should be of no surprise when immediately, the redemption arrives."

The Rebbe's talk of Shabbos Shoftim 5751-1991 ■

(To contact, email info@arniegotfryd.com or call 416-858-9868)

THE ESSENCE OF YOSEF

By Rabbi Heschel Greenberg



The newly formed Jewish nation had just left Egypt and become a free people. In describing their journey out of Egypt, the Torah mentions what seems to be a detail of secondary importance.

“Moses took Joseph’s bones with him, because he had made his brothers swear saying, ‘G-d will surely remember you, and you shall bring up my bones from here with you.’”

Why is this detail of Joseph’s bones highlighted here?

The Midrash enlightens us by applying the verse in Proverbs, “A wise heart takes Mitzvos” to Moses, who occupied himself personally with transporting Joseph’s bones.

Commentators are baffled by the application of the term “wise” in relation to Moses’ involvement with the Mitzvah of transporting Joseph’s bones. What wisdom did that display? If anything it was a sign of his piety, his devotion to Mitzvos, and his concern for the dignity of Joseph. In what way was it a testimony to his wisdom?

To better understand the significance of Moses’ carrying Joseph’s bones in the context of the Exodus, we should focus our attention on the Hebrew word for bones, “*Atzamos*.” The same word, according to the Kabbalistic work *Megaleh Amukot*, also conveys a different translation, which is “essence.” Hence, the phrase

“*Atzmos Yoseph*” which is usually translated as, “Joseph’s bones” can actually be rendered, “Joseph’s essence.” What Moses did was not just transport his bodily remains but, in addition, in doing so he was actually carrying Joseph’s essence.

What is Joseph’s essence?

If we had to describe Joseph we could say many things about him based on all the Torah’s narratives with the light shed on them from our Oral Torah as it is preserved in the Talmud, Midrash and Zohar. Joseph was a precocious child, brilliant scholar, favorite of his father, hated by his brothers, industrious, good-looking (inside and out), a slave, manager of his master’s household, resistor of temptation, manager of the prison’s affairs, all of these arising from his inner moral strength and courage, compassion, prescience, regal bearing, a leader forgiving and nurturing.

But what is Joseph’s essence?

The Rebbe addresses this question (Likkutei Sichos, volume 26) and refers to Joseph’s name as his essence, because it is our Hebrew name that is the very source of our existence. The Torah tells us that G-d created the world with Divine speech. The forces of creation are thus the Hebrew letters. Each letter represents a Divine energy that possesses creative powers. The Hebrew

name therefore represents the very life force of the person with that name.

What does the name “Joseph” mean?

The Torah explains that when Rachel bore Joseph—her first child after many years of childlessness—she named him Joseph saying, “May G-d add [*Yosef*] another son for me.”

In other words, Joseph represents the desire to increase the family’s children. His life is about growing the Jewish people.

But there is more to it than just increasing the number of Jews quantitatively. The text does not just say, “May G-d add a son.” It inserts the word “another”—“**another** son.” The *Tzemach Tzedek* derives from this additional word that Joseph’s name—and therefore his essence—relates to Joseph’s ideal as one who takes “another,” i.e., a person who is an outcast, outside the pale of the Jewish people, and transforms him into a son, an insider.

Joseph’s essence, the Rebbe concludes, is a qualitative increase. Not only do we try to increase our numbers; the greatest increase is when we take a Jew who appears lost to us and bring him back into the fold, into the domain of holiness.

So when Moses prepares the Jews for a long circuitous sojourn through the desert—as mentioned in the preceding

verse: “G-d led the people on a circuitous route through the desert... “ he needed to arm himself with Joseph’s essential trait, his ability to transform the most threatening situations and daunting challenges into a “son.”

The Jewish people’s journey through the desert after the Exodus is relevant to our own experience in exile. The desert is a foreboding and hostile place and a fitting metaphor for exile. We need to take with us Joseph’s **essence** and bring every Jew back into the fold by bringing the light and warmth of the Mitzvos to every Jew no matter how far he or she may have strayed.

The Previous Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn of sainted memory, the sixth leader of Chabad-Lubavitch, whose passing in 1950 occurred on the Tenth day of Shvat, which we will observe this Shabbat) was—as his successor, the Rebbe, stresses—an heir to the Joseph tradition in our own time. He pioneered the movement of reaching out to every Jew by reaching into his or her inner core and revealing that the “outsider” and stranger status of the Jew is only that: on the outside. Within lies a warm and receptive Jewish heart and soul—a son.

With the Rebbe’s premise we can now also understand why the Midrash refers to Moses’ carrying Joseph’s bones from Egypt as a form of wisdom, not just an act of piety.

The definition of “Wisdom” according to the Talmud is one who can see now what the future will bring: “Who is a Chacham? One who sees the future.”

Moses, knowing that ultimately the Jewish people will be going through a long and arduous exile—symbolized by

their journey through the desert—prepares them for the journey by taking Joseph’s essence with him. No matter how far and how long the exile, no matter how far a Jew may stray, Moses and all the Jewish leaders of each and every generation, personify Joseph’s trait of caring for those lost souls and bringing them back into the fold.

There is another dimension of Joseph’s essence that is reflected in yet another translation of Joseph’s name. And as we shall see, even the essential trait of Joseph to transform the outsider into an insider is but his *modus operandi*, not his life’s mandate. The second interconnected translation of his name relates to Joseph’s goal and ultimate objective.

Where do we find a hint to this second aspect of Joseph?

We find it in the very last words Joseph uttered to his brothers before his passing at the end of the Book of Genesis. The Talmud teaches us that everything follows the conclusion or seal of a text—its “bottom line.” Here too, as we shall see, Joseph’s parting words, with which the entire Book of Genesis concludes—its seal—capture Joseph’s essence:

“Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am going to die. G-d will surely remember you and take you out of this land, to the land He swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’”.

Joseph then adds:

“Joseph made the children of Israel swear, saying, ‘G-d will surely remember you, and you should take my bones [read: essence] out of here.’”

Joseph’s last will and testament was about his people’s **liberation** from exile and the removal of his bones from there. Joseph did not speak

to them about their next two centuries in Egypt. He did not advise them on his deathbed about any of the things which related to his role as a Viceroy of Egypt. Joseph’s obsession was the getting out of Egypt—Geula-Redemption! That was Joseph’s essence!

It is true that in order to reach this goal one must go through the desert of exile and confront the hostile conditions, withstand them, and transform the “other” into the “son.” However, we must not forget that this is but the role of the Jew still on his or her **way** to the final Redemption.

When we were years, decades, centuries away from the Redemption we had to focus on the journey itself, and, to some extent, of necessity required to put the goal on a “back burner.” But now that we are so close to the final Redemption we have to look at the other translation of Joseph’s name the Rebbe often refers to when discussing his illustrious father-in-law, the Previous Rebbe, whose name was also Joseph:

The prophet Isaiah (11:11) states: “And on that day, G-d will again [*yosif*], a second time, extend His hand to recover the remnant of His people...” Here too, the prophet uses Joseph’s name in conjunction with the future Redemption. Indeed, the Midrash on the beginning of Exodus links this verse with Joseph’s name.

In other words, Joseph’s name describes both his methodology and the goal of his efforts. His *goal* is to bring us to the time when we will all be liberated from all that is undesirable in exile, and the *methodology* is through lovingly reaching even those of

our children who have become alienated.

This adds yet another layer of meaning to the characterization of Moses' carrying Joseph's bones as "wisdom." Wisdom, as noted above, refers to the ability to see into the future. Moses does not only see Joseph's bones (read: essence) as a means to help cope with the challenges of exile; he even sees beyond this and recognizes the second definition of Joseph's essence—the goal of bringing the ultimate and final Redemption.

Yud Shvat, the anniversary of the passing of the Previous Rebbe, and also the ascension to leadership of the Rebbe, is the appropriate time to articulate and integrate the twin, interwoven Joseph essences. We must not lose sight of the goal and recognize that we are standing on the very threshold of "another" Redemption—one that will be unlike all the preceding ones in its magnitude and finality. Simultaneously, we must employ Joseph's essence, i.e., the methodology of reaching into ourselves, our families, and every Jew to find the "son" even where the facade says it is an "other", a stranger.

And just as we accept every Jew no matter how far he or she may have strayed because they are our children, we ask G-d to look at us the same way and take us out of the state of

"otherness" and exile-induced alienation and bring us to the state of Redemption when we

will experience the embrace of the Divine "otherness". ■



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THE REBBE SAVED ME!

In honor of Yud Shvat we present a compilation of stories about the Rebbe Rayatz from the notes of R' Avrohom Weingarten a"h, l'ilui nishmas his son, R' Matisyahu Aryeh Leib Hy"d.

Compiled by Y Ben Boruch



THE REBBE RASHAB SHOWED HIM THE MANUSCRIPT

R' Eliyahu Yochil Simpson related:

I heard from the Rebbetzin (who heard from the Rebbe Rayatz shlita) that before Shavuos 5704/1944, the Rebbe Rayatz lost a manuscript of his father, the Rebbe Rashab, and the Rebbe was very upset by this.

On Shavuos, his father came to him (24 years after his passing) and showed him where the manuscript was.

HAVE A TANYA, TALLIS AND T'FILLIN WITH YOU

There was someone by the name of Shmuel Tzvi who learned in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch and then went off the proper path and soured (when he was in Kiev R' Binyamin Gorodetzky was mekarev him).

The Rebbe Rayatz once met him and said: "It's one thing that you're not Shmuel Tzvi, nu ... but you should have a Tanya, tallis and t'fillin with you!"

THE MAAMER "HEICHALTZU" WHICH WAS SAID ON CHANUKA!

At the beginning of 5694/1933, the Rebbe sent the Chassid R' Itche der masmid to the United States to raise money. Shortly thereafter, on 2 Cheshvan, 5694, R' Menachem Mendel Lokshin, who was the director of Agudas Chassidei Chabad, passed away in the US.

At the time there was a disagreement among the Chassidim in America (apparently as a result of the passing of R' Lokshin). This was

Chanuka time.

On Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz, Shabbos Chanuka 5794, the Rebbe Rayatz said a maamer Chassidus, “Ner Chanuka Mitzva” which was about negating disputes and was based on the famous maamer “Heichaltzu 5659.”

R’ Chatshe Feigin, the Rebbe’s secretary, wrote in a letter to R’ Yisroel Jacobson that it was surprising, for what connection was there between the maamer Heichaltzu and Chanuka? They figured it must be because of the dispute among the Chassidim in the US.

(That is what the Rebbe MH”M wrote in his introduction to the kuntres “Heichaltzu – 5659” – the maamer was said in 5694 in connection with events similar to those which led to the saying of the maamer Heichaltzu 5759).

THE MISNAGED WHO GAVE HIS MONEY TO THE REBBE

In Russia there was a rabbi by the name of Rabbi Yaakov Klemes of Moscow. At first he was a big Misnaged (and very wealthy) and he once said he wanted to burn the Likkutei Torah!


But when he saw the great mesirus nefesh of the Rebbe Rayatz in Russia, he was very impressed and he joined the Vaad HaRabbanim of Russia, which was led by the Rebbe Rayatz, and he gave all his money to the Rebbe!

IF ONLY WE COULD SUPPORT THE EXISTING YESHIVOS!

