

ב"ה



Farbrengen with the *Rebbe*

התוועדות
יו"ד שבט ה'תשמ"ב



אשריינגטעם חרבי

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5778 - 2018



פתח דבר



כהמשך לפרויקט "פארברענגען חודשי עם הרבי" בשנה זו (על ידי "ועד תלמידי התמימים העולמי" וחברת JEM), שמידי חודש בחודשו יזכו תלמידי התמימים ואנ"ש בכל רחבי תבל להשתתף ב"פארברענגען עם הרבי" בבחינת "יהא רואה בעל השמועה כאילו עומד כנגדו" -

נצפה יחד בסרט-צילום מהתוועדות יו"ד שבט ה'תשמ"ב.

בקלטת זו נערכו כל השיחות ממהלך ההתוועדות עם תרגום מילולי ע"ג המסך.

התרגום המופיע על גבי המסך, נערך בצורה מילולית באידיש, בלה"ק, באנגלית, צרפתית, רוסית וספרדית - מתוך השתדלות להיצמד ככל האפשר ל"לשון הרב", למעט מקרים בודדים בהם נעשה תרגום ענייני יותר, להבנת הענין לאשורו.



כבכל חודש, בנוסף לוידיאו - מצורף גם קובץ זה היוצא לאור כדי לשמש כעזר וכסיוע להכנת תוכן ההתוועדות מראש, ובו 'הנחה' מההתוועדות **בתרגום לאנגלית** (באדיבות חברת JEM ו Sichos in English).

בנוסף לקובץ זה יצאו גם קבצים נוספים: א) **רשימה מילולית באידיש** מדברי כ"ק אדמו"ר (בהתוועדות. ב) **הנחה בלשון-הקודש** - תורגם ונערך ע"י חברי המערכת.



ויה"ר אשר בזכות ה'קאץ' בלימוד תורת רבינו, ובפרט באופן ש"רואה בעיניו ממש את המשלח, נשיא דורנו, שנותן לפניו היום שליחות זו", נזכה במהרה לקיום היעוד ד"תורה חדשה מאתי תצא", ונזכה לחזות באור פני מלך חיים, ולהשתתף בגשמיות ובמוחש בעוד פארברענגען עם הרבי, בביאת משיח צדקנו בקרוב ממש.

ועד תלמידי התמימים העולמי

כ"ח טבת ה'תשע"ח

Sicha 1

We've discussed this several times, but it is important to once again address a question that may arise among the participants here, so we'll briefly review its main point once again: We've gathered here in a holy sanctuary, where we pray to God "as servants to a master," and where we study Torah, which is "One with God," through which one unites with God, to the extent that Torah declares, "They are one." Yet we don't gather often every day in this manner or on this scale.

Here, "a multitude honoring the King" of the universe, has gathered to commemorate an event which occurred many decades ago, thirty-two years ago.

In general, this is quite a long period of time, and all the more so these years – and specifically these thirty-two years, which were very rich with events which, normally, should have taken many more years.

We've seen extreme change and the quick pace of progress over these years, progress both for the positive and in the opposite direction, as well.

In normal times, these events would have spanned a much longer time frame, but here they've occurred within a much shorter period.

This only seems to further distance our current day of commemoration from the time of the Rebbe's passing.

Nevertheless, we see, that our gathering has attracted individuals from various Jewish communities, all of whom belong to the "Wise and understanding nation." They are all aware that we are commemorating an event that occurred in the past, from a different

era, and as mentioned before, from an era when the world was vastly different from today.

Nevertheless, they gather willingly and gladly to join in and participate, regardless of the various inconveniences involved.

As mentioned, they are the “Wise and understanding nation,” and yet they obviously chose to participate, and in fact, from year to year more and more people join.

And the growth in quantity spurs a growth in quality as well.

We discussed this many times: Jewish law states that “a large crowd brings honor to the King.” Not only when nine people are joined by tenth, when together they constitute a minyan.

Even if you are person number eleven, or number one hundred and one, or one thousand and one, or even ten thousand and one, you are an important contribution to the “multitudes,” even though one or two people may seem insignificant when we have already reached a minyan, or a “minyan” of one hundred, one thousand, or ten thousand – those minyans apply in Rabbi Yosi’s opinion regarding the Grace After Meals.

Even if one person joins ten thousand, more honor has been brought to God, and if two people join, it honors Him even more.

Likewise, with every addition in quantity, there is a growth in quality as well.

The explanation is obvious: The very fact that people are attracted to come, and the very fact that from year to year new individuals are drawn to participate, is the evidence itself, genuine evidence, that we are not celebrating the past, rather something very current.

In fact, a similar celebration was held last year, and we see that “new fruit” have already grown since then.

As an aside, this idea is emphasized in the fact that mere days after Yud Shevat is the fifteenth of Shevat, the New Year for Trees.

The verse states, “Man is a tree of the field”; every person, and especially every Jew, is compared to a tree.

Now is the period of renewal for trees, especially according to the House of Shammai, which sets the New Year for Trees on the first of Shevat.

This is the season when they receive new freshness, new strength and new vitality, to continue their growth and to produce even more fruit, and better quality fruit.

As noted, this growth is testimony that the subject of this gathering is current and relevant.

The growth also ensures that the future will be superior to the present, for we'll go from strength to strength: We will each grow as an individual, and we will continue to produce more "fruit" as well.

One may ask: How can we claim that it's current, when the Torah of Truth mandates that when one specifies the date in a legal document, it must be dated thirty-two years later than a document written the year of the Rebbe's passing.

Doesn't this prove that the event is a piece of history? The answer :
It depends what was achieved during those years.

And it depends, as well, whose passing we're talking about, and also, which activities we are discussing.

The Talmud says "Wine improves with age." Certain things, as they age, don't weaken, Heaven forbid, or become less active, Heaven forbid.

To the contrary: With each passing year, the Rebbe's "offspring" become more alive, and grow stronger and greater both in quantity and in quality.

Certainly now, as many years have passed, and we are discussing a person whose goal and mission in life – which he actualized – was to imbue life into every person he encountered; spiritual life, as well as physical life.

His dedicated efforts are well known, including self-sacrifice when necessary, to help whomever he was able, in both their spiritual and physical needs.

He also taught all those whom he was able to reach, to produce “living offspring”; that they, too, should spread life, spiritual and physical vitality to their surroundings; beginning with oneself – not to suffice with what you have already attained, but to constantly grow, like a tree which continuously produces fruit.

The Rebbe influenced and raised generations of students and their students who are vibrant and alive, and who infuse life in all their surroundings.

They are guiding lights to others, kindling their souls, in turn.

They inspire whomever they meet, so they, too, should see themselves as messengers to radiate life to all those they meet.

So, in truth, the whole matter is reversed: With every passing year, the Rebbe’s legacy does not, God forbid, grow older and therefore weaker.

Rather, as time passes, his students become wiser, more observant, study more Torah and perform more good deeds.

And “He who has one hundred desires two hundred,” and once he achieves two hundred, he desires and does all within his power to achieve four hundred.

So with each passing year, the Rebbe’s legacy becomes stronger and more alive, continuously growing both in quantity and in quality.

And we have God’s assurance, that when we do our part, God will give us generously, measure for measure – but many times more, on a much larger scale, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

In the words of our Sages, who expressed very profound concepts in very concise words: “Toil, and you will find.” When you will toil and invest hard work, not only will you achieve your goal – in that case, it shouldn’t read “you will find” rather “you will achieve.” The term find connotes that you will achieve far beyond the expected return on your investment.

We will merit, through these good deeds and Torah study, which increase from strength to strength – with each new day that we

grow older, we also gain a new day which is filled with good deeds, Torah study and fulfillment of mitzvot...

This will hasten the era when "The world will be filled with knowledge of God" – when every person's days will be filled, and indeed, the entire world will be filled, with awareness of God, with knowledge of Godliness.

– and it will unite with Godliness through fulfilling the mission of humans beings, which are created in God's image: To do everything in our power, to emulate His compassion, and to follow in His footsteps; "Just as He is merciful, you be merciful." And to perform acts of kindness, including kindness to our souls: by always growing in our Judaism.

"Action is the main point": We must actually study the Torah, and actually fulfill the mitzvot faithfully.

This will hasten the moment when "Those who lie in the dust will rise and sing," the Rebbe among them, with the resurrection of the dead.

The Zohar explains that there are stages in the resurrection: The righteous of the world, the Jewish leaders, will be first to arise.

This is also evident from the Talmud's statement that "Moses and Aaron will be there": When the Third Temple will be erected, which will occur immediately after the final redemption, by the Redeemer, as Maimonides rules, Moses and Aaron will have already been resurrected and they will instruct us on the details of the Temple service on issues which we lack clarity, as described by the Talmud and the Tosafists.

In order to hasten his coming, and to do so in a joyful manner, in the spirit of today's portion of the Chumash based one Rebbe's study schedule instructions, as we will later explain – every single good action, every single good word every single good thought, and even a good resolution – if it is determined, and the decision is made firmly – it will surely be actualized in thought, speech and action.

It will enhance your own life and will also affect all your spiritual offspring, your students and pupils.

Then they, too, will be “alive” and will, in turn, be a source of true life to all their surroundings.

This will help bring, immediately, the hastened fulfillment of the prophecy, “Those who lie in the dust will rise and sing,” with the Rebbe among them.

