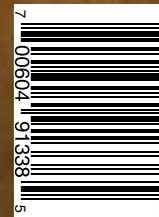


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# Perspectives

Issue 6 • Price: \$4.00



**THE PATH TO SPIRITUAL  
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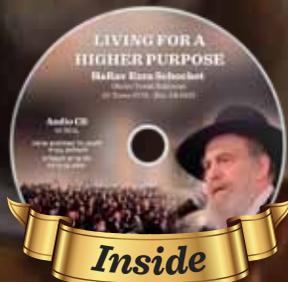
*Reb Yoel Kahn*

**IN LOVE WITH HIS  
PEOPLE**

*The Story of Shir Hashirim*

**LIVING FOR A  
HIGHER PURPOSE**

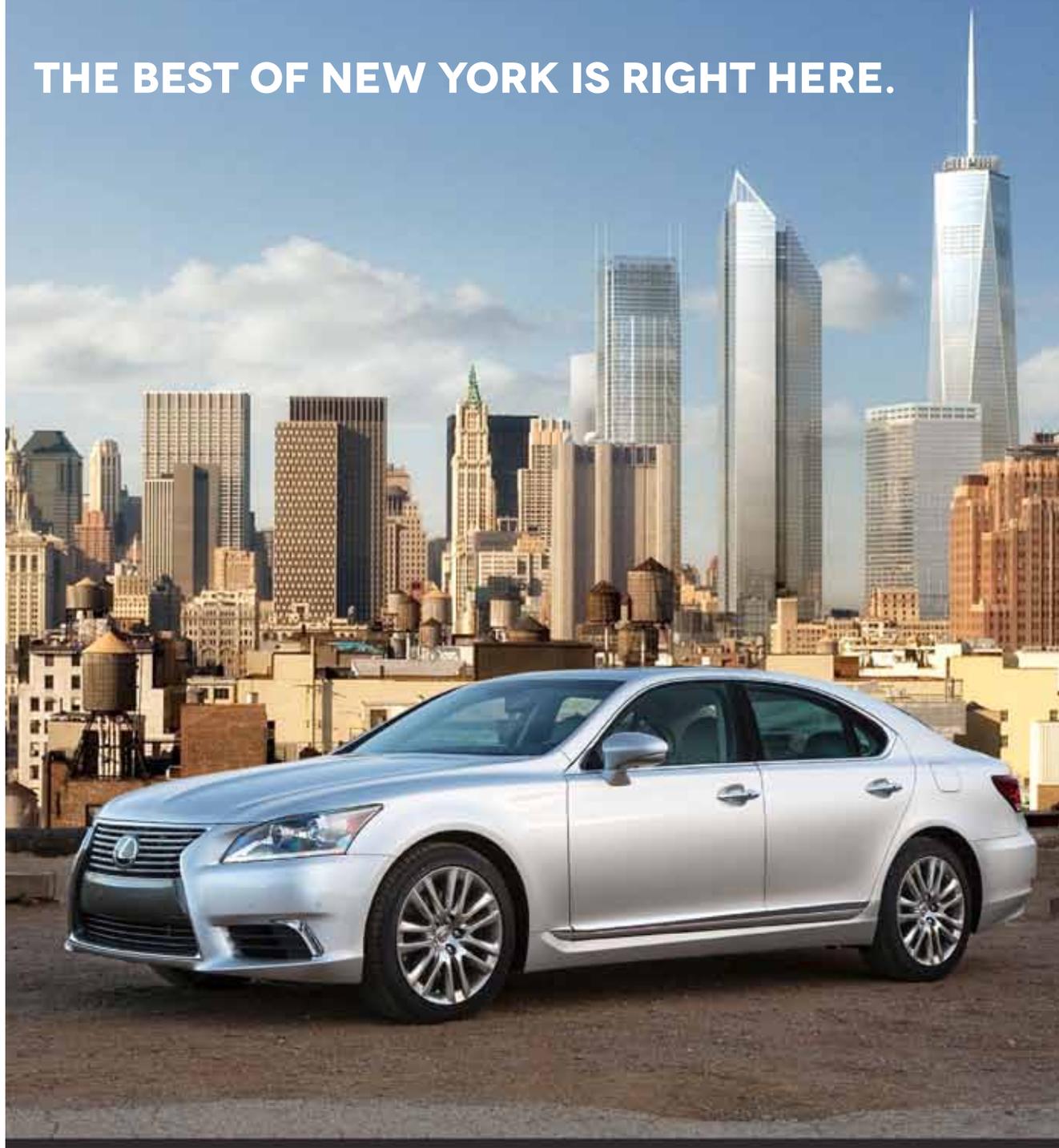
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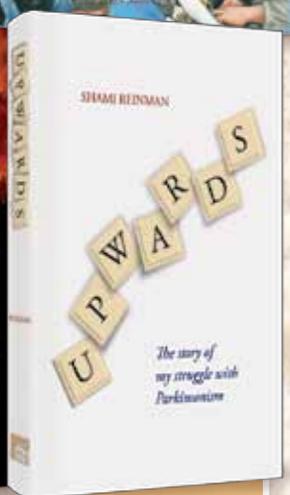
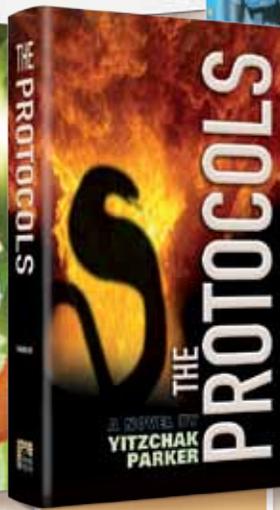
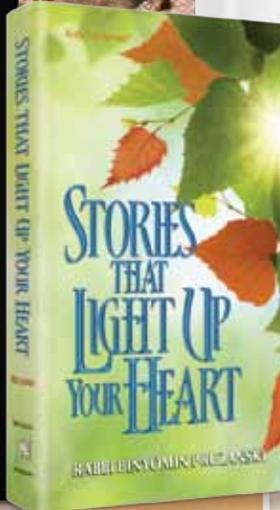
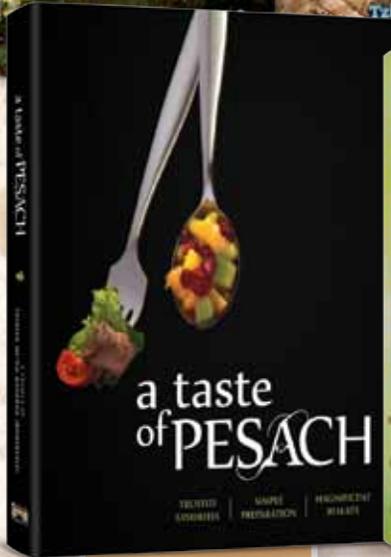
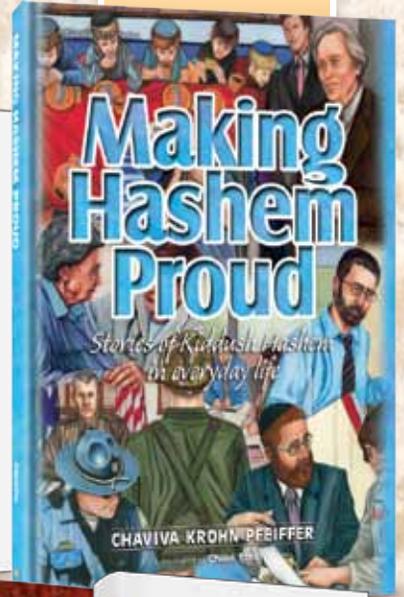
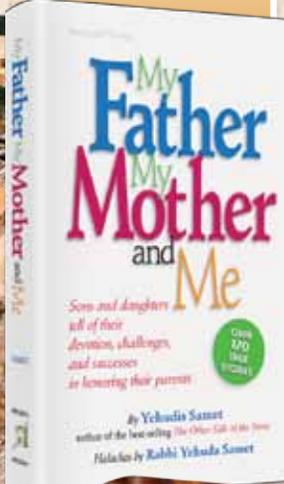
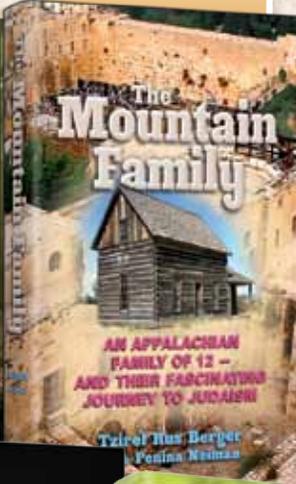
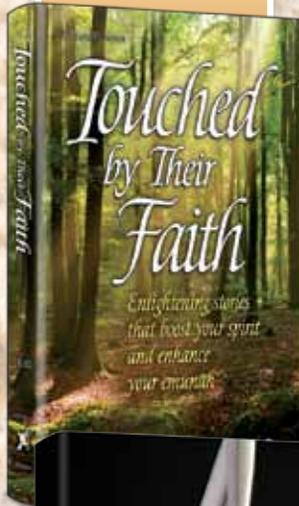
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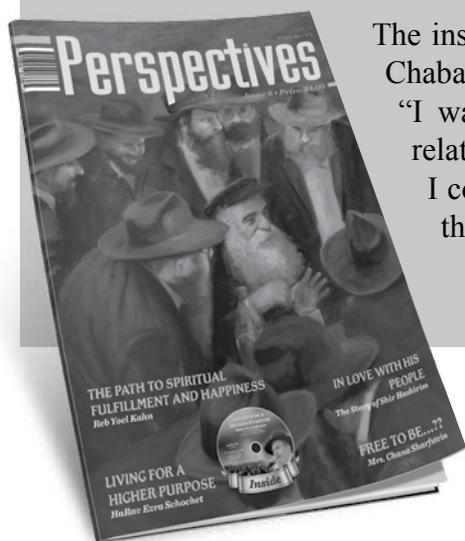
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## - ABOUT THE COVER -

"The Farbrengen," oil on canvas, 36 x 40

Born in 1983 and descended from a European Chasidic lineage noted for its artists, Joel Gluck paints scenes from Jewish life, past and present. The physical and the spiritual come together in his paintings connecting the viewer to the wealth and depth of his heritage. Joel Gluck has studied with outstanding contemporary artists, including Max Ginsburg and Paul McCormack, president of ACOPAL. He is represented exclusively by the The Betzalel Gallery in Crown Heights, Brooklyn NY.



The inspiration for "The Farbrengen" was the famous Chabad Mashpia Reb Menachem Mendel Futerfas. "I was at a farbrengen one Shabbos," Joel Gluck relates, "and the whole thing was about R' Mendel. I couldn't get him out of my head and so the only thing for me to do was to make a painting!"

Photo credit: Yaakov Hellinger

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# - FOREWORD -

Like every good endeavor, we at Merkaz Anash encounter well-meaning people who question our efforts in promoting education of classical Lubavitch values.

Some question its necessity, while others doubt its achievement. "We have so many *sichos* and *maamorim* from the Rebbe. Anyone looking for guidance should look there." "People aren't interested in guidance. Everyone has their mind made up and no one will change."

Recent happenings in our community have dispelled both of these claims.

Firstly, we saw the critical importance of guidance on day-to-day issues. Without direction from *mashpiim*, we are at risk of misinterpreting *Chassidus* to become practices that are completely foreign to the principles of *Chassidus*. Similarly, constructive discussion and dialogue keeps us on the straight path, like trees in a dense forest that guide each other upward. "*Asei lecha rav uknei lecha chaver.*" Both a *rov* and an honest friend are indispensable tools to clarifying and applying ideals.

Secondly, we saw how much everyone appreciates genuine guidance. When we are lost and confused, as individuals or as a community, we all turn to leadership for direction and meaning. In difficult situations, even the most independent minded hope for a clear message.

We hope that Perspective magazine contributes to this important end.

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger

General Editor



## The Rebbe's Perspective ■

*Prepared by Rabbi Shimon Hellinger*

### Is there value in 'family time'?

What led the previous generation to stray from Yiddishkeit?

What can unite family members who live such different lives?

In this sicha from Yud Shvat 5734<sup>1</sup> (1974) the Rebbe addressed these questions and more:

#### ■ LIVING AS A FAMILY ■

One of the things upon which any nation is dependent, and particularly the Jewish nation, is the family-unit. Unfortunately, it has been lacking. Even those who follow the path of Torah and *mitzvos*, set times for Torah study and fulfilling *mitzvos behiddur*, and even expend *mesiras nefesh* to help a single *Yid* that is astray *beruchnius*, lack this element of 'the Yiddishe family' to a great degree. Even when the father, mother and children all follow the path of Torah and *mitzvos*, they don't do it *as a family*.

When the *Yidden* were counted, the Torah emphasizes that they were counted as a family, "to their families and to their father's household." This is especially significant according to *Kabbalah* and *Chassidus* that explain the *mitzvah* of bearing a son and a daughter is to complete the name *Havayeh*. The parents represent the *Yud* and the *Hei*, and the son and daughter represent the *Vov* and final *Hei*. The significance of completing the name *Havayeh* is critical in our incessant battle against *Amalek*.

Now, just as the name *Havayeh* is not merely a combination of four separate letters, but rather letters joining together to make HaShem's name, so too, the *Yiddishe* family needs to act as a unit.

#### ■ THE SPLINTERED FAMILY ■

The strongest form of proof in *halacha* is the observable reality. The destruction caused when family member's live in their own world is readily apparent.

1. Unedited – printed in *Sichos Kodesh* vol. 5734 vol. 1 p. 329 and in a recent booklet by Vaad Hanochos B'Lahak se'if 36.

To preface: Even among those who follow Torah and *mitzvos*, it is possible for the father to *daven* in one shul, the mother in another, and the children in others. The same is true for their Torah study and *mitzvah* observance. Although they all follow *HaShem's* Torah and *mitzvos*, it does not compare to doing it as a family. This is even more applicable to those children who claim that they belong to "another generation" with a different lifestyle.

The previous generation had their youth deteriorate in *Yiddishkeit* and general morality as a result of the youth lacking direction that left them blindly searching. They were left to search alone. The parents were busy with business or community service, and the children were left with a lonely sift through the darkness of *galus*...

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■ ■ ■

*It is normal that during the week each family member is occupied with different activities. However, on leil Shabbos, families should gather around the Shabbos table and engage in Shabbos-appropriate conversation.*

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■ ■ ■

Friction between parents and children starts when children are deprived of a good education that emphasizes "honor your father and mother" and "teach your children" are not merely irrational ways to earn reward in *Olam HaBa*, but rather they create a family-unit that benefits every family member.

#### ■ SHABBOS IS THE SOLUTION! ■

One solution for this, which is also intrinsically important, is that on Shabbos families should be together. It is normal and it has basis in Shulchan Aruch, that during the week each family member is occupied with different activities. However, on *leil Shabbos*, families should gather around the *Shabbos* table and engage in Shabbos-appropriate conversation.

On Shabbos, when their weekday activities do not separate them, they will be a "healthy family." Then, they will be a healthy family throughout the week as well, since the unity from Shabbos will outweigh their differences and their differences will actually complement each other.

But nothing happens on its own, especially after years of damaging habits, and as such creating the family-unit must be constantly addressed and readdressed. Then, we have the guarantee that we will succeed.

#### ■ IN SUMMARY ■

A united family-unit contains tremendous holiness, and is crucial for the future of every child, no matter the family's level of practice.

The Torah commandments for upholding the family structure bring immediate reward.

Spending the Shabbos meal in Shabbos-appropriate conversation is the best way to create a healthy family-unit that lasts throughout the work-week as well.



# Making Chassidus Our Way of Life

On Tuesday evening, the 21<sup>st</sup> of Teves, 5774, nearly 2,000 men and women gathered in the Oholei Torah Ballroom in Brooklyn, NY for a monumental gathering discussing making *Chassidus* a way of life.

The gathering was in response to a developing group claiming that meaning and internal satisfaction in life is reached through emotional healing. Aside from the questionable credentials of the group's methodology, their fundamental premise was that happiness is acquired through self-development and not by the 'suppressing' religious lifestyle. Recognizing the serious mistake and seeing the potential danger, Reb Yoel Kahn called for a gathering to address basic *Chassidic* values.

Notices were posted throughout the streets and shuls and a car drove through Crown Heights announcing the details. From 8:15, hundreds streamed through the doors of Oholei Torah to get a seat. By the time the program began, every seat was taken and hundreds more stood at the perimeter of the room.

The dais was graced by the most prominent Rabbonim, Mashpiyim and Roshei Yeshiva from across the spectrum, including HaRav Yosef Heller, who in-principle does not attend public community events, HaRav Shlomo Segal, HaRav Zusha Winner, Reb Pinyeh Korf and others.