In 5687/1927, the yeshiva in Nevel became a central place

of Torah for the entire area. About 80 bachurim learned there. The Vaad HaHanhala consisted of four men: R’ Yehuda Eber was in charge of Nigleh, R’ Zalman Halpert of Korenitz was the mashgiach for Nigleh, R’ Chatshe Feigin was the mashpia, and R’ Nissan Nemenov was the mashgiach for Chassidus.

At this time there were Chassidim who wanted to open additional yeshivos like the yeshiva in Nevel. They asked the Rebbe Rayatz about this and he said: “If only we could support the existing yeshivos!”

 At first he was a big Misnaged (and very wealthy) and he even once said he wanted to burn the Likkutei Torah! However when he saw the great mesirus nefesh of the Rebbe Rayatz in Russia, he was very impressed and he joined the Vaad HaRabbanim of Russia, which was led by the Rebbe Rayatz. He even gave all his money to the Rebbe!

THE REBBE SAVED ME FROM DANGER!

At the Rebbe Rayatz’s Simchas Torah farbrengen of 5792/1931, he suddenly referred to R’ Shmuel Levitin, who was called “Shmuel Kutaiser,” and said: “A picture, Shmuel Kutaiser is now in Siberia.”

Later on, R’ Shmuel Levitin related what happened to him at the time:

“I was escaping the labor camp in Siberia and I was on the road which was very dangerous because of thieves etc. I was escaping with a gentile and we would pass through small villages in Siberia where ten or more families dwelt.

“On Simchas Torah we were in one such village. It was extremely cold and we were in grave danger because there was a police chief who might catch us. Boruch Hashem, he didn’t notice us, for if he had he would certainly have sent us back to prison.

“There was heavy snowfall but we had no choice and had to flee the village. On the way there was a big mountain and when we began to climb it, my tallis and t’fillin fell from my frozen fingers. We couldn’t tarry lest the police chief catch us but boruch Hashem, the gentile looked for

my bag and found it right away and we continued and were saved.

“Throughout this time I thought about how the Rebbe (Rashab) and the Rebbe shlita (Rayatz) were with me and guiding me and protecting me.

“Afterward I found out that the Rebbe sensed this with his prophetic spirit and he mentioned me in the farbrengen. It was with his blessing I was saved from danger!”

THE YESHIVA IS NOT AN OLD AGE HOME!

R’ Shmuel Levitin related: When I was in Nevel, R’ Mendel (Liadier) Diskin came to



me. He was one of the melamdin (teachers) in the chadarim in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lubavitch. He said he wanted to be accepted to the yeshiva Beis Midrash L'Rabbanim which I ran. I didn't know whether to accept him or not since he was old and the yeshiva was for young people.

I sent a letter to the Rebbe (Rayatz) and the Rebbe answered: The yeshiva is not an old age home!

THE REBBE ENVISIONED WHO WOULD LOSE HIS MIND

At this time, R' E.Y., who learned in Minsk, came to me and begged me to accept him into the yeshiva. I asked the Rebbe (Rayatz) in a letter and the answer I received said: You need to check whether he is of sound mind.

When I received this reply I

was taken aback since E.Y. was a genius and was certainly of sound mind, but after a response like this I told him that I had no place for him in the yeshiva.

I went to the Rebbe for Tishrei and the Rebbe asked me: Why don't you accept E. to yeshiva?

I realized that I was supposed to accept him and when I returned to Nevel I informed him that he was accepted into the yeshiva. A few years later, when I was sent to Siberia, E. lost his mind, as the Rebbe had predicted in his letter to me years earlier. I saw that sometimes the Rebbeim say things that are not pertinent for that time but pertain to the future.

THE SHLICHUS IS GOOD FOR HIM AND HIS FAMILY!

R' Shmuel Levitin related:

When I left Russia in 1937 I went back to serve as rav in Rakshik, Lithuania (where he been rav before) but a short while later I received a letter from the Rebbe (Rayatz) dated 20 Tammuz, 1938, which said:

I request of my friend that you make a trip to the United States for seven-eight months ... Surely this is difficult for you and for your family but I think that if you focus on how necessary this is for all matters of Anash, you will find the strength to put yourself aside for the benefit of Chassidus and matters of Anash.

In another letter the Rebbe wrote about this shlichus: It will be good for you and your family!

Nobody in Rakshik nobody knew that I already had a foot out the door, as I was planning a trip to America as the Rebbe's fundraiser, and the people made an official welcoming ceremony

MORE ABOUT THE “REBBE’S MINYAN”

for me together with a Chanukas HaBayis which they made especially for me.

In the meantime, I had a bad cold and it was feared that I had pneumonia. When I informed the Rebbe about this, he answered through the secretary R’ Chatshe Feigin that I should wait until I was better.

Then I received another letter from R’ Chatshe in which he wrote that the Rebbe told him that when my condition improved a bit I should leave immediately. The doctor examined me and said that I had improved somewhat and I immediately left even though I was still sick. This was in Elul 1938.

(See also the letter from the Rebbe Rayatz, vol. 4 p. 413, to Anash and the T’mimim in America: I would like to acquaint you with my friend, my soul friend ... R’ Shmuel Levitin, rav of Rakshik, whom I am sending as *shadar* to your country ... Although he did not sufficiently rest up from his suffering, having suffered in exile (Siberia) and he is still weak ... However, knowing the situation and out of great friendship, he did not reckon with all this and he fulfills my request).

Even when I arrived in America the Rebbe wrote me several times that this was for my benefit and the benefit of my family. When World War II broke out I saw how by fulfilling the Rebbe’s shlichus I was saved.

I HEARD A MAAMER FROM THE REBBE

On my way to America I stopped off in Otvotsk by the Rebbe. I very much wanted to hear a maamer Chassidus before my trip. At first I was supposed

The following was written by R’ Eliyahu Chaim Altheus of Riga about the Rebbe’s minyan:

The Rebbe’s minyan – the name signifies that it is the Chassidic center of all the minyanim here. This is where all those associated with Chassidei Chabad gather for every *yoma d’pagra* (celebratory day) out of all the minyanim in the city. This is where they study Chassidus every day.

Whoever has a heart alert to approaching the “tree of life,” knows to go to the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s minyan. That is what everyone calls it and it is like going to the Rebbe’s chamber.

That is where they go to inquire how the Rebbe is doing, or when someone needs to write a *pan* or a letter asking the Rebbe for advice. He knows that in the Rebbe’s minyan he will always find someone who will respond and revive his spirit. There he will hear a review of new maamarim, he can get a kuntres, a sicha, kosher tallis katan, a package of Lubavitcher tzitzis.

The name of the town of Lubavitch is constantly in the mouths of the congregants and those of Anash who daven there. I would not be exaggerating if I say that a day doesn’t pass without some story about Lubavitch being told.

to arrive for Shabbos Parshas Teitzei but I ended up arriving after Shabbos.

Upon my arrival, R’ Chatshe Feigin told me that the Rebbe would not say a maamer Chassidus and he added: You don’t have the *z’chus* (privilege, merit).

But in the end, I had the *z’chus* and the Rebbe said a maamer in honor of my trip. The maamer was said on Monday, 16 Elul, 5698/1938, “Mi Keil Kamocha.”

THE TZEMACH TZEDEK ESTEEMED THE “METZUDAS DOVID”

In the maamer “Mi Keil Kamocha” some amazing and lofty things were said.

At the beginning of the maamer, when the Rebbe related the commentary of the Metzudas Dovid on the verse, “Mi Keil Kamocha” (Who G-d is Like You), he noted: the Tzemach Tzedek greatly esteemed the

commentary of Metzudas Dovid.

The Rebbe sent the maamer to the Chassidim in the US so they would learn it together on Rosh HaShana and the Ten Days of Repentance of 5699. Then he had it printed in the “Kuntres Chodesh Tishrei – 5700” so it would be studied publicly on Rosh HaShana, Shabbos Shuva, and Yom Kippur of 5700.

THE REBBE SAID TO GO TO SIBERIA

The Chassid R’ Chaim Ber was sentenced to Siberia for several years. Before he set out he was allowed to go home for a few days and then he was supposed to present himself to be exiled to Siberia.

There was a Chassidic farbrengen taking place at this time and this Chassid participated. During the farbrengen, R’ Shmuel Levitin said it was worthwhile staying put for part of the time and only then going to Siberia. This would be considered as though

he was in Siberia during this time because they wouldn't know the difference. Some other Chassidim who were present agreed with R' Levitin and told him not to leave just yet.

In the end it was decided that he would ask the Rebbe whether he should leave now or wait. The Rebbe told him to leave right away.

When he arrived in Siberia he showed up at the place where he was supposed to be and waited there. A phone rang and the secretary announced that the call was for so-and-so. R' Chaim Ber was sure it was his wife calling him and he said to the secretary: I think it's my wife who is calling because she doesn't know where I am. Immediately after, he was released.

When he left the station he went to his wife who was waiting outside and he asked her whether she had called. She said she had not. It was regarded as a miracle because this enabled him to be freed. He never found out who called.

COLD WATERS AROUND A BURNING FIRE

R' Levitin related:

The Rebbe Rayatz once told the Chassid, R' Yaakov Heschel Zeligson: "Chassidus is cold water around a warm fire."

I DIDN'T DESCEND THE MOUNTAIN YET!

R' Chatshe Feigin went in to the Rebbe a few days after Shavuos and he read the financial accounts to the Rebbe. He noticed that the Rebbe didn't seem to be listening and the Rebbe said: "I haven't yet come down the mountain (from Kabbalas Ha'Torah)," so he

postponed the accounts for a few days.

HE'S ACTUALLY THERE!

Similarly, when the shadar, R' Mordechai Cheifetz returned from the Rebbe's shlichus to America (at the end of Iyar 5698) and arrived in Otvotsk a few days before Shavuos, he went to the Rebbe to give him

a report as well as regards from Anash in the US. The Rebbe told him: "I will only accept a general regards from Anash and after Mattan Torah I will accept personal regards."

R' Chatshe explained it thus:

The reason the Rebbe said "after Mattan Torah I will accept personal regards" and he did not say "after Shavuos" or "after



Yom Tov,” was because to the Rebbe, Shavuot is actually the Giving of the Torah and he was on the mountain!

This is along the lines of the story about the Maggid of Mezritch. Someone who knew him before he became close to the Baal Shem Tov went to see him. The man was a merchant and he asked the Maggid: “Why does your davening take so long? Even if you think about all the kavanos according to Kabbala you can finish the davening after an hour or two!”

The Maggid asked him: “Why do you have to bother traveling to Leipzig to buy merchandise and then having to come back and sell it. That wastes so much time. You can just sit at home and picture in your mind how you are traveling to Leipzig and going to the market and buying merchandise and returning home and selling it. Why go in person when you can do it in your mind?”

The man exclaimed in astonishment: “What will imagining do for me? How will I support my family? To do that I need to be there; it’s not enough to think about it!”

“Aha!” smiled the Maggid. “The same is true with meditation during prayer. In order for there to be sustenance

for the G-dly soul, thought is not enough; you need to actually be there and in order to be there you can’t limit the time to an hour or two.”