And we will bring the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

May it be speedily in our days.



Sicha 2

We explained earlier, based on the Talmud, that if the Rebbe's children are alive, he too, is alive.

But more so, he has grown stronger over the many additional years during which he grew "from strength to strength." The term "His children are alive" is written in the Torah of Truth, so its every detail is accurate.

When you say that a human being is alive, it doesn't mean that the mind is alive while his heart is asleep, nor that one part of the body is alive while the other part is asleep or is, to some extent, not fully alive.

The same applies to "his children are alive." We are commanded by the Torah of Life – a name which connotes that it is a living guide for our daily lives – that "You shall be whole with God"; that one must safeguard his body.

Every limb in our bodies, every potential that God has given us, each of them, and all of them together, must be truly alive.

True life, as we said earlier, means not to remain stagnant, but to always grow and progress.

That's characteristic of a tree :

Even after a small sapling matures and attains the status of a tree, it continues to grow to taller heights.

We see, particularly here the United States, there are trees that existed at the time of the Giving of the Torah.

But notwithstanding their age, they continue to produce fruit and sprout leaves.

If it is so of plant life, it must certainly be the case with living creatures, and with human beings, and certainly, with those who “resemble God” :

the Jewish people, who are expected to lead lives based on Torah’s wisdom on a daily basis; not only in special circumstances but even in daily life.

As mentioned earlier, we must be “whole,” and not, God forbid, an “invalid,” whose body is mostly healthy, while one limb remains dormant and doesn’t perform its function.

We know the effect in our own lives :

When can the mind function properly ?

When all the limbs are healthy and performing their specific functions.

Only then can the vital organs like the brain and heart perform their vital functions, in a healthy and wholesome way; only when every limb is fully alive.

Everything in our life is reflected in the laws of the Torah of Life which is also called the Torah of Light, for it illuminates the path of every Jew in every detail of his daily life.

The Code of Jewish Law rules :

“All your actions must be for the sake of Heaven.” In earlier chapters we are taught how we must be humble, as servants before a Master immediately upon awakening – this is how the Code of Jewish Law begins.

Likewise, during the morning prayers, and likewise, when following the prayers, we conduct a Torah study session.

And then, after many chapters, the Code of Jewish Law sums it all up :

“All your actions must be for the sake of Heaven,” and “In all your ways, know God.” These refer to your personal affairs, when you aren’t occupied with mitzvot, Jewish laws, or Jewish customs.

They are “Your actions,” meaning, you have the free choice to choose any mode of conduct.

“Your ways” means the path that you have chosen.

But they certainly have a deeper intent and purpose.

The purpose of our mundane affairs is, in the words of the Mishna :

“I was created only to serve my Maker.” You were created for His honor.

Inasmuch as God fashioned us with personal interests and needs, it is our responsibility to infuse them with the same sense of mission and service of God, even though they are our own ordinary affairs, our own personal hobbies and interests.

We see practically :

How can a person fulfill his true purpose and potential ?

Or, in the analogy of the body :

When do the mind and heart function best ?

When every part of the body is performing its individual function to the utmost, – and these functions are quite unlike the brain’s or heart’s.

Even the toenails must function.

Toenails are the lowest part of the body.

Nails, in general, have the least life and energy, and especially the toenails.

They can be cut without feeling pain, because the life within them is so minimal.

Nevertheless, it is crucial that they function too, and achieve their potential of life.

In fact, the growth of nails and hair is a sign of a newborn's health.

And regarding adults, there is a specific task and mitzvah for each part of the body, including the nails and hair.

For example :

a nazir grows his hair; and we cut our hair and nails before Shabbos to fulfill the mitzvah of honoring Shabbos by entering Shabbos in a beautiful way, as instructed by Jewish law.

So too, spiritually :

Every person has a number of talents.

You must remember, that even once you fulfilled your main responsibility, you cannot neglect your other duties nor fulfill them out of habit, without investing real passion.

Torah commands us :

"All your actions must be for the sake of Heaven." In order for "Heaven" to be complete, you, here in this world, must conduct yourself in a way that all your pursuits achieve and add to glorifying God's Name and be "For the sake of Heaven," "To know God." Herein also lies a directive for those who deal not only with Jews, but also with non-Jews, and for those who deal primarily with non-Jews, or if they deal with people who don't conduct themselves properly.

You have a sacred mission to utilize those relationships for the sake of heaven.

You must influence every person with whom you come into contact, and educate them to conduct their own lives for the sake of Heaven.

And inasmuch as you were given this mission, God has undoubtedly also granted you the capabilities to accomplish it.

We've discussed many times that we live, today, in a benevolent country where a Jew can freely express his Judaism in his daily life.

There is nothing in our way; in fact, the authorities actually support it.

Each individual, therefore, must reach out to his fellow Jews, and constantly do more.

We cannot be satisfied to be a tzaddik, progressing in our own spiritual perfection.

You have the responsibility, as stated in Jewish law, being a Torah scholar, to pass on your knowledge to every single Jew whom you can reach.

And this obligation entails not only teaching Torah and mitzvot to Jews, but also a specific mitzvah :

to promote civilized conduct, and to teach justice and integrity amongst the non-Jewish society as well.

It is a mitzvah, as we've discussed many times, for every Jew to do whatever needed to promote the mitzvot which establish morality in the world as outlined in the Seven Noahide Laws and all their details.

And to emphasize, that this can't be a purely intellectual decision; One can't reason, "First I must understand it, and only then will I fulfill 'Thou shalt not rob' or 'Thou shalt not steal'" and the other commandments.

Rather, one must fulfill these laws just as the Jews fulfill the mitzvot :

with the pledge to "Do first, and then understand." A non-Jew must fulfill the Noahide Laws because God commanded him so through Moses.

This is part of the eternal "Inheritance of Jacob" :

Every Jew bears this responsibility, to the extent of his own abilities, to promote law and order in society at large, with the emphasis that it's the command of the world's Master and Creator, the only One who really understands what is true good for each and every person, in each and every situation.

He didn't leave humanity to fumble in the darkness.

He gave them the Torah of Light and, in it, gave guidance and instruction, including the Seven Laws for all of civilization, which, for every possible scenario, gives clear guidance for the non-Jew on how to deal with the situation.

Torah also directs to follow the “Law of the Land.” With regards to secular law Torah gives it the weight of Jewish law; secular law becomes a binding Torah law, so long as it does not conflict, God forbid, to Torah study and fulfillment of its commandments.

These laws of the land support Jewish observance, by bolstering peace and stability in the world, as Jeremiah said :

“Pray for the government, for in its peace, you too, shall find peace.” This mission to promote a civilized world is part of the duty of every Jew, and here, too, you must “do first and understand later,” and teach others to do the same through being a living example, and speaking sincerely from your heart, thereby affecting them and achieving your goal.

This promotes justice and morality in the world and brings true peace to the world, an enduring and lasting peace.

We learn regarding the Jews’ first exile, when they were exiled in the land of Egypt, that even in the darkness of exile, “The Jewish People had light.” They were illuminated by the light shown to them by Moses, the leader and “Faithful Shepherd” of the time.

Similarly, the leader of each subsequent generation illuminates the path for their flock, up to, and including, the Rebbe.

And by following in Moses’ ways, the Jews were freed from Pharaoh’s bondage, as we read in this week’s Torah portion, and in fact, Pharaoh aided the Jews in reaching Mount Sinai and receiving the Torah, becoming God’s servants, and eventually reaching the Promised Land, the eternal inheritance of the Jewish People.

The same applies to each and every exile, including, and especially, this final exile, which will be followed by everlasting Redemption, a true Redemption :

In these last days of exile, we have the ability to illuminate our lives by following the light of Torah and mitzvot fully, unabashedly and vibrantly, illuminating our lives here in exile.

This will prepare us for the Redemption of our righteous Moshiach :

At that time, God will unite all nations to serve Him.

Now is the time to prepare and train the nations to strive toward "serving God in unison," and its ultimate form will be when Moshiach comes, as an outcome of these preparations.

Through actualizing these concepts, we become "whole"; all our activities and pathways become complete, by following in God's ways, and living our lives as by His instructions.

The Code of Jewish Law explains, that God's name "Havaye" means Creator; He created us and gives us our existence, and God's name "Elokim" means He gives us life; He gives the strength and ability to achieve.

And in this path, we become "Whole with havaye elokecha." Teaching non-Jews, in turn, will help make you "whole" in your own life, because you will actualize your role as a teacher, a mentor and a guide, and as a community leader, each person according to his individual abilities.

This will prepare you and the entire world around you, for the time when "The Jewish nation goes out triumphantly," when, as mentioned in today's Torah portion, "Moses and the Israelites sang":

The Talmud says the accurate translation is :

"Moses will sing," in future tense.

"Moses" refers to all Jewish leaders; from Moses, the "Faithful Shepherd," through all Jewish leaders who followed – in fact, every Torah scholar is called Moses, as the Alter Rebbe explains based on the Talmud's teachings, and especially by Chasidic teachings, of the inner dimension of Torah, its "soul." The straightforward reason is :

Every scholar is part of a chain, as is every Jewish leader, leading back to Moses, the first leader.

May we merit to see all this in a practical manner, with our physical eyes, beginning with “Our eyes will behold your return to Zion,” with the coming of our righteous Moshiach.