Reb Yoel Kahn spoke first in Yiddish, elucidating the nature of *avodas Hashem* in our times. He explained at length how every mitzvah, even when done without any felt emotion, is an expression of a Jew's essential bond with Hashem. He emphasized that *Chassidus* is a practical guide to life for every *Yid* and must not be elevated to be a lofty discipline reserved for great *Chassidim*.

The emcee, Rabbi Aharon Ginsburg, director of Chabad of Boro Park and the Gan Yisroel schools, gave an English summary of Reb Yoel's words and elaborated upon them.

HaRav Ezra Schochet, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshiva Ohr Elchonon Chabad in Los Angeles, CA, spoke passionately about the challenges and frustrations of an *oved Hashem*. Every person is destined to have ups and downs, but he cannot let the failures him over and define who he is. By rejoicing in our connection with Hashem, he will attain true happiness.

After HaRav Schochet finished speaking, Reb Yoel asked to add a few words. He added some points and clarified that no one should "graze in foreign pastures" and participate in any 'self-help' programs. Resolutions of the evening included the establishment of new *shiurim* in *Chassidus*, *chavrusos* and *farbrengens*.

All participants were greatly inspired by the gathering. As one put it, "The whole confusion was worth it for such a gathering of Rabbonim, Mashpiyim and Anash for a pure holy cause."





# The Path to Spiritual Fulfillment and Happiness

In his speech, Reb Yoel Kahn spoke out against the perception that people might be able to more easily find spiritual fulfillment through sources other than Chassidus. Drawing a sharp distinction between the worldly approach to happiness and the Chassidic approach to happiness, Reb Yoel argued that we have to realize that at its heart Chassidus carries a very practical message. Hashem has given us the privilege of an unbreakable connection with Him, and it is only by embracing that relationship and subjugating ourselves to Hashem's will that we can reach ultimate fulfillment and happiness. The following article is adapted from the full transcript of Reb Yoel's speech.

Translated and adapted by R. Eli Rubin

## ■ THE WORLDLY PERSPECTIVE VS. THE TORAH PERSPECTIVE ■

There is a distinction between the way many concepts are perceived by the general world and the way they are understood from the perspective of Torah and Chassidus. The same applies to the search for meaning and happiness. When a person is lacking some kind of vitality, is not internally happy, what can be done that he should become happy? From the worldly perspective, the answer is that he should become free; that he should have no yoke upon him. So long as he has a yoke he is limited thereby; it constrains him.

But Chassidus looks at it differently. There is a letter penned by the Rebbe on the 17th of Elul 5710 (1950); a Jew had complained about various things,

concluding that he "cannot find satisfaction," and that "he feels that he is missing something." In reply the Rebbe wrote: "In my opinion, what he is missing is acceptance of the yoke (*kabbalas ol*)." This is exactly the opposite of the worldly outlook.

...

## ■ THE JOY IN BEING FORCED ■

There is *maamar* from the Rebbe (Roni Ve'simchi Bas Tzion, Sivan 27th 5727, printed in Sefer Maamarim Melukut Vol. 4), where he explains why Hashem "turned the mountain above their heads like a barrel" before giving the Jewish people the Torah. Hashem forced them to accept the Torah. Everyone asks the obvious question; the Jewish

people wanted to accept the Torah of their own volition, they had already said *naaseh v'nishma* “we will do and we will listen.” Why then did Hashem have to force them?

The Rebbe’s explanation is founded upon a teaching of the Baal Shem Tov and the Rebbe elucidates it with great depth. But simply speaking, when the time comes that a Jew does not want to accept the yoke of *mitzvos*, this is when the power of the overturned mountain has its effect; something compels him and forces him so that even when he no longer wants it, he cannot tear himself away.

Accordingly, there can be three general ways in which a Jew learns Torah and fulfills *mitzvos*:

One way is that he enjoys it, he is a religious Jew, a Chossid, and he enjoys it. He learns a piece of Gemara and enjoys it, he does a *mitzva* and enjoys it, and so on.

A second Jew has no particular desire, he doesn’t enjoy it, but accepts the yoke of Heaven. He knows he has a yoke upon him and he does want to be a pious Jew. He does accept the yoke, but it remains a yoke, a burden from which he doesn’t derive any pleasure. The only motivation is his acceptance of the yoke of Heaven.

A third person, doesn’t even want to accept the yoke of Heaven. He wants to abandon it, but there

is something that prevents him from doing so. What is that prevents him? That turning over of the mountain. Hashem transmitted something of such potency that the individual cannot tear himself away. Practically speaking, this is expressed in different ways, either because of something his father has said, or that his grandfather said, or that his childhood teacher said. But this is only the technical medium. What is it really? It is the effect of Hashem turning the mountain above their heads like a barrel.

Now, let’s think about these three types of Jews; one enjoys Torah and *mitzvos*, another has no enjoyment but accepts the yoke, the third doesn’t even accept the yoke, but cannot bring himself to abandon it, something prevents him. When is happiness possible? How can one’s study of Torah and fulfillment of *mitzvos* be permeated with happiness? For the first person it is understood, he has an outright pleasure from learning, whether from studying a page of Gemara or from learning a *maamar*. Likewise he enjoys fulfilling *mitzvos*, he fulfills *mitzvos* in the most beautiful way, and with enthusiasm. The second person only accepts the yoke; seemingly there is no enjoyment here.

But Torah tells that it is not so. In the Beis Hamikdash there was the pouring of the wine and the pouring of water (*nisuch ha’yayin* and *nisuch ha’mayim*); wine has an enjoyable taste, water does



---

not. Similarly, when a person understands what he is doing he enjoys it, but water has no taste and is likened to a person who simply accepts the yoke. But the Gemara says that true joy was experienced when the water was poured, “one who did not see the happiness... never saw happiness in his life.” Elsewhere wine too is described as causing happiness, but in comparison to the happiness of water this is not happiness. True happiness was experienced specifically when the water was poured. This is very strange; when a person knows and understands we say that he doesn’t achieve true happiness, but by simply accepting the yoke he finds happiness.

When we come to the third type this goes even further. Here the individual doesn’t even accept the yoke; is happiness possible even for this person? The Rebbe says yes. A very strange thing. When a Jew says *ubanu bacharta mikol am v’lashon*, “you have chosen us from all the nations,” that Hashem has forged such a relationship with us that even if we want to abandon Him we cannot, this is the greatest possible joy. Such a deep relationship! Such a deep connection that he cannot tear himself away even if he wants to. This joy, which derives from the recognition that he is so strongly connected that he can’t tear himself away, is even greater than the happiness that is derived from simple acceptance of the yoke. He rejoices that he is so strongly bound with Hashem.

This expresses a very different vision of how a person achieves happiness.

---

■ ■ ■

### ■ A JEW'S SOURCES OF JOY ■

Let’s return to what the Rebbe wrote in that letter. The individual complained that he is dissatisfied, that he feels he is missing something.

---

*When a person is lacking some kind of vitality, is not internally happy, what can be done that he should become happy? From the worldly perspective, the answer is that he should become free...*

---

The first thing the Rebbe writes in reply is that “what he is missing is acceptance of the yoke,” and that “this is the foundation and root of all service.” Then the Rebbe continues to explain how one brings oneself to accept the yoke, that this is simple, that one doesn’t need to achieve lofty levels; simply, as it says in Tanya, to contemplate how Hashem “views and looks and searches the interior of each individual...” Then the Rebbe continues further, “In order to make this work easier for him, Hashem gave him the merit that he is a *chossid*, which means that his soul is a part of the general soul of the *tzaddik*, and if the individual soul is missing something, through the correct connection he can draw whatever he is lacking from the general soul...” The Rebbe continues to

write at length, discussing many foundational ideas, that a *mitzvah* is a means to connect to Hashem, etc.

...

### ■ THE PLACE OF PROFESSIONAL HELP ■

There clearly are situations when a person is unhappy, when he does indeed need to see a medical professional. But to make it into some kind of movement requiring everyone to seek medical help, is obviously a very strange idea. It doesn’t stand up, neither according to Torah, nor according to human reason. It is clearly understood that someone who is ailing must go to a medical professional. Even in a situation where one does need help, one has to know which doctor to go to and on what kind of basis; there are many things that need to be considered. And no doctor, not even a good doctor, can make a person happy. If an individual is missing something, no other person has the ability to replace that which is missing. Certainly, as the Rebbe writes in the letter, Hashem sustains everyone and will fill everything with

good. But when a person is missing something, the question is what is the address to which you should turn for fulfillment? There is no reason to start looking elsewhere. The address is right here.

...

#### ■ CHASSIDUS IS NOT A "LOFTY IDEA" ■

Sometimes we try to convince ourselves that "Hashem's glory is upon the heavens." We want to exalt Hashem, saying that he transcends even the heavens, but does he also have a connection with simple people? Is he present down on this earth? Chassidus, we argue, is a very lofty discipline. Certainly, we must learn Chassidus, but we study it as another subject. "I am just a simple person, with a coarse animal soul; I am not especially refined. So what connection does it have to me?" This is a mistake. We argue that everything taught in Chassidus is not sufficiently tangible. Of course there are lofty ideas, but the ideas expressed in the Rebbe's letter are very simple.

A Jew must simply reflect on the fact that we have a Rebbe, that the events of Gimmel Tammuz did not change anything, and the Rebbe gives us attention just he did previously. This is a fact, and it is meant in the most simple sense. This is not something that we're just saying to comfort ourselves. This is the fact. What it says in Tanya, that *tzaddikim* are more present following their passing than they were in their lifetimes, is a fact. This refers to *tzaddikim* in general, and especially when we are discussing a shepherd of Israel, "shepherds of Israel do not abandon the sheep of their flock." The Rebbe used that phrase regarding the Rebbe Rashab. But in this case it is even more intense; the Rebbe Rashab left behind a son, and the Friediker Rebbe left behind a son-in-law, but in our situation we only have the Rebbe just as it was before.

If somebody is searching, if somebody is in such a situation that he needs to pour out his heart to somebody; where can he pour out his heart? Where can he cry his heart out? Apart from the fact that he can go to the Ohel and ask for a blessing, which is a whole different concept; we are talking about the need to express what is in one's heart. The only Jew -- not a Jew in the supernal realms, but in this world, "found in all realms more than in his lifetime" -- to whom he can cry out to and speak his heart to is the Rebbe. Talking from a psychological perspective, there is a need to pour out what is in one's heart, but not everything can be said to just anyone, some things can only be said to a very strong and close friend. This is a very practical thing. When we exalt these notions, arguing that this is a heavenly thing or some kind of spiritual thing, we are making a big mistake.

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#### ■ CHASSIDUS MAKES YOU GREAT ■

Another thing mentioned in this letter, is the special opportunity that this individual has as a Shliach of the Rebbe. We are all Shluchim of the Rebbe. There are those who are specially designated as Shluchim, but we are all Shluchim. In the very first discourse that the Rebbe said in 5711 (1951) he stated that we are now in the Seventh Generation whose purpose is to draw down the essence of the Divine Presence. It is for this that all the generations have waited, it is for this that the Torah was given, for this the *mishkan* and *Beis Hamikdash* were built, for this Chassidus was revealed, for this Chabad Chassidus was revealed. All of this for what? For the individuals of this generation.

Somebody said to me that the reason one might search for meaning in one place or another is because there they uplift the individual. Nothing uplifts an individual like Chassidus. Accepting the yoke of Heaven doesn't mean that you are

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*This joy, which derives from the recognition that he is so strongly connected that he can't tear himself away, is even greater than the happiness that is derived from simple acceptance of the yoke.*

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■ ■ ■

a nothing. On the contrary! Chassidus tells a person how great he is, that Hashem has given you unparalleled ability and an unparalleled responsibility. This is all clear. But to achieve happiness you need to have the right perspective. As the Rebbe writes again at the end of this letter, "abandon the excessive complaints... subject your will to the will of our Rebbe who has transmitted to you the will of Hashem..." The emphasis here is again subjugation of the self and acceptance of the yoke of Heaven. Why does the Rebbe continually emphasize subjugation? A person complains that he cannot find satisfaction and the Rebbe's answer in subjugation!

But that is exactly the point. When a Jew says "you have chosen us from all the nations," when he praises Hashem that he is so strongly bound up with Him that even if he wants to he can not tear himself away, he is not complaining. He doesn't pity himself saying, "Woe! What should I do that Hashem has chosen me..." A Jew sings *ata bechartanu* "you

have chosen us" with happiness and with a melody. On the contrary! Despondence is the very opposite of this chosenness. It is imperative that we not see this as some kind of heavenly or abstract idea. This is the fact, the practical reality.

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■ GIVE THE INCANTATION A CHANCE! ■

There is a humorous anecdote told in the name of Reb Itche der Masmid, that there was once a nobleman's estate and he had dogs, very big dogs, so that it was impossible to pass through there. If you has to pass through you would travel with a very high wagon, which was too high for the dogs to jump up on. Two Jews were passing through one on such a wagon and one by foot. The one with the wagon told the other to join him on the wagon to protect himself from the dogs. But he said "No, I'm

## THE KEY TO JOY

### The letter quoted in the article

17 Elul, 5710 [1950]

In response to your letter from the 28<sup>th</sup> of Av in which you describe your situation and quote what my father-in-law, the Rebbe HK"M, wrote to you that you should organize shiurim in your home and endeavor to increase the number of participants in the learning. You also write to me that you were active in making children's gathering and *mesibos Shabbos*, sometimes during the week as well, that now as well you have *shiurim* in learning, but that you do not have satisfaction from this and you feel that you are 'lacking something,' and you ask my opinion on the matter.

In my opinion, what you are lacking is *kabalas ol*, which is the basis and foundation of all service. To acquire *kabalas ol* there is no need for a special in-depth *hisbonenus*. You must only imagine how the King of kings, Hashem, created the world, and then "blew a spirit of life into his nostrils," which is your *neshama* that enlivens your body, and Hashem stands above you and watches, and He checks your heart and inner being, your actions and words, and he counts all your steps (Tanya *perek* 42).

In order to ease this avoda, Hashem has given you the *zechus* that you are a *chossid*, meaning that your *neshama* is a part of the General *Neshama* of the *tzaddik*, and if something is lacking in the individual *neshama*, then through a proper connection [to the *tzaddik*] all that you are lacking is drawn to you from the General *Neshama*. The [Frierdiker] Rebbe said clearly that when he accepted upon himself the *nesius*, he stipulated that it be "with kindness and compassion." Since then, from 5680 until now, he 'stands

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*Abandon the excessive complaints of self feeling, what you are lacking and what you have..*

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not afraid.”

“Why are you not afraid?”

“I have an incantation, and as soon as I repeat this incantation the dogs will disappear.”

The Jew on the wagon wasn't so impressed by this, so he drove very slowly so that if anything happened the other Jew would be able to climb aboard. Soon enough, the Jew on foot shouted for help and jumped on the wagon. Afterwards the wagon driver asked him what happened to his incantation.

“My incantation?” he said, “My incantation is a sure thing. There's nothing to talk about! But the dogs didn't even give me a chance to say it.”

Chassidus is a conducive remedy for everything, but sometimes the dog doesn't let you use the incantation. Sometimes the dog says that the books

should remain on the shelf, that we shouldn't learn them; but sometimes the argument is more subtle. “On the contrary, learn it, but in practice it is not effective. It's a spiritual thing, but you are a coarse person. You, you need to search elsewhere; search for things that are lower and more tangible.”

...

### ■ "FOR A JEW, TRUE BEING IS NON-BEING" ■

Earlier we explained that there are two perspectives on how to look at a person who feels dissatisfied, and two way to look at the way forward. There is a worldly perspective, and a Torah perspective -- a Chassidic perspective. The worldly way is to decrease the yoke as much as possible; one wants to become free. They tell you you're a great person, don't worry about others,

and serves,' and he draws down upon his students, *chassidim* and those connected to him, power and enthusiasm in the service of Hashem, which includes both matters that are between man and Hashem and matters that are between man and his fellow.

In addition to the above, the Rebbe has personally chosen you and placed upon you a special *shlichus*, and it is known even according to *nigleh* that "the messenger of a person is like the person himself." It is therefore understood that for this *shlichus* the Rebbe gives you from his powers. And as explained in the *ma'amar* for Chai Elul this year, that the word *mitzva* means an attachment and connection, and as is explained there at length with a *mashal*, that when a person fulfills the commandment of a wise man or king, then even if he doesn't understand the meaning of the matter and doesn't comprehend its greatness, his joy is nevertheless limitless, since he thereby connects and becomes united with the essence of the wise man and the king.