R’ Chatshe concluded: When we learn in Chassidus about the revelations during the Exodus, that “the King of all kings appeared to them in His glory and redeemed them,” and it is explained that there was a revelation of G-dliness in all the worlds, or when we learn about Mattan Torah on Shavuot, that the upper and lower worlds were united, namely G-dliness with the world – to us this is merely thought and reckoning due to the conquest of substance over form, but for the Rebbe it’s not an intellectual calculation for he’s actually there!

That is why the Rebbe said to give him personal regards after Mattan Torah, because for him he’s actually experiencing Mattan Torah and he is still on the mountain! May we merit to at least be near the mountain.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A BIOLOGICAL CHILD AND A STEPCHILD

After the Rebbe Rayatz moved from Riga to Warsaw (at the end of 5693), the minyan where the Rebbe used to daven

continued. They would call it, “the Rebbe’s minyan,” and this place was a Chassidic center for the entire area.

A man who was a *baal tz’daka* (philanthropist) davened several times in this minyan during his year of mourning and he liked it so much that he began davening there regularly. He was bothered, however, by the fact that the davening started at 10:30 on Shabbos morning and sometimes, at farbrengens, some Chassidim would shout at one another. He decided he would daven in another shul.

When the Chassid, R’ Eliyahu Chaim Altheus heard about this he said: “There is the real child and the stepchild. The difference between them is, even when a father hits his real son or wants to throw him out of the house, the child doesn’t leave the house because, after all, this is his father. A stepchild would leave the house. The same is true for us. Although sometimes we yell amongst ourselves, nevertheless nobody leaves the minyan of the Rebbe because after all, we are the Rebbe’s children and in the end we make peace. But you are acting like a stepchild.”

This greatly affected the man and he decided to remain in the shul. ■

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FACE TO FACE

An overview of the system of yechidus with the Rebbe, over the years • Printed in connection with Yud Shvat, the day when the Rebbe accepted the leadership of Chabad and the world in an official manner, although people already knew that he was the Nasi when he began accepting people for yechidus, a phenomenon which is unique to the Rebbe-Chassid relationship.

By Yisroel Yehuda



Yechidus. Those thrilling moments between Chassid and Rebbe. Yechidus. It goes far beyond submitting a note and then receiving a bracha or good advice. It is loftier than the “giving Shalom” in other Chassidic courts. To earlier Chassidim, yechidus, especially the first one, was the pinnacle of a Chassid’s life. From the time he reached adulthood

or joined the world of Chabad, he prepared himself for it. The yechidus itself could hardly be described. These were sacred moments that were engraved with an iron nail and fire upon his very soul, igniting his middos, subjugating his mind and heart, and in a burst of flame shaping the image of the Chassid.

When a Chassid left yechidus,

his way was paved. It was long and winding, but clear sailing. From then on, his life revolved around the axis of yechidus. The words uttered in yechidus were the roadmap for the Chassid, the blessing for his journey and the clear line to follow – yechidus was the path in life of the Chassid in the full sense of the term.



However, the Rebbe, in his love for the Chassid, does it for him. The Rebbe Rashab once said that the main difficulty in yechidus is the constant dressing and undressing (i.e. putting oneself into the “shoes” of the petitioner and then returning to the role of Rebbe, and on and on in each successive yechidus).

The aide of one of the Rebbeim, who wasn't the brightest of fellows, once expressed his surprise about how the Rebbe had to change his undergarments after he finished receiving people in yechidus, since they were soaked through with sweat. When the Rebbe heard about this, he was annoyed, and he told the aide he was fired, but that he would continue to send him his salary. The Rebbe continued: What don't you understand? When a Jew comes to me, in order for me to be able to help him, I have to put on his clothes (so to speak). Then, in order to give him a bracha, I have to get dressed again in my own clothes. Nu, when thirty people come and I have to undress and dress sixty times, shouldn't I perspire?!

YECHIDUS WITH THE REBBE RAYATZ

When the Rebbe Rayatz arrived in Warsaw, numerous people flocked to him, including Chabad Chassidim who had fled from Russia and were thrilled at this opportunity of seeing the Rebbe openly, without fear. There were also many Chassidim who lived in European countries like Poland, England and Germany who yearned to see his holy face after years of suffering in Russia. In addition, there were many Polish Chassidim who had heard about the “Lubavitcher

What is yechidus? The Rebbe defined it briefly: Yechidus is when one yechida of the soul (the highest level of the soul that expresses the soul's essential bond with G-d) asks of and talks to another yechida of the soul.

In Likkutei Sichos vol. 32 p. 25, the Rebbe explains it deeper. He says, “It means the unification of the yechida of the

one having the yechidus with the yechida of the Rebbe.”

When a Chassid goes to the Rebbe for yechidus, the Rebbe connects to the soul of the Chassid and gives him direction in avodas Hashem according to his soul-root. It is not a simple matter, and it requires tremendous spiritual and physical exertion on the part of the Rebbe.



The Rebbe Rayatz in the yechidus room

“The Rebbe continued: What don’t you understand? When a Jew comes to me, in order for me to be able to help him, I have to put on his clothes (so to speak). Then, in order to give him a bracha, I have to get dressed again in my own clothes. Nu, when thirty people come and I have to undress and dress sixty times, shouldn’t I perspire?!

Rebbe” and his tremendous work, and they too wanted to meet him.

To accommodate the greater numbers, three days were set aside for yechidus: Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. This routine continued after the Rebbe Rayatz arrived in New York and made 770 his home base.

In the early years the Rebbe Rayatz received people for yechidus in the Rebbe’s room [which he later gave to the Rebbe as an office], and after a few years passed, he began receiving people for yechidus in his apartment on the second floor of 770.

In those years it was very hard for people to understand the Rebbe Rayatz’s speech, and there were only a few Chassidim who could make out what he was saying. These included the Rebbe MH”M, R’ Mordechai Mentlick, and Rabbi Eliyahu Yochil Simpson.

In *Yemei B’Reishis* the following description is written about a group of Russian bachurim who came from Paris and wanted yechidus with the Rebbe:

“Today a group of four Russian bachurim came – Sholom Morosov, Dovber Junik, Gedalia Korf, and Yitzchok

Pewzner, who learned until recently in Paris – to learn in the court of the Rebbe [Rayatz].

“They wanted to enter today for yechidus – all of them as one group – and they asked the secretary, R’ Moshe Leib Rodstein, who was in charge of arranging yechidus (because R’ Eliyahu Simpson traveled for maamud to various towns), for permission to do so.

“R’ Rodstein submitted their names to the Rebbe in order to get the Rebbe’s approval (as was customary that the Rebbe is asked about each person who wants yechidus). The Rebbe said he would receive them for yechidus after Shabbos [R’ Rodstein said that he thought the reason was that this was the usual order, that Chassidim would first hear Chassidus from the Rebbe and only after that would they have yechidus, and the Rebbe says Chassidus every Shabbos (except that we don’t get to hear it) and therefore the Rebbe said they should come after Shabbos, i.e. after the saying of Chassidus, at least in the spiritual sense].

“...Before they entered for yechidus, Sholom Morosov asked Ramash [later the Rebbe MH”M]:

1-Should they say the bracha (that is said when seeing Sages of Israel), *boruch she’cholak mei’chachmaso* etc. ?

Ramash: ““Rebbe” is higher than that.” and he instructed them to say the SheHechyanu blessing. He added that they should say it loudly so that the Rebbe could answer Amen.

2-Should they wear a gartel?

Ramash: “In my view you should wear a gartel, but it is not necessary for it to be over your clothes in a way that shows; it can be worn under the jacket.”

3-Should they go in before or after Maariv?

Ramash: "Better after davening, but if they will be so distracted to the point that they would not be able to concentrate on the davening, then better to daven after yechidus."

At this time, the Rebbe greatly encouraged Anash and the bachurim to go in for yechidus to the Rebbe Rayatz. The Rebbe explained that although in the "good old days" they would make prodigious preparations, now it was a time to "grab and eat, grab and drink."

The last night of yechidus took place on Thursday night, 8 Shvat 5710, but on Friday, Erev Shabbos Parshas Bo, R' Naftali Dulitzky had yechidus, which was unusual. He was traveling that day by ship to Eretz Yisroel. He was the last Chassid to have yechidus with the Rebbe Rayatz.

CHASSIDIM "NUDGE" TO ENTER FOR YECHIDUS

After the histalkus (death) of the Rebbe Rayatz, once the chassidim began to recover from the tremendous blow, the Chassidim considered the Rebbe as the one suitable for taking over the Chabad leadership. However, the Rebbe was unwilling to accept the position, and he continued fulfilling the responsibilities that the Rebbe Rayatz had assigned him to do.

That year, the Chassidim "waged a battle" in which they took all measures to try to convince the Rebbe to accept the leadership. Part of what motivated them was their desire to have yechidus with the Rebbe. Yechidus is something that pertains solely to the Rebbe, and therefore, if the Rebbe agreed to receive someone in yechidus,



The Rebbe in the yechidus room in the early years

this would be another proof that the Rebbe was accepting the leadership.

For this reason, every yechidus at that time was considered almost a miracle, and it was related with great excitement by the Chassidim to each other as "another success" in the attempt to get the Rebbe to accept the leadership.

R' Shneur Zalman Gurary related that one day he went to the Rebbe and asked for yechidus because he had certain questions for which he wanted answers. The Rebbe looked at him in surprise and asked (laughing), "Do you really mean that?" R' Gurary answered that he wouldn't joke in "soul matters", and he meant it seriously. The Rebbe turned somber, sat down

in his place and answered his questions.

In Nissan 5710, R' Meir Ashkenazi, the rav of Shanghai, returned from his visit to Eretz Yisroel, and he brought handwritten booklets with him that belonged to a Chassid who was a mashpia in Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Vilna.

In these writings he found an allusion to the Rebbe's responsibility to accept the leadership, and he went in to relay this to the Rebbe. It is also told that on this occasion (or another), R' Ashkenazi gave a *pidyon nefesh* to the Rebbe in which he asked that the Rebbe answer his questions as in a yechidus. The Rebbe firmly refused and told him to go to the Ohel and ask his questions there.

R' Ashkenazi did not give up, but continued to importune the Rebbe to accept him for yechidus. The Rebbe refused and said he should send a shliach with a note to the Ohel.

When R' Ashkenazi saw that the Rebbe was adamant, he began to complain that after all the years of mesirus nefesh in Russia and then in Shanghai, until Hashem helped him get out, if he had no Rebbe, then what was it worth? What did he need it for?

The Rebbe then agreed to take a pa"n from him and received him for yechidus.

Elsewhere it is told that someone went to the Rebbe and asked to be received for yechidus. The Rebbe said: You want yechidus with someone who wears a short jacket?! That's not a Rebbe ... Did you ever see a Rebbe with a short jacket?

The man said: I didn't come to the **jacket**, I came to the **Rebbe!**

In those days you could see the special regard the Rebbe had for the bachurim. He was greatly mekarev them, and being accepted for yechidus was easier for them.

YECHIDUS WITH THE REBBE

Around Tishrei 5710, the Rebbe began receiving people for yechidus at set times. In those days this was one of the indications that the Rebbe was willing to take on the leadership. As it says in *Yemei B'Reishis*: "From the Rebbe's conduct from that Tishrei and on, it was apparent that he agreed, albeit unofficially, to accept the Nesius."