Then we will behold the resurrection of the dead, and the advent of “the tenth song,” sung by Moses and the entire Jewish nation, and we’ll recite it each day in prayer, together with Moses and all Jewish people of all generations, with joy and happiness.

May it be speedily, in our days.

L’chaim.



Sicha 3

Everything we discussed earlier applies each time we commemorate Yud Shevat; it is equal every year.

Surely, however, we can also derive a particular lesson from the specific details which are unique to this year's commemoration.

If we were shown a certain fact, the Baal Shem Tov taught, it surely isn't for naught, for God creates nothing without a purpose.

Every detail, therefore, contains new insight to enhance our service of God both in quantity and in quality.

In this light, regarding the uniqueness of the specific date:

The total sum of years which have passed since the Rebbe's passing, surely contain a lesson which can give us insight that can be applied toward our purpose in life which is to serve our Creator.

This year is the thirty- second anniversary of Yud Shevat in 0-0, the day the Rebbe passed away.

When we recall that it is thirty-two years – the Torah of Truth which is also a Torah of Life, which guides us how to live by the light of Torah and mitzvot – a life worthy of its title.

Now it may seem to be no more than a number.

It reveals nothing about the item it applies to.

"32" can refer to years, months or days or thirty-two objects, and so on.

Nonetheless, when some- thing recurs every single year and is commemorated once a year – when thirty-two years have passed there is certainly a message here.

Indeed, number play a role in determining Torah laws.

In the system of Torah exegesis there are 32 different methods.

And one of them is to interpret numbers, and thereby derive actual laws:

Regarding the nazir, there is a numeric value of 30, and the numeric value teaches us that a nazir's vow endures for 30 days.

And similarly in other Torah laws.

When discussing the number 32, the first thought that comes to mind is its Hebrew spelling, Lamed Beis which spells the word "heart." The heart represents life; it is one of the three vital organs, and the heart represents a person's true life.

It is superior to the mind in this regard.

And this is expressed in Jewish Law, as well.

The concept of a heart is especially relevant when speaking of a Jewish leader who is likened to a king, for Maimonides rules in the Laws of Kings that a king is the "heart of the Jewish people." Now, his designation as lev, a heart, is a term in the Holy Tongue.

The Baal Shem Tov taught that an object's name in the Holy Tongue actually creates the object it sustains it, and it gives the object life.

So the current year, 32, is connected to the nasi, our heart.

Where can we find lev in Torah, which is "our life and the length of our days?"

We find it at the beginning and at the end:

The commentaries point out that the last words of the Torah scroll are "Kol Yisrael – all of Israel," which concludes with the letter Lamed.

And immediately thereafter, – as we recite on Simchat Torah – we read the first part of Torah; we link the end of Torah with its beginning, "Bereishit," the letter Bet.

Thus, when you connect the Lamed to the Bet, it creates the Hebrew word "lev – heart." The Torah is the "heart," the "king," of every Jew.

Just as “the king’s edict moves mountains,” we must obey the rulings of the Torah, and the Sages, because they articulate Torah Law, are called kings.

So the crucial part of the body and our most crucial elements spiritually, are called “lev – heart.” So this number inspires us once again in the directives we received from the Rebbe, who is “the heart of the people,” as discussed earlier.

When we ponder the fact that thirty-two years have passed, we are reminded that he is our heart, and we are connected to him as a body.

The physical relationship between the heart and body is devolved from the makeup of the soul; our bodies resemble our souls.

And the soul, in turn, derives its characteristics from Torah, the source of our life.

Contemplating the significance of 32 gives additional vitality to the “limb” – the person reflecting, it strengthens his bond with the heart.

Just as in a physical body.

The Alter Rebbe writes in Tanya, that for when a heart is healthy, the blood must circulate properly; it must spread from the heart to the limbs, and then return to the heart.

And the circulation must encompass every single limb in the body.

Then it is a healthy heart and a healthy body, just as the connection to the spiritual heart indicates a healthy soul.

Now is an appropriate time to reiterate, as we’ve just concluded the first Communal Torah, which concluded with the letter Lamed, and we immediately commenced writing the next Torah, starting with the letter Bet:

Now is the time to reemphasize the importance of this campaign; it is extremely relevant to our times, and it has invaluable worth:

It connects us with the true life, the Giver of the Torah, Who grants all life.

Each person should see to it – in addition to owning their own letter in the Torah – to encourage those who, for whatever reason, do not yet own a letter in the Torahs, to purchase a letter, with their own money.

It can be in any Torah; the Arizal wrote that all Jewish traditions have a holy source, and are equally valid; he describes their intrinsic value, even though he created his own unique tradition.

We must see to it that every Jew should own a letter in one of the Torahs; thus they unite with all other Jews in that Torah, and through their Torah scroll, they are united with all Torah scrolls, all the way back to the first Torah scroll which was written by Moses when God commanded him:

“Write for yourself this song, to teach it...” Through this unity, we will go with all the Torah scrolls to the Holy Land, where we will study Torah from the mouth of Moshiach, the Torah of Moshiach.

Its importance can be deduced from the following:

The last letter of the Torah is the Lamed of Yisrael.

The word Yisrael is an acronym for “Yesh shishim ribuy osios latorah – Torah has , words,” so within this phrase, the word which corresponds with the letter Lamed is “Latorah – to Torah.” That Lamed is directly linked to the Bet of “Bereishit,” which refers to the beginning of the creation of all existence; physical and spiritual realms.

This means:

When we fulfill “Latorah,” the Torah, then “Torah is the blueprint of the world” – and we infuse the Bet of “Bereshit” with life, and the world is again created by the Torah.

That is how the world was formed in the first place:

The Midrash states, “God looked into the Torah and created the universe,” and so too, today, says the Zohar, “A person who studies Torah sustains the entire universe.” So practically, when you own a letter in a Torah scroll, it enhances your life more – as the Rebbe explains in his Simchas Torah discourse of 5–6:

A letter in the Torah gives you vitality and strength, and becomes a vessel for blessings in everything you need.

And you can then share these blessings with all whom you are able to reach, including those whom you can influence to acquire their own letter in the Torah scroll.

Very soon, may all Jews be reunited, including those Jews behind the "Iron Curtain" – as it is widely known, although Torah declares:

"Even a barrier of iron cannot separate the Jewish people from their Father in Heaven." Especially when our spiritual unity becomes inscribed with physical ink on physical parchment, by a soul in a physical body – by a scribe who writes with his physical hands and fingers; it definitely has a permanent impact, a permanence with the power of Torah – an eternal and everlasting presence, and a true existence, being the Torah of God Himself.

And this effect will become manifest in the world:

The prophecies which describe the coming of the redemption, in the book of Daniel, at the beginning of the chapter, state:

"All your nation written in the book will be delivered." The commentaries explain this to mean "in God's book," so it also alludes to those who own a letter in Torah, for "Torah protects and saves." No matter what era it is, or in what state one may have been just a moment ago, the great angel Michael safeguards and saves him, and leads the entire Jewish people.

And soon, Moshiach himself will be at our lead.

And even more so, as the Talmud states on the verse:

"God will return your exiles" – He will not merely return the exiles, rather, God Himself will return with each and every Jew.

"Collecting them one by one," God Himself will gather each and every Jew, and will lead them all together to the true and ultimate Redemption.

May it be speedily in our times, in a manner that we have a complete Torah, together with a complete Jewish nation, "With our young and

our old, our sons and our daughters,” at a time when children will influence their parents – they all have a common “heart,” notwithstanding the fact that some are young and some are old.

We will all go together, as a complete nation, to the complete Land of Israel, which “God’s eyes are upon from the beginning through the end of the year,” and we’ll go with joy and gladness, as described in today’s portion of Psalms.

It concludes on the topic of song and joy – although it begins on the topic of exile, the same portion’s conclusion turns the darkness to light, “God illuminates my darkness.” And we’ll go glowingly, and in a happy way, and in a whole manner – a complete people, with the complete Torah to a complete Land, with the complete redemption.

May it be speedily in our days, through our righteous Moshiach.

L’chaim.



Sicha 4

We said earlier, that the portion of Psalms for Yud Shevat concludes on a note of joy and song

It begins with “He redeemed my soul in peace” – at the conclusion of the first chapter – and the conclusion of the entire portion is on the topic of joy and song.

Now, this portion is identical every Yud Shevat.

What is particular to Yud Shevat this year is that it falls on Wednesday of Parshat Beshalach.

The Alter Rebbe taught and instituted a custom to study a daily portion of the weekly Parshah; on Wednesday, to study the fourth portion.

Today’s Torah portion describes the Song on the Sea, the song of Moses and the Jewish nation

In fact, the entire Parshah is named “Parshat Shirah, the Portion of Song,” and the Haftarah has a similar moniker; even though the Haftarah and the Parsha cover other topics as well.

Especially following our custom to begin the Haftarah from the chapter preceding Devorah’s song.

Nevertheless, the entire Haftarah is titled by the song, and likewise, the Parshah, is called “Parshat Shirah, the Portion of the Song.” This serves to emphasize the Rebbe Maharash’s teaching on the Mishnah “The world is sustained by three things, Torah, Divine service and deeds of kindness.” These three sustain the world as a whole as well as its microcosm, the person.