Now, despite the fact that you have all of the above, you still complain that you have no satisfaction and do not feel enthusiasm, and you only feel that you are 'lacking something.'

If you will listen to my voice, you should abandon the excessive complaints of self feeling - what you are lacking and what you have - and you should consider the good portion that was given to you that you are amongst the students and the *mekusharim* of our *nasi*, my father-in-law, the Rebbe HK" M, and you should rejoice with great joy over this lot, and you should draw down the joy in practical activities to carry out the will of his sender, for which you were given powers and are only lacking the willpower. And when you will disregard your will in favor of the will of our *nasi*, who has given over to you the will of Hashem, then this alone will be the vessel through which you will receive enthusiasm in all of your activities of carrying out the will of my father-in-law, the Rebbe HK" M.

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be yourself. But what does this come to? What is the measure of this person's self? It can be nothing more than what it is. But the less yoke, they claim, the more the self is helped.

But then, as I mentioned earlier, there is a different perspective. There was a Jew who complained that he did not have satisfaction, and the first thing the Rebbe says is accept the yoke. That's the first thing. But then this goes even further, there is the concept of Hashem turning the mountain over them, that even when one no longer wants it, the relationship with Hashem cannot be broken. And it is from this relationship that true happiness is derived.

The Rebbe once said something, not exactly about this, but nevertheless a relevant statement, "For a Jew, true being is non-being." This is the difference; for a regular person his being is nothing more than his being, therefore if you subdue him and place a yoke on him it is a negative imposition on his sense of self; it constrains him. But for a Jew exactly the opposite is true; his being is his relationship with Hashem, expressed through subjugation to Hashem's will.

Who communicates this and reveals it? Torah and Judaism in general, and especially the teachings of Chassidus. This is the notion behind *naaseh v'nishma* "we will do and we will listen" and even more so "he turned the mountain over them like a barrel." Accordingly, when does a Jew achieve true happiness? The more that he is touch with his Divine soul. And what is the Divine soul? Acceptance of the yoke of heaven. Moreover, a Jew says "you have chosen us" not with self pity, but on the contrary, with joy!

In the *maamar* that we mentioned earlier, Roni V'esimchi, the Rebbe asks how we can achieve happiness even when the relationship is only because Hashem turned the mountain over us? The Rebbe answers that this is through our relationship

with the Rebbeim, our relationship with the Rebbe.

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*There clearly  
are situations  
when a person is  
unhappy, when he  
does indeed need  
to see a medical  
professional.  
But to make it  
into some kind  
of movement  
requiring everyone  
to seek medical  
help, is obviously a  
very strange idea.*

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■ **TORAH LIFE BREEDS A  
TRANQUIL SOUL** ■

Since people are searching, and searching itself is a very desirable thing, we must know where to go, where to look and where to find it. In simple language; we have no reason to enter 'foreign gardens.' If somebody did enter 'foreign gardens,' what has passed has passed, it shouldn't be repeated.

There are tens of letters of the Rebbe, if not hundreds, where Jews asked how to find tranquility in their souls, and the Rebbe answered that there is only one way -- one must conduct oneself in accordance with the directives of Torah. That's it. Conducting oneself in accordance with the directives of Torah is the path to a tranquil soul. This applies especially to Chassidim. But the evil inclination clamors in your head and tries to confuse you, and presents a clever argument that "on the contrary, Chassidus is a very lofty discipline."

The more *shiurim* established, the better. Likewise, the more *chassidische farbrengens*, the better. And at a *chassidische farbrengen* we must talk to the point. Not to speak nonsense or about irrelevant matters, but to explain that Chassidus is practically effective and relevant. That all things were for the purpose of this generation, that Hashem chose us and gave us the greatest abilities, and that from this we should derive happiness. Certainly this may take work, and we must work. If you are searching for a path in life, our path is the path of life that the Rebbe gave us. We must continue to follow with even greater strength. We will walk in the Rebbe's ways for ever and for eternity; till the coming of Moshiach and certainly afterwards.



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HaRav Ezra Schochet



# Living for a Higher Purpose

## ■ WHEN THINGS DON'T MAKE SENSE ■

At the end of *parshas Shmos*, Moshe Rabbeinu asks Hashem, “*lama hare'osa la'am hazeh.*” Simply, Moshe was sent with the *shlichus* to bring the imminent *geulah* and take the *Yidden* out of *Mitzrayim*. He was well received and the *Yidden* believed him. To his dismay, not only did the *geulah* not become reality, *golus* became far worse with newly enacted Egyptian decrees. Worst of all, the heavily multiplied suffering was blamed on Moshe Rabbeinu, as it was his conversation that angered *Paroh*.

Moshe Rabbeinu turned to Hashem with a simple but pressing question. How could a *shlichus* from Hashem Himself through Moshe result in such a *chilul Hashem*?! If the *golus* was going to become worse before the *geulah* would happen, claimed Moshe, do it before he arrives on the scene – that way the *chilul Hashem* would be avoided.

What does Hashem answer him? *Ato sireh*, “now you will see.” Hashem shows how worsening the *golus* qualitatively would shorten the length of the *golus*. But to the *chilul Hashem*, it doesn't seem that an answer was given.

## ■ ACCESSING THE ESSENCE ■

We usually assume that there is a level of understanding to be found in everything that

happens. Hashem can do whatever He wants, and everything will happen in exactly the way it's meant to happen, but we can find some understanding.

In contrast, *Golus Mitzrayim* is a preparation for *Matan Torah* – the revelation of “*anochi Hashem elokecha*,” Hashem Himself. *Matan Torah* revealed the levels of “*Shmi Hashem*,” which even the *Avos* didn't fully reach, *Atzmus ein sof boruch hu, nimna hanimnaos*, the innermost essence of Hashem. There is no description or definition of such a revelation; nothing for human understanding to grasp. It was a moment and revelation that was uniquely and exclusively G-dly.

There are ongoing moments of pure *Elokus*, impossibilities which human beings cannot begin to fathom. The Rebbe once said that today's incomprehensible reality is the continued existence of the world despite the endless unanswered questions. Hashem has a plan despite blatant human lack of understanding as to what Hashem wants and how He does it. Sometimes, reality is the opposite of the way it was ‘meant to be,’ and we are full of frustration!

Moshe Rabbeinu himself had a question! True, Moshe attained a pure level of connection to Hashem, in which all is clear and smooth, in which there were no questions, but he saw the *Yidden's* frustrations, and posed the question to Hashem to allow them to share in his lofty level. Moshe

brought the unwavering connection into *emunah* - even when there are questions, there is *emunah*. Even when there's frustration; it doesn't change the facts!

### ■ WHY THE STRUGGLE? ■

The question of Moshe resonates as every person experiences the ultimate frustration and the ultimate question. Even the Beinoni of Tanya questions, "I reached a tremendous love of and connection to Hashem during *davening*. My *nefesh habahamis* was obliterated. I felt the sweetness of *Elokus*, and *dveikus* and unity with Hashem. After hard work I had a moment of ultimate elation.

"And then, *davening* finished and he's back. Again I have a *taivah*." He cries, "*Lamah asah hashem kazos!? Why, Hashem?!*"

It's the ultimate frustration.

After working and fighting and doing everything right, when no thought, speech or action fell through the cracks, instead of feeling evermore connected to Hashem, the *yetzer hara* presents a full array of temptations and lusts. It might have even been a month-long high, but then all at once there is a steep fall.

The Moshe Rabbeinu within, cries, like Moshe Rabbeinu himself cried, 'I went on Your *shlichus* and believed Your promise of a personal *geulah*, but the struggle only got worse!'

### ■ IT'S NOT ABOUT US! ■

There is one basis: "*Ani lo nivreisi ela l'shamesh es koni*," I was not created for any other reason than to serve my Master." The *shlichus* of life is to carry out Hashem's wishes and plans, period. Self-improvement, although necessary and demanded, is not the only fulfillment of this *shlichus*.

Understandably, Man and G-d are infinitely different. Man seeks personal growth and spiritual gain. G-d's path means suspending the self for a higher cause. Following the whims of man means drifting from the vision of G-d.

Frustration from unmet goals comes when the human perspective and interests are fused with Hashem's perspective and interests. From man's perspective the formula in working for G-d should result in achieving self-set goals. However, in *bitachon* and trust, the unmet goals are part of the *shlichus* from Hashem. They are part of the plan, and by no means should result in frustration. Without understanding how or why, these constant attempts and struggles give tremendous *nachas* to Hashem!

### ■ THE GREATER NACHAS ■

There are two types of *nachas ruach* for Hashem, that of the *tzaddik* (of Tanya), and that of the rest of us. The *tzaddik* gives pleasure to Hashem through transforming darkness to light, the process known as *Is'hapcha*. Being subtly freed from the

mantle of the material world, the *tzaddik* can bring transformation. The other *nachas ruach* is from people who are influenced by the material world, constantly stormed by the *yetzer hara*, by problems and darkness. Through the process of *Iskafya*, overcoming the challenge and persevering to do what Hashem wants, a unique *nachas* is given to Hashem. In fact, this *nachas* sometimes outweighs the *nachas* from a *tzaddik*.

In the words of *Chassidus*, there are two dimensions of the *Yid*, "*Bni Bechori Yisroel*" and "*Ki na'ar Yisroel v'ohaveihu*." (The first born son *Yisroel*, and the young beloved *Yisroel*). First there is the 'first born son,' the pride and strength of the father. This represents the attributes developed through the service of Hashem, those qualities that can be seen and appreciated. Then there is

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turned to Hashem  
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pressing question.  
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■ ■ ■

the 'young son,' a child too young to have developed aptitude and talents. The 'young son' represents the powers hidden within the soul of the *Yid* that remain untapped and unexplored.

The Rebbe points how the *posuk* attests to a special love of the 'beloved young son.' In the undeveloped uncelebrated part of the *Yid*, there is the *ahava atzmis*, the essential love of Hashem. The child has no redeeming qualities of intelligence, emotions, or good deeds, other than that of being a *Yid*. Hashem loves the *Yid*, wants the *Yid*, and gives every *Yid* an opportunity to connect to the innermost of Hashem! Talents don't impress Hashem. Sincerity, commitment, and earnest effort draw Hashem's love.

So, what's the answer to the frustrations? The feeling is misplaced. Hashem has *nachas ruach* from the work and effort, not only from the ultimate accomplishment or success; that's why He created

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■ ■ ■

man. Frustration comes from **human** perspective. But, there's something much higher: Hashem's perspective, and then it's "*nachas ruach le'fanai, she'amarti vnaaseh retzoni*," a pleasure to Hashem that His will was fulfilled.

■ FOLLOW YOUR PATH ■

On a personal note: When I was a young boy of 13 or 14, one Purim in an uplifted state of mind, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe spelling out my struggles, beginning to end, including my *ruchniyus'dik* problems, *yeridos*, and *nsiyonos* as a teenager. Then I wrote how the Alter Rebbe began writing his *Shulchan Aruch* at age 18, the Shev Shmaatsa wrote his *sefer* at age 18, at age 13 R' Meshulam Igra delivered a *drasha* that amazed the great *rabbonim*, etc., etc... I asked the Rebbe, that even if I learn all day I can't do that, so what is my learning worth?!

The Rebbe's answered, "Regarding all the problems that you write... Surely you have a Tanya, where you will find answers for all your questions, and certainly you have a Tanya with the index,



which will make the search easier.

“[Regarding the question of the value of your learning,] I wonder about your whole approach, since the goal of a person is not to outlearn or to become greater than another. Rather, like the Mishna attests, ‘I was created to serve my Master.’ And if Hashem wants that one person be great in the *mitzvah* of *tzedaka*, and another one in Torah, etc., then each person must carry out the purpose for which he is appointed.

“It’s self-understood, that this is only talking about achieving excellence, but all Jews are obligated in all 613 *mitzvos*, and Talmud Torah *k’neged kulam*.”

The Rebbe did not elaborate on the everyday struggles. He simply referred to Tanya. The body of the letter is about the appropriate attitude, that “I was created to serve my Master,” and not to reach great heights.

## ■ DEALING WITH FAILURES ■

Interestingly, from these teachings of *Chassidus*, there is a unique way to find joy and pleasure in our *shlichus*, albeit not a self-serving satisfaction. But first to preface:

The beginning of Tanya, the platform for the *sefer*, presents a contradiction: The Gemara in *Niddah* says, “Even if the whole world tells you that you are a *tzaddik*, regard yourself as if you were a *rasha*,” and contradicts the Mishna in *Avos* that says, “Do not be a *rasha* in your own estimation.” Should one see himself or herself as a *rasha* or not? Both options seem troublesome. Seeing oneself as a *rasha* will lead to depression, and accordingly faltering in serving Hashem joyously. On the flip side, not seeing oneself as a *rasha*, and not being

pained by the slips and falls, is a far bigger problem that leads down a slippery slope of becoming lax about the *shlichus* of life, namely Torah and *mitzvos*.

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■ ■ ■

*“I reached a tremendous love of and connection to Hashem during davening ... And then, davening finished and he’s back. Again I have a taivah.” He cries, “Lamah asah hashem kazos!? Why, Hashem?!” It’s the ultimate frustration.*

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[Both options seem terrible. Serving with no joy, or become lax in service. Yet only about becoming lax does Tanya say, ‘*chas veshalom*.’ Despite the importance of joy in Divine service, becoming lax is far worse. In one letter, the Rebbe, renowned for avoiding negative titles or terms (like saying ‘opposite of life,’ instead of ‘death’), referred to the proponents of the “don’t worry, feel good, and indulge” attitude, as ‘*rofei elilim*’, which can only be translated as witchdoctors...]

Tanya leaves a burning question of how to view oneself. Isolating weakness will lead to strained joy and a lacking of wholeheartedness. Shrugging it off will just get worse. What’s

the solution?

## ■ WHO AM I? ■

Previously understood in a superficial sense, as a middle marker on the scale of weighing one’s deeds, the Alter Rebbe uses this contradiction to present the objective definition of the Beinoni. Tanya highlights that a Beinoni describes a person of inner struggles, who continuously rises to the challenge and overcomes darkness in the face of light; always prevails with the appropriate and holy thought, speech, and action. A *tzadik* accomplishes this with relative ease, a *beinoni* lives the same life, but only through a continual battle. In fact, just like Hashem derives *nachas* from the *tzaddik*, so too, and in a certain sense even more, does Hashem derive *nachas* from the battles of the *beinoni*.

That’s the work of life! That’s the meaning of a *beinoni*! Thoughts and passions come up, and are

fought away. So what is there to be sad about? It's a joy to fulfil the *shlichus* in this world: To have darkness, wants, and uncertainties, and overcome them.

For those not at the level of *beinoni*, the finding joy is far more daunting, since successfully overcoming darkness may seem like a futile end for which to strive, as Tanya itself attests, "if only [to be a *beinoni*] for one single moment." Frustration continuously builds as the need to succeed always seems unmet. Once upon a time, Chassidim, after appreciating the greatness of a *beinoni* would wish upon themselves "*halevai beinoni*." Nowadays, we at times have to say "*haelvai rasha v'tov lo*," that we should at least regret and do *teshuvah* over wrongdoings. So for us, the second question in the beginning of Tanya screams out, "If I really care about my lack of service to Hashem how will I be able to have joy and happiness about myself, if I don't care it will be even worse, I might *ch"v* become lax in doing what I have to do?!"

The Rebbe points out that the answer to this question is found in chapters 31 and 33 where the Alter Rebbe explains that the body and *neshama* are separate realities and staunch opposites. The body and *nefesh habehamis* are plenty cause for sadness. The Divine soul is unchangeably a *chelek eloka mimaal mamosh*, a literal piece of Hashem, and is a source of unbounded joy.

#### ▪ DON'T BE FOOLED! ▪

The effort of the *nefesh habahamis* is to bring us to disassociate ourselves with the G-dly self, and give up hope of identifying with the *cheleck eloka*. It pushes us to settle and be satisfied with the animalistic tendencies. It says, 'be yourself.'

The battle is to prevent the *yetzer hara* and

*nefesh habahamis* from defining one's identity. The *nefesh habahamis* is indeed real, but the objective is to overcome it, not embrace and dwell upon it. Without distinction, everybody's *nefesh haelokis* is "faithful to Hashem," even if it is not part of the conscious self. Even the most lax person, a *kal sheb'kalim* [that even the *kalim* call him a *kal* on their standards], that seems to be completely 'gone,' will still, in the majority of cases, give up his or her life on *kiddush Hashem*!