The seifer continues by describing some practices of

the Rebbe, such as: "The Rebbe received people for yechidus three times a week at night, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday (in the past there weren't set times). Yechidus begins at 8:00 in the evening and continues until one in the morning and sometimes two. There are many non-Lubavitchers who come too.

"There are exceptions such as shluchim, askanim, chozrim and the like – when something urgent comes up, they speak to R' Chadakov, and he goes in to ask the Rebbe whether or not they can come in. When he says yes, they can enter, even on days that are not designated for yechidus."

Until that time there was no routine or structure. The bachurim would encounter the Rebbe when he came out for davening, or they would even knock at his door, walk in, and ask for yechidus.

Then a system was put into place so that yechidus was limited to a few nights a week, and the one in charge was the head secretary, R' Chadakov.

The Rebbe once said, "It's easy for me to talk – I sit in my room and if someone comes, having spent twenty cents [apparently the price of a subway ride at that time] and wants to come in, R' Chadakov doesn't let him and tells him I'm busy and to come back in two months."

This went on for many years until 5725, which was the year of mourning for Rebbeitzin Chana, during which yechidus was cut down to only two nights a week for a long time.

Later, yechidus was limited in 5738-9 after the Rebbe's heart attack on Shmini Atzeres. In connection with this the Rebbe wrote to someone, "For now the doctors have allowed me

to answer my mail, but not to receive people to talk and the like. They do not say when they will allow this too."

At that time, the winter of 5738, there was a special yechidus at the end of Tishrei of that year. While still connected to machines, the Rebbe asked that everybody pass by as he sat in the doorway of his room. Each person placed his note and received a dollar. Although the Rebbe did not read the notes then and there, one or two had the privilege of being answered on the spot.

Another topic was yechidus for a birthday. In the early years, a birthday was an automatic reason for bachurim to have yechidus without having to make an appointment. In the very early years it was routine for a bar mitzva boy or a woman, before giving birth, to have yechidus. The number of these yechidus meetings decreased until Shabbos B'Reishis 5735, when the Rebbe stopped the option for birthday yechidus. The Rebbe said the bachurim used this meeting to resolve various questions they had in avodas Hashem, but this was not the "desirable way of doing things", for this is the job of mashpiim to work out an "order."

The Rebbe said: Since it is Shabbos B'Reishis, all brachos will be given "face to face" from the source of brachos, and it will be as though they entered [for yechidus] and heard the brachos in person.

GENERAL YECHIDUS

In Tishrei 5741/1980, a few bachurim from Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Kfar Chabad asked for yechidus as a group. A group from Lud did the same. When

the secretaries told the Rebbe, the Rebbe gave his approval and even added that with the approval of the roshei yeshiva, they could all enter as one group.

The mashpia who was present was R' Chaim Ashkenazi who, of course, approved the joining of the groups, and on 26 Tishrei they all had the first “general yechidus” in the Rebbe’s room. Each student submitted his note, and then the Rebbe addressed everyone in Lashon HaKodesh. This Yechidus was printed afterward.

That year most of the talmidim entered in groups, and some of Anash also entered in groups. In 5742 “general yechidus” became an option for everyone. At first, the general yechidus was held in the Rebbe’s room; afterward, in the small zal upstairs; and in later years it took place in the big zal downstairs.

In the brief period when the yechidus took place in groups in the Rebbe’s room, the way it worked was as follows. Members of the group would go over one by one and give the Rebbe their note with requests for brachos. Then the Rebbe addressed the group, and finally, they passed by the Rebbe and received a dollar for tz’daka.

Later, when the general yechidus took place in the big zal, the order changed. First the Rebbe addressed the crowd, then each one passed by the Rebbe, then placed his note, and received a dollar.

Naturally, this new way of doing things was hard for many Chassidim who were used to private yechidus with all that this entailed. The Rebbe referred to this and explained that “general yechidus” is of no less value than the individual yechidus; on the contrary, it is even more valuable.



The Rebbe saying a sicha in a general yechidus

To one of them the Rebbe wrote: “It’s very astonishing that you write that the yechidus is not for every individual privately, for apparently you don’t know or it hasn’t reached you regarding that which has been said a number of times about the great advantage of general yechidus and in the shul and beis midrash” (see photocopy).

The Rebbe explained this in a general yechidus in 5744: “There are those who think that the change in yechidus, that instead of receiving each person individually – everybody is received together and this is a disadvantage, G-d forbid ... Simply, when you receive everyone together, there is the advantage associated with the strength and advantage of a tzibbur (congregation), ‘the glory of the king is with many people.’ In addition, there is the advantage of the place where everybody is received, the place where Jews gather to daven, to learn Torah, to give tz’daka, and to celebrate simchas ... all this

makes the things that are said and heard (with the intention of internalizing it) – that they will have their effect in a loftier manner ...”

Over the years the “general yechidus” became more institutionalized. The Rebbe received guests as they were divided into groups – guests from various countries, brides and grooms, bar mitzva boys, the T’mimim, etc.

It should be noted that in those years the Rebbe began giving out dollars for tz’daka on a regular basis every Sunday – with the Rebbe standing on his feet for hours without a break, receiving thousands of people one after the other. In those few moments, each person felt that the Rebbe was fully with them, and many used this opportunity to ask for advice or a bracha.

THE YECHIDUS

In the early years, in order to have yechidus, a chassid had to speak with R’ Chadakov. In

HAVING YECHIDUS DEPENDS ON YOU

The mashpia in the yeshiva in Tzfas, R' Moshe Orenstein, relates:

Over the years I went to 770 a number of times, and each time I was able to arrange to go in for my birthday and then again afterward, for my trip home. On Chol HaMoed Pesach 5734 I went to the Rebbe, and I asked R' Groner for an appointment for yechidus for my birthday. R' Groner remembered the earlier years when I had gone in several times, and did not allow me to have yechidus. In those times, a birthday was your entry ticket for yechidus but R' Groner nevertheless refused to give me an appointment.

When I saw that R' Groner meant this seriously, I wrote to the Rebbe about it, how my birthday was coming up and I wasn't allowed to have yechidus, and how I was upset about this.

The Rebbe wrote a question mark and exclamation point on the note I submitted and added: **This is as if you entered, for on your part there was nothing holding you back, as is easy to understand.**

In these few amazing words lies a message for every bachur. The Rebbe was telling me, "Why are you upset? **You came in for yechidus** because if you prepared for it, I give you the yechidus, and all the spiritual effects of the yechidus are drawn down.

In other words, if a Tamim prepares properly for yechidus and he really wants it, and the reason he doesn't have yechidus is because of something that is not dependent on him, then as far as the Rebbe is concerned it is not possible that he will be lacking in terms of receiving the hashpaos (spiritual benefits) from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe says – You really want it? I'm giving it to you!

later years, it was R' Groner. Preparations for yechidus included immersing in a mikva and putting on a gartel (under their clothes for the bachurim). These were things the Rebbe himself said to do. In addition, many of the T'mimim fasted the day of the yechidus, and many of them went to yechidus wearing all-new clothing.

The time for Yechidus usually began at 8:00 at night and the Rebbe continued to receive people late into the night. In the 60's, when requests for yechidus increased, they lasted until dawn. After 5738 they ended at one or two at night. The balabatim (householders) usually went in first, then – at about 3-4 a.m. – it was the turn of the T'mimim. When someone came whom they knew would stay a long time, he

would be given a turn after the bachurim, at 4-5 in the morning.

As they waited their turn, Anash and the T'mimim would recite T'hilim and wait eagerly, though with trepidation. S. Avigdor in the paper *Panim el Panim* once described the waiting Chassidim with the following words:

"I saw how the Chassidim stood and waited for the moment when they could go in to see the Rebbe. Their pale faces, the verses of T'hilim on their lips, the gartel tied well just as during prayer, their trembling hands, a tear in their eye, all this testified to what yechidus is to a Chassid ..."

When the secretary gave the signal, the bachur went in. The rules were: don't sit, don't extend

your hand.

The Rebbe sat at his desk and the bachur gave him the note. In connection with this the story is told of the bachur who had yechidus in 5710 and put his pa"n on the table. The Rebbe said, "A pa"n is better given into the hand."

The Rebbe took the note and read it (very quickly) and marked on it in the margins with a pencil. Then the Rebbe began to respond while looking at the page, "What you asked about ..." Sometimes the Rebbe chose to ignore some of the points that were written. Towards the end, the Rebbe would focus his gaze on the person. When the Rebbe stopped talking, that was an indication that the yechidus was over and the bachur left, walking backwards so as not to turn his back on the Rebbe, until he left the room.

The mashpia in Tzfas, R' Moshe Orenstein, related that one time in yechidus he was compelled to speak. It was Kislev 5734, and R' Orenstein was planning on returning to Eretz Yisroel. He asked R' Groner if he could have an appointment for yechidus, but R' Groner refused because he had just had yechidus (in Tammuz, on his birthday).

In the end, on Shabbos after the farbrengen, R' Groner told him he would let him go in for yechidus on condition that he did not bring in a note and questions, but would just ask for a bracha. R' Orenstein agreed, but submitted questions before the yechidus. He went to the yechidus without a note. When he walked in, the Rebbe looked at him and said: Your note with questions did not reach me. Do you remember the questions?

R' Orenstein had no choice but to say one of his questions as

the Rebbe looked right at him the entire time.

THE YECHIDUS ATMOSPHERE

Whoever had yechidus felt that the Rebbe was “all his.” Aside from that, the atmosphere in yechidus varied from person to person. Mekuravim and VIPs who were not Lubavitchers usually enjoyed kiruvim (gestures of closeness) and a warmer atmosphere, while the feeling for a Tamim was a more intimidating one.

R’ Orenstein told about a yechidus he had as a chassan, a description that illustrates the very different moods that were felt in yechidus:

“When I went in for the fifth time in my life for yechidus, I was a chassan. The way it was done was the mechtutanim (the parents of both sides) and the chassan and kalla went in together.

“We all walked in, and the atmosphere was friendly, especially since the Rebbe knew the mechtutanim prior to Yud Shvat, and people like that would often get treated like an ‘acquaintance.’ The Rebbe smiled a lot and said many brachos.

“The mechtutanim left and the Rebbe sent for someone to call the kalla back. We remained there with the Rebbe and the atmosphere changed in an instant. The Rebbe was more



serious, and then he gave his blessing to chassan and kalla.

“The kalla left and I remained alone. I took out my note and gave it to the Rebbe, and then the ‘yechidus as a bachur’ began with great awe and fear.”

Here is a description of yechidus by a mekurav, which is very unlike the yechidus of bachurim:

“I had already gone in for a talk several times, or as they call it – yechidus – with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Each time the same deep feelings accompanied me, before I even crossed the threshold of the Rebbe’s room. I always felt filled with a great light of exaltation of spirit when speaking to the Rebbe. And when I left, I spent

a long time in the grips of the charisma that radiated from this rare personality.

“... It was almost dawn when I found myself once again face to face with the Rebbe ... He had the same captivating smile which immediately created a bond between him and me ... Clearly, it was only his personality that created the atmosphere in the room because there were no external signs of anything out of the ordinary. On the contrary, the old furniture was of the utmost simplicity; there was a wide desk, a few chairs. Even the chair he sat on wasn’t in the style of an Admur, and yet ...”