All three must be performed joyfully and gladly, as explained in the Biblical verses and teachings of our Sages, beginning with the verse “Serve God with joy,” – that verse is specifically interpreted about prayer, “The service of the heart is prayer,” but it also applies to our general purpose in life, to all aspects of our service of God, which we must do with joy.

Likewise, regarding Torah study, the Talmud states that Torah study should begin with a humorous word, introducing the study with joy, not sadness.

Likewise, about charity Jewish law rules, based on Maimonides, one must give with a cheerful countenance and not, Heaven forbid, the opposite.

Even a neutral one doesn't suffice; Jewish Law specifies that one must give “with a cheerful countenance.” Surprisingly, this concept, in “Ethics of our Fathers,” “Greet every person with a cheerful countenance,” is stated by the House of Shammai.

Certainly then, it is of vital importance for the House of Hillel, and Hillel himself.

The meaning of this approach :

There are many ways to serve God; however, the ultimate way is to serve Him through joy.

Through infusing joy into our Torah, prayer and kindness.

In addition, Torah rules that we must “serve God in all we do”; all our activities are a part of serving God, – “For the sake of Heaven,” “To know Him,” – so everything must be infused with joy.

This leads to wholeness in our service of God, for joy breaches all of our limitations; it nullifies the limitations and restrictions of our personal intellect and desires, and even the limitation of “the heart and soul.” Joy enables us to serve God “with all our might” – to enlist every single one of our faculties to serve God out of love.

The Zohar explains that serving God joyfully evokes a mirror response from Above in the same joyful manner.

God's concealed kindness becomes revealed as evident and obvious good, a goodness which, in turn, evokes more joy.

When we break through our own boundaries and transcends our own limitations, acting out of love for God and not for the sake of any reward, as Maimonides explains in his Laws of Return in chapter ten, we can then serve God wholly, with all ten attributes of the soul.

When is our service complete ?

When we enlist "all our might" – the transcendent level of the soul.

Beforehand, one's service may have been adequate, but it doesn't reach its fullest potential.

You can reason, "My Divine service is adequate, I'm not obligated to do more," but that claim demonstrates that one's service of God hasn't broken through his limitations.

When you serve God with true love – and as mentioned before, Maimonides rules in his book of Jewish law, a practical rule, that we must serve God out of love – we see in our own nature, that when you serve a beloved, you do not calculate and measure that because you love him to a certain extent, you'll only serve him to that extent.

That is not how one expresses true love, and is not how to study Torah, nor will it suffice for our service of God out of true love.

Genuine love will engage all ten faculties of the soul; they will be permeated with a true willingness and a true delight, and then our Divine service could reach perfection.

We see in our own nature, that humans can suffice with little.

However, even if we can provide for our basic needs, still Torah declares, that "He who has, desires." Even if you can suffice with one hundred, by nature, it elicits a desire to acquire double.

And if you have amassed two hundred, it must elicit a desire to acquire four hundred.

And likewise, once you amass four hundred.

If that is human nature in physical matters, it must be so for spiritual matters as well :

concerning our dedication and enthusiasm for Torah study, prayer, and deeds of kindness.

Every element of a person can achieve perfection when the overriding nature is properly attuned.

And when our Divine service does reach perfection, through breaching our personal limitations, through song and joy, which breach all boundaries, as emphasized in the Torah portion of Yud Shevat this year, the Song of the Sea, we hasten the realization of a promise :

The Midrash speaks of “ten songs.” The first was sung by Moses at the Red Sea, and nine of these songs were sung before the final redemption.

The tenth song will be sung at the coming of Moshiach, with the true and ultimate redemption.

But this depends on our own actions.

Serving God with joy while in exile, is a proper preparation to having “Everlasting joy on our heads.” Our song and joy in exile is a proper preparation for the “Tenth Song.” And breaching our limitations in our Divine service, allows us, while still in exile, to breach our limitations in our physical matters :

“Life, sustenance, and children,” for us to merit them all in abundance.

May we experience the ultimate abundance, “My cup overflows,” and we’ll sing praise over a cup of wine, over the cup of our King Moshiach, when we will witness “Pharoah” expelling the Jews from this last exile.

In a manner, as the Midrash states on the verse “When Pharoah sent the nation out,” that when you plant a small measure of seeds, they multiply to a much greater measure.

Similarly, when Pharoah sent the Jews out, they were joined by a "Great multitude," in addition to the , Jews.

Similarly, we will bring along – in Kabbalistic terms – all of the "lost holy sparks," wherever they may be; we'll gather them from all corners of the universe, and bring them along with us, and likewise, we'll bring along every Jew, even those lost and assimilated in any forsaken corner.

"God will gather you from there and He will take you from there," with the true and ultimate redemption.

And we'll proceed to study Torah from Moshiach's mouth, just as following the Parshah about the Splitting of the Sea, we proceed to Parshat Yitro, which describes the Giving of the Torah.

The Giving of the Torah is a one-time occurrence, but we will have a similar experience with the redemption :

"Your Teacher won't be concealed; your eyes will see your Teacher"; "No longer will one teach his friend, for they will all know Me, from smallest to greatest." In the words of Maimonides, we will "Know our Creator" – God will be revealed.

May it be speedily in our day.

L'chaim.



Maamar

“I have come to My garden, my sister, my bride.” This is the title of the Rebbe’s discourse which he published for study on the first Yud Shevat, the Shabbos of his passing, and on each anniversary of Yud Shevat as well.

He begins by quoting the Midrash on that verse:

“‘My garden’ means ‘My first dwelling,’ for God once dwelled in this lowly world.

However, due to man’s undesirable actions, God’s presence retreated from this world, until the deeds of the seven righteous men brought His presence back down, until Moses, the seventh righteous man – and all sevenths are beloved – restored God’s presence here in the “garden,” in this lowly, physical world, which is the lowest of the low.

We too, influence God’s presence in this world:

Every Jew is righteous, and every Jew was given the Torah as a personal inheritance, and with it, we “make it permanent”:

Although God’s presence is already in this world, we ensure that His presence will remain, constantly and eternally, here in this lowly world.

Now, the term used to describe God’s presence is *istalek*, similar to the word for a Tzaddik’s passing:

histalkus.

The Previous Rebbe explains this in the beginning of the discourse, because Godliness is so lofty, it cannot be contained or expressed in

our lowly world; hence, the usage of istalek here, and also by a Tzaddik's passing:

Both are too lofty for our world.

However, the goal is that Godliness be expressed in physical materials within this lowly world, and this can be fulfilled by the command to erect a Tabernacle in which God dwells:

When from thirteen or fifteen physical materials which are elements of this lowly world, we form a holy place where God's presence can rest:

the Tabernacle, and likewise, the Holy Temples – an extension of Him dwelling “within the heart of every Jew.” For only when God dwells within the heart of every Jew will he be inspired to erect a Tabernacle.

Now, an essential part of the Tabernacle was “Make the panels from acacia wood, upright”:

To fashion wall-panels.

The Rebbe explains that the word acacia–shittim, means shtus–folly.

The Talmud says, “One only sins when he is overtaken by folly,” for a Jew, by nature, will not transgress God's will.

The Zohar states that the verse “If a person sins” – a verse which discusses mere inadvertent sins – should be read as a question:

We know that God protects the righteous from sinning, “so how can a Jew ever sin?” The Torah of Truth is baffled by this problem – which is also the Torah of Life.

So by taking acacia –shittim wood, we reveal God within the folly – shtus of this world.

For although God is the life-force of the world, as Maimonides explains in his work in the first chapter of Hilchot Yesodei Hatorah, His presence is, nonetheless, concealed, and in order for us to develop a love and fear of God we must contemplate the matter first,

and then come to a realization – we must recruit our entire intellect to make God tangible in our lives.

In other words, we take the folly of the world and fashion from it panels for the Tabernacle, “upright panels,” – upright meaning lofty, like angels.

The Midrash compares the “upright panels” to the “lofty angels.” But unlike angels, we have the power to grow and progress.

We thereby “turn darkness into light,” and reveal Godliness in this world a far more lofty revelation than anything prior, and then “God dwells,” God, Who is beyond all limitations, reveals Himself, as the Midrash said, as one is revealed in his own dwelling place:

with his authentic, uninhibited self.

In the words of the verse, “The highest heavens can’t contain You, but this house could.” He dwells in “this house” – in the heart of every Jew, and with their heart’s generosity, they erect a Tabernacle, and the Holy Temple – may it occur with the ultimate redemption speedily in our days through our righteous Moshiach.

Now, in order to transform the worldly shtus – folly into a shtus of holiness and transform its untamed nature for good – creating “upright panels” which continue to grow and become more spiritual, we need to wage a battle.

For only a war will arouse us to fight with the depths of our soul and then we will be ensured a victory.

God is called “the Lord of Hosts,” and “it is because He wages war,” says the Midrash.

He inspires the Jewish people to wage war against the lowly world, and He brings about the victory in these wars of “God’s army,” as the Jews were called when they left Egypt, their first exile.

Since then, every single Jew is considered a soldier in God’s army; “I was created to serve my Master,” here, in this lowly world, to illuminate its darkness by being victorious over the forces of darkness.

Now, we see that a mortal king will squander his treasures, and even his ancestors', treasure-houses which he wouldn't spend on regular expenses.

During a war, he'll squander them in order to achieve victory.

So too, God gives His treasures to His army, the "Army of God." "God's treasure is the fear of heaven." The Rebbe writes in the discourse – also based on the above allegory – that when God assists us he does so in a manner that we achieve victorious in a peaceful way.