In the words of Tanya, "don't mix the joy of the soul with the sadness of the body." Despite the weaknesses and hang-ups, each small victory, and even the struggle that may not end successfully brings "*nachas ruach*" to the Hashem. And that's meant to bring the person tremendous *simcha*!

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infinitely different.  
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G-d's path means  
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The seeking of personal satisfaction and personal perfection is the cause of the open ends. The satisfaction of major accomplishments is a long shot away from one who lives a life of constant uphill struggles. For such a person, it is critical to come to the realization that "I didn't create myself" (Tanya ch. 31) and that the same Creator who created the *nefesh hoelokis* also created the *nefesh habahamis*. He wants good in the world. He created bad and prescribed overcoming struggles as the catalyst to transforming the world into a *dirah b'tachtonim*. Had Hashem wanted, it would have been different. The struggles, and even the failures, are part of the Divine plan and are a source for Divine pleasure.

The value of the struggle goes way beyond human comprehension, and is exactly where *Chassidus* offers a profound light. Hashem sets aside all the higher and lower realms, and anxiously watches every single thought, speech, and action, because each moment of rising beyond the *yetzer hara* and human limitations is precious

to Him. The one living a life of struggles, always an arm-reach away from being a *beinoni*, merited the opportunity bring Hashem a truly unique *nachas ruach*.

▪ SURRENDERING  
AUTONOMY ▪

There's a drive in man that wants to seek out other solutions. "If there is an easy way to rid personal suffering and challenge, so why not?" While there may be seemingly useful guidance available from outside of the books of Torah and *Chassidus*, there is an essential difference between the two. In fact, this very difference stirs the thirst to search out those new-age solutions of psychology and self-help.

By way of example: Anger. In *Yiddishkeit*, there is no room for feeling anger towards another. Since everything

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Hashem's love.*

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in the world happens solely because of Hashem, the person takes no real fault. The person causing the anger is merely a through-passage for the handiwork of Hashem, selected for the task because of the person's bad choice. The delivered blow, be it physical or otherwise, was, however, from Hashem. Getting angry at the aggressor is pinning the events on the human, which is a misperception of the truth, and therefore it is considered as worshipping idolatry.

Psychology and self-help coaches, on the other hand, teach to respond to anger with an analysis of the trigger; is there real reason for anger, or is the emotional response unjustified and snowballed from other events. This school of thought argues that everyone has rights, including the right to get angry. It teaches to become aware of the cause of the anger in order to better control a misplaced



anger. Anger, though, remains acceptable should it be justified.

*Chassidus* teaches to let go of the 'I' completely. This can be quite scary. One's entire identity, power, and satisfaction, is built on what 'I' feel, what 'I' am, my rights, and my individuality.

"Practicality", "being real," or similar terms, deny the whole basis and foundation of *Chassidus*. It denies that the individual essence's is a *shlichus* from Hashem, and the ultimate level to reach is to do something for the Creator. While psychology focuses on the accomplishment and the advancement of self, *Chassidus* brings a greater realization by suspending the corporeal identity and identifying not as an 'I', but as a piece of Hashem; the real 'I'.

#### ■ THE FOUNDATION OF CHASSIDUS: HASHEM'S UNITY ■

A basis of *Chassidus* is the concept of "*achdus Hashem*," *Ein Oid Milvado*, there is nothing other than Him. While there is undoubtedly a world, "*breishis bara Elokim*," it poses no challenge to the concept, it is merely a part of Hashem's plan, and He's not separated from it. From this is born the concept of *hashgocha protis*, nothing happens without Hashem wanting it to. Even the result of spiritual downfalls are *hashgocha protis*, to bring to an even higher *madreiga* thereafter! (The choice between right and wrong was the person's. The result of the choice comes from Hashem, and could have come about in one of infinite different ways).

The attitude of wanting to follow feelings, wanting to be "real," and wanting to become something big, is the absolute opposite of *Ein Oid Milvado* and of *hashgocha protis*! It's a total contradiction to what *Chassidus* came to teach the world, that "*tzimtzum*

*shelo kipshuto*," the world is not a separate entity from Hashem.

Hashem created the world for a purpose, one that includes *klipos* and *sitra achra*, as the famous *mashal* from Zohar, which is also brought in Tanya. The worldly notion that opposes *bittul* contradicts the true purpose and function of the world. The world is a means to an end, but the false notion gets caught up with the means and disregards the end!

*Bittul* is the ultimate existence because it penetrates the world's shortsightedness and infuses every iota of life with its ultimate purpose and value. It's the only true existence because it is connected to Hashem! Everything else serves a particular function.

The challenges, obstacles and darkness are not a contradiction to total *emunah* that everything comes from Hashem and that everything has a purpose, although it cannot be understood. In fact, the Rebbe said with bitter tears, when speaking about the Holocaust that he **doesn't want** to understand it...! It should

be totally illogical and not be brought down into human understanding...!

#### ■ THE JOY OF A CHILD ■

The Rebbe instituted twelve *pesukim* and *maamarei chazal* for children to know, and moreover to live with. They contain the most basic and foundational concepts of Torah, accessible even for children, and are broken down into two sets of 6, each set comprised of two passages from Torah She'biksav, two from Torah Sheba'al Peh, and two from Tanya.

The twelfth passage of "*Yismach Yisroel*" deals with *simcha*. Selected by the Rebbe from many

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*The Rebbe did not elaborate on the everyday struggles. He simply referred to Tanya. The body of the letter is about the appropriate attitude, that "I was created to serve my Master," and not to reach great heights.*

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■ ■ ■

possible references in Tanya, this passage contains a powerful message. “Anyone who is a descendent of the people of Israel, [even if the only redeeming factor is being born a Yid,] has to rejoice with the joy of Hashem!” Our young children are taught that joy comes not from things or achievements or feelings, not from candy, good grades, or a big pat on the shoulder, but rather, joy comes from participation in Hashem’s joy from *dirah b’tachtonim*.

Another passage is the *maamar Chazal, “Yagaati.”* “I have toiled and have not found – don’t believe. I have not toiled and I have found – don’t believe. I have toiled and have found – believe.”

It seems like a strange statement. A child can prepare for a test and get a 40, while a gifted child can study for a few minutes and get a 100. What is the meaning of, “don’t believe?” Secondly, is it a matter of believing? It seems like common sense that effort usually translates to success.

The Rebbe explains a few points from this passage. Practically speaking, effort does not always translate into success, and succeed is matter of fact, not of belief. The word *metziah* is applied to finding something unexpectedly, like stumbling on a real find. In this passage, “*matzasi*,” speaks of achieving something beyond human reach.

#### ■ BEYOND OUR UNDERSTANDING ■

Torah is not just a subject, or another wisdom, *chv’s!* For a non-Jew Torah presents superior wisdom, “*Ki hi chachmas’chem u’binaschem l’einei ha’amim*” (The Torah is your wisdom **in the eyes of the nations**), but for a *Yid* it is much more; it’s attaining an unequalled connection to Hashem. That is a real find, and far beyond human reach. This passage teaches that through effort in Torah study, one not only achieves, one reaches something beyond human reach, something that is not a matter of fact and causality, but rather is a matter of belief. Without seeing quantifiable results that satisfy the person, a connection has been made to Hashem in a level beyond understanding.

However, this achievement only comes through toil. *Kedusha* can’t come freely, and being able to feel the *shlichus* and Hashem’s *nachas ruach*,

does not come by itself. Usually, something easy to do stems from the *yetzer harah*. Even if the task involves hard work, like building a large structure, nonetheless, if it stems from the *yetzer*, the commitment to proceed is very easy. Such ease should raise big question marks. In context, the old-fashioned *Chassidische* hard work of poring over a *maamor Chassidus*, or a *sugya* in Gemara, to understand a *Tosafos*, a *machlokes rishonim*, a *svara* of *achronim*, is met with many excuses and pardons. It takes an inner strength and commitment to persevere.

“I want Moshiach Now” is often misunderstood as a wanting to live free of strife and evil, in a perfect world, but that is a dressed-up cry to get rid of the nagging personal issues; it’s not Moshiach. “I want Moshiach Now” means wanting the *shlichus* to finally be successful without the falling, failing, and frustration. Moshiach is about reaching the completeness; being able to follow through fully with the toiling that currently seems hopeless. That toiling to serve Hashem should be accomplishing, and the accomplishing toiling and work should continue.

#### ■ PRACTICAL LESSONS ■

There are several practical lessons that we must apply to our daily lives:

(1) **Live Higher** – *Chassidus* exposes the *neshama* and the connection with Hashem through Torah and *mitzvos*. The darkness of *golus* and the personal strife and confusion that accompanies it are combated and overcome through Torah and *mitzvos*. The reservoir of *kedusha* is boundless, and all its tools are given to the *Yid* to be successful on the *shlichus*. All that remains is to become engrossed in learning *Torah* and performing *mitzvos*, and all side-things will fall on the wayside.

The Rebbe taught to beat darkness by focusing on the positive. Instead of dwelling on the bad, get involved in thinking, doing, and learning; automatically the trouble disappears. Too many times, the battle shifts to fighting the bad, and R”L breaks the person leaving the feeling that ‘*Chassidus* doesn’t talk to me.’

(2) **Find the Answers** – Like the Rebbe said,

“I’m sure you have a Tanya with an index, which will for sure make it much easier to find the answers therein.” Since the Rebbe said that, there has been dozens of new publications: the *biurim* of the Rebbe on Tanya, Tanya in Yiddish, the 39 volumes of Likkutei Sichos, Toras Menachem, the Maamorim of the Rebbe, and Igros Kodesh with an index. Today, answers to every issue, small or large are at the tip of the finger; they just need to be accessed and learned.

(3) **Reach Out** – The spreading of *Chassidus* brings Moshiach, and has to start with ourselves; to learn to relate to the reality, and not the falsehoods of the luring physical world. From there, spread outwards.

The Rebbe always said, “If you know *alef* – teach *alef*, *beis* – teach *beis*.” This includes any of the *‘alef*

*beis*’ of *Chassidus* and Torah, to anybody that needs to know it, even our own. In fact, the obligation of kindness to others applies firstly to the members of one’s own community. Anyone who knows the answers, please provide them readily. Because people are looking, and there is nothing worse than them getting answers from those who do not teach with light of *Chassidus*. If you have a *sicha*, you learned something – please teach it. In fact, the Rambam rules that one who abstains from teaching is at fault for the people who go astray.

Everyone should have *hatzlacha* in their teaching, the way the Rebbe wants it, and have all the *brachos* of the Rebbe. May we merit to be true Chassidim as we’re meant to be and merit the complete *geulah* immediately.



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## THE LECTURE EVERYONE IS TALKING ABOUT

*“This lecture has transformed me. I keep the CD in my car and listen to it again and again.”*  
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# In Love with His People

There is an age-old *minhag* of reading *Shir Hashirim* on Shabbos Chol Hamoed Pesach for its connection to the exodus from *Mitzrayim*. Some have the *minhag* to recite it on the night of Pesach after the Seder, (as did the Rebbe's father, Reb Levik). While reciting it is not *minhag* Chabad, its connection to *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and the Yom Tov of Pesach undoubtedly remains.<sup>1</sup>

## ▪ TO LOVE HASHEM ▪

There is a *mitzvas asei* in the Torah, which we repeat several times daily, "*v'ahavta es Hashem elokecha,*" - and you should love Hashem your G-d. Since antiquity, the question has been asked, what kind of instruction is this? Love is not an order that can be carried out on demand, but an emotion which is either felt or not. How can the Torah command us to love?

The Rambam (Hilchos, Yesodei Hatorah 2:2), in addressing this question, explains that the Torah's instruction is to contemplate Hashem's greatness. Once a person appreciates the enormity of Hashem's power through considering His

wondrous creations, he will automatically be aroused with a love for this Great Being.

In Tanya, the Alter Rebbe enumerates several more methods and levels in attaining love for Hashem: arousing the inborn hidden love and *mesiras nefesh*, recognizing Hashem as our source of life to which we are naturally attracted, compassion for the neshama which has fallen so low in its descent to this world, and more.<sup>2</sup>

However, these solutions are not without difficulty. Many of us find extensive contemplation challenging, especially on a regular basis (since *Ahavas Hashem* is one of the six constant *mitzvos* in which one is obligated). Some can perform the

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1. In Pelach Harimon of Reb Hillel Paritcher (*Shir Hashirim* 2b) he explains the connection to Pesach, since our full relationship with Hashem that will be fully revealed (in *pnimiyus*) with the coming of Moshiach began (in *makif*) at the time of leaving *Mitzrayim* on Pesach.

2. To those who think that love for Hashem is a lofty level

beyond their reach, the Rebbe Rashab writes (*Kuntres Eitz Hachayim perek 16*) that it is due to their mistaken notion that there is only one grand level of love – that of Avrohom Avinu. In truth there are infinite intensities to love and every person will experience it according to his perception of Hashem. In short: Love for Hashem means adoration of

contemplation, but are not aroused with an emotion of love. How are all of these people to achieve love for Hashem? After all, *Ahavas Hashem* is one of the 613 *mitzvos* that is equal for every Yid.<sup>3</sup>

### ■ THE FINAL LOVE ■

It is for this reason that the Alter Rebbe lays out another type of love in *perokim* 46-49 (the following is a slightly adapted translation):

"And then there is a straight path, equally accessible to all, and very much within reach, to arouse and shine the light of the love that is implanted and concealed in our heart, that it may shine with its intense light, like a burning fire, in the consciousness of the heart and mind, to surrender our soul to Hashem, together with our body and material possessions, with all our heart and all our soul and might, from the depth of the heart, in absolute truth..."

What is this new "straight path" to reach a love for Hashem? Why is it so much more accessible than all the previous options?

The Alter Rebbe quotes a *possuk* stating that just as water mirrors a reflection, love between two people is automatically reciprocated. When a person experiences the love that someone has for him, he is likewise aroused with a love for that person. The extent of the recipient's arousal is dependent on the extent of love shown and the status of the person exhibiting it.

The Alter Rebbe explains that the same is true of our relationship with Hashem: If we realize the immense love that Hashem has for us, we will automatically be aroused with a corresponding love for Him. The advantage in this method is that it does not demand that the person create the emotion, a most intense and lengthy process. With this method, all one must do is recognize Hashem's love for him, and he will then become fired up with love on cue (the Rebbe in a gloss to *Lessons in Tanya*).

### ■ THE KING'S EMBRACES AND KISSES

The Alter Rebbe illustrates this with a vivid parable:

"When a great and mighty king shows his great and intense love for a commoner who is despised and lowly among men, dirty and lying in the sewer, yet the king comes down to him from his place of his glory, together with his entire entourage, and raises the man from the sewer and brings him into the royal palace, into the innermost chamber, where no one may enter, and there shares with him the closest friendship with embraces and kisses... even if his heart is like a heart of stone, it will surely melt and become water, and his soul will pour itself out like water, with soulful longing for the love of the king."

The Alter Rebbe then describes how this is actually what Hashem did for us:

"In this exact manner and this very image, but to an infinitely greater degree, Hashem dealt with us. For His greatness is beyond comprehension and He fills all worlds and transcends all worlds; as we know from the *Zohar* and from the *Arizal* the infinite multitude of chambers and worlds, and of the countless myriads of *malochim* in each world and chamber..."

"And yet when all these *malochim* ask: 'Where is the place of His glory?' They answer: 'The whole earth is full of His glory,' that is, His people, *Bnei Yisroel*. For Hashem forsakes the higher and lower beings choosing none of them but *Bnei Yisroel*, whom He brought out of *Mitzrayim*—the place of filth and impurity— "Not through the agency of an *malach*, or *saraf*, but Hashem Himself in His glory" descended there in order to bring them near to Him in true closeness and unity, with a soulful attachment of mouth to mouth "kisses," through uttering the word of Hashem, in *halachah*, and the fusion of spirit to spirit, through the comprehension

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Him and the desire to become more connected. There is no person who can not experience this.

3. Although there is a saying from the Baal Shem

Tov that the *mitzva* is to contemplate the ideas (Shnei Hameoros vol. 2 p. 262), it is nevertheless understood that it is within reach for every person to actually reach an actual emotion of love (see Basi L'Gani 5728, end of *ois* 8).

of Torah... and with a "embrace," through the fulfillment of the physical *mitzvos*..."

In other words: Out of His tremendous love for us, Hashem lowered himself to the lowest levels, and connected with us in a most intimate way.

### ■ FINDING THE LOVE ■

While explaining all this, the Alter Rebbe comments, "And this is why in *Shir Hashirim* Shlomo Hamelech compared this union with Hashem to the union of a *chossan* and *kalah*..."