“Fortunate is the eye which saw all this ...” ■

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GEULA: WHAT WE BELIEVE

Part 5

By R' Gershon Avtzon, Menahel – Yeshivas Lubavitch Cincinnati



Dear Reader sh'yichyeh:

In our previous article, we ended with a question:

What are some of the details of the Resurrection?

We will discuss some of the details now – based on a letter of the Lubavitcher Rebbe (Igros Kodesh Vol.2, page 65):

Who will be resurrected?

All Jewish people who have passed away will be resurrected in the times of Moshiach (Mishna Sanhedrin Perek Cheilek). Even those people who have sinned will be resurrected if A) they repented before they passed away, B) they have a righteous son or father, C) someone prayed or did something positive on their behalf, D) if they were disgraced after their death, E) if Hashem has special mercy on them.

(Regarding the question of the resurrection of righteous gentiles, see the seifer Yemos HaMoshiach B'Halacha pg.351)

When will the resurrection happen?

According to the sequence of events that will transpire, if Moshiach will come in a “natural” way, this will be the order: Moshiach will first build the Beis HaMikdash and then gather all the Jewish people who are scattered in the Diaspora, to Eretz Yisrael. Forty years later will be the resurrection of the

dead (Zohar 1 139a).

Where will the resurrection take place?

All people will be resurrected in Eretz Yisrael (see Talmud K'subos 111a). Those who are buried outside of Eretz Yisrael will have to “roll” to Eretz Yisrael where they will then be resurrected. The Tzaddikim who are buried outside of Eretz Yisrael will have special tunnels built for them so that they will not be pained with rolling.

What will people look like when they are resurrected?

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba, Ch. 95) writes that people will be resurrected in the same shape and form as when they passed away. This includes people who were blind or sick etc. Only after they are resurrected will Hashem cure them. The reason for this is so that everyone will recognize them and see that they were truly resurrected.

In what order will people be resurrected?

The Tzaddikim will rise before the regular people (Zohar 1 140a). The regular people will be resurrected based on the Aleph Beis (Midrash). Those buried in Eretz Yisrael will be resurrected before those who were buried outside Eretz Yisrael.

There are opinions that say that our Avos – Avraham,

Yitzchak and Yaakov – will be resurrected last. The reasoning behind this opinion (Sefer Avkas Rochel) is to give the Avos the most respect and Nachas. When they will see the entire Jewish nation – from all generations – it will fill them with pride and joy.

These are some of the details of the resurrection. There are many technical and Halachic questions that will arise after the resurrection. We will discuss some of them.

1) If a soul was reincarnated many times in this world in various bodies, which body will be resurrected?

In truth, all of the bodies will be resurrected. When a person does a Mitzvah in this physical world, the G-dliness that is created from that Mitzvah is eternal. It elevates a certain part of the world, as well as part of the Neshama. That part of the Neshama – which was elevated through the Mitzvah done by a physical body – will be the life-force of that body in the time of the resurrection. Each “part” of the soul contains the spiritual components of the entire soul.

2) If a woman was married twice – because the first spouse had passed away – who will she remain married to in the times of Moshiach?

There are a few opinions:

1) The **Anaf Yosef** (On Ein

Yaakov, Sanhedrin 90a) writes that the woman will marry her second husband. This is based on the law that if a couple divorces and the woman gets remarried – and then divorces her second husband – she may not remarry her first husband.

2) The **Zohar** (Bereishis 21b) writes that she will return to the first husband. In regard to the above-mentioned question – how would this law fit with the law that one may not marry his divorcee after she remarries – the **Sefer Rav Paalim** answers that being that the body that will be resurrected is “new”, it is not bound by the fact that it died before.

3) The **Chasam Sofer** (Sh”ut 7:34) writes a revolutionary answer. He says – based on what he heard in the name of the Arizal – that each soul will be

reunited with its original soul-mate that was predetermined in heaven. It could come out that the person will not marry *either* of the people that they were married to in their previous lifetime.

[Regarding the Halachic question of will couples need to do another Kiddushin (marriage ceremony) or will the original Kiddushin remain binding, see discussion in **Yemos HaMoshiach B’Halacha** pg. 329-342]

3) Will there be a “Judgment-Day” for those who will be resurrected?

1) **Ramban** (Sefer HaG’mul) writes that there will be a Judgment day.

2) **Abarbanel** (Mayanei HaYeshua 8:7) writes that there will not be a Judgment-day.

3) **Arizal** (Nishmas Chaim

1:17) writes that the Judgment day will be only for Non-Jews.

[**The Rebbe Rayatz** writes (Likkutei Dibburim) that there will be a Judgment day for the Jewish people, but in a very positive way. Hashem will judge – **and excuse!** – all our sins. After bringing in such a hard and difficult exile, He will give the Jewish people the “benefit of the doubt” and negate our sins.]

From the above it is clear that all Jewish people who have passed away in previous generations will be resurrected. We still have to clarify: What will be with those who are **alive** when Moshiach arrives; will they have to pass away and be resurrected again?

This we will explain IY”H in our next article. ■

(For Rabbi Avtzon’s audio shiurim on moshiach: www.ylcrecording.com)

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AN OPEN LETTER TO ANASH AROUND THE WORLD

24 Teves 5771

Dear brothers and sisters,
fellow Chassidim:

Before we begin, let us all say L'chaim together so that we can Farbreng a bit and put ourselves into the proper frame of mind. L'chaim, Chassidim! May we see the Hiskalus of our dear Rebbe, *teikef u'miyad mamash!*

As we approach and get ready for Yud-Yud Alef Shvat we hear many terms, such as “Kabbalas HaNesius”, “Hiskashrus” and “Shishim Shana”. While we certainly know the literal translation and superficial meaning of the words, let us reflect for a moment on their deeper meaning, and more importantly, how they pertain to us. Now. Today.

First, what does it mean “to get ready for Yud-Yud-Alef Shvat”? How do we “get ready”? For what are we preparing? When we use the expression regarding Pesach, for example, we understand that this implies cleaning the house and buying Matzos, and that getting ready for Sukkos includes building a Sukkah and shopping for Daled Minim. But what does one do to get ready for Yud Shvat?

In order to understand how one ‘gets ready’ for Yud Shvat, we must first ask ourselves: What is Yud Shvat?

Based on the pasuk in Megillas Esther, “V’hayamim ha’eleh nizkarim v’naasim”, the Rebbe explains that when we celebrate a Yom Tov we are not

only commemorating an event that happened many years ago on this date on the calendar, but that on this day, all the hamshachos that are connected with it are happening all over again, each year anew.

To illustrate with an example: The Geula we celebrate on Pesach is not only because this is the date, on which many years ago, Hashem took us out of Mitzraim. The 15th day of Nissan was always a day set aside for Geula, even before Yetzias Mitzraim took place. And every year on that day, the inyan of Geula shines forth. Sometimes it is expressed only in the Spiritual Realms, and when we are zocheh, sometimes it comes down even in the physical realm. However, the idea of Geula is always expressed in some form on this day because the day itself is a day of Geula. That is why when Yidden had to be redeemed specifically on that day.

Perhaps the same may be said about Yud Shvat. Yes, it is the day on which – 60 years ago – the Rebbe formally accepted the Nesius and became our Rebbe in the full sense of the word. But the concept of Kabbalas HaNesius is continues to be expressed every year, in some way, on Yud Shvat. This is the reason why Chassidim prepare themselves every year for Yud Shvat – to accept upon themselves, in an even stronger way, the leadership of the Rebbe as their Rebbe.

In previous year, one of the ways that Chassidim prepared

themselves for Yud Shvat 5711 was by writing letters of Hiskashrus to the Rebbe, in which they begged the Rebbe to accept the Nesius. Then they would also pledge their unwavering loyalty to the Rebbe and to everything the Rebbe would tell them to do.

I don’t know the Rebbe’s what cheshbonos are or whether the Rebbe’s acceptance of the Nesius had anything to do with the letters that the Chassidim wrote to him. But Chassidim have to be Chassidim. There are two parties involved in Kabbalas HaNesius – the Rebbe and the Chassid. It’s not enough for the Rebbe to accept to be our Rebbe; we have to accept the Rebbe as our Rebbe. And this aspect of Kabbalas HaNesius – that we accept the Rebbe as our Rebbe – is definitely effected by these letters.

When a Chassid realizes that his entire being is nothing but a vehicle through which the Rebbe’s ratzon is fulfilled, he has then accepted the Rebbe as his Rebbe; he is mekabel the Rebbe’s Nesius. This is the meaning of ‘Hiskashrus’ – I do what the Rebbe wants because that is who I am. I am connected to the Rebbe because the Rebbe’s





agenda is my agenda.

Fellow Chassidim! HaYamim ha'eleh nizkarim v'naasim!

This year will mark 60 years of Kabbalas HaNesius; **THE REBBE'S AND OURS!!**

Chassidim the world over are learning Basi L'Gani 5711, in which the Rebbe gives us the outline of what his entire Nesius is all about and what our acceptance of the Rebbe's Nesius is all about, namely that we are Dor HaShvii, and that we are going to bring Moshiach! This is not just the first Maamer the Rebbe said. This is the Maamer upon which the entire Nesius is based: actually bringing Moshiach b'poel mamash!

Every single one of us must write a K'sav Hiskashrus to the Rebbe in which we will beg the Rebbe to formally accept the Malchus of Melech HaMoshiach in the fullest sense, just as we begged the Rebbe then to formally accept the Nesius. And we must tell the Rebbe very clearly – as we did then – that we accept upon ourselves to do all that the Rebbe wants from us.

In the days preceding Yud Shvat 5711 we accepted the Rebbe as our Nasi and the Rebbe accepted the Nesius. In

the days preceding Yud Shvat 5771, let us accept the Rebbe as our Melech and the Rebbe will B'ezras Hashem reciprocate our Kabbalas HaMalchus and be Nisgaleh.

Just as then, united as one, all Anash around the world showed how much we wanted the Rebbe to be our Rebbe, so too now, let us stand together as one and show how much we want and need the Rebbe to be Nisgaleh.

And just as then, when Chassidim put their differences aside and united as one to reach the common goal of Kabbalas HaNesius, so too now, let us all put our differences aside and unite as one to reach the common goal of Kabbalas HaMalchus – on our part and on the Rebbe's part.

Because, dear brothers and sisters, our differences pale in significance – and actually disappear! – in the presence of our similarities. We are so alike. We all want to see the Rebbe. We all want Moshiach to come immediately. We all want to be Chassidim and do what the Rebbe wants. We should strive to love each and every Chassid because we love the Rebbe and the Rebbe loves each and every

Chassid! When we are mekushar to the Rebbe, our individual agendas and identities are nullified and become nothing else but vehicles to fulfill what the Rebbe wants. How can a vehicle fight with itself?! Does the hand mind that the foot looks or acts differently than him?! Certainly not! They are working towards the same goal.

Very often, we spend 99% of our time focusing on the 1% on which we disagree. But brothers and sisters: we agree on all the essentials! We are telling the Rebbe that we want to be mekushar to him. When we are mekushar we don't notice the differences. They don't matter, they don't exist!

And just as then our Achdus and our united efforts gave us our Rebbe, so too now, our Achdus and united efforts will bring us our Melech HaMoshiach m'heira yigaleh amen kein yehi ratzon!