Many sources describe the concept of a peaceful victory – as will occur at the end of this last exile – when no warfare is waged at all; we will peacefully attain a genuine redemption, in peace, as in the days of Solomon, and the time of Moshiach will be even beyond that.

Now, to explain what the treasures are, and to better comprehend their impact, he explains in chapter 12, which corresponds with this 12th year, of the second twenty-year cycle – his discourse has twenty chapters, so each year corresponds with one chapter, and at its conclusion, in 0, we began another round of twenty.

These two twenties correspond with the "double letters" which connote redemption.

In this twelfth chapter we learn – just as we learned 20 years ago, in the first round – regarding the treasures:

The Zohar states that God's infinite light reaches "the lowest of low to no end, and the highest of heights with no limit." That "highest of heights." is the "treasure." So to appreciate the uniqueness of the treasure, he begins by examining the uniqueness of "the lowest of low"; from there we can gain insight into the significance of the "highest of heights," the "treasure." The Rebbe explains, that Godliness is called "the Light of Infinity." Now, based on the sources, – including Eitz Chaim which expounds on this term – this doesn't refer to a light which shines from a place of infinite Godliness.

"The Light of Infinity" means that the rays of Godliness themselves are infinite.

Although a ray is only an expression of light, it adopts the characteristics of its source:

In this case, Godliness, which is infinite.

Moreover, This level of Godliness has no beginning or end.

So the light which shines from Godliness, too, is called infinite.

How can an infinite light correlate with a finite world?

For this, God “constricted” Himself:

By “clearing a space in the infinity,” a finite world becomes possible.

Nevertheless, the “Light of Infinity,” even in “the lowest of low,” remains infinite, as the Rebbe explains in Chapter 12.

This “lowest world” is even more unique based on the beginning of the discourse:

The “lowest of the low” is God’s own original dwelling.

Although it was created through His tzimtzum – constriction, this world, specifically, is His dwelling place – God Himself, not His “Infinite Light.” And this occurs through our efforts, in the lowly realms created through the tzimtzum and specifically in ours, the lowest of all worlds.

This is based primarily on the concept explained in the Arizal’s writings, as well as in Mavo She’arim and Otzrot Chaim:

Initially God’s Infinite Light filled everything; and because of the revealed Infinite Light a finite world could not exist.

So the tzimtzum was formed to “clear a space” for a distilled form of Godliness which can coexist with our universe.

And specifically down here we can connect with God Himself:

through our victory, He reveals Himself and His deepest essence “dwells” in our midst.

This can be connected to the famous teaching which the Previous Rebbe cited from the Alter Rebbe:

The verse states "Who is like our God..." that God answers us, "Whenever we call to Him." The Pardes quotes the Sifri's commentary:

"When we call to Him – not to his attributes." The Alter Rebbe also quotes the Baal Shem Tov's commentary, but then he offers "the straightforward meaning":

We pray not to any expression of Godliness, nor to His "Infinite Light":

"Him" means "God's deepest essence"; whenever a Jew prays, he prays to no attribute of God's, only to God alone.

On a similar note, the Baal Shem Tov teaches – cited in Kesser Shem Tov – that God concealed His presence from numerous worlds, so that a Jew, through his efforts, should be able to unite with God "the Creator of all those tzimtzumim." Obviously then, a Jew reaches higher than all of these tzimtzums, to a place where tzimtzum is non-existent, and definitely not dominant.

This is also consistent with the opening statement of the Maggid's writings.

His works Likkutei Amarim and Or Torah both begin with the statement that the relationship between the Jewish people and God is like a father who constricts himself:

He lowers himself to play with his child.

Obviously, our relationship is with God's essence; just as the love of a father to his children comes from the essence of his being.

Why is that the case with mortal parents?

Because that is the case with God.

Our physical relationship stems from the spiritual.

We find a similar concept in the Alter Rebbe's prayers.

The Mitteler Rebbe explains in Shaar Hayichud that "Heaven" in Kabbalistic terminology refers to Godliness loftier than the tzimtzum.

Now, when the Alter Rebbe would pray he would say, as the Tzemach Tzedek quotes him, “Whom do I have in heaven; I desire no one with You on earth.’ I don’t want your paradise,” and so on.

He was rejecting even the levels above the tzimtzum; and he would conclude, “I only want You alone,” God Himself.

This is consistent with our previous citation, “Call to Him – not to His attributes” which, the Alter Rebbe explains, refers to God’s very essence.

A similar concept is often taught by the Rebbe Maharash, and especially in his discourses from 7–7, where he cites the Alter Rebbe’s discourse titled:

“To understand the concept of Infinity” – which is directly related to our discussion – along with the glosses and comments of the Tzemach Tzedek and Rebbe Maharash, and later in that year, in the discourse titled:

“Naftali is a swift gazelle–ayalah shluchah.” He asks, why is ayalah shluchah written in female form?

He answers, that everything after the tzimtzum is “weak like a female.” Likewise, the verse “You created–at asis” is in female form, because it refers to creation after tzimtzum.

Only through our own efforts and prayers do we elevate it beyond the tzimtzum, to a most lofty place, beyond the limitations of “high” versus “low,” as in the Alter Rebbe’s prayer.

Every person must take a lesson from this:

You can elevate yourself, and truly fuse yourself with Godliness, and ultimately reach a level of worship where “I want nothing but You alone.” This unification with God can be materialized through the “thirteen or fifteen elements” which represent the entire creation:

through our efforts to elevate this lowly world, and create a dwelling place for God.

And this world is “the lowest of the low”:

The Previous Rebbe speaks of a single tzimtzum, but as we quoted the Baal Shem Tov, "God created many tzimtzumim through many worlds." This concept is discussed in detail in the discourses of the Rebbe Rashab, in numerous places; there are many tzimtzumim, and they are generally defined as three:

1) Before the creation of the spiritual realm of Atzilut, 2) Between Atzilut and the lower spiritual worlds, and 3) Before the creation of physical worlds.

Clearly, Godliness is very concealed in the lower realms.

And regarding all these tzimtzumim the Baal Shem Tov says, "He created many tzimtzumim through many worlds," all with the intent to give every Jew the ability to unite with God in a powerful fusion to the extent that they become indivisible.

This all is brought about through our efforts, as the Rebbe details in the following chapters:

When we utilize the treasures which God gives every Jew, being a member of the "Army of God." When he fulfills his mission and is victorious, with the assistance of God's treasures, we bring the true and ultimate redemption, when "God's glory will be revealed, and all will see that God spoke." And this happens principally in "My dwelling place"; "Where I was originally," in this world, the "lowest of the low." May it be speedily in our days, in the Holy Temple, in the Holy Land, which "God's eyes are upon from the beginning to the end of the year," in our physical lifetimes, and we'll go with our spiritual "silver and gold," as well as our physical silver and gold, children, life, and livelihood in abundance.

And literally:

May we go very soon, with the true and ultimate redemption through our righteous Moshiach, "With our young and old, our sons and daughters," to the Holy Land, "with the joy of days bygone." May it be speedily in our days.

Sicha 5

We mentioned previously the Alter Rebbe's teaching on the verse "To all those who call." It is puzzling.

The Alter Rebbe cites the Pardes' explanation, and then cites the Baal Shem Tov's explanation, but then he explains the pshat – straightforward meaning.

In addition to the first two explanations, he suggests something radically different.

The other explanations maintain that we pray to specific attributes of Godliness, but the Alter Rebbe says that we pray only to God's Essence, God Himself, and says that it is the most straightforward approach.

This is entirely out of character.

The regard which the Alter Rebbe had for the Baal Shem Tov was well-known, and likewise, toward the author of the Pardes.

Yet here, not only does the Alter Rebbe propose his own approach, and maintain that it is the most straightforward – in fact, he quotes all three explanations, prefacing that the Pardes has one approach, the Baal Shem Tov has another, but this is the pshat!

And he emphasizes, that his pshat is the basic concept of prayer.

In simple terms:

When a Jew prays – though there are some lofty individuals who are knowledgeable in Kabbalistic meditations – they, too, must pray to God alone.

This is certainly the case for those who aren't well -versed in those meditations; they pray, in the words of one famous rabbi, "I pray with the mindset of a young child." This is the truest form of prayer, the Alter Rebbe says, the most straightforward approach.

Now, in this pshat, there are two virtues:

Firstly, any person can relate to pshat, while a more intellectual approach, delving into the Torah's deeper meanings is beyond the scope of many individuals.

A young child, studying Torah in school, can only be taught pshat.

And likewise, there are many adults too, who, for whatever reason, cannot comprehend the deeper elements of Torah, and can only comprehend the method of pshat.

And when it comes to prayer, the ultimate way to pray is simply; "as a servant before his master." For any of a king's subjects, when one stands before him, he must disregard his own prominence – that he is a powerful minister, or even a regular official, or, at the least, a minor one.

When he stands before his king, he is nothing but a servant.

That is how one truly accepts the king's authority, and this is how one truly accepts God's kingship.

The Talmud brings a case where this was applied to practical law:

When, standing before King David, Uria the Hittite referred to Yoav as "My Master," it was considered a lack of deference to the king, and he forfeited his life.

This same concept applies in prayer.