In this line the Alter Rebbe summarizes the message of *Shir Hashirim*: To recognize Hashem's intense love for us, which will arouse in us a reciprocal love for Him.

This love is especially pertinent to our times. Aside for it being more accessible than the other kinds of love, it can also serve as an answer for many who have lacked warmth and affection. Recognizing Hashem's infinite love for us uplifts a person and gives them true unequivocal love.

Even a basic read of *Shir Hashirim* can arouse the reader to a reciprocal love for Hashem. Reading of Hashem's immense love for His people is bound to arouse a love even for one with "a heart of stone." Yet, understanding *Shir Hashirim* according to its deeper meaning as explained in *Chassidus* is ecstatic.

*Chassidus* naturally has much to say on *Shir Hashirim*. Since *Shir Hashirim* discusses the most intimate topics of our relationship with Hashem, *Chassidus* reveals the depth of that connection and its meaning as a personal experience.

In order to best appreciate the inner meaning of *Shir Hashirim*, we must contrast it with its classical understanding. An overview will explain the general approaches to understanding *Shir Hashirim* followed by a sample *possuk* with explanation.

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### ■ THE STORY OF SHIR HASHIRIM ■

Chazal say, "All of the *Kesuvim* are holy, and



*Shir Hashirim* is holy of holies." This means that while the rest of the *Kesuvim* (Writings) discuss important lessons in life, only a portion of them discusses Hashem directly. *Shir Hashirim*, however, is entirely about fear of Heaven and acceptance of Hashem's kingship (Rashi).

The song of *Shir Hashirim* is set around a man and woman who were very close with each other and have now been distanced. The woman calls out to her beloved and speaks of how good it was when they were together and how she yearns to come together once again. The man responds by singing her praises, and sharing his yearnings to be reunited.

In our relationship with Hashem, He is the husband and we are the wife. During the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* and other times of Divine revelation, we experienced closeness to Hashem. We saw how we are His chosen nation and the recipient of His love. Now, in *golus*, we have been distanced from Him, spiritually and physically downtrodden. *Shir Hashirim* is the song that both we and Hashem sing today, as we recall the joy of being close and express our yearning for one another.

Rashi, following the *Midrashim*, explains the various verses of adoration as referring to times in history when Hashem showed us His love, during *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, *Matan Torah* and the First *Beis Hamikdash*. During these stages, Hashem openly revealed Himself to us. Then, because of misdeeds we were distanced from Hashem and sent into *golus*. We don't experience closeness and are looked down upon by the other nations. In yearning, we reminisce of old times and express our longing to be reunited with Him once again with the coming of Moshiach. Hashem too, responds with equal sentiment of love, singing our praises as His beloved wife and His yearning that we become united again.

The Malbim, in his classic style, takes a more

personal approach. The husband and wife refer to Hashem and the *neshama*. During the times of the First *Beis Hamikdash*, Divine revelation and *nevuah* was common. As the *golus* set in, the body and its pleasures gain control over the *neshama* and barred her from achieving a state of Divine union. During these dark times, she recalls her previous state and yearns for the time of Moshiach and *Elokus* will be revealed to all.

While Rashi and Malbim differ in application, they both share a common thread. During earlier times Hashem was close to us, and now, in *golus*, we are far. They both understand the expressions of closeness found in *Shir Hashirim* as referring to a time of *geulah* and open revelation.

*Chassidus* turns all of this on its head. It is indeed true that during the times of the *Beis Hamikdash* we experienced Divine revelation and felt a tangible closeness to Hashem that we are missing today. However this does not mean that we are distant. On the contrary, through the physical *mitzvos* that we complete now, we attain a greater union than is possible through revelation. This union will be revealed when Moshiach will come, but it already exists now, and even manifests in several ways. In truth, while we are indeed in a state of darkness, we are not alone and we are even more connected than before.

It is interesting to note that an extensive amount of *Chassidus* has been written on *Shir Hashirim*, more so than any other section of *Tanach*. Aside from the many *maamorim* written expressly on the *pesukim* of *Shir Hashirim*, explanations to almost every *posuk* are scattered throughout *Chassidus*. [To illustrate this, Chassidim would tell the following joke: A *chossid* once picked up a *Shir Hashirim* for the first time and commented in amazement, 'What an amazing idea! To collect all the opening *pesukim* of the *maamorim* and form a book']. This attests to the centrality in *Chassidus* of our special connection with Hashem during the time of *golus*.

שְׁחֹרָה אֲנִי וְנֹאדָה בְּנֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּאֶהְלֵי קֶדָר בִּירֵיעוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה

## I am black and beautiful, daughters of *Yerushalayim*, like the tents of the *Kedar* tribe, like the drapes of King Shlomo.

In the storyline of *Shir Hashirim*, girls taunt the female character, called her unattractive and claiming that her beloved has lost interest. She responds that although she has been darkened by sitting in the sun, she can return to her beauty by keeping out of the sun for a while. She compares herself to the tents of the Ishmaelite tribe Kedar which are black from the elements, but through washing can become as white and clean as the drapes in the palace of Shlomo *HaMelech*.

Rashi explains that 'daughters of *Yerushalayim*' refers to the gentile nations who taunt us saying that Hashem has lost interest in us, having become black with *aveiros*. We respond that although we have sinned and have become black, we are still beautiful by other virtues. We have the merit of the Avos, we have *mitzvos* that we perform, and Hashem still loves us on those accounts.

In the Malbim's portrayal of the *mashal*, the husband is a shepherd in the field, and a king has abducted the wife for himself. He locked her up in the palace and appointed girls to guard her. The guards taunt her that her beloved has lost interest in her and has forgotten about her. She argues with them and continues calling out to her beloved.

Similarly, our *neshama* is held captive by our body and physical desires (*nefesh habehamis*) which do not allow our *neshama* to unite with Hashem and experience *Elokus*. Furthermore, they 'tell' the *neshama* that having been placed in a body, she has become coarse, permanently 'black' and 'unattractive.' Thus, she is incapable of ever

experiencing Divine revelation again.

In this *possuk*, the *neshama* responds, "Although I have indeed been blackened by you, and I am currently engaged in coarse desires, my essence has not changed. I remain a pure *neshama* which can be cleansed and become once again worthy of revelation."

*Chassidus* explains this *possuk* in a most original manner. 'Daughters of *Yerushalayim*' refers to the *neshamos* in Gan Eden, who are in a state of *yirah shaleim*, complete fear of Heaven (= ירושלים (יראה שלם)). They look down at the *neshamos* in this world, particularly during *golus*, and tell her how 'black' she is and unworthy of Divine revelation. The *neshama* in *golus* responds, "I indeed am black, and my service of Hashem is comprised of black and unattractive physical acts, however **particularly for this reason I am more beautiful than you**. In Gan Eden you are only a recipient of a ray from the Divine, while I, through physical *mitzvos*, attain a unity with Hashem's essence."

The *neshama* then continues to elaborate on why this is so, "Just as the *kelipos* (*Kedar*) receive energy from a lofty force (*makif*) that surrounds them like a tent, how much more so that I can draw a holy equivalent through the fulfillment of physical *mitzvos*. Furthermore, through *mitzvos* I will reach a holy *makif* with no equivalent in *kelipah*, whose intense light harmonizes (*shalom*) all lower levels."



# Kosher Education

## An Anthology

Anyone familiar with the Rebbe's letters is surely familiar with the topic of *Chinuch Hakasher*, kosher education. Beginning in the days of the Rebbe Rashab and the Friediker Rebbe, there were already those who saw chinuch as a matter of professional expertise, like secular education. To their understanding, the two educational systems only differed in the subject matter. With this mindset, they set out to reform elements of age-old *chinuch*, to "update" them to more modern methods.

Our Rebbeim staunchly insisted on continuing the tried and tested "old way" of chinuch. In their talks and writings they maintained that secular ideas are a danger to the future of Yiddishkeit. *Chinuch*, they argued, is about transmitting *yiras Shamayim* and the holiness of Torah to pure *neshamos*. This link to the revelation on Har Sinai is accomplished expressly through righteous teachers by means of holy tools. No other system or curriculum can create this bond.

## ■ THE EDUCATION ■

In this statement to the Russian government, the Rebbe Rashab says that chinuch is a holy matter which cannot be tampered with:

expense of their lives, and which we will fulfill with the same warmth that our parents did...

(Kuntres Uma'ayan, p. 44)

### JEWISH EDUCATION IS A RELIGIOUS MATTER

Jewish education and instruction is a religious subject, unlike other nations where it's just a matter of expertise. We, as Jews, are obligated to educate and instruct our children exclusively in accordance with the instructions written in the book of G-dly laws which Hashem our G-d gave us at Sinai, and which our parents and ancestors fulfilled at the

...

In Eastern Europe, the *Haskala* (enlightenment movement) made every effort to pull Jewish children away from "old-fashioned" Yiddishkeit and to modernize them. Some of its adherents were quite knowledgeable in Torah and would pretend to be devoutly religious *melamdin* who have the children's Jewish

education in mind. Their lack of *emunah* and their apathy to Jewish tradition and customs raised heretical children *R"L*:

### TEACHING THE SAME AS ALWAYS

There's a new generation that wishes to uproot the holiness of the letters and *nekudos*. They pretend to be our friends, but they're our biggest enemies, they'll turn our children into heretics. Remember, the education your child receives in cheder will decide whether he'll remain a Jew. We have to fear the imposters, who appear wholesome on the outside, but who are evil on the inside. There'll be those who'll appear religious and who'll appeal to improving the children's education, and making things easier and more similar to mainstream education, but they are attempting to destroy traditional Jewish customs.

(Sefer Hasichos 5688-5691, p.159 – summarized)

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When the Frierdiker Rebbe arrived in America, he discovered the sorry state of Jewish education. Although many children did attend Talmud Torahs, the teachers there did not believe in what they taught, and the lessons were devoid of Hashem and Yiddishkeit. The unsuspecting parents trusted the schools blindly, believing that their children were receiving a top of the line *Yiddishe chinuch*:

### A HECHSHER ON WHAT THE CHILDREN'S HEADS ARE FED

There is a well-known remark made by the Frierdiker Rebbe during his first years in America: "There's supervision on what we put in our pots (*teplach*), but why isn't there supervision on what we put in our (children's) heads (*keplach*)?"

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 4, p. 227, #958)

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Other parents disdained the traditional *chinuch* and knowingly preferred modern

education:

### "WHAT'S HE TEACHING THEM, OLD-FASHIONED THINGS?"

Education was once completely different. Everything was innocent, both on the part of the children as well as the parents, and it was observable both in the teachers and the parents. There was innocence, simplicity. There was once respect for teachers; today the attitude towards a teacher is: "What's he teaching them, old-fashioned things?"

(Sefer Hasichos 5705, p. 100)

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In this pre-Pesach public letter, the Rebbe encourages parents to discard all foreign influences in their life, as those ideals are keeping their children from living true Yiddishkeit:

### SAVING OUR CHILDREN FROM FOREIGN INFLUENCES

Pesach is about education. If parents don't circumcise their child, they haven't only robbed the child of his connection to Hashem, but they also lost the opportunity to eat the *korbon* Pesach themselves. Some parents today have abandoned the *korbon* Pesach, allowing the plague of death to enter their homes; not only their children are the victims of a lack of education, but the parents suffer from the results as well.

This is because the parents have themselves not abandoned foreign ideals, which are detrimental to true *Yiddishkeit*. Others have not ensured that their children are raised in this way. The sad and tragic results aren't difficult to find.

Pesach teaches us to keep the street's influences out of our homes, to destroy the *avoda zara*, and help our children live a Jewish life every day. Then we can experience the true spirit of Pesach, culminating in Moshiach's arrival.

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 26, p.362, #9878 – summarized)

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Because of the foreign influences that surround us, we must shower every child with the “dosage” of Yiddishkeit generally reserved for molding a Rabbi:

### **KOSHER EDUCATION PREVENTS ASSIMILATION**

Kosher education isn't about producing Rabbis; it's about guaranteeing Jewish offspring. If we want to be confident that our children will still be connected to *Yiddishkeit* in twenty years, we need to pour as much *Yiddishkeit* as possible into them, and ask Hashem that they remain Jews no matter what.

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 3, #730)

...

New educational methods are developed daily. Before turning to them, we must ask ourselves, "Have we tried our own age-old method?":

### **DON'T EXPERIMENT WITH "NEW METHODS"!**

This is what leads to all the confusion: there's

a quest to fix or add things, a search for all sorts of “new” methods which in fact were attempted a generation ago, and not only weren't beneficial, but actually proved damaging, and there's a refusal to try the old, proven approach, which created a “civilized world,” and established a nation which endured harmoniously, conflicting personalities notwithstanding...

(Sichos Kodesh 5731, Vol. 1, p. 258)

### **FOLLOW THE TRODDEN PATH**

Torah has its path. “This is the path of Torah.” If you follow your own path, you'll get lost.

(Sefer Hasichos 5703, P. 131)

...

When the Friediker Rebbe challenged the enlightenment and insisted that the Aleph-Beis should be taught in the traditional manner and not using the new modern method, it seemed clear that we were losing out for the sake of purity. Only years later, did the experts discover that, in the long term, the traditional manner offers better results:

### **WHERE'S IT COMING FROM?**

Yechidus of R. Gershon Ber Jacobson

The *maskilim* in Vilna made a lunchroom for the *yeshiva bachurim*, so that the *bachurim* wouldn't have to eat 'teg' (in someone's home every day). The *maskilim* argued that eating 'teg' lowers the dignity of the *yeshiva bachurim*, and so they made the lunchroom. So they approach the Rav, I think his name was Rabbi Gordon, and they requested a hechsher, but he refused.

They asked him: “Why? It's all kosher?”

And he replied: “I've been a Rav for 40 years and I know a general rule, that the *yetzer tov* comes to me, and the *yetzer hara* goes to you. And that whenever you make a decision or do something, it always originates from the *yetzer hara*.

“Are you trying to tell me that after 40 years the *yetzer hara* suddenly gotten confused...?!”

(Jacobson Teshura Sivan 5759, p.15)

## THE OLD WAY WORKS BETTER

The Frieddiker Rebbe once spoke about the importance of teaching the Aleph-Beis with *nekudos*, where the aleph is taught separately, and then the *nekudos*, beginning with *kamatz*, and not the way the *maskilim* wished to switch to, which takes less time. He spoke then about the holiness of the letters, and how *yiras Shamayim* is clearly only attainable through learning this way. The time before Moshiach is when things are cleared up, and educational experts have now realized the truth, which is that only the old method leads to more success, even if the other approach takes less time.

(Sichos Kodesh 5729, Vol. 1, p. 48)

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A common challenge to this notion is the sense that the facts seem to prove otherwise. When looking around we find products of the traditional system who have failed. If the traditional system is really superior, what explains all these failures?

This letter clarifies that the success of traditional methods is naturally dependent on them being implemented correctly. The Torah's guidance is surely the best solution for the child's success. Teachers and parents should be guided in the Yiddishe way by knowledgeable *mechanchim*:

## TORAH'S METHODS BRING SUCCESS

On the subject of teaching Aleph-Beis the

traditional way, or as you put it, "the approach that was the convention in the 'Cheder'", we must really divide this issue into two:

1) The approach itself, which is teaching children the aleph beis using the proper names, "*aleph, beis*," etc. in sequential order, and the same for the vowels, using their names and combining them with the letters in the proper order.

2) The means of teaching this approach, namely the methodology, which is a science of its own, since it is necessary to know **how** to use even the best system, as it's possible for two to employ the same method, and one succeeds while the other doesn't, or worse. So when we witness a lack of success in a particular system, we can't extrapolate to the approach in its entirety, because we have to assess whether the person administering it is aware of the means of using it and whether he is in fact doing so.

Now, on the first count, teaching the Aleph-Beis in order and so on is based on holy foundations as is well-known, and while this is not the place to do so, you can certainly locate all the relevant sources. And not only may this approach not be abandoned, but whoever tampers with it is tampering greatly with implanting a sense of holiness in a child's soul.

And so even if one could argue (although realistically it isn't true) that learning this way isn't as interesting and so forth compared with the new systems, it would still not justify retreating from our sanctified approach and employing a new system whose losses outweigh its benefits.

But in truth, when we think into Chazal's

## ETHICS FROM SINAI

"Moshe received the Torah from Sinai..." (Avos 1:1)

In my opinion, considering that this tractate isn't based on any particular mitzvah in the Torah like all the other tractates in the Mishna, and instead consists solely of morals and ethics, and in view of the fact that gentile sages have also authored works on morality containing instructions for proper behavior which they invented themselves, the Tanna therefore began this tractate with "Moshe received the Torah at Sinai", indicating that the ethics and morals in this tractate were not invented by the sages of the Mishna themselves, but were said at Sinai as well.

(Bartenura)

statement that “Hashem consulted the Torah and created the world”, and “its ways are pleasant ways”, it becomes clear that if only the method of teaching Aleph-Beis according to Torah’s instructions was used properly there’d be success not only in the matters of holiness which are related to that approach, but simply in the very learning and progress of the child. And we’ve seen from experience, that the teachers who became adept in the knowledge of the means and methods of teaching beginner’s *kriah* realized that only teaching by this approach is the most successful. For Example, I’m aware of a number of teacher training programs in Europe and in the Unites States, which elected for teaching the Aleph-Beis the traditional way over all the other approaches when it came to teaching the methodology for beginning *kriah*, although of course there needs to be training on how to use this approach.

In light of the above, not only should the method not be switched, but the teachers using it should be encouraged, and those who are struggling with it for whatever reason, should be directed to experts who, in addition to being G-d-fearing, should be well-versed in how to train these teachers on how to teach their pupils in the best possible way according to this system.

And we’re confident that your honor, as an educational counselor on behalf of the [Israeli] Ministry of Education in the religious schools, will investigate and learn more about everything

discussed above, and will yourself assist as much as possible in this area, and you’ll be from those bringing virtue to the public, the merit of which is great and eternal.

Rabbi C.M.A. Hodakov

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 26, p. 234, #9773)

...

At times, it may seem that the solution to an educational dilemma is to temporarily employ an alien solution. In this talk the Rebbe states unequivocally that this cannot possibly work:

### “GOYISHKEIT WILL NEVER RESULT IN YIDDISHKEIT”

There are well-known Rabbis who, instead of erecting fences around unsecured territory, tear the fences down even more instead, with the claim that this will attract more Jews, who’ll be drawn even deeper into *Yiddishkeit*... Here’s the response: This is not your gain or your loss! It’s about what Torah says; and that’s what you have to impart, without any compromise, because *Goyishkeit* will never result in *Yiddishkeit*.

(Sichos Kodesh (Teruma) 5741, Vol. 2, p. 416)

## ■ THE EDUCATOR ■

Whereas in the area of *kashrus* of food there are clear guidelines and standards, in the field of *chinuch* we are heavily reliant on the expertise and piety of the educator. The problem is that anyone can assume the position of educator without qualifications:

### THE TITLE OF ‘EDUCATOR’ ISN’T JUST AVAILABLE

I was glad to read in the second letter, that

you’ve finally succeeded at correcting the situation regarding kosher meat, and may it be G-d’s Will that very soon you’ll succeed at rectifying the chinuch situation, and as the Frierdiker Rebbe famously remarked, that in America there’s always the demand that’s what’s placed in our pots be supervised and monitored, yet what’s placed in the heads is unrestricted, and whoever wishes can simply call himself a G-d-fearing *melamed*, or an educational expert etc.

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 5, p. 213, #1414)

...

Besides for being G-d fearing himself, the *melamed* must realize the tremendous responsibility that he carries in transmitting faith to his students:

### “THE FATE OF THE FAITH OF THE NEXT GENERATION IS IN HIS HANDS”

Get involved as much as possible in the area of *cheder* attendance, and ensure that not only is there simply a *melamed* and a *cheder*, but that the learning is as it should be, 1) convince the fathers and mothers to give their child only to a G-d-fearing *melamed*, 2) discuss with the *melamed* about how the fate of the pure faith of the next generation is in his control, and that any inappropriate move on his part can uproot a tree and a stem from G-d vineyard, Heaven forbid, and that when he'll put his mind to educating and enlightening a student, he's planting a stem of a great tree in G-d's vineyard.

(Igras Kodesh Rayatz, Vol. 1, p. 533)

...

Pedagogy is indeed a skill. What to do when we must choose between a skilled teacher and an unskilled teacher who is G-d-fearing? The Rebbe clarifies:

### YIRAS SHAMAYIM ABOVE PROFESSIONALISM

Everything in the field of education is of paramount importance; a change made in a student has a lifelong effect. And so anything that causes religious doubts must be avoided, just like anything of remote risk to human life, as any intelligent person can understand. With that in mind, the status of any book of religious dubiousness, or any teacher with a similar problem, is obvious.

This would be the case even if there was no alternative, because the goal of the school and the parents is to raise religious children, which is the only way they'll have a contented life; but now it is certainly possible to find appropriate teachers and textbooks from a religious perspective on a high scholastic level. A number of schools have gone through a phase of doubt and confusion, but experience taught them how to solve these problems, and your school can certainly utilize the results of their experience, and considering your conclusion that “*yiras Shamayim* comes before wisdom”, the teacher and textbook that excels in that area must be chosen.

(Igras Kodesh, Vol. 17, p. 233, #6383)

...

### THEY'LL SAY AS YOU SAY, AND DO AS YOU DO

There was once a *chassid* who was seeking a *melamed* for his children. The name of a certain prospect came up, but the *chassid* felt that the fellow's behavior was beneath the level he'd want for his children.

In response, the candidate in question attempted to argue: I might not be the best *chassid* myself, but my goal is for my students to be real *chassidim*, and so my character shouldn't prevent me from doing a good job.

To which the *chassid* countered: the kind of good job you'll do is precisely what I'm afraid of; my children will grow up and aspire to help others be *chassidim*, but will never become ones themselves, just like you...

(Otzar Pisgamei Chabad, Vol. 1, p. 239)

## A LIVING EXAMPLE IS MOST IMPORTANT

About having an impact on the school: Education must be practiced with energy and with sincerity, and most importantly the educator has to be a living example. If you have that, you have the most important thing. And dedication to your work is the foundation to developing everything else necessary to succeed at education.

(Igros Kodesh, Vol. 27, p. 321, #10326)

...

Why is it so important for a teacher to be G-d-fearing? Can't they transmit the material to the students regardless? The Friediker Rebbe explains that the students can tell whether the teacher means it:

## "YOU CAN'T GIVE SOMEONE WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE YOURSELF"

Anyone who knows anything about education will recognize that if irreligious teachers are forced to teach children Torah, their students will never learn to love Torah and actually follow it. All the students will see in their teacher is a conniving liar and "businessman" who's willing to teach things he disbelieves in for a few dollars. Our experience has shown us that even when teachers attempt to mask their personal lives from their students, their pupils ultimately see through it and detect that they don't actually believe in what they're teaching. You can't give someone what you don't have yourself, and a nonbeliever can't plant the belief in Hashem in others.

(Igros Kodesh Rayatz, Vol. 6, p. 101)





*Mrs. Chana Sharfstein*



# Free To Be...??

Mrs. Chana Sharfstein is a noted author and lecturer. Her recent book is titled, *Beyond the Dollar Line*.

This article first appeared in *Di Yiddishe Heim*, Autumn 5735 (1974).

## ■ IMPOSED NUTRITION ■

“Do you believe in censorship?” she asks. I detect a note of sarcasm, a tone of defiance. Instinctively I realize that a simple, direct affirmative response will not suffice in this situation. An answer of Why is required to meet the implied challenge. And so, in the traditional Jewish way, I answer her question with another one.

“Do you believe in learning about good nutrition?” She looks puzzled. She absolutely cannot detect any relationship between the two questions. She sounds annoyed as she answers, “Of course it is important to know about nutrition. I subscribe to health magazines, I read articles in various journals, and I try to be well-informed and up-to-date on the subject.”

We enter a discussion about nutrition, a peaceful, agreeable one. We know that one of the basic, most important functions of the woman in the household is to supply the family with well-balanced meals. Health foods are worth investigating, we agree.

“Interesting,” I note, “that while you are so concerned about the physical needs of your family,

you disregard their moral needs. Are these needs insignificant in your opinion?” She views me haughtily with raised eyebrows. “Would you allow your child to live on a diet of soda, ice-cream and potato-chips?” I ask. The answer is a definite No. In this area the child cannot have freedom of choice. He doesn’t understand the daily requirements of his body. “Would you allow your child at age five to cross a major thoroughfare?” Again a sharp no. Of course not. He would endanger his life. He would be too young to use good judgment. “Would you allow your child to play outside on a frosty, winter day dressed in thin summer clothes?” Another firm No, and as this point she is growing angry with my elementary questions on basic child-rearing.

“Obviously you are very concerned about your children’s well-being,” I observe. “But how can you be an effective parent without considering moral development. You feel justified in imposing restrictions in the area of your children’s physical needs. Isn’t it equally necessary to act as a guide and protector in the area of morals? Isn’t the food for the mind as important as the food for the body?”

For that matter, a thinking person never lets

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down his guard and protects his well-being all through life. Do we stop caring about our nutritional needs, exercise, and other good health habits at age seventeen?

### ▪ THE 'NEW FREEDOM' ▪

The concept of censorship has a derogatory connotation in the modern world. It implies police-state, bigotry, old-fashioned traditionalism and a frowned-upon moralistic outlook. Censorship sounds Un-American. The theme of today is Freedom. Be yourself. Don't listen to your parents. Don't accept what society attempts to impose on you.

These themes are repeated in a variety of forms and settings, in the mass media, literature, music and entertainment field. By covert and overt means both young and old are exposed, in fact overexposed, to this idea. The new interpretation of freedom infiltrates all areas of life, even our homes, sometimes in the most subtle, hard-to detect ways.

Let us pause for a moment to attempt to define this new freedom. A young man is taking a year off to "find himself." He has been restricted by his family and educational institutions during his adolescent years. Before settling down in a job or career, he must have a year off to find himself.

Why, I wonder, can't he look into himself instead of searching outside? Isn't he taking his confused self with him wherever he goes? Won't he become more lost, perhaps, in strange surroundings? Where is he? I am tempted to play a childish game—Knock Knock, is someone inside?

The young woman's outfit reveals more than it conceals. She proudly proclaims that she is in full agreement with the ideology of the woman's

liberation movement. She wants to be considered a person, not a female, and absolutely not an object. She is free to dress as she chooses, why does she dress to attract attention to her femaleness if her stated objective is acceptance as a human being on equal footing with the male? Why the contradictory emphasis on exposing her femininity?

The sweet, innocent young children are singing in their thin, high voices, "Free to Be, You and Me," a very popular song from a widely acclaimed T.V. special and a fast-selling recording. They are too young to understand, but already they are being indoctrinated with the need to be "free."

Can you, our dear children, be free without knowing who you are? Free to be what? Wild, untamed, uncivilized? Why compare yourselves to the rivers, trees and clouds? Were we not created separate and apart from the physical elements and all other living creatures? Wasn't there a specific reason for being given the ability to know right from wrong? Shouldn't we, furthermore, use this ability as rational, human beings to elevate ourselves from the levels of animals? Do we want to be ruled and enslaved by whims, urges, and lusts, or do we seek to develop our intelligence to make informed judgments and decisions?

### ▪ SELF-AWARENESS OR SELF-HYPNOTISM? ▪

The psychologists speak of the importance of "self-knowledge." Doesn't the fact that the human infant is more totally dependent upon his parents for a longer span of time than any other living offspring imply that we, as parents, have an obligation to guide and direct our youth?

Our sages say, "Know where you came from. Know where you are going. Know to Whom you are to be held responsible." This knowledge of roots

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---

and tradition will provide direction in life. Self-awareness will bring the freedom to be true to one's total self.

The gum-cracking, finger-snapping, swaying bodies of the adolescents as they listen enraptured to the rock music—Are they free, I wonder. They seem to be enslaved by the music. Are they happy or are they trying desperately to become, or at least, seem happy? Is there an undercurrent of self-hypnotism? Is the music so loud because they want to drum out reality?

The large number of youngsters who seek freedom in the world of drugs are surely not aware that they will find neither freedom nor happiness. There will perhaps be illusionary moments of tranquility in the dream-like trance, but it is a road of self-destruction. The world of reality will become even more difficult to cope with. Experimentation with drugs—is that freedom? I would term it enslavement of body and mind.

The uniformly attired young people who utter the same ideas, in the same type of language, with the same urgency for communicating, proclaim in one protesting outcry their uniqueness and individuality. I smile. Do they ever listen to each other? Do they ever look at one another? They mirror each other's looks and ideas to almost total perfection. To me they appear as a highly structured group wanting to be completely non-structural. Is this freedom?

## ■ WHO IS TRULY FREE? ■

What is this much-heralded freedom? Is anarchy freedom? Is freedom the negative of responsibilities?

Is it freedom to remove oneself from the world of reality to the fantasy existence of drugs? Is it freedom to involve one's self in immoral and amoral situations? Is it freedom to shout Individuality while adopting what psychologists refer to as the theme of "otherness", the urgent need to be like everyone else combined with an inner deep fear, or perhaps even inability, to be oneself.

"Don't you feel confined," I am asked. "You have so many restrictions in your life? Don't you feel inhibited?"

Who is Free? I know that I am Me. Of course I live by rules, but my choice in doing

so is a free one. I want to grow in self-knowledge. I must continuously search ever more deeply to learn the message life has for me—A Jewish Woman. This is Freedom.

"Yes," I respond, "I definitely believe in censorship. Particularly today, when immorality and indecency are becoming an integral part of our world, we must closely scrutinize everything that touches us and our children to hinder contamination. More than ever before, we must educate ourselves and our families in the ways of the Torah. We must acquire a Jewish education in depth to enable us to overcome and survive in these surroundings. Prevention in the spiritual realm of morals must become as widely accepted as good nutrition in the physical realm. And then we can be free—FREE to Be You and Me.

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*Do we want  
to be ruled and  
enslaved by  
whims, urges, and  
lusts, or do we  
seek to develop  
our intelligence  
to make informed  
judgments and  
decisions?*

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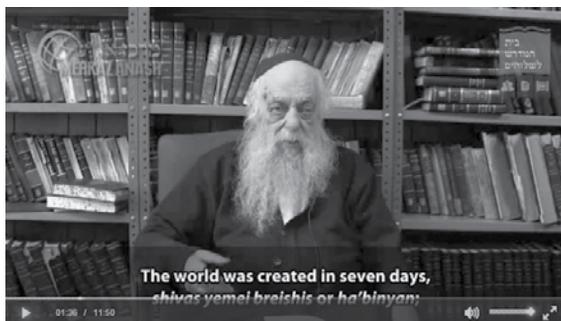
## Reb Yoel Now in English

Consider the following question: What's the proper method for dealing with individuals, who, while having a fondness and appreciation for chassidim and chassidus, never have had the chance to explore it in a personal way, leaving them torn between the realities of everyday Jewish life and the vague Chassidic ideas they may have been exposed to? How can we be mekarev them? What message do they need to hear and who should be the one to present it and how?

This might sound like a question worthy of being addressed at a featured workshop during the Shluchim convention, or something veterans in the field of outreach might discuss when planning future activities. You may think this description concerns members of other communities, people we only come in contact with on occasion.

But the truth is that this is just as applicable to people within our own community; our neighbors, our friends and our relatives. And recent events have demonstrated that when there's a dearth in Chassidic

messaging, other foreign influences of dubious origin can attempt to fill the void. It seems as if in the rush to bring the messages of chassidus to the outside world, the focus on educating and inspiring our own may have been neglected. A certain aimlessness and ennui appears to have set in. What's the solution?



Fortunately, Merkaz Anash has stepped up to the challenge of solving these thorny questions by launching a host of initiatives aimed at raising awareness in the community about chassidus and how its ideas can influence our lives on a daily basis. Merkaz Anash has become a voice of genuine

chassidishkeit at a time when confusion reigns supreme and many are seeking direction; through an array of publications and by means of highly publicized events, the Rebbe's ideas have once again become the center of conversation, influencing ever widening circles in our community.

But the highlight, the coup de grace, is unquestionably the introduction of a revolutionary

new project: a weekly video featuring Reb Yoel Kahan. The legendary Reb Yoel, whose name conjures up decades of memorizing and recording the Rebbe's lengthy farbrengens, preparing many sichos and maamarim for publication, producing the volumes of the scholarly encyclopedia of Chabad thought known as 'Sefer Ha'erchim', and countless hours dedicated to speaking and farbrenging with Lubavitchers and outsiders alike, *the* Reb Yoel is now bringing the Rebbe's messages to the next frontier, the digital landscape.

While Reb Yoel is revered and venerated in Chabad circles, his published books and recordings weren't necessarily accessible to today's more diverse audience. Faced only with his deep elucidations in Hebrew and Yiddish in a lengthier form, many were unlikely to ever encounter the lucid, razor-sharp presentations Reb Yoel has become famous for.