“Di Achdus fun Chassidim vet ze feeren kegn Moshiach'n!” L'chaim Chassidim!

“V'nizkeh zeh n' zich mit'n Rebbe'n... v'hu yigaleinu!” – Basi L'Gani 5711, fulfilled when there will be “Basi L'Gani” in 5771!!

Rebbe!! Ad Masai!?■

IN THE PATH OF THE JUST

On the appointed day, I traveled to Crown Heights. By this time, I had exchanged my religious garb for a colored shirt, tight pants, and a knitted kippa on my head the size of a quarter. I entered the Rebbe's room. I didn't expect too much.

By Nosson Avrohom

Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

During the last four years since R' Shlomo returned to Eretz HaKodesh after a lengthy stay in the United States, he has served as the gabbai of one of the most prominent shuls in the Holy City of Tzfas. For whatever reason, he categorically refused to be identified by his full name (permitting his first name only), but he will say that every time he is found among a group of Litvisher avreichim who speak contemptuously about the teachings of Chabad and about the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, he tells them his personal story with the Rebbe, and that shuts them up. "I see this as a literal shlichus," he told us without a tinge of haughtiness in his voice. "But despite the fact that I was privileged to receive special treatment from the Rebbe, seeing actual *ruach ha'kodesh* right before my eyes, I'm still closer to the Litvisher world."

While many years have passed since this story took place, the event remains engraved deep within his heart. As he puts it, "with each passing year, I understand even more how great a person the Rebbe really is." R' Shlomo shares this insight with us from his personal vantage point. "I was privileged to see revealed G-dliness from the Rebbe."

*

"I was born in Eretz Yisroel into a Torah observant family. I am considered part of the Sanzer chassidic community, and was educated in Talmudei Torah and yeshivos. In my earlier years, I followed the straight and narrow path, but as I grew older, I underwent a spiritual decline. This decline grew and intensified after 5736, when my job took me to New York. From the viewpoint of my Jewish identity, this marked a most confusing and

frustrating period. I had many questions in faith and outlook, but few answers that could satisfy my thirst as I pondered and searched for the truth. Each day, I would sit and wonder whether I wanted to continue my observance of Torah and mitzvos.

"I was in my mid-twenties at the time. I traveled the world, seeing all the material good it had to offer. While it attracted my growing curiosity, I was still confronted by the firm foundations of the education I had received. 'Where do I belong?' I asked myself as the opposing realities collided before my eyes. I felt that I had come to a crossroad, a fateful intersection regarding my future. Now I had to choose whether to strengthen myself and return to the straight path, the path by which I had been educated, or to build a new life for myself, another life, free of all distinctive traits of Judaism. This deep sense of confusion created a difficult feeling of unease. I didn't know where to turn or with whom to take counsel.

"In the city where I worked, I had a Chabad friend, a most unique individual with an unusual level of concern for others. When he realized the quandary I was in, he suggested that I travel to Crown Heights and go in for yechidus with the Rebbe. I was already starting to go downhill spiritually, and I initially rejected the idea. 'What do I have to do with the Rebbe?' I protested, brushing off his suggestion. But my friend would not relent, and with his typical stubbornness, he succeeded in getting me to agree to see the Rebbe. This young man apparently had connections in the right places with the Rebbe's secretaries, and he managed to



The Rebbe was not disturbed by the doubts in my faith, and instead of getting into details and trying to convince me that I was making a mistake, the Rebbe simply asked me to sit and learn chassidus.

arrange an urgent meeting late at night.

“On the appointed day, I traveled to Crown Heights. By this time, I was already clean-shaven, with a colored shirt, tight pants, and a knitted kippa on my head the size of a quarter. I entered the Rebbe’s room. I didn’t expect too much. I naively thought that I already knew everything about rebbes, as there were many prominent rabbanim in my family. Yet, when I came in to the Rebbe, I quickly understood that here was something else entirely. The picture is forever engraved in my memory: The Rebbe sat with his hands on the table, and gave me a penetrating look, as if he was scanning deep into my soul. I felt as if he was scouring me from within.

“The entire conversation was conducted in Yiddish. The Rebbe asked me to sit down. I began by telling the Rebbe that I was going through a difficult time. The Rebbe asked me where I was from, who I was, who my parents were, and then he listened to my complaints. It seemed that the Rebbe was not disturbed by the doubts in my faith, and instead of getting into details and trying to convince me that I was making a mistake, the Rebbe simply asked me to sit and learn chassidus. With great chutzpah, I told the Rebbe that it didn’t speak to me. I had tried learning chassidus with my Chabad friend, but it didn’t last very long. The Rebbe smiled broadly to my reply and said, ‘So learn *Mesilas Yesharim* (The Path of The Just, a musar seifer authored by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto)...’

“The yechidus concluded with my shaking the Rebbe’s hand. I returned home that night



and started learning ‘Mesilas Yesharim’.

“Slowly but surely, I began to come back to my previous state. The process of my return to the path of our forefathers did not happen miraculously, nor did it take place in an instant, but the change was sincere and profound.

“Several years later, I married my wife and we were blessed with our first child, a son named Binyomin. At the advice of my friend, I sent a letter to the Rebbe’s secretariat on the birth of our son, and requested a bracha. Rabbi Groner submitted my letter, and I was privileged to receive a bracha in response.

“Another thirteen years passed, and as our son reached the age of bar-mitzvah, the time had come to buy him a hat and suit. There was not a large community where we lived, so

we decided to take him to Crown Heights to buy a hat and all the clothes he would need for his bar-mitzvah.

“Many things had occurred over the years, and in the meantime, I had made a complete change in my life, including my external attire.

“We arrived in the Rebbe’s neighborhood quite early on a Sunday morning, and within a few short hours, we had completed all the necessary purchases. The boy was simply overjoyed.

Continued on page 50

IN RIGA WITH THE REBBE RAYATZ



R' Avrohom Uri Pizov a"h of Rechovot was from Riga. He spent his childhood years there and absorbed the Chassidic atmosphere. • In his poignant life story, he shares memories of the Rebbe Rayatz and tells about the arrest and exile of his family to Siberia and how they were miraculously saved from the murderous Germans. • Presented for Yud Shvat

By Shneur Zalman Berger

“It was two weeks before the outbreak of World War II,” began R' Avrohom Uri Pizov. “I was a boy of fifteen, and I learned in Tomchei T'mimim near Riga. In those days, my father was a dynamic askan (public worker) in Jewish matters, and he worked tirelessly to spread and strengthen Judaism in Riga.

Knocks and kicks at the door of our house at dawn woke us all up. We didn't have much time to think and from the moment the door was broken in, our lives changed very quickly. The NKVD arrested all of us and

informed us that we were being sent to Siberia. Just like that. With no explanation and no trial. We had no idea what prompted this. We were given only minutes to prepare for the trip. Within those few moments my father managed to bring a sack with fresh loaves of bread from the bakery that he managed, and thanks to this we had what to eat on the long trip to Siberia.

The trip took a month, and because war had broken out we were delayed additional days as a result of the increased traffic due to movement of forces to the front. We suffered from cold and

poor nutrition. All we had to eat was the bread we were given and cups of boiled water with sugar.

When we arrived in Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, we were ordered to alight, and we were taken to a small apartment at the edge of the city. They separated my father from us and sent him to a labor camp near the city. Then they told us that he was sentenced, without a trial, to five years of exile with hard labor.

The work was indeed hard labor, and it was made all the more difficult because he refused to eat the food prepared in the camp kitchen. He only ate bread,



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R' Avrohom-Uri Pizov
receiving Kos Shel Bracha
from the Rebbe

water and some potatoes that he somehow obtained. That was his entire diet.

Erev Pesach arrived. My father had been wondering how to make it through the holiday without eating the bread ration. You couldn't get potatoes either, or maybe just a few, and even these were a rosy dream.

One day, as he did every morning, my father went to the field in order to hoe and weed and perform other hard labor. He suddenly noticed something under a pile of snow. When he dug with his hands he found a treasure – seven potatoes! It was an unbelievable treasure. He looked right and left, and once he was certain that nobody was watching, he hid them under his clothes. There was nobody happier than he. He had been constantly worried about what he would eat on Pesach, and now he had found the answer.

When they returned to the camp he went through the gate

like the other prisoners where a guard stood and checked them. For some reason, the guard decided to focus his attention on my father, and he began carefully examining him. He soon found the seven potatoes. My father had thought he would have one potato each day of Yom Tov but the commander had a different perspective – one day in solitary for each smuggled potato. My father spent seven days in solitary confinement and suffered tremendously. Throughout Pesach all he put in his mouth was water with some sugar.

When the five years of hard labor were over, he was released and allowed to return to civilian life in Krasnoyarsk.

One day, as he walked down the street, he met a woman who had a Jewish face. She stopped and looked at him in surprise, and in a rich Yiddish she asked him what he, a Jew, was doing there. He told her that he had been released from hard labor

after five years.

“Where are you from?” she asked.

“I came here from Riga, but I was born in Drisa in White Russia.”

“I am also from Drisa,” said the woman in surprise.

“Who is your family?” she asked and my father told her. The woman nearly fainted on the spot.

“I am also from that family!” she said in a trembling voice. It turned out they were relatives.

She invited him to visit her house, and he agreed. As he sat with her and her husband, the door opened and in walked a *plakovnik* (a colonel) in the Russian army. The woman spoke to him in Yiddish, “My son, meet our relative whom we have just found.”

The eyes of my father and the colonel met and a chill, went down my father's back. The colonel was also in shock. “You sentenced me to solitary

on Pesach,” said my father incredulously.

“Yes, you were a prisoner in my camp.”

When I went to Avrohom Pizov’s house in Rechovot, I found the book, *Lubavitch V’Chayaleha* on the table. It’s a book that tracks the lives of the talmidim of Tomchei T’mimim. Apparently this book was often perused in this house. He opened the book, and as he flipped through the many pictures, his eyes filled with tears.

“When I remember the Lubavitch community which flourished in Riga before the Holocaust, I am filled with nostalgia for the Chassidic figures we children watched from a distance, out of respect. I miss the farbrengens that lasted all night, the Melaveh Malka meals, the Hakafof on Simchas Torah. Ah, those were the days.”

R’ Avrohom’s father was the Chassid, R’ Michoel Pizov who was born in Drisa. Before World War I, he went to Riga in Latvia, and during the war he married Chaya Faige. He opened a bakery, which he ran successfully for many years.

As a child, R’ Avraham attended the Torah V’Derech Eretz school which was run by Rabbi Chaim Mordechai Isaac Chadakov, with Rabbi Nissan Mindel as a teacher.

His father davened in the local Lubavitcher minyan. “The atmosphere in the shul was special,” R’ Avrohom remembers. He recalled the time of the third Shabbos meal, when the renowned Chassidim R’ Shimon Bliner and R’ Mordechai Cheifetz would take turns reviewing Chassidus. On Motzaei Shabbos they would eat Melaveh Malka in the homes of different Anash.

“When the Melaveh Malka meal took place in my home, all the g’dolei ha’Chassidim would attend, and the farbrengen lasted until the wee hours of the morning.