Now, to answer the question:

The Alter Rebbe sees all three explanations as linked:

The depths of understanding which you can attain through contemplating the Pardes, becomes more meaningful when, after understanding the Pardes, you approach the Baal Shem Tov's teaching, and you contemplate its meaning.

And then, you will gain an appreciation for the Essence of God, God Himself which is the straight- forward meaning:

that we pray to God Himself.

Thus the Alter Rebbe's preface is necessary.

Obviously, the pshat – basic understanding – is meaningful for those who don't know the explanations of the Pardes and Baal Shem Tov.

However, some might think that if they do know the other two, the pshat isn't relevant for them.

So the Alter Rebbe emphasizes to the contrary:

By first studying and contemplating in the method of Chabad, employing your entire intellect to understand the teaching of the Pardes, and then the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, you will fully appreciate the basic pshat – prayer to God as He transcends any attributes, God's very Essence.

On a similar note, there is a concept in Jewish Law cited in Tanya – the fundamental work of Chasidism, but also includes important elements of Jewish Law:

The most important part of a mitzvah is the deed itself.

True, a mitzvah or prayer without proper intent “is like a body without a soul,” but nevertheless, if one has the best intentions without the actual deed, he does not fulfill the mitzvah at all.

On the other hand, the straightforward deed alone does accomplish the mitzvah, and as “One mitzvah leads to another,” with time he'll learn the proper intent as well.

This all leads back to our earlier discussion:

When God desired that a Temple be built for Him – and prior to that, the Tabernacle – how did He want it to be done?

He asked that the Jewish people bring thirteen or fifteen physical materials, from which they would “build Me a sanctuary,” and then “I will dwell among them.” At that very moment, Torah tells us, God had an already complete Tabernacle!

The verse says, "Build it, as you'll see on the mountain." The entire Tabernacle that was later built was shown to Moses on Mount Sinai, but it was made of fire; it existed spiritually.

God says:

everything already exists spiritually – He even has a complete Tabernacle.

Yet, He says, how will "I dwell among you"?

How will God's Essence be revealed on this earth?

The Tabernacle of fire won't do; it must be of this world and its physical materials.

For what is the source of all physical matter?

Godliness.

"Torah is the blueprint of the world":

The Midrash says, God saw the verse "Let there be light," so He articulated it and then, "there was light." The Tabernacle must be of physical materials, and likewise, everything we do to serve God, "In all your ways, know Him," and "All your actions for the sake of heaven":

We must specifically deal with the physical world.

Torah deals specifically with worldly objects; "Torah is not in heaven." It seems puzzling:

To fashion a Menorah, we are shown a "Menorah of fire." To erect a physical Tabernacle, we are shown "on the mountain" a "Tabernacle of fire" – and this doesn't refer to physical fire; it means a spiritual form.

Yet when does God dwell among us?

Only when a Jew – a living soul, and in a physical body – takes of his gold, silver, and copper and all the materials listed there, and gives it to God:

“They shall make for Me – for My sake.” Only that is the true Tabernacle, one that becomes a dwelling place for God when even “the heavens cannot contain You,” as King Solomon said of the First Temple.

Where must this dwelling place be?

Specifically in this lowest place.

The gold, silver and copper that they used were from the spoils of Egypt and the Sea.

The items were “robbed” of their coarseness, and were elevated to a refined physical state capable of being a vessel, a Tabernacle, for holiness, “for Me – for My sake.” In this way, we “rob” the world of its coarseness and lowliness, and we abolish it entirely.

We reveal that the world’s essence is Godliness.

And thus, in these very physical things the world’s true identity can be revealed.

As Maimonides writes in the beginning of his work:

“Everything comes from the truth of God’s Being,” and he continues, “And God is true”:

This ultimate truth, the existence of God Himself, as discussed in the above-mentioned discourses, shines into our lowly world; the darkness is refined, and transformed to light, through transforming the “folly” into “wisdom”; through elevating the folly – shtus of this world, and transforming it into wisdom, Godly wisdom, meaning Torah’s wisdom.

And in this world, we can appreciate the contrast:

When light is compared to darkness, we truly understand its value.

When one sees an image of light alongside an image of darkness and obscurity, it highlights the beauty and the brilliance and the advantage of the light because it comes forth from the darkness.

This idea is emphasized in next week’s Torah portion, which tells the story of Jethro, and follows with the Giving of the Torah.

The Zohar explains, that before we could receive the Torah, God specifically wanted Jethro – who truly understood the darkness of the world being a Midianite Priest who had partaken in all sorts of idol worship – but had then, “Heard and converted.” He was able to elevate the darkness and utilize his former state to be able to truly declare, “Now I know that God is greater than all other Gods,” and to recognize God’s miracles, as the verses continue, “he heard what God did for Israel.” Specifically through elevating darkness, Torah impacts our world, the lowest of the low.

For the Torah is infinitely loftier than our physical world, and even within this world:

Abraham studied the Torah, and so did our ancestors in Egypt, however, the Torah they studied was only on a lofty spiritual level; it did not come down and impact this world.

The shadows and the darkness remained as powerful as ever, even when, for short moments, the darkness was utilized for holier purposes.

What did Jethro achieve?

“Now I know”:

After all his experiences – some holy ones, and some the antithesis of holiness – he was able to recognize the truth of Judaism.

“Action is the main point.” No matter how great, sublime or spiritual your intent may be, what is demanded of a Jew is that he should take his physical arm, and on his left hand he should literally wrap Tefillin.

And then, the physical arm, which is a mere shadow of his spiritual arm – the life-force present within the physical arm – this “shadow” becomes a tool through which God’s desire is fulfilled.

This brings to the perfection of both the physical hand and the spiritual hand, for true perfection is to fulfill God’s will, and God desires the actual deed.

Now, as the Rebbe said in his discourse, God wants not only a dwelling place, but a dwelling place which is also a garden, "I have come to My garden." A garden is more than a home, it's a place of pleasure and enjoyment, as we see with the first man, Adam:

God placed him in the Garden of Eden, so that he should lack nothing; everything he could possibly need, even comforts and luxury.

Not only were his needs provided for, he was also given the greatest wealth and luxury possible.

This means, pursuant to the earlier discussion:

There are certain basic obligations for every Jew:

to fulfill the mitzvot, the positive mitzvot, – in their simplest form:

physically fulfilling them – and likewise, to keep the negative mitzvot.

But to reach perfection, we must utilize all the faculties that God gave us, and become "Whole with God":

we must be whole, perfect and complete, and in which manner?

"Whole with God"; To be entirely engrossed with God, Godliness and Judaism.

It is clear from the above, that it is not enough to have a "Jewish heart," or to have "a Jewish head," although one's mind and emotions may be entirely immersed in Judaism and Jewish matters.

It is also necessary that every limb of our body, down to our toenails, be "whole with the Lord, your God." It must be evident in them that they belong to a Jew, who is as a Jew should be:

One with God.

For through Torah, "Jews, Torah and God are all one." Like an only child of elderly parents, the Baal Shem Tov says, who are bound together with an innate love.

A first child born to elderly parents, the Baal Shem Tov said, are bound together with a powerful love, and are inseparable; "they are all one." This relationship can be revealed by making God's entire creation into a dwelling place for Him.

In God's creation, some items are light, and other parts which, compared to the light, represent concealment, darkness and shadow.

And they too, can be part of a Tabernacle for God.

The Tabernacle itself had various utensils; utensils for the removal of soot and ashes, etc.

These, too, were part of the Tabernacle, and essential for its perfection.

And likewise, in the Holy Temple.

The same is true for every Jewish man and woman:

God says of every Jew, "I will dwell within them." Our Sages point out that the verse should have read, "Make Me a sanctuary and I will dwell within it," within the Tabernacle.

But it reads "I will dwell within them," for the ultimate purpose is that God dwell in the heart of every Jewish man and woman.

This is achieved when we take everything in our world – whether they are as valuable as gold, or as ordinary as copper and all the other materials listed – and make them all into one unified Tabernacle and Temple for the one, single God, for God's Essence.

And then we become "One nation in the land." The Alter Rebbe explains that "in the land" means even in the mundane, while dealing with mundane matters.

While doing the mundane, we resemble a nation like all others, and those who do not see the true Essence of the world can, God forbid, think, that "The Jews are like all the nations." We are told:

You are "One nation in the land." Even in "the land," and in its lowest state – the state of exile, we are still "One." Even while scattered all

over, we remain “One nation,” for we are connected to the One God, by living our lives according to the dictates of God’s one Torah.

And we make the entire world a Tabernacle, a conduit through which Godliness is revealed in this lowly world, the lowest of the low.

And thereby, we “Tip the scale for ourselves, and the world” in the words of Maimonides, “and bring salvation and redemption,” and we bring the world to a state of Godly perfection and wholesomeness, when God “will give the nations a pure language, to worship Him of one accord.” May it be speedily in our days; through our efforts, as noted above:

Specifically in a manner which impacts this lowly world and illuminates it, we will bring the true and ultimate redemption through our righteous Moshiach, speedily in our day.

L’chaim.



Sicha 6

“One nation in the land,” the Alter Rebbe explains, as discussed earlier, means that Jews retain their status even “in the land,” even while occupied with mundane matters.

Although “the land” also has a spiritual connotation, here it refers to the mundane:

Even when the Jews are “in the land,” they remain “one nation,” even though they are scattered in exile.