Merkaz Anash has stepped up to the plate and unveiled a project that has left many astounded by its concept and scope. A short video, featuring Reb Yoel sitting in his humble office, captured beautifully by high-grade video equipment, is uploaded to the internet every week. Viewable on Merkaz Anash's own website as well as other Chabad pages, the videos which have a duration of approximately ten minutes are seen by thousands each week.

But highly aware of the language barrier, Merkaz Anash has taken things to the next level: the videos featured English subtitles crafted with great care to both preserve the flavor and message being delivered by Reb Yoel, while enabling the English reader to grasp the ideas smoothly and easily. Along with appearing on the screen, the English rendition is also provided in article form, for the benefit of those who prefer to be able to review the talk at a glance. For the benefit of those who might not watch the video, the articles are then printed and distributed to all of the shuls in Crown Heights as well as other neighborhoods.

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, director of Merkaz

Anash, enthuses: "The amount of care and precision that Reb Yoel puts into these videos is just incredible. He spends much of his valuable time in advance, first settling on a theme, then researching the relevant details, before getting in front of the camera to deliver the weekly dvar Torah in his inimitable style."

Between Reb Yoel's efforts, Rabbi Hellinger's diligence, and the contribution of others devoted to making this phenomenon a reality, the amount of work put into ensuring the maximal reach and success of the videos is nothing short of inspiring, and Rabbi Hellinger is clearly proud of the results. "The success we're seeing is a testament to the thirst for authentic Chassidic ideas, along with the wisdom in choosing to invest in this unprecedented approach."

The responses haven't stopped flowing in: "Yasher koach for the wonderful video this week. Reb Yoel was brilliant as usual, and I felt the Rebbe's words enter my mind and heart." "I watch the dvar Torah every week, and then immediately share it with all of my friends. Thanks for giving us this opportunity!" "Reb Yoel's message is the highlight of my week. Whether I watch it or read it, he presents the Chassidic ideas so clearly in a way I was never able to experience before. Thank you so much!"

Many who thought that Chassidus could never be spread in such up-to-date fashion, while preserving its authentic form, have been pleasantly surprised. "Reb Yoel was always just a big name, someone almost larger than life; due to my background and level, I never thought I'd ever be able to learn anything he had to offer. These videos have been a complete game-changer; I watch them now every week and I feel like a whole world has been unlocked for me, without taking me out of my depth." Similar sentiments have been conveyed numerous times by viewers of all stripes.

Spurred by the overwhelmingly positive response, Merkaz Anash is emboldened to continue bringing Reb Yoel and his unique delivery to an ever wider audience. Their message to everyone: Tune in and spread the word!



# Children's Clothing Made Easy

Sara had closets full of clothing. Her firstborn Mendel was born in the summer, and she had stored all his charming newborn summer stretchies, his infant winter clothes, and the many handsome outfits she had acquired as he grew. Chaim'l was born in the winter, and that meant purchasing a whole new set of newborn winter outfits, new infant summer clothes, and a full one year old winter wardrobe as well. Then came Mushka'le, a summer baby. Very few of the newborn outfits were suitable for the baby girl, so it was time to splurge on another set of newborn wear. Sara continued buying outfits for her children, while saving all the old outfits "for the future." Yossi was born in the spring, and being the big baby he was, when summer arrived, he could not fit into much of the boy summer clothes she had in stock.

The day came when Sara decided she had had enough. Her closets and wardrobes were filled to capacity and there was absolutely no space in her home for the mountains of carefully organized and marked boxes of clothes. It didn't help that she would sometimes unload a box, only to realize that her baby had already outgrown that size, or there were some items which she had forgotten about and had recently purchased similar gear. "I decided to give all my children's clothes to family or friends who could make good use of them. I only kept the best outfits and those that had special meaning to our family."

In response to those who inquire about her plans for her growing children, she says, "Just as I can give what I am not using, there are others who will share what they aren't using." She notes that there are some articles of clothing that must be bought new (such as

shoes, hosiery, and *yarmulkas*).

When asked if she feels needy by taking used clothing from others, she responded sharply, "Ridiculous! Why should anyone want to squander money on brand new outfits for each of their children?! You think that everyone has extra money lying around..."

"Besides, we always say that '*chassidim ein mishpacha*' (Chassidim are like one family)!"

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Having recently moved into a nice and spacious location, **Gittel's Boutique** serves as a center to facilitate these exchanges in an efficient manner. Walking thru the door is like entering a welcoming and organized vintage clothing shop, the likes of which have recently regained popularity in America. It is spacious and easy to navigate, with an inventory that includes both brand-new, unworn items, as well as good-as-new clothing too. Volunteers carefully select the fresh, clean garments and sort according to type: newborn, infants, toddlers, boys, girls, and women.

Those coming to find something specific, often walk out with much more clothing, and a cheerful and relaxed demeanor. What a pleasure to have found so many of the clothes they've been needing to buy, all in one shop, and in a place which carries clothing for the frum family with all the frum style clothing.

To schedule a visit, contact Mrs. Devorah Leah Sternberg at 718-773-5595

# 74 Years and Chinuch in America Should Be No Different

Nearly one thousand men and women participated in a *chinuch*-evening titled “Raising Chassidim Today.” The Oholei Torah ballroom served as the venue for the event, filled with Crown Height’s parents and educators, while others tuned in live.

Marking 74 years since the Friediker Rebbe arrived in America on 9 Adar 11, 5700, and boldly declared that America was no different in Torah observance. To mark this event, and courtesy of JEM, The crowd enjoyed an exclusive viewing of the soon to be released DVD of “America is no Different.”

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, director of Merkaz Anash, opened the evening with the thoughts that while today’s *chassidim* may not be at the same level as *chassidim* of old, there is still “no difference” since the perspectives and priorities remain exactly the same.

Rabbi Fishel Oster, *maggid shiur* in Oholei Torah, encouraged giving children the gift of a meaningful life through a clear and consistent upbringing. As the Rebbe told Herbert Wiener who claimed that the *bochurim* in 770 were naïve, “they don’t have a ‘split’ in their eyes.” To this end, parents must show their

children that despite their endless preoccupations, their priority lies with Torah and *mitzvos*.

Rabbi Aharon Dovid Gancz, *menahel* of Morristown *yeshiva* and acclaimed *mechanech*, demonstrated how *Yidden* are “a nation apart” and that ‘*chinuch*’ really is different than ‘education.’ A soldier is dedicated to the success of his mission and that’s his source of satisfaction; temporary inconveniences along the way don’t faze him. A vacationer is in for pleasure; every discomfort throws him off. By living with our mission, we can overcome almost every difficulty. The Torah’s approach is eternal, unlike educational methods that change with the times.



Reb Pinyeh Korf, head *mashpia* of Oholei Torah, spoke how *chinuch* is primarily about planting *yiras Shamayim* in the hearts of the children. He emphasized that it is “no different” after Gimmel Tammuz, and we must continue with the same *chinuch* as before.

A memento ‘Kosher Education’ was distributed to the attendees, containing guidance from the Rebbeim and the Rebbe’s assurance that in the long-run, traditional *chinuch* produces better results.



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Dach Yomi is the project of **Rabbi Shimon**

**Chyrek**, a Crown Heights *sofer*, who saw a need and stepped up. Together with writers **Rabbi Levi Gelb**, author of the popular 'Di Chassidishe Parsha' series, and **Rabbi Binyomin Walters**, and editor **Rabbi Moshe Marinovsky**, a prime publication is produced week after week.



The no coincident, *Torah Ohr* and *Likutei Torah* were selected for daily study. Aside from being a foundation of *Chassidus*, the Rebbe instructed, on several occasions, to complete the work. At the *Kinus Hashluchim* of 5752, the Rebbe compared these works to *Rambam's* all-inclusive work and said that learning *Torah Ohr* and *Likutei Torah* will actualize

*Moshiach* faster. In fact, *Dach Yomi* aims to finish the entire corpus in four and a half years, at one column a day, of course.

The goal aims to encourage and make accessible a daily study of *Chassidus*. "Learning *Chassidus* daily is critical for a *Yid's* wellbeing, happiness and *shalom bayis*," says Rabbi Chyrek.

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# COUNTER PERSPECTIVE

## RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS ARTICLES

### Thought for Food (4)

At the time the original article was written in the Yiddishe Heim there weren't any alternate materials and students used the same textbooks in the secular department of *yeshiva* schools as in public schools.

In the past ten years an organization called Mosdos Press has developed an alternative for the literature/reading/vocabulary section of the curriculum. They have reading materials available as well as teacher editions and workbooks for grades three through eight. I had thought that they were going to develop materials for high school and science but at this point they have put together an informational CD with biographical and scientific information so that students can research specific

topics for people without accessing the internet.

Having taught sixth & seventh grade students reading using their books and materials, I can say that they are a viable alternative to the secular material currently used. More *yeshivos* would do well to implement these materials as the content level of popular secular reading is rapidly declining. I agree that secular education is dangerous and has far reaching affects. I always wondered why in some schools there is a '*cheder*' option for boys but not for girls. As if somehow girls were less vulnerable to outside influences.

Hadassah Aber

North Miami Beach, Florida

### Where Did You Get That From? (4)

Pursuant to my last letter (Perspectives 5), after further analysis and pondering I would like to clarify:

When studying a trade for earning a livelihood, or learning how to use a computer, or even techniques for classroom management or instruction, I think it is pretty clear that one may use any qualified source.

However, regarding areas that are not so clear cut, it is hard to set guidelines. For that we need to go to a *rov* or *mashpia*, a person able to offer

a non-partial assessment in a particular thing is appropriate for a *chossid* in general and for the individual in particular. One glove does not fit all, and a necessity for one person may be prohibited for another.

On one hand, we need *ahavas Yisroel* to accept every single *yid* without character judgment. On the other hand we need the maturity not to generalize individualized *hora'os*.

These points are especially meaningful in light of the recent gathering in Crown Heights led by

Reb Yoel Kahn and Rabbi Ezra Schochet *sheyichyu*, that underscored the urgency for a *chossid* to consult Tanya, *Chassidus* in general, a *mashpia*, and proper *Chassidische farbrengens* in order to

clarify the proper path in our *avodah* of bringing *Elokus* down to this world and Moshiach now.

RZ  
Montreal

## The Yiddishe Home (4)

Dear editor,

Thanks you for a wonderful publication. I was especially pleased with the article in the Tishrei issue titled "The Yiddishe Home" by Rabbi Y.M. Although the article highlighted basic ideas, traditionally conveyed through a proper *chinuch*, unfortunately many people do not know these basic things. People seem to be lacking knowledge and clarity in the basics of *Yiddishkeit*.

Articles that discuss deep philosophies and

high "*madraigos*" are important, but people need the foundations as well, in clear and palatable explanations, and how they apply to each area of life, and yes they should be very specific and detailed. No longer can we mistakenly assume that people know the basics; the fact is that many people do not.

Thanks again for everything you do.

Rivkah C.

Chicago

## Quality Lubavitch Reading

I picked it up the Perspectives magazine on my way home from work.

This is the only real Chassidish publication in English. It reminds me of Di Yiddishe Heim - a few copies of which I merited to inherit about 5 years ago, and keep reading and re-reading. B"H, Perspectives sees fit to reprint articles from it, the quality of which has yet to reappear in any Chabad English publication in more than 15 years.

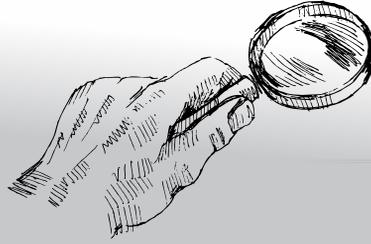
I would also like to mention how much I appreciated your editing decision to NOT disturb the enjoyment of reading your publication by the constant interruption of every single article with

advertisements, like certain other publications. It is so thoughtful of you to limit the advertisements to the beginning and the end of the magazine so as to allow for the smooth and uninterrupted enjoyment of each article.

Kol HaKavod to the entire staff of Perspectives, and may they go MeChayil el Choyil!

Karen Boloten

Montreal



# my PERSPECTIVE

## A Guide to Divine Service

Berel Ben Moshe

*The following article is based on the maamar Lo Sihyeh Meshakeilah 5712, a fundamental maamar of the Rebbe concerning the approach to Divine Service.*

### ▪ 1) DO THE DEED, DESPITE DESIRES ▪

First thing first, behave. Before we start working on our insides, we must first make sure the outsides are OK. We must recognize Who we are serving, and follow what He tells us to do. I.e. ensure that we do, say, and think as Hashem instructs us.

As with all future layers, we may never be perfect on any one of them. Therefore, we cannot wait on one layer forever. Rather, they must all be worked on simultaneously.

### ▪ 2) IT'S NOT ME, IT'S YOU ▪

Here starts the inner work. Naturally, we (our animal soul) are self-centered beings. This may lead us to do good things or the opposite. Either way, if the aim is about Ahavas Hashem and Yiras Hashem, then the focus must be on Him. As long as we do what we want, commendable as they may be, we cannot relate to Hashem correctly, even on an intellectual level. Once we change from being me-centered to Hashem-centered, then we can start

appreciating Him.

### ▪ 3) SHAKE IT UP ▪

This is the wakeup call, where we suddenly realize where we are and we have been doing. When the penny does drop, we regret our precious actions and self-interest, and resolve to improve in the future. The inspiration for this does not come (directly) through our work. Rather, it is a present given from Above, and is expressed on Rosh Hashana.

### ▪ 4) SATISFACTION STOPS SERVICE ▪

With all the great work we are doing, it would be expected to feel proud and satisfied. We've improved our actions, speech, thoughts and even shifted the whole focus in our lives. Surely, it's time to take a vacation!

However, this doesn't work for two reasons. Firstly, in spiritual terms, you're either progressing or regressing.

- If a train is on a hill, unless the engine is constantly pushing it up, it will inevitably roll back downwards. (It will then crush the person who was standing "in the right track" but not moving...)

Secondly, satisfaction goes hand in hand with complacency. This means that we will only do as much as necessary to make us feel good, and not maximize our abilities. This is besides the fact that it can easily mean focusing on ourselves and not on Him, as above.

- A fool is a 27 story window-washer who steps back to admire his work.

### ■ 5) STOP ANALYZING ■

As we've seen above, when we look back at all of our achievements, it's only logical that we feel satisfied, and possibly even complacent. But we also see how this can lead to disastrous results. So how do we prevent this from happening?

Actually, the answer is in the question itself. This feeling comes from analyzing our situation. However, by realizing that we are on this world for a very limited time, for a specific purpose: to recognize Hashem in this world. With this in mind, we find that we really have no 'spare time' to relax and retrospect. As long as we are here, that means we have a mission to do right now. If we didn't have something important to do at this moment, we simply wouldn't be here. So let's stop analyzing and start (continue) doing!

- When asked why he never got a job, the man replied "I'm too busy making wallets to hold all the money I will earn." Without ever actually getting a job, all his wallets remain empty to this very day.

### ■ 6) LEAVE IT TO HIM ■

Once we've done all we can working on all the above layers, now it is Hashem's turn to reciprocate, and fix up all the things which are beyond our capacity to deal with.

Earlier, we said that we have no free time, because we are given exactly enough time to fulfill our mission. Well, what about all the time wasted in the past? Until we invent a time machine, it is too late for us to correct them. However, Hashem is obviously higher than time, and when He sees we are doing all we can in the present, He repairs the past for us.

### ■ 7) WHO? ME? ■

More importantly, Hashem 'heals' us of the root illness, from which all problems stem. Without it, all challenges fall away automatically. It is an illness that has plagued us since the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge.

This illness is the illness of Self. Self-Consciousness, Self-Centeredness and Selfishness.

As much as we work, with a whole lifetime of Avoda, there will always be two separate things: me, and my Avoda/connection to Hashem/Bitul etc. The only way to escape this is through a power way above us. This comes as a reward for our work, from the highest 'echelons' of Hashem.

*Hatzlacha!*



## Early Night, Early Morning

Yosef M.

Not long ago we were informed of a new *shiur* in Crown Heights. The *shiur* is at five-thirty a.m., made up of three parts, Gemara, *halacha* and then *Chassidus*, and followed by *davening*. While it may seem unusual, it actually seems to be the most logical *seder hayom* for a *yid*.

Limmud HaTorah holds a primary role in our lives. It only makes sense to dedicate the best time of our day to learning, when the mind is clear and fresh and there are most likely no interruptions. An early-to-bed and early-to-rise schedule would also replace time that would otherwise be wasted,

with productive and accomplishing learning. And the order is also excellent; Gemara, *halacha*, and then *Chassidus*. These are the three areas of Torah in which everyone needs to be involved. Gemara comes first when the mind is most fresh, and *Chassidus* ends off as a preparation for *davening*.

Unfortunately, the night-life of *simchas* and evening events make it difficult to keep such a schedule. Chassunahs or Lchaims only open to

the public at nine-forty-five, and lectures and *farbrengens* are called for nine-thirty. People end up going to sleep late, and as such unable to rise before the morning light.

I don't know how to change this trend, and I understand that many people are not available earlier, but I think *balei simcha* and event organizers can be much more accommodating to the learning lifestyle we thirst to have.



## Public Privacy?

*Mushky Gordon*

This Hey Teves, as I was looking for some spiritual fuel for the special day I came across a fantastic book and some great articles that recount the exact history of the proceedings beginning to end. Although I very much appreciate it and am grateful to the author it was surprising to see with what ease the names and details of certain individuals were mentioned.

As far as I recall from *sichos*, the Rebbe never mentioned who took the *seforim* or who helped him with the abduction. Until recently, those who knew the details, knew, and those who didn't know, knew not to ask. Some things we just don't talk about. The Torah doesn't mention people negatively for no reason. When the Torah does mention a Yid negatively, the Rebbe goes to great lengths explaining to us why the Torah took the liberty in this particular case.

Another lack of privacy in relation to Hey Teves is the recent publicity of the video where the *seforim* are returned. To put it mildly it is a powerful video where the Rebbe tells the *chassidim* very strongly that they should go and learn instead of standing around to wait for the books. This video wasn't taken yesterday but there is a reason why it wasn't widely spread. Not everything that happens needs to be publicized. Certain things are meant to stay in the family. When a child is told off by his father it's an embarrassment meant to be taken to heart, only

a foolish child would paste it online for his friends to see, gloat at and scoff him.

A greater breach than unabashedly telling the events in detail or showing such films is the circulation of the Rebbetzin's testimony. Rather than the Rebbetzin going to court to speak about her father and the *seforim* she was filmed giving testimony in her own home. It is a long and painful interview where the Rebbetzin, advanced in her years, ever so regally responds to the barrage of accusatory questions. How such a personal film got to our hands baffles me. While watching it and learning so much from the Rebbetzin I felt a constant guilt imagining how the Rebbetzin, such a private person, would feel about her interview going public.

Yes, I did read the detailed history of Hey Teves and watch the video of the *seforim* being returned as well as the testimony of the Rebbetzin. Yet at the same time wonder what happened to our sense of privacy?

In recent years, with the social media revolution, privacy has become an outdated concept. People consider it normal to tweet what they are doing at each moment of the day and to upload awkward pictures. This secular fad it seems has found its way into our communities. It's not a Yiddishe concept to publish articles about politics in communities or the

faults of mosdos or individuals. And it is certainly not a *hiddur mitzva* to comment on such articles.

*Bnei Yisroel* are *bayshonim*, bashful. It's not natural for a Jewish website to have an entire section devoted to venting about shidduchim, it's a private topic. It's not Jewish to have personal pictures and videos broadcasted around the planet. Bilam praised the Jewish people for not being able to see what goes on in the tent of their neighbor. Could the same praise be said about us today?

Now that we do have access to certain private information or videos, I'm not suggesting that

anyone has to have the *iskafia* not to see it. However, I do think though that we need to take more care in being bashful, discreet, and more careful on what we choose to share. Certain things the Rebbe said specifically at a Shabbos farbrengen so it couldn't be recorded. Not everything that is said is meant to be heard by all. Some things need to stay in the family. Some things need a certain maturity or state of mind to be taken in the right way.

We should have the sensitivity to keep private matters private, both for ourselves and our community.



## A Time to Rejuvenate

*Boruch Shalom Wolf*

In light of recent happenings in our community, I've come to realize a need that our community has that remains unfulfilled.

Every year, thousands of shluchim gather to reenergize; to plug into a global camaraderie of shluchim. The vitality afforded to shluchim in just 4 days is indescribable. Anyone who has experienced the banquet can certainly relate.

The annual Nshei Chabad Convention is attended by hundreds of women. The women congregate at a retreat facility to enjoy workshops and lectures relevant to the life of the "Chabad woman." I can only imagine the immense benefit it affords the attendees.

However, Lubavitch men are forgotten. No convention, no retreat.

Approaching two decades R"L after Gimmel Tammuz, where does a regular Lubavitcher turn to gain inspiration? Where does he get that feeling of belonging to a collective community of Chassidim, which yields pride in who we are?

Sadly, nowhere.

I thus humbly propose to those individuals who endeavor to be activists to place the initiation of an annual Anash Kinus on their agenda. Design an uplifting weekend retreat for Anash men to go to farbreng together, attend pertinent workshops, and instill a reason to be proud of who we are.

In truth, something of this kind already exists to an extent. The experience of Shabbos Gimmel Tammuz at the Ohel is a prototype of what this event can be. This is a Shabbos of 2,000 Chassidim completely immersed in farbrenging, learning and davening together, without outside obligations, for 25 hours. Yet, its accommodations are not five star (though impressive and appreciated), it does not span the entire weekend, and perhaps most importantly, it doesn't reach those who have reservations regarding spending Shabbos at the Ohel.

Hence, a Shabbos at, say, the Brooklyn Marriott, with a well designed program, can help serve this purpose for ALL of the men in Anash. (Yes, plenty of Rabbonim, mechanchim and shluchim would love such an event as well.)

Let's make this happen!

It's not a Yiddishe concept to publish articles about politics in communities or the faults of particular mosdos or individuals by name. And it is certainly not a *hiddur mitzva* to comment on such articles.

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"It was on the eighth day," is how Parshas Shmini begins, the number eight being in reference to the seven previous days of miluim, during which Aharon and his children were trained into the avoda; then, on the next, eighth day, the mizbe'ach was inaugurated.

The Ki Yakar raises the following question: considering that the events which took place on this day were unrelated to the things that happened earlier, why should this day be described as the eighth? And he explains that in view of the fact that this day was described as the day when Hashem's glory would appear, there's a need to address why this day was special and featured the revelation of the Shechina, and being referred to as the eighth bespeaks the reality that it was of a caliber unlike the usual.

### Transcendent or Connected?

Seven represents our universe; eight indicates Hashem's presence. The world was created in seven days, chesd yemot berisot or ha'Bayan; on a level beyond that, there's Hashem, eight. Bris Milah overrides Shabbos because Shabbos takes place on the seventh, while milah occurs on the eighth, indicating that it is of a superior quality. The instruments in the Beis Hamikdash had seven strings, while those when Moshach comes will possess eight. And so, by referring to the day in our parsha as the eighth, Hashem's revelation becomes understandable.

The Ki Yakar's language is that seven is "chol," mundane, while eight is holy, although "chol" isn't literal, considering his example of milah and Shabbos, where Shabbos is holy as well; "chol" being used in a relative sense, because as holy as Shabbos is, it's entirely G-dly. However, the more the Ki Yakar explains why eight is superior, which is intended to justify why Hashem appeared then, the

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## TRANSCENDENT YET IMPACTFUL

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question of how it can actually be considered the eighth seems larger. The seven days of miluim seem even more unrelated than before, because the greater eight is, the more disconnected it becomes from the first seven. We must therefore conclude that eight is somehow both, demonstrating superiority on the one hand, yet displaying a connection on the other.

### BEYOND WORK OR REST

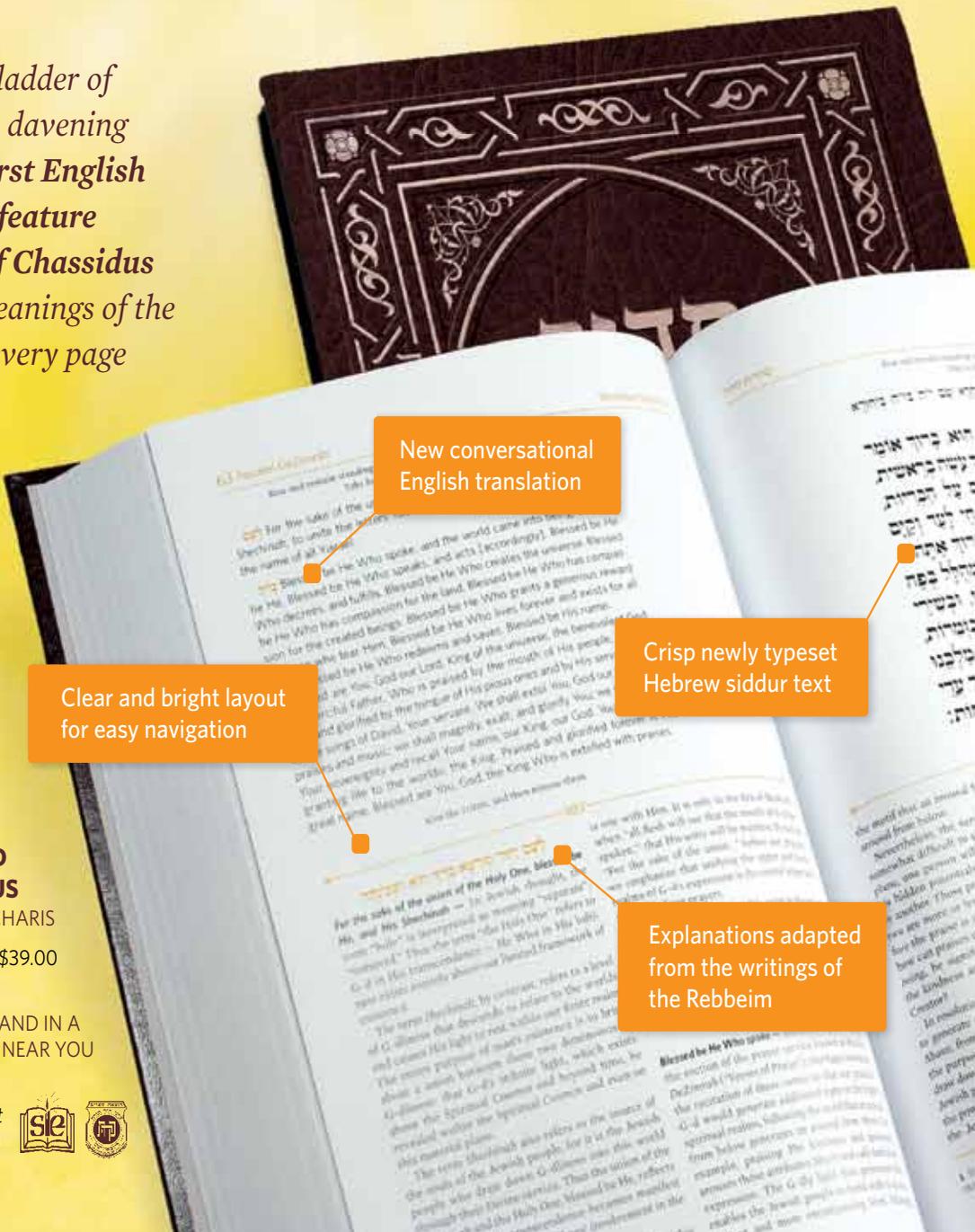
The Ki Yakar also cites a midrash which states that Moshe's great moments are always accompanied by the word "az," "since I came to Pharaoh," "Moshe then sang" and many more; the midrash then states that "az" (which equals eight) signifies that "the alpha rides the zayin." Zayin is seven, representing this world, either literally worldly things, or even Shabbos, but all within the world's parameters. But the alpha of eight is higher, and "rides" upon the zayin.

What does that mean? Riding doesn't just entail being higher; it also means impacting the entity below. When you ride a chariot, it doesn't lose its status, but the previously ordinary animal now become behodan to you, your chariot, and have been elevated.

Eight is completely G-dly, while seven is holy but still relatively so. Sometimes Shabbos is differentiated, "Hashem created the world in six days, and on the seventh day He rested," but on other occasions all seven are combined, like Shivas Yemei Breish. When it says that "Hashem concluded on the seventh day," there's the question of how that fits with Hashem resting on Shabbos. One of Rash's explanations is that the world was previously lacking rest, which Shabbos provided, indicating that Shabbos is still a part of creation, after which rest wasn't lacking. When a person works and then rests, both are actions in relation to the world he inhabits on a level

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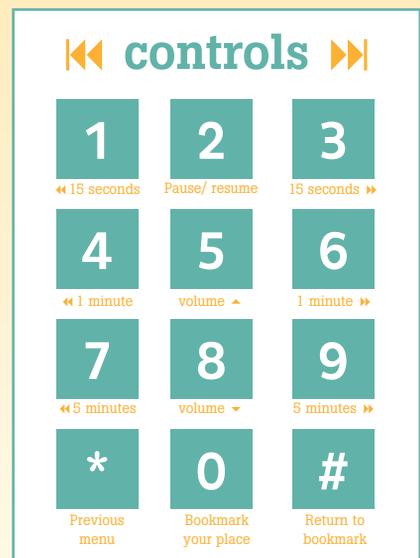
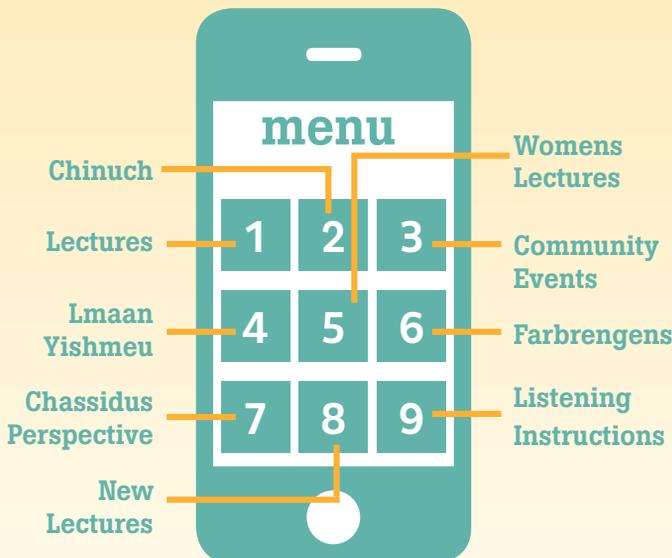
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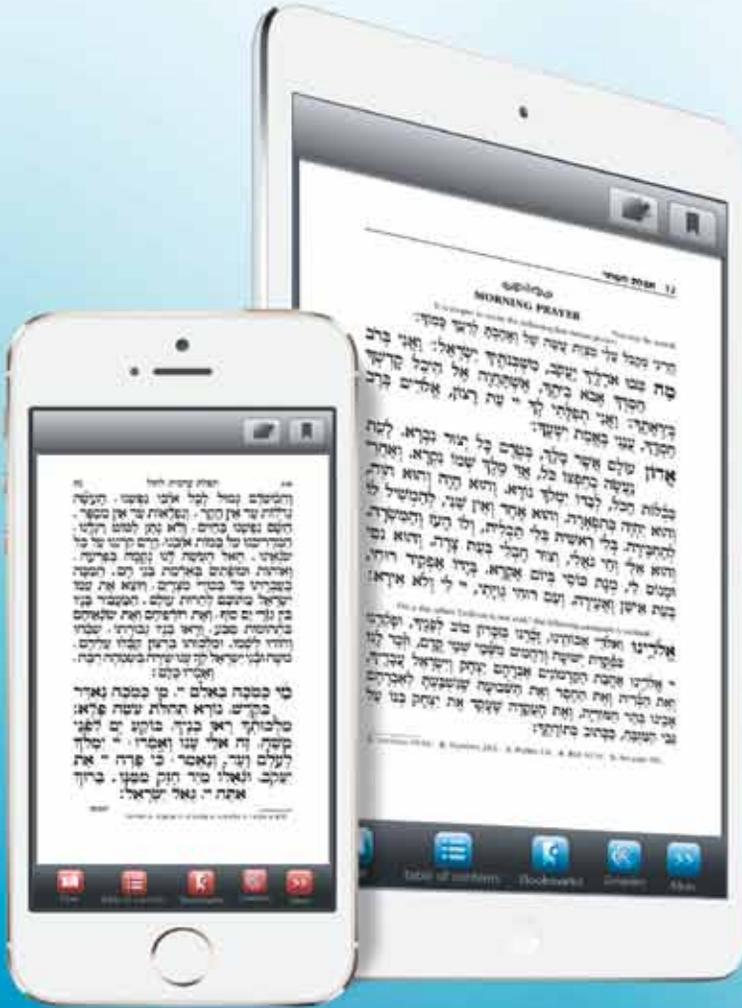
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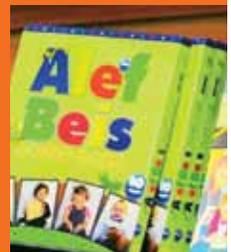
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