“In 5688 the Rebbe Rayatz left Russia for Riga. All the Chassidim went to daven with him in a place that was a two and a half hour walk from our house. My father and I had yechidus with the Rebbe, and I attended the Rebbe’s farbrengens. I don’t remember much since I was a child at the time, but one picture is engraved in my mind, of a particular farbrengen on Acharon shel Pesach, when they brought a tray to the table with kneidlach. My friends and I jumped to take some, but the Chassid R’ Eliyahu Chaim Altheus saw fit to protest our unmannerly behavior in the Rebbe’s presence and nearly threw us out.

“The Rebbe saw this and said with a smile, ‘The children also left Egypt, and they have a right to the kneidlach just like the adults.’

“At a certain point my mother baked challos for the Rebbe Rayatz, and I was the one who brought them to the Rebbe’s house and gave them to the Rebbe’s mother, Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah. Those six years in which the Rebbe Rayatz was in Riga were the best of times for Chassidic Riga.”

About a year after the outbreak of World War II, the Soviet Union conquered Latvia. Until then, Latvia was an independent country where there was freedom of religion. This is the reason why many Lubavitchers fled to Riga; there they could lead a religious life. However, after the Soviets conquered Latvia, they began imposing their anti-religious

decrees.

“I was only fifteen at the time, and I was learning in Torah V’Derech Eretz which was closed down because of the invasion of the communists. I was sent to learn in Tomchei T’mimim, which was in a city called Gustina, a town near Riga. Dozens of T’mimim learned there at that time. The rosh yeshiva was R’ Hillel Gurewitz, the son of R’ Itche der masmid, and the mashpia was R’ Yechezkel Himmelstein.

“The NKVD began trailing the steps of religious figures, and since my father was an askan in Jewish matters, and worked tirelessly on behalf of Judaism in Riga, they came to our house and arrested him. That’s how we ended up in Siberia, as I described earlier. The wicked ones had evil plans, but Hashem worked it out for the best. After the war, when we returned to Riga and saw what the Germans had done, annihilating any memory of the Jews from the city, we realized that thanks to being exiled, our lives had been saved. Only a few remained out of all of the thousands of Jews and Chassidim who had lived in Riga.”

During those years of exile the family lived in Krasnoyarsk. In exchange for their work on the *kolkhoz* (farming collective), they received a bit of food.

About a year later, officials arrived who told them to get on a truck. Along with about fifty other people, they obeyed and traveled to an unknown destination. It was only when they alighted that they saw they had been let off in a clearing in a forest in northern Siberia. “Here is where you will live,” they were told.

The place was desolate



Right: R' Avrohom
as a young man
Left: His father,
R' Michoel Pizov

and cut off from the world, surrounded by endless forest and endless snow. There were no dwellings at all, and forget about electricity and water; you couldn't even dream about that. People were ordered to start building houses and new lives. With great effort they built barracks out of logs. They ate fish that they caught in a nearby river, and every so often they received shipments of flour out of which they made bread.

Another two Jewish families were exiled here with whom the Pizovs shared their plight.

"Not much time elapsed before my mother, who could not withstand these frightful conditions, passed away. From that point on, I was responsible for my younger brother and sister. Even during this harsh time, I would daven every day that Hashem extricate us from this bitter exile and that we merit to meet with my father again. Since I had somehow managed to smuggle my t'fillin and a small Siddur, I davened with them every day.

"We stayed in this isolated and terrible place for four years, until we were given permission to leave and return to the city proper, where, to our delight,

we met our father who had been released a few days earlier and was looking for us. It was a joy mixed with sadness, as on the one hand, we were so glad to see my father alive and well; on the other hand, it was difficult and sad to tell him about our mother's death."

The war was over, and Europe was slowly recovering. In the summer of 1946, R' Avrohom left Krasnoyarsk to return to Riga, where he arrived Erev Yom Kippur 5707. He lived there until he made aliya.

"I returned to Riga and walked the streets, but recognized nothing. It wasn't the city I knew. I walked near the shul, the Lubavitcher minyan, and it was painful. I soon learned that everybody had been murdered by the Nazis. I stood opposite the building and cried. Where were those majestic figures who filled the shul and graced it with their delightful Chassidic characters and refined ways? When would we have farbrengens again that lasted until dawn?

"Only a few Lubavitcher families that had been saved returned to Riga after the war, including the families of R' Notke Berkahan, R' Zalman Friedman,

and R' Shaul Pewzner. A short while later my friend R' Avrohom Godin returned from exile, and we reminisced together about a world that had been destroyed."

R' Avrohom studied carpentry and got a job. He kept Shabbos despite the difficulties. After a few years, when the local authorities decided to give a day off to workers on Saturdays and Sundays, a heavy stone rolled off the hearts of many Jews who could now keep Shabbos without any problems. In 5709 R' Avrohom married Rivka Finkelstein.

It seemed as though life would now be peaceful, but then the communists bore down on them. About a year after their wedding, he received a letter ordering him to appear immediately at the KGB office.

"I had no idea what they wanted from me, but I obediently went to their office. When I presented myself, they told me I was arrested! 'Why? What's the reason?' I asked, and they claimed I had come back to Riga without permission. I explained that this was incorrect, since I had received official permission to return to my hometown, but they didn't care. I was interrogated for hours and they

A PROPHETIC BLESSING FROM THE ROGATCHOVER GAON

When I was 11, I went with my parents to a vacation spot on the outskirts of Riga. It was Shabbos afternoon as I took a walk with my father and brother. At a certain point we passed near a house where the Rogatchover Gaon was staying. We looked in the window and saw him sitting and learning, immersed in his s'farim. My father said we should go in and ask him for a bracha.

We walked in, but he continued learning. We waited silently for five minutes until he lifted his head, and when he saw us, he asked us what we wanted. I said quietly and shyly that we wanted a bracha. He asked, "Who are you?" We said we were the children of R' Michael Pizov. He thought for a few minutes and then said, "Go in peace and be well, and may Hashem have mercy on you."

This is engraved in my mind all my life. I remembered this scene often when I was with my brother and sister in exile, after my mother died, and we were alone and living in terrible conditions. That is when I understood what he was alluding to when he blessed us with, "May Hashem have mercy on you."

tried to incriminate me. I realized they wanted me simply because I was a Lubavitcher Chassid who was fully observant.

"After a few days they put me on a train to Siberia. I thought, this is the second time in my life that I am being sent into exile against my will. After a few weeks they took us to the town Dolgamost near Krasnoyarsk where I had been the previous time.

"Two weeks passed and one day, to my amazement, I saw my father walking down the street! At the time, he was living in Rostov. After a short conversation I learned that he too had been called to the KGB offices in his city where they tried to falsely accuse him, and when they were unsuccessful they had put him on a train to Siberia. Not long afterward, R' Avrohom Godin was also exiled to this place.

"The rules were that every two weeks we had to present ourselves at the KGB office and sign in, so they would know we hadn't escaped. It was a small

town, and the living conditions were difficult. We had no money with which to buy basic food items, and my father suffered from this a lot. He had not recovered from the hard labor during the five years of exile, and now he was exiled a second time for an unspecified amount of time.

"Despite the vigilance of the KGB, we tried to keep mitzvos as much as was possible. Eventually, my wife joined me. We were married only one year, and we suffered greatly. It was only after the death of Stalin that the government began releasing some of the prisoners who had been exiled to these places. Thus, six years after we arrived, we were told we were free to go.

"My wife and I and my father returned to Riga, and only then did we hear about the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz. My father took this hard, and he suffered a stroke. Three days later he passed away on 20 Adar 5719. He was only 60 years old.

"There was constant communication among the few

Lubavitchers in Riga. We sat together and learned Chassidus, and we farbrenge secretly on occasion. Every so often shluchim from the Rebbe came at great personal risk. I remember the visit of R' Nissan Mindel who had previously lived in Riga and then left Russia for the United States. He became the Rebbe's secretary, and at that time he came to us on the Rebbe's shlichus and brought s'farim, maamarim, and religious items. I was thrilled to see him, for he had been my teacher in school."

"In 5732 I received the documents I needed to get a visa from the Soviet Union. Those were tense times – would we get the visa or have to wait a long time?

"One night, my father came to me in a dream. He was dressed in Shabbos clothes, and his face was happy and shining. 'Avrohom' he said to me, 'Go with success, and Hashem will help you.' I said to him, 'We should go together.' He said, 'This is your path, and I have my path.' And I woke up.

"A few days later we received visas, after only waiting a length of time that was much quicker than usual. There were people who waited for years until they got their visas, while I had just submitted a request, and it was granted the first time.

"Years later I traveled to the US and had yechidus with the Rebbe. He asked how I was managing in Eretz Yisroel, but mainly asked about Anash who lived in Riga and about my activities there.

"That was my life in Riga. I lived with Anash and the Chassidim who lived in the city, and I experienced the taste of Chassidic life. Fortunate am I, and fortunate is my lot.■

AS DIFFICULT AS SPLITTING THE SEA

*The big paradox: In heaven it's decreed who will marry whom and yet people "choose" a spouse. How can this be? * This and more in a fascinating look at the parsha from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala and Chabad Chassidus.*

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik

District Rav Bat Chefer – Emek Chefer

A Roman matron asked Rabbi Yosi ben Chalafta[1]: "In how many days did G-d create the world?" Said he to her: "In six days." Asked she: "And from then until now, what does He do?"

Said he: "He sits and matches up couples, the daughter of ploni to ploni (= a first marriage) and the wife of ploni to ploni (= in a second marriage)." (The Rebbe's note: The concept is that Hashem is involved in "increasing joyous times in Israel").

Said she: "And this is His artistry? I can also make matches! How many servants and maids do I have! In a fleeting moment I can pair them. Why does He need thousands of years to make matches?"

Said he to her: "For you it may be easy. For G-d it is as difficult as the splitting of the sea."

What did she do? She took a thousand slaves and a thousand slave-girls, lined them up in two rows, and announced: "You marry him, and you marry her." On the next morning they came before her — this one with a wound in his head, that one with a drooping eye, this one's arm dismantled and that one's leg

broken. Said she to them: "What happened to you?" The one said, "I don't want him," and the other said, "I don't want her..."

Immediately she sent for Rabbi Yosi ben Chalafta and said to him: "There is no one like your G-d. Your Torah is true, beautiful and praiseworthy. Everything that you said was well said. Making matches is no easy work."

R' Yosi said to her, "As I said, it's hard work like splitting the sea. G-d makes matches against the will and inclinations of people as it says, '*Elokim moshiv yechidim baisesa*' — Hashem puts two singles (yechildim) in one house and this is marriage. 'Moshiv' — even against their will."

He concluded,[2] "Hashem makes ladders for people. He lowers ploni and elevates ploni as it's written, '*Elokim judges, this one He lowers and this one He raises.*'"[3]

MAKING MATCHES AGAINST THEIR WILL?

Why does R' Yosi say that making matches is as hard as splitting the sea? If we want to compare it to something difficult,

how about comparing it to creating the world — that's much harder than an isolated miracle like splitting the sea?!

We also need to understand what R' Yosi meant when he said that Hashem makes matches against people's will and inclinations. Does Hashem make a mockery of His creations to match them up against their will?

(The verse "*moshiv yechidim baisesa*," which speaks about matches, ends with the word "*ba'kosharos*" which is from the roots meaning to cry and to sing (*bechi v'shiros*); if you want, say shira; and if you don't want, cry. In other words, there is one who rejoices with his match and another who cries over it).

IS IT HARD FOR HASHEM TO MAKE MATCHES?

The holy Zohar tells us that the connection between man and woman does not begin at the wedding. It is an ancient relationship, going back to the world of souls when the two of them were one spiritual-soul entity. Before these souls descended to this world, they were split in two, with one half entering the body of a man and

the other half into the body of a woman. When they wed, the two half souls reunite.

This is why, unlike all creations that were created as male and female, the first man was created singular and only afterward did Hashem put him to sleep and take a rib and make woman from that, because at first both halves of the soul were united and it was only later that Hashem “operated” and made them into two bodies. Marriage is not just providing a helpmate (as it is with a non-Jew or animals) in order that he not be alone, but to fill a lack. A single person is “half a person” because the other half of the soul is missing. It is only with marriage that a person is complete.

So what is so hard about shidduchim when people are already “marked,” when each one has a half and the shidduch reveals the prior connection that existed between them?

IS SPLITTING THE SEA DIFFICULT?

Let’s first focus on the great miracle of the splitting of the sea which R’ Yosi said was a difficult miracle for Hashem. Isn’t that astounding? How could anything be difficult for the infinite, omnipotent G-d? He is the one who created nature and He can certainly change nature with ease, so in what sense is it hard for Him?

Obviously, it’s not in the act of breaking nature and splitting the sea. The difficulty lies in the condition Hashem set for Himself: that in order to make a miracle, a change in nature, man must work hard.

During the Six Days of Creation, Hashem created the entire world and its contents

without any dependence on man’s actions[4]. Man did not help or participate in any way and at the end of creation, it says, “that Elokim created ... to do,” i.e. from then on, Hashem gave man the job to work, develop, and fix the world. Since the conclusion of Creation, Hashem, as it were, limited Himself and made a rule: I will work from Above only when there is cooperation from man below!

As Chassidus would put it: Man must work and create a vessel in order to receive the bracha. There are numerous stories of people who were blessed by tzaddikim and yet the bracha was not fulfilled because they had not made a vessel with which to receive it.

(Every bracha has its vessel, or “key.” For example, to receive the bracha of wealth, you need to work or buy a lottery ticket. To receive the bracha for children, you need to marry).

This is how the Alter Rebbe explains it[5]: With the word of Hashem the heavens were made in the Six Days of Creation, but that was a *hamshacha* (drawing down) without *is’arusa d’l’tata* (arousal from below, i.e. man’s input) at all, because “there was no man to work” etc. It was only because He desires kindness; but after Man was created to work etc. then every *is’arusa d’l’eila* (arousal from above) to arouse the attribute of supernal kindness is with the *tz’daka* and *chesed* that Yisroel do in this world. In order to arouse supernal chesed from a lofty place to a low place you need an arousal from below.

This is comparable to the Chassidic explanation of the verse, “G-d is your shadow on

your right side,” that Hashem is like a shadow that accompanies a person wherever he goes. So it depends on man. Man is the one who sets the path and leads the way. When he goes to a good and holy place, Hashem’s accompaniment and protection is with holiness. If, G-d forbid, he goes to an evil place, he drags the G-dly shadow there too.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE MIRACLE AT THE SEA

Now we can understand what was so special about the splitting of the sea. The Ten Plagues and the exodus from Egypt were not directly dependent on the actions of the Jewish people. On the contrary, they were immersed in the impurity of Egypt[6] and nevertheless, they merited miracles and wonders. But with the splitting of the sea, Hashem wanted man to take action first and put his life in danger by entering the water. Only then did the waters split.

The Midrash[7] says: When the Jewish people stood at the sea, they stood and discussed it, with one saying I will go in first and another saying I will go in first. Then Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped into the waves and Hashem immediately said to Moshe: “My friends are drowning in the sea as the sea closes in and the enemy pursues ... raise your stick.”

The Jew was needed for the miracle to occur. It was only when Nachshon jumped into the sea with *mesirus nefesh* (self sacrifice) that the miracle took place and the sea split. This is the novelty of this miracle as compared to all the other supernatural events that took place for the Jewish people in Egypt. The splitting of the

sea is an example of the rule G-d established for Himself in the world: I must have man's collaboration[8].


This is what Chazal mean when they say that it's "hard" for Hashem to split the sea. The difficulty is not in Hashem's doing the act because obviously, nothing is hard for Him. The difficulty lies in Hashem's depending on us; because we have free will and can cooperate or not, we can choose good or bad (which is why we are punished for doing bad and are rewarded for doing good).

At the miracle of the splitting of the sea all were present and could see the connection between man's action below and the miracle from above. That's why this event specifically became emblematic of our needed input which is what makes it "difficult." In contrast, the other miracles of the exodus were done by Hashem without our direct input and therefore were not called "hard."

SHIDDUCH

This is the connection between making shidduchim and the splitting of the sea. Both are accomplished solely by G-d, but in both we see how Hashem gives the key to man. If he wants to, man can open up his mazal by taking action and searching for a suitable match, or he can lock up his mazal when he sits alone and turns down offers. If a person does the work and looks for a shidduch, Hashem's bracha will rest upon him and he will find a proper match.

If, G-d forbid, a person uses the key that Hashem gave him to search for a shidduch in a forbidden manner, against the rules Hashem established in His

 **The connection between man and woman does not begin at the wedding. It is an ancient relationship, going back to the world of souls when the two of them were one spiritual-soul entity... When they wed, the two half souls reunite.**

Torah, then Hashem will not help him and he will find his shidduch on his own without G-dly assistance. This is likely to adversely affect the relationship (because this match will not merit special G-dly assistance and this may *ch"v* have negative consequences).

THE MATRON'S QUESTION

The Roman matron asked how many days did it take for Hashem to create the world and what has He been doing ever since. R' Yosi interpreted her question in a deep way: Hashem creates and renews creation at every moment so what is unique about the Six Days of Creation?

So he answered her that Hashem makes matches, alluding to the difference between the Six Days of Creation and the days that followed. At first, Hashem created the world on His own but since then He makes matches, i.e. He wants His partner, the Jew, to participate in the work of sustaining the world by doing mitzvos and good deeds and learning Torah.

The matron thought that man can go it alone and does not need heavenly assistance, which is why she attempted to pair up 1000 maids and slaves herself. When she failed, she realized that you need a blessing from heaven, you need Hashem in the picture and that is the only way we can succeed. The work needs to be done with man below and G-d

helping from above.

R' Yosi went on to make the point about matches made against people's will. In other words, those who don't want to accept the fact that man's required efforts are for his own benefit will be sorry and "cry," while those who understand that the requirement to work in this world and to find a shidduch is for their own good, will "rejoice."

The secret to success is in Hashem's hands:

"Hashem sits and make ladders, lowering this one, raising that one, as it says, 'Elokim judges, this one He lowers and this one He raises.'" Sometimes we see two people working and one climbs the ladder with dizzying success while the other one falls and fails. The difference between success and the lack thereof does not depend on how much a person invests but in Hashem's role – "Hashem makes ladders." It's a heavenly calculation beyond our understanding and ultimately it depends on G-dly assistance. Yet man must make an effort.

"DO ALL THAT YOU CAN"

The true and complete Geula is like the splitting of the sea:

The purpose for which Hashem created the world is that it should be a place of good deeds, a dwelling for Him. This will be fully realized with the coming of Moshiach when all the thorns that interfere with and

ruin the world will be uprooted and it will be entirely a Garden of Eden for Hashem.

Hashem can create this garden Himself, but He wants us to be a part of it. This is what the Rebbe told us in the famous sicha of Chaf-Ches Nissan, 5751: Do all that you can to actually bring Moshiach immediately, and may we finally find ten Jews who will “insist” that they must influence Hashem, and certainly they will influence Hashem – to actually bring the true and complete Geula immediately.■

*Thanks to R’ Tzvika Drori
(Sources: Tanya Igeres
HaKodesh chapter 6, sifrei
Chassidus, explanation and
sources in HaBayis HaYehudi p.
21)*

NOTES:

- 1 – B’Reishis Raba 68, os 4
- 2 – alternate version of Midrash
- 3 – T’hilim 75
- 4 – as Chassidus puts it: b’is’arusa d’l’eila sh’eina t’luya b’is’arusa d’l’tata
- 5 – Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh chapter 6

- 6 – “49 gates of impurity”
- 7 – Mechilta B’Shalach 5, Midrash T’hilim 76
- 8 – Although even before the exodus the Jewish people prepared for redemption with two mitzvos: the courage needed to slaughter the Egyptian deity, the lamb, as a sacrifice, and circumcision. We don’t see a clear connection between these mitzvos and Geula. The splitting of the sea is unique in our history in that we see a direct connection between the vessel and the G-dly influence. It was only when then was actually mesirus nefesh to enter the sea that the miracle occurred and the sea split.

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“It was already afternoon, and I remembered that the Rebbe distributes dollars on Sunday for tz’daka and a bracha. Since our son was now about to become a bar-mitzvah boy, I wanted very much for the Rebbe to bless him. Throughout the long years since the first time I went in for yechidus with the Rebbe, I had neither seen the Rebbe nor had I returned for a second visit to 770. While I always felt a connection with Chabad chassidim, I hadn’t remained within their circle. But now that we were here, I decided we couldn’t leave Crown Heights without going for Dollars. This was only the second time in my life that I had ever seen the Rebbe. The signs of age had peppered his beard since then, but his eyes were as intensely brilliant and penetrating as before. The change in my external appearance from the last time I had been in the Rebbe’s presence, was dramatic. Now I was dressed as an ultra-Orthodox Jew, the transformation furthered by my beard and eyeglasses.

“I held out my hand to the Rebbe, and even before I had a chance to open my mouth, the Rebbe spoke first, dropping a bombshell that positively shocked me. ‘Do you still learn *Mesilas Yescharim*?’ I was stunned. For a few moments that seemed like an eternity, I couldn’t seem to utter a word. When I recovered my senses, I replied that I still learn, adding that I had recently moved on to other works of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto as well. The Rebbe smiled broadly and twice said, ‘*Zai’er gut*’ (very good). I presented my son, and the Rebbe gave us dollars and blessed us with good news. It was only when I went outside that I realized that I had just witnessed a literal Divine revelation.

“How could the Rebbe have possibly remembered me?” I thought to myself. It simply wasn’t logical. Twenty-five years had passed, and my face and even my attire had completely changed, not to mention that I had gained some weight. Yet, the Rebbe made certain to inform me that he remembers and knows – a fact that has not ceased to amaze me to this very day.

“It could be estimated that hundreds of thousands of people passed by the Rebbe during those years. On Sundays alone, he received thousands of Jews from throughout the world. How did the Rebbe remember me? I asked myself this question over and over again.

For quite some time I stood outside 770, shaking, deeply moved, and very excited.

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It’s quite easy to see how R’ Shlomo’s heart was overcome with emotion as he recalled the events from those days. “G-d allowed such a great Jew to walk among us; it’s simply beyond our comprehension. As I grow older, and I now have grandchildren, I understand even more deeply what the Rebbe had told me. Today, I fully realize that this is not something that can be passed on from father to son. A simple Jew, a man created in His image, can’t attain such levels of vision and foresight, and surely not memory. This is a most lofty soul that we have been privileged to have live among us in this generation.”■