Moreover, the Alter Rebbe explains, the meaning of in the land – that the Jews reveal, within the land, the concept of Oneness; the singular truth of Godliness.

That “This palace has a Master”; the universe didn’t create itself, God created it from nothingness.

“In His goodness, He continuously renews the work of creation,” as the Alter Rebbe explains in Shaar Hayichud V’ha’emunah based on the Baal Shem Tov’s philosophy about creation.

This revelation occurs when “All our actions are for the sake of heaven,” and we “Know God in all our ways,” as expected in Jewish Law.

As a result, one leads a harmonious life without inner conflicts and discord, and without disturbances to one’s peace of mind, because he has a singular ambition:

To serve God in everything he does.

As a result, he will not be torn between the Evil Inclination, on the one hand, and the Good Inclination, on the other.

He won't falter in the battle between the two conflicting pulls, because he already won the war – he has only one identity.

He is of the one nation, which serves One God, by conducting their lives according to His one Torah, and as discussed earlier, specifically “in the land,” and particularly, in physical and mundane matters.

This connects to the unity of the Jewish people amongst themselves, that we are literally “One nation.” Despite the fact that Torah categorizes us from “The heads of the tribes,” and “the wood-choppers and water-carriers,” and also divides us into twelve tribes, and as Israelites, Levites and Kohens, and so on and so forth – all genuine divisions based on the Torah of Truth nevertheless, there is something that unites us all and makes us one entity, and this common denominator is our true essence and identity.

Their categories – one being a head, and another a water-carrier – are insignificant considering the fact that they are “all of one kind, and have one Father.” That is our essence, and all divisions are only external.

Although regarding the Birkat Kohanim, only a Kohen blesses the congregation, and when the Kohen washes his hands, it must be performed by a Levite or firstborn, and the blessing is received by Israelites, men, women and children, each and every other Jew.

But this is all insignificant compared to what unites them:

The Jews are one entity when they “stand before Sinai,” to receive the one Torah from the One God.

This emphasizes the concept of Ahavat Yisrael, and that we are “One nation apart”; we must recognize that “God chose us from all nations,” and moreover:

He “raised us above all tongues.” We mustn't think, God forbid, that our fate is dependent on our own doing.

"Strategies will be foiled, and plans won't materialize," because "the word of God will stand forever," and "God is with us." Among the nations, God created the Jews and He chose them to be His people, and similarly regarding the Land of Israel:

He created all the lands, and from among them, He chose one for His Temple, "The place which the Lord your God will choose," the Land of Israel.

And He gave His chosen land, to the people He chose, for all eternity, just as He is eternal.

As we've discussed many times, true Ahavat Yisrael which generates true Jewish unity, also brings to a love for the Land of Israel, and the unity of the Land of Israel, including the territories which God granted us through open miracles, during these dark days of exile before Moshiach.

This includes Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights, and all territories under Jewish jurisdiction which they acquired in openly miraculous ways, and even the non-Jewish nations declared "It's the Hand of God; only God could have performed such a miracle, in spite of the fact that the Jews are a sheep amongst seventy wolves." And according to Torah and Jewish Law, in the Code of Jewish Law in the Laws of Shabbat, it is forbidden to relinquish a single inch of the territories which were received.

Because it compromises the security of every Jew people, the Torah of Truth, the Torah of Life – the directive for our lives – rules that even on Shabbat we must arm ourselves and assert that we won't relinquish anything.

And then, "the nations will see that God's name is upon you":

When the nations will see and hear that Jews go with the strength of the Torah and declare that the Code of Jewish Law rules that it is forbidden to relinquish any territories which are under Jewish control.

Now, we do not yet have full sovereignty over the entire Land of Israel, and we must wait for the coming of Moshiach; not, God forbid, through our own power and might.

But on the other hand, and most significantly, the very same one Torah rules that whatever we already have – Judea, Samaria, the Golan Heights, etc.

etc.

which are vital to the country's security, we must not give one inch, nor even half an inch.

This is especially the case with the consideration we said earlier, that we beheld with our own eyes how, through open miracles, Jews received the territories, when the “fear of the Jews fell upon them.” Most of the ammunition prepared was unnecessary; the enemy fled, knowing the Jews were coming, and that while “they trust in chariots and horses,” the Jews “go under God’s banner,” they “call in the name of God.” This achieved an open miracle and we received those territories, which will remain in our possession for all eternity, as an eternal inheritance, from the Eternal God, to the eternal nation, starting from God’s covenant with Abraham.

May it be peacefully, with a genuine and lasting peace, that we not need to use the weapons, God forbid.

It will be sufficient for the enemy to know that Jewish Law commands us to defend ourselves, and that we are willing to fulfill its dictates.

This is the only way, because there is only one truth, and truth knows no compromise; there is no half, third or fourth of a truth.

If something is a little untrue, it is entirely untrue.

The Torah of Truth, given to us by the True God, gives us the strength to act truthfully, and then we’ll experience true peace, and lead true lives – not a delusional one, convinced that we are, God forbid, inferior to a different nation, or that Judaism, God forbid, is dependent upon anything un-Jewish; to the contrary, “Kings will be

your servants and their princesses your wet-nurses" when we'll follow Torah and mitzvot, which includes this fact:

When God gives us a gift in a miraculous way, and states clearly:

In a matter of life and death, be stringent even when in doubt, and certainly when there is definite danger.

Follow Jewish Law, for Torah can control reality:

The Jerusalem Talmud states that a Torah ruling can change an existing reality.

Obviously then, it can sustain the current state of affairs here in exile, when the territories are already in Jewish hands, and the Jews are in full control, because we approach it with Jewish courage, with the courage of Torah.

"The word of God will stand forever":

Because "Torah was given to bring peace to the world," we will surely accomplish this in a peaceful manner.

But there is a requirement:

That we should be "One nation in the land," through Ahavat Yisrael which bolsters Jewish unity.

This is also an appropriate time to encourage once more, to unite with hundreds of thousands of Jews through acquiring a letter in a Communal Torah Scroll, which contains over , letters, belonging to over , Jews, and is connected to all other Torah Scrolls, all the way back to the Torah written by Moses.

With this letter, one fulfills the commandment "Write for yourselves this song, and study it." One must also have set study sessions in addition to the study sessions which the Rebbe instituted in Torah, Psalms and Tanya, and we must add, "growing in holiness" from time to time, studying more and more, and we must do it with genuine joy, and in a way that "creates life":

By impacting the Jews around you, and inspiring them to follow your example in all matters of Judaism, as explained in our Torah, the Torah of Life and the Torah of Truth, the Eternal Torah.

“Words that come from the heart,” Torah says, “enter the heart and achieve the desired effect.” Especially when they come with a personal example, and when you do so in a pleasant and peaceful manner, for, “its ways are pleasant; all its paths are peace” – Torah’s paths.

And with it, we can give the world a true and everlasting peace.

It is also customary on Yud Shevat to donate money to the Torah Fund.

Each person can also note his, and his mother’s name, and the notes will be brought to the Rebbe’s resting place.

Beforehand, as customary, we will conduct a siyum on a Tractate of Talmud.

“Everything is based on the Written Torah,” so this relates to the Written Torah as well.

They are called “My Torahs”:

The Written and the Oral are both parts of God’s one Torah.

Just as we conduct a celebration when the writing of a Torah scroll is completed, we celebrate the conclusion of a Talmudic Tractate, as described in Talmud and in Jewish Law, and as is customary in many Jewish communities, and in recent years, here as well, at the commemoration of Yud Shevat.

The verse states “There are sixty queens,” and the Midrash explains “These are the 60 tractates.” Which tractate would be appropriate?

A Torah scholar and Jewish leader is called “Shabbat.” And when a righteous person passes away, he is in a state of completion; his life-mission has reached its ultimate completion, as explained in the Lag B’omer discourses based on the Alter Rebbe’s teachings – the Mitteler Rebbe’s discourses – and also in the discourses of his successors, the Rebbes.

If a Torah scholar is always called "Shabbat," it is certainly so on the day of his passing, when his work is complete, "and the effect of all his life-work is revealed and channeled into our world, and brings salvation to the earth," as the Alter Rebbe writes in his well-known letter regarding the passing of a Tzaddik.

Therefore, at least briefly, we will conduct a siyum on Tractate Shabbat.

As we've done recently, we will compare the Babylonian Talmud – the Bavli to the Jerusalem Talmud – the Yerushalmi.

We've spoken numerous siyums on Tractate Shabbat, and some have already been published, but "Every study hall innovates a novel Torah thought," so we'll probably add some new insight here.

The difference between the conclusions of the Bavli and Yerushalmi, is an entire discussion at the conclusion in the Bavli which is absent in the Yerushalmi.

The conclusion of the Tractate Shabbat in Bavli:

A certain episode occurred involving the Mishnahic Sages, and the Talmud concludes, "We learned from their words" – based on the Sages' behavior in the story – the law is, "one may plug a window, measure, and tie a knot on Shabbat." Although work is forbidden on Shabbat, if there is an opening which can be sealed – in the words of the Mishnah, "To plug it" – as long as there is no construction involved, you may plug the window on Shabbat.

And secondly, "To tie a knot." Although it is forbidden to tie a permanent knot on Shabbat, the law says, a knot which is not permanent may be tied on Shabbat.

And thirdly, "Measuring." Although mundane activities are forbidden on Shabbat, one is permitted to measure on Shabbat.

That is the law written in the Mishnah.

The Talmud follows and elaborates on the Mishnah, and tells the following story:

There was a man named Ulla.

He was one of the Talmudic Sages who lived in Israel, and then he “lowered himself” – he left the Holy Land and traveled to Babylonia.

He visited the home of the Exilarch, the leader of the Jewish people in Babylonia.

There he noticed that Rabbah Bar Huna was sitting in an avna, a bathtub and measuring.

He was measuring the length, width, or depth of the bathtub.

Ulla commented, that measuring on Shabbat is permitted only for the purpose of a mitzvah.

But otherwise, it is forbidden.

Rabbah Bar Huna responded that he wasn’t really measuring; “I am merely shifting absentmindedly.” He was abstractedly moving his hands, so he appeared to be measuring, but that wasn’t his intention at all; his hands were shifting absentmindedly.

With that, the Bavli concludes the Tractate.

The Yerushalmi presents the same Mishnah, without explanations – it concludes the Tractate with the Mishnah, and omits the explanations which the Bavli gives on the Mishnah.

Now, in general, there is a rule in Rules of the Talmud:

We always attempt to reconcile the two Talmuds in a way that they don’t contradict one–other.

Therefore in our case, we should assume that the Yerushalmi’s omission isn’t a disagreement; there are, in fact, many similar omissions.

This story, in particular, took place in Babylonia, so the entire episode may have occurred after the Yerushalmi was written and sealed, one hundred years before the conclusion of the Bavli.

There are several more explanations.

For example:

The Torah discussions in Jerusalem came before the discussions of the Sages in Babylonian.

So the Babylonian discussion, in fact, may have been a discussion of the Yerushalmi's text.

Why wasn't it inserted in the Yerushalmi?

That would be unnecessary; including it in the Bavli is sufficient, for, as mentioned, we don't assume a disagreement if there is another fitting interpretation.

So here, we will assume that they agree.

However, there are several questions on the Bavli, and if we will assume that the Yerushalmi and Bavli disagree, those problems won't apply to the Yerushalmi.

One issue is:

The Mishnah talks, simply, about all three actions:

plugging, measuring and tying.

But according to the Bavli's explanations, measuring is permitted only on condition that it's done for a mitzvah.

Plugging, the law states – as the Tosafists write – whether for a mitzvah or not, is always permitted, as Tosfos explains.

Hence, the Mishnah spoke about three activities, but their laws are dissimilar.

Plugging is permitted under all circumstances, while measuring may only be done for a mitzvah.

And regarding the non-permanent knot:

The codifiers of Jewish Law maintain that tying is also only permitted for a mitzvah.

However, the Mishnah's commentators, Bartenura and Rashi, maintain, according to Tosfos Yom Tov, that the condition of a

mitzvah applies only to measuring, but tying is permitted for mundane purposes as well.

There is another issue with the Bavli's explanation:

When discussing the law of measuring, the Mishnah brings two examples:

“One may measure a rag and a Mikvah.” This begs to be explained:

Why two examples?

One should be sufficient.

Had the Mishnah been telling a story, we wouldn't ask why two examples were brought; those are the facts of the story.

But when stating a law – Maimonides says that the Mishnah's concise words contain many details.

Here, the Bavli maintains that measuring is only permitted for a mitzvah, so why are both examples necessary?

It should have only said the example of a Mikvah.

The example of the rag alone wouldn't tell us whether it was limited to mitzvot or not.

But had the Mishnah stated “We may measure a Mikvah,” it would be clear that it's limited to a mitzvah; had the Mishnah wanted to permit all measuring, not have specifying something which is uniquely a mitzvah.

But there may be a dissenting opinion:

The view of the Yerushalmi.

And in their interpretation, plugging, measuring and tying all have identical conditions:

they are permitted under all circumstances.

This will resolve another question which is posed by the Tosfos Yom Tov:

Tosfos notes that plugging is always permitted, while measuring, according to the Bavli, can only be done for a mitzvah.

He asks, why is that?

Plugging “might be similar to construction,” which is why Rabbi Eliezer forbids it entirely, as stated in a separate Mishnah in Tractate Shabbat, a few pages earlier.

Why is measuring – merely “a mundane act” – forbidden unless it is for a mitzvah?

He explains that according to Tosfos if we will say plugging is like construction, the prohibition will be very severe, and will be forbidden even for a mitzvah.

Measuring however, is merely a mundane act, so the need of a mitzvah can override it.

Now, however, the difficulty is:

“One hundred is included in two hundred”; Because plugging is a type of construction; is it therefore not a mundane act?

It is most certainly a mundane act. It is merely overshadowed by its similarity to construction. It is most definitely a mundane act, as well.

So when our Mishnah determines that plugging isn't similar to construction and is therefore permitted on Shabbat – isn't it still a mundane act?

And the law regarding a mundane act is, that it's permitted only for a mitzvah.

Why then, is plugging always permitted, and that is the final ruling in Jewish Law?

All these questions can be resolved at once:

According to the Yerushalmi, plugging, measuring and tying are discussed together because just as plugging is always permitted so, too, are tying and measuring.

The Yerushalmi therefore ignores the story where Ulla said that measuring is only permitted for a mitzvah.

And obviously, tying is always permitted – even Rashi and the Bartenura state that it is permitted under all circumstances.

This will also explain why the Mishnah brought two examples for measuring; A rag and a Mikvah.

If the Mishnah would only mention a Mikvah, we would assume that it is only permitted for a mitzvah.

If the Mishnah would only mention a rag, we could have made a similar assumption; we may have compared it to tying in the Bavli, which – according to the codifiers – is only permitted for a mitzvah. We might have assumed that measuring a rag is also permitted only for a mitzvah:

to determine the required measurements, whether it becomes ritually impure.

When the Mishnah brings both examples, the question is:

Why are both examples required?

We deduce that Mikvah teaches that it's permitted for a mitzvah, and the rag teaches that it's permitted for everything else too; therefore the Mishnah brings one example which is clearly a mitzvah and another which is not.

This resolves all our questions on the Bavli, and some additional ones.

However, this seems to contradict a rule regarding the Bavli and Yerushalmi and their differences:

The Yerushalmi focuses on the future, while the Bavli deals with the present state.

If a rule will cause unnecessary hardship, the Bavli won't sanction it for some future gain, at a later point in time.

We discussed this at length; there is no need to repeat it.

Now, the Sages' decrees about Shabbat matters seem to be about the future.

Why do they make decrees? At the current moment, the subject matter isn't forbidden.

However, the Sages fear, that if it remains permissible, as a result, on a Shabbat in the future, or many future Shabbats, one might deduce that if that is permitted, something else is, as well.

But here we find an opposite:

The Bavli permits actions only for a mitzvah, while the Yerushalmi is more permissive, and allows it unconditionally.

This all is due to a fundamental difference.

The Bavli and Yerushalmi also differ in the following:

The Bavli mentions numerous times that "Rav arrived in Babylonia, he saw an open valley and erected a fence." When Rav came to Babylonia, he saw laxity in Jewish observance, so he "erected a fence," he enacted new prohibitions to protect the existing ones.

Why was that necessary?

The Land of Israel has "pure air," along with many spiritual advantages, so the people there are less inclined to arrive at making a mistake – in our case, comparing one case to another – "because such-and-such is permitted, something else is surely permitted as well." The Land of Israel makes one wiser and holier, while the Diaspora – Babylonia – is impure, and there is less clarity in its Torah study.

Therefore, the decrees our Sages created were enacted specifically in places, as the Bavli says, where "he found an open valley, he erected a fence." When Rav was in Israel, he didn't find a valley; had there been a "valley," he would have enacted decrees there too, or perhaps another would have done so.

But where did he find this shortcoming?

In the “valley of the world,” Babylonia, so there he “erected a fence.” This explains our discussion:

In Babylonia, which was a “valley,” more decrees were enacted, while in Jerusalem, one is always permitted to plug, measure and tie.

May it be God’s will, very soon – because when a Jew studies Torah, he is referred to, during those moments, as a Torah Scholar, and a Torah Scholar is called “Shabbat” – May we very soon merit to taste the Shabbat foods during these last days of exile, leading up to the redemption, “the day of rest and tranquility for life everlasting,” and then, may we immediately merit to start early, by “adding mundane time to the holy.” May we be immediately redeemed with the true and ultimate redemption by our righteous Moshiach and, as on Shabbat, “all your work is done.” God has already done everything needed for the redemption, and “all our work is done,” all signs for the redemption have passed; we have fulfilled everything needed to bring the redemption, and merit it while physically alive, when “Our eyes will behold Your return to Zion,” with our physical eyes, in “a single moment.” May we merit in “one single hour, and single moment,” the conclusion of this exile, that “He put an end to the darkness,” and the redemption will begin, when we’ll experience the true and ultimate redemption, the final redemption, “with the joy of days bygone.” L’chaim.

Pass out the cards, and everyone can donate to his heart’s desire, and the more, the better.

Those who wish can also write their name and mother’s name.

And with much joy and gladness, may we merit the fulfillment of the verse “I’ll pour blessing until you won’t be able to contain it,” “until your lips will be worn out from saying ‘enough,’” still during these last days of exile, and we’ll go joyfully to greet our righteous Moshiach, “with our young and old, our sons and daughters.”

L’chaim.



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