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(מנוסח המצבה)

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Vayishlach,
Yud Tes Kislev, 5786
(Vol. 8)



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THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

as the waters cover the ocean bed."⁷

*(From the talk of the end of 19 - beginning of 20 Kislev 5752
- in a group private audience)*

7. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

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In all that has been said this year, what requires the most emphasis is what the times require: the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach. As has been said frequently of late, all the requirements have already been completed and we only need to greet our righteous Moshiach in actual reality. This will be hastened even more through learning Torah in general, and in particular through learning all of the Talmud as divided on Yud Tes Kislev, when the inner teachings of Torah were given. For through "engaging in Torah study, etc."¹ one realizes "Redeem my soul in peace"² - "A Redemption for me and my children from the nations of the world,"³ through the true and complete emancipation and Redemption.

*(Pamphlet on the occasion of the completion of the division of the Talmud
for study, 19 Kislev - Sefer HaSichos 5752, p. 491)*

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1. *Brochos* 8a.
 2. *Tehillim* 55:19.
 3. *Brochos* 8a.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע"ה
Ekman
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע"ה
Marenburg
Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתח'ל
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y. and Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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Rabbi Yosef Y. Shagalov,
Executive Director

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The unique advantage of the 19th of Kislev of this year is that it occurs after the completion of the **eighty-ninth** year, in Gematria "**Redeem**."¹ The Redemption from every thing that obstructed and hindered the coming of Dovid the King Moshiach, "who reviled the footsteps of your Moshiach," (as Psalm Redeem-89 [PaDaH--Pey-Tes] concludes) has been completed. We find ourselves already in the **ninetieth** [Tzaddik] year, connected with the third Redemption and the third Temple.

...In these times - **the days of Moshiach** - in which we now find ourselves,² we only need "to open the eyes." Then we will see that the true and complete Redemption already exists, in the simple sense. All the Jewish people, "with our youth and our aged, etc., with our sons and our daughters,"³ are prepared, in every single, last detail, "to approach and sit at the table," the table prepared with every delicacy and delight, beginning with those of the Redemption, Livyosan, Shor HaBor⁴ and Yayin Meshumar.⁵ Also, [the Jewish people are ready for] the most important thing, "to know G-d,"⁶ "the world will be filled with knowledge of the L-rd

1. *[This address was given in the Rebbe's 90th year. The Hebrew letters for "89" are "Pey, Tes." The Hebrew word for "Redeem" is spelled "Pey, Daled, Hey." The letter "Tes" has the numerical equivalent of 9; the letter "Daled" has the value of 5 and the letter "Hey" the value of 4. Thus, the word "PaDaH" (Redeem) is numerically equivalent to and therefore connected with the number Pey-Tes (89). Translator's note.]*

2. As mentioned many times by the leader of our generation, my sainted father-in-law, that already much earlier all the appointed times have passed, and all aspects and preparations have been completed, including the buttons, etc.

3. *Bo* 10:9.

4. See *Bava Basra* 75:a. *Vayikra Rabba* chapter 13:3, and in other places.

5. *Brochos* 34:2. And in other places.

6. *Rambam* at the conclusion of his work the *Mishneh Torah*.

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

RELATING TO THE WEEKLY SECTIONS OF THE TORAH AND
SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Volume VI: *Bereishis*

•

In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

VAYISHLACH

TWO NAMES, TWO PATHS OF DIVINE SERVICE

Our Sages¹ compare the verse:² “Your name will no longer be Yaakov. Instead, your name will be Yisrael,” with the verse,³ “Your name will no longer be Avram,” and state that a person who refers to Avraham by the name Avram commits a transgression.⁴ In contrast, a person who refers to Yaakov by that name, rather than by the name Yisrael, does not transgress.

What is the difference? Our Sages explain that from the time G-d gave Avraham his new name, the Torah refers to him with that name alone. With regard to Yaakov, by contrast, even after G-d gave him the name Yisrael, the Torah still refers to him as Yaakov.

1. *Berachos* 13a.

2. *Bereishis* 35:10.

3. *Ibid.* 17:5.

4. There are two opinions in that *Talmudic* passage: one that this involves the transgression of a positive commandment, and another that it involves the transgression of a negative commandment. The *Jerusalem Talmud* and the *Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 46:8)* cite an even stricter view: “Rabbi Levi says, ‘[The transgression of both] a positive and a negative commandment [is involved].’”

The latter opinion is cited by the *Magen Avraham* (at the conclusion of sec. 156). This differs with the view of several texts, which explain that the instruction is merely an *asmachta* (a Rabbinic ordinance associated with a Scriptural verse). It would appear that the text of the *Babylonian Talmud* which the *Magen Avraham* followed also contained the wording “and also a negative commandment.” See also the *Zohar Chadash (Chukas 51d)*, which states: “One who calls him Avram creates a blemish in the place called ‘a positive and a negative commandment.’” This is not the place for further elaboration on this subject.

breaker [HaPoretz] has gone up before them.”⁹

...In these days we really only need to open the eyes and to see the existence in actual reality¹⁰ - that we are sitting together with the Holy One, Blessed be He (“Israel and the Holy One Blessed be He are altogether one”¹¹) at the “Prepared Table” for the wedding feast, the feast of Livyosan, Shor HaBor and Yayin Meshumar.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, 16 Kislev 5752)

9. *Aggados Bereishis*, end of chapter 63. And see *Bereishis Rabba* end of chapter 85 and in the commentary of Rashi.

10. That is to say, not only is the Divine service completed and the revelation needs to be brought into the world (as mentioned above), but more than this, that it already is actually revealed. All that is needed is to open the eyes, because **already (in the past) "He gave to you... eyes to see."**

11. See *Zohar* Vol. 3 73a.

It may be said that herein is an allusion that in the refinement of France (Tzarfas) lies the overall completion and perfection of the world, which was created in the seven days of building, with all its myriad details.

It should be noted that the refinement of "Tzarfas" which has the numerical value of "770" was accomplished through ("the flame" that is ignited from) "the house of Yosef." This refers to the house of Yosef in its simplest sense, the house which my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, chose and bought and lived in for the last ten years of his life in this world. From there he continued and extended (in an "ever increasing measure") the Divine service of "the house of Yosef - whose number is (the house number in the obvious sense) is "770."

On a deeper level, the letters of "Tzarfas" are the same as "U'faratzta." This implies that the revelation and spreading of the wellsprings are "Tarfes" (breaks through all barriers⁶). The wellsprings not only penetrate to even the lowest possible level (because the barriers of the wellsprings were breached) but this [occurs] from **the perspective of the nether regions**, exemplified by the correspondence of the letters of "Tzarfas" with those of "U'faratzta." Through this is accomplished, "You have broken through⁷ for yourself," and "This is Moshiach, as it says,⁸ "The

6. [The root letters for "Tzarfas" (south, France), "U'faratzta" (spread forth) and Pritzas (breaking through) are the same: Pey, Reish, Tzadik. Thus, the etymological connection indicates a deeper significance. Translator's note.]

7. Vayeishev 38:29. [The Hebrew emphasizes the concept by repeating the word as both verb and noun: "Paratzta alecha paretz," literally, "you have breeched for yourself a barrier." (Note that the f-sound and the p-sound are physiologically related, i.e., made by a closure of the lips. In Hebrew, the same letter is used for both; they are differentiated by an indicator of stress, called a dagesh. Translator's note.)]

8. Micha 2:13.

What is the rationale for this distinction? Why does the Torah still refer to Yaakov by that name even after he was given the name Yisrael?

In *Chassidus*,⁵ it is explained that the names Yaakov and Yisrael reflect two different approaches to Divine service. Every Jew must possess both traits, for there are times when a Jew must carry out his Divine service in the path reflected by the name Yaakov, while at other times, his Divine service must reflect the path of Yisrael. Although Yisrael implies a higher level, at certain times, and in certain situations, the Divine service of Yaakov is necessary.

YAAKOV'S DECEPTION, YISRAEL'S MASTERY

The difference between the approaches of Yaakov and Yisrael can be described as follows: The name Yaakov indicates that the blessings from Yitzchak are acquired through deception and trickery.⁶ Through cleverness, Yaakov was able to snatch Yitzchak's blessings from Esav. Yisrael, by contrast, reflects a higher rung. For Yisrael, there is no need to secure blessings by craftiness. Instead, they are granted him: "as befitting a ruler, in a revealed manner."⁶

"The deeds of the Patriarchs are a sign for their descendants,"⁷ providing us with guidance in our own Divine service. "[The meaning of] a verse never departs from its simple interpretation."⁸ Thus the blessings given by Yitzchak —⁹ "The dew of the heavens and the fat of the earth" — refer to material prosperity. To receive these blessings, Yaakov and

5. See the *maamarim* entitled *Lo Hibit* and *Mi Manah* in *Likkutei Torah Parshas Balak*, and the *maamar* entitled *Mah Tov* (*Sefer HaMaamarim Yiddish*, p. 122). See also the commentary of the *Chizkuni* to *Bereishis* 17:5.

6. See *Rashi*, *Bereishis* 32:29.

7. Or *HaTorah*, *Parshas Lech Lecha*. See also the *Ramban's* Commentary to *Bereishis* 12:6 which states: "Everything which occurred to the Patriarchs is a sign to their descendants." See also the *Ramban's* commentary to *Bereishis* 12:10.

8. *Shabbos* 63a.

9. *Bereishis* 17:28.

Rivkah were willing to take risks and employ deception. For example, Yaakov had to wear the clothes of Nimrod,¹⁰ the one who "with his kingship, caused the entire world to rebel against [G-d]."¹¹ What was the purpose of these tactics? To elevate the sparks of G-dliness which are contained in material entities.

This serves as a lesson for us. A Jew must approach eating, drinking, and other material activities with a certain measure of craft and deception.¹² How does a person perpetrate a fraud? He does not reveal his true intent. He begins by appearing to follow the path which his opponent desires, but at a particular point, he changes course and does what *he* desires, although it is against his opponent's wishes.

This is the way a Jew should approach material activities. On the surface, he — like everyone else — is involved in material activities; he eats, drinks, and deals in business. But he engages in these activities "for the sake of heaven."¹³ He wears "Esav's clothes," but carries out all his material activities with a sense of inner purpose: to elevate the sparks of G-dliness contained in the material entities.

The Divine service of Yisrael involves a different approach. The blessings for prosperity granted him by Yitzchak are conferred upon him "as befitting a ruler, in a revealed manner." He does not have to conceal the G-dly goal of his material involvement. For material concerns do not create a conflict for him; for him, there is no concealment of their G-dly source. To cite an example, by simply eating a *Shabbos* meal,¹⁴ a Jew is performing a *mitzvah*. This is different from the task of refinement which he performs during the

saviors will ascend Har Tzion [Mount Zion] to judge Har Eisav [the mountain of Eisav]."

The "House of Yosef of our generation (my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation whose first name was yosef) distinguishes itself in comparison to former generations, even that of the Alter Rebbe ("The House of Jacob.")³ The innovation of our Yosef is that through him the wellsprings spread to the farthest ends of the world, beyond which there is nothing further, as the country of **Tzarfas** (France). The times of the Alter Rebbe (and also in the times of our Rebbeim and leaders that followed) the revelation of the wellsprings of the Torah of Chassidus was not so well established in France due to its lowly state (to such an extent that the Alter Rebbe feared it might be victorious...⁴). Precisely in our generation, through "the House of Yosef," the wellsprings were revealed and spread even into France, through the establishment there of the Yeshiva "Tomchei Temimim," as in the city of Lubavitch. Therefore, we have actually reached the time of "they will inherit the cities of the South" and "the saviors will ascend to Har Tzion to judge Har Eisav."

This can be expanded and elucidated through an allusion:

"Tzarfas" in Gematria is seven hundred and seventy (770).⁵ This is the perfection of the number seven, since it includes ten sevens (70) and a hundred sevens (700) and both of them together (770).

3. The particular connection between the Alter Rebbe and Yaakov (see at length *Ma'ayanei HaYeshua* (Kehot 5748 p. 101 ff.) should be noted.

4. See *Sefer HaToldos Admur HaZakein* (Kehos 5736) p. 259 ff. And elsewhere. [During the Napoleonic Wars, the Alter Rebbe was a vehement antagonist to Napoleon and the so-called "Enlightenment" he brought with him. Translator's note.]

5. [The number 10 represents completeness, and thus 100 perfection. Here, we have the completeness and perfection of the number 7, which represents the physical world (seven days of Creation, etc. Translator's note.)]

10. *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 24; *Bereishis Rabbah* 65:16, cited by Rashi in his commentary to *Bereishis* 27:15.

11. *Eruvin* 53a, cited by Rashi in his commentary to *Bereishis* 10:8.

12. See the *maamar* entitled *Padeh B'Sholom*, 5703.

13. Cf. *Avos* 2:15.

14. See *Torah Or*, the beginning of *Parshas Chayei Sarah*, the *mamaar* entitled *Vehu Omeid*, 5663, et al.

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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The "deeds and Divine service" of all the Jewish people throughout the generations brought about the culmination and perfection of all aspects of refinement to the world, **within the parameters of the world**, as my sainted father-in-law was able to publicize that all aspects of the Divine service have been completed. This includes "polishing the buttons," and everything is ready for the coming of Moshiach.

In particular, this process was effected by the revelation of the teachings of Chassidus on the 19th of Kislev, which was the principal beginning of "your wellsprings will spread farther outward.")¹ From that time onward, the dissemination has progressively increased through our Rabbeim and leaders from generation to generation until the leadership of my sainted father-in-law, through whom the wellsprings spread to the farthest corner of the world.

It follows then that now, as long as our righteous Moshiach delays his coming (for utterly incomprehensible reasons), our Divine service is no longer one of "refinement" (since we have already concluded and perfected the service of refinement), but one unique to bringing the revelation into reality in the world.

The uniqueness of our generation is alluded to in the Haftarah of Parshas Vayishlach - "And² the house of Yaakov will be a fire and the house of Yosef a flame and the house of Eisav straw... and the inhabitants of the South will inherit the mountain of Eisav... and the exiled... until **Tzarfes**... will inherit the cities of the South. And the

week. During the week, he eats *for the sake of heaven*, i.e., with "deception." For a Jew is practicing "deception" every time he performs a physical activity for a spiritual purpose. On *Shabbos*, the physical activity of eating itself reflects holiness.

This concept is alluded to by the name Yisrael, which was granted to Yaakov because: "You strove with angels¹⁵ and men and prevailed."¹⁶ The terms "angels" and "men" refer to the different challenges we face in our Divine service, for both involve the concealment of G-dly influence. "Angels" refer to the 70 spiritual archangels who serve as channels through which the Divine influence that maintains material existence passes.¹⁷ This process veils G-dliness.

An even greater process of concealment is brought about by "men" — coarse individuals who ridicule Jews for seeking to observe the Torah and its *mitzvos*.¹⁸ As is painfully obvious, it is more difficult to overcome human obstacles than those which are brought about through spiritual beings, i.e., the inherent veiling of G-dliness involved in the creation of material existence. For this reason, the entire *Shulchan Aruch* begins by stating: "Do not be embarrassed by those who scoff." This is the foundation of our Divine service — to break through the forces which conceal G-dliness.

The advantage alluded to by the name Yisrael — the ability to "strive with angels and men and prevail" — is that Yisrael is able to see through the concealment perpetrated by both angels and men. Not only do these forces not contend with him, they consent to the blessings he receives.¹⁹ Not only does Yisrael defeat the archangel of Esav, but that angel

15. Our translation is based on *Targum Yonason*, and *Chulin* 92a.

16. *Bereishis* 32:9.

17. See *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 25 (139b).

18. See the *maamar* entitled *Ein HaKodesh Baruch Hu Ba* (*Sefer HaMaamarim Yiddish*).

19. To cite a parallel: At the very beginning of *Shabbos*, "the wicked angel" answers *Amen* to the blessings given by "the good angel" (*Shabbos* 119b).

1. See *Sefer HaSichos Toras Shalom* end of p. 112 ff.

2. *Ovadyah* 1:18 ff.

blesses him, in keeping with the dictum:²⁰ “His enemies will establish peace with him.” This includes the greatest enemy, “the primeval serpent,” the source of all sin and conflict. Not only will this force not present any opposition, it will “establish peace,” and offer assistance.

WHEN STRUGGLE IS NO LONGER NECESSARY

The distinction between the levels of Yaakov and Yisrael can be clarified based on the *maamar* in *Likkutei Torah*.²¹ which interprets the verse:²² “[G-d] does not look at wrongdoing within Yaakov, nor does He see vice²³ within Yisrael.” On the level of Yaakov, there is no “wrongdoing;” there is, however, “vice.” Indeed, a struggle is necessary so that no wrongdoing ensues, for on Yaakov’s level, the veiling and concealment of G-dliness present a challenge which must be overcome. Therefore Yaakov is given the title “My servant,”²⁴ for his Divine service of refining the animal soul involves labor and toil. (There is, however, no “wrongdoing,” for Yaakov summons up inner strength, and overcomes the *yetzer hora*.)

With regard to Yisrael, by contrast, there is no “vice.” There is no need to contend with the *yetzer hora*. Yisrael has already “strive[n] with angels and men and prevailed.” The verb uses the past tense, indicating that the struggles are

20. *Mishlei* 16:7. See *Bereishis Rabbah* at the beginning of *Parshas Vayeira*, which interprets this verse as referring to the serpent. See the explanation of this concept in *Or HaTorah* (47b) on the verse (*Bereishis* 3:15): “I will create strife.”

21. *Parshas Balak*, 72b.

22. *Bamidbar* 23:21.

23. [Our translation follows the interpretation of *Ramban* and *Ibn Ezra*, which interprets the Hebrew original, *amel*, as referring to latent evil.

Amel can also mean “strenuous activity.” Both interpretations are relevant with regard to the Divine service of the righteous. They have purified their natures and there is no vice within them. As such, their Divine service is not characterized by an inner struggle that requires strenuous activity. Instead, their energies are devoted solely to spreading light.]

24. *Yeshayahu* 44:2.

light — true light, the light of the Torah and its *mitzvos* — in his own corner of the world, G-d assures us that the light will spread. Not only will a person’s own life be better and easier, but he will be doing his part in shouldering the burden of the world at large, and bringing it closer to the path of righteousness, justice, good, and holiness. These positive efforts will weaken those forces which lead the world away from peace, away from growth and development, and away from good.

First and foremost in these efforts must be the campaign to strengthen genuine Jewish education for Jewish children wherever they may be found, and in this way, spread the light of the Torah and its *mitzvos* — the lamp of *mitzvah* and the light of Torah.²³ And we have G-d’s promise that these endeavors will bring good to all those involved.

And these efforts will strengthen the power of good in the world, leading to their ultimate victory — the time when the entire Jewish people will merit the coming of *Mashiach*, who will take the Jews and the entire world out of exile, and bring the true and complete Redemption.

May G-d grant His blessings to enable us to carry out the above activities in good health, with happiness and gladness of heart. And these blessings will intensify our efforts, enabling them to be carried out on a much greater scale.

This is absolutely necessary. No matter how much larger we make *yeshivos*, there will always be more children to fill the study halls and classrooms. And this will increase the success of these activities and amplify G-d’s blessings.

(Adapted from an address to the supporters of
Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, Lubavitch, 4 Cheshvan, 5723)



one positive act, he can tip his own balance and that of the entire world for good.

23. *Mishlei* 6:23.

Every child, regardless of his background, must be given the most complete Jewish education possible. This will insure that he proceeds down the path of life, happy and satisfied, in material as well as in spiritual concerns.

NO MAN IS AN ISLAND

There is another lesson that can be derived from the above story. We have just begun a new year. The new child — i.e., the world in this new year — appears to have fallen from its cradle; things have gone off track, and it is not known how to correct the situation. This applies with regard to relations between nations, with regard to relations between different sectors of the populace, and with regard to the use of the potential mankind possesses to build the world and make it a better place, instead of destroying things and making the situation worse.²¹

The above story provides us with an approach that can be applied to forestall two fundamental errors. Firstly, there are times when a person thinks that since he is busy with his own concerns, he needn't get involved with the world around him, particularly in developments that concern other countries. Today, we see how impractical such an isolationist approach is, and how events that take place in a far-away corner of the world affect everyone's life, and indeed even one's personal affairs.

Secondly, a person may look at the situation and despair, wondering "What can I do? How can I change anything"?

This is a wrong tack. The truth is that everyone can bring about change. As explained in the *Talmud*, in the *Rambam's* writings,²² and in subsequent works, when a person generates

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21. Translator's note: The *sichah* was delivered in 1963, at the time of high tensions in the Cold War, civil rights protests, and heavy investment in the arms race.
22. *Kiddushin* 40b; *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4, which states that a person should always see himself and the entire world as equally balanced. With

behind him. He has already nullified all the veils concealing G-dliness.

Therefore, the Divine service of Yisrael does not involve a struggle with forces opposed to holiness. Instead, his efforts are dedicated solely to reaching higher and higher within the domain of holiness, "go[ing] from strength to strength."²⁵

TWO MAXIMS

The Previous Rebbe related²⁶ that the *Tzemach Tzedek* was once sitting with chassidim at a *farbrengen*. Suddenly he jumped onto the table and exclaimed: "[Our Sages' statement:] 'What difference does it make if you kill it entirely or kill it partially?' can be applied to the *yetzer hora*.... It is, however, necessary to kill it partially."

As the *farbrengen* unfolded and led to dancing, the *Tzemach Tzedek* continued: "When one kills the *yetzer hora* — as it is written,²⁷ 'My heart is slain within me' — one's life takes on a new cast."

The two maxims of the *Tzemach Tzedek* reflect the different levels of Yaakov and Yisrael. On the level of Yaakov, it is necessary to wage war against the *yetzer hora*, "killing it, [at least] partially"; life is filled with strife. On the level of Yisrael, by contrast, the *yetzer hora* has already been slain, and existence takes on a new visage; it becomes a life of satisfaction and pleasure.

TWO LEVELS OF SPIRITUAL LIGHT

The two levels of Yaakov and Yisrael and the paths of Divine service associated with each reflect two rungs within the G-dly soul. The Hebrew letters of the name Yaakov, יעקב, can be divided as י עקב, i.e., only the *eikev*, the heel, the low-

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25. Cf. *Tehillim* 84:8.
26. *Sefer HaSichos* 5696, p. 8.
27. *Tehillim* 109:22; see *Tanya*, ch. 1.

est level of the *yud*, the soul, shines within the person. As such, it is possible for the body and the animal soul to conceal the light of the Divine soul, and thus conflict ensues.

The name *Yisrael*, ישראל, by contrast, can be divided into the words *לי ראש*, “the head for Me.”²⁸ The “head” of the soul shines within him. Accordingly, there is no need for war; “You [have] strive[n] with angels and men and prevailed.”

In general, the name *Yisrael* describes the righteous, while the name *Yaakov* relates to *beinonim* — “intermediate men,” which is “the attribute of all men.”²⁹ More particularly, within the Divine service of the ordinary man, the name *Yaakov* refers to our efforts during the week, while the name *Yisrael* refers to our devotion on *Shabbos*.

Moreover, within the Divine service of the righteous themselves, there is a rung of observance associated with *Yisrael* and a rung — in proportion to their level of righteousness — associated with *Yaakov*. Indeed, this is obvious from the *Talmudic* passage quoted at the outset, which states that even after *Yaakov* our Patriarch was given the name *Yisrael*, he was still sometimes called *Yaakov*.

Since every Jew, both *beinonim* and righteous men, relate to the level of *Yaakov*, the Torah still refers to him by that name even after he has been renamed *Yisrael*. The name *Yaakov* remains, because even afterwards, his Divine service must bear a relationship to that level.

AN ASSURANCE OF VICTORY

As mentioned above, the Torah states: “[G-d] does not look at wrongdoing within *Yaakov*.” The verse does not exclude “vice,” however, for vice indeed exists at *Yaakov*’s level. The level of *Yaakov* involves a struggle with the *yetzer hora* that requires strenuous effort, and involves danger. Nev-

have been stirred with a desire to have their little ones experience *Yiddishkeit*. Furthermore, there is a desire — finally, they have realized the truth — to give their children genuine *Yiddishkeit*, not a watered-down version filled with compromises.

Therefore, our obligation has become even stronger. We must provide children with an education based entirely on our Torah, the Torah of life, which brings energy and vitality into our day-to-day experience. The story related above teaches us that regardless of what a Jew is doing — and surely Jews are involved in good and important matters, be they associated with earning a livelihood or other things — nothing takes priority over the desires and cries of Jewish children seeking a Jewish education. Dealing with this problem and involving oneself in this task is of preeminent importance.

We must strain ourselves to establish and maintain the schools, *yeshivos*, and *chederim* which provide children with a genuine Jewish education. We must aim to accomodate the maximum number of children possible. This is painfully necessary, because there are children who are being left in the street because *yeshivos* do not have the means to open new classes or hire new instructors.

BEING SENSITIVE TO THE UNUTTERED CRY

There are, unfortunately, Jewish homes in which the children do not feel a lack, and therefore are not crying. Relating to these children demands a far greater commitment, for the very fact that they are not aware of the need to cry shows how dire is their need of a genuine Jewish education.

This is one of the missions which *yeshivos* must accept. They must be prepared to enroll children from every sector of the Jewish community, without differentiating between those who come from a home where it is realized that something is lacking, and those who come from homes in which they do not feel a need to cry at all.

28. See *Likkutei Torah*, Parshas Shelach 48b.

29. *Tanya*, ch. 14.

At one point, the Mittler Rebbe — the Alter Rebbe's son and eventual successor — was living with his father in the same home. The Mittler Rebbe lived on the ground floor, and the Alter Rebbe on the second storey. Together with the Mittler Rebbe lived his family, including one very young infant.

Once, while the Mittler Rebbe was studying, the infant fell out of his crib and began to cry. The Mittler Rebbe was so absorbed in his studies that he did not hear the child at all and continued studying without interruption.

Although he lived on the second storey, and was also absorbed in study, the Alter Rebbe heard the child crying. He went downstairs, put the child back in his crib, and calmed him.

Afterwards, the Alter Rebbe admonished his son, the Mittler Rebbe, explaining that one should never be so absorbed in one's studies that one cannot hear a child's cry.

My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, expanded on this story, teaching that however deeply one is absorbed in study, prayer, or the performance of positive activities, one must always have an ear open to the cries of a Jewish child. And one must interrupt one's studies and one's prayer to soothe the child. Regardless of how important one's own concerns are, when a Jewish child cries out, one must listen, put one's own concerns aside and find a way to still the child's cry.

TIMES OF SPIRITUAL THIRST

This story provides us with a lesson relevant to the present time, and the task facing us. In the last years, one can see Jews — and in particular, Jewish children — awakening to their heritage and beginning to search for *Yiddishkeit*. This awakening is felt among 18-year-olds and 20-year-olds, and to a larger extent among 13-year-olds and even younger children. Moreover, young couples with children of four and five

ertheless, Yaakov has the inner strength to succeed in this struggle and remain free of “wrongdoing.” For every Jew is “the branch of My planting, the work of My hands in which to take pride.”³⁰ He is “an actual part of G-d.”³¹ As such, just as it is impossible for anyone to overcome G-d, it is impossible for anyone to exert any authority over a Jew's soul, if he resists. For a Jew always has the inner strength to be victorious. Indeed, he has been assured that he will ultimately prevail, as it is stated:³² “No one will remain estranged from You.” And we have been promised:³³ “All of Israel has a portion in the World to Come.”

This promise (like all concepts in the Torah) affects our Divine service at present. The assurance that we will be victorious in the struggle should infuse us with strength and happiness. This strength and happiness will, in turn, hasten the victory. As my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, said:³⁴ “A soldier... proceeds with a happy melody, although he goes to a place of danger.... It is his approach in happiness which enables him to be victorious.”

HAPPINESS, INSTEAD OF FEAR

Based on the above, we can appreciate the implication of the liturgical hymn sung at the *Melaveh Malkah* meal on Saturday night³⁵: “Do not fear, Yaakov My servant.”²⁴ As explained in *Likkutei Torah*,²¹ on *Shabbos* the Jewish people are on the level of Yisrael. There is no need for strenuous efforts to refine the world's material substance.

30. *Yeshayahu* 60:21.

31. *Tanya*, ch. 2.

32. Cf. *II Shmuel* 14:14; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 4:3; *Tanya*, the conclusion of ch. 39.

33. *Sanhedrin* 10:1.

34. *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5710, p. 191.

35. Although it is not *Chabad* custom to recite this hymn, it is an accepted custom in many Jewish communities. Frequently, *Chabad Chassidus* offers explanations for Jewish customs observed by others, but not by *Chabad* chassidim.

As the *Shabbos* departs, however, Jews make the transition to the level of “Yaakov My servant,” and prepare to resume their mission of refining material entities in the weekdays which follow. Therefore they are assured: “Do not fear, Yaakov My servant.”

A Jew is promised that there is no need to fear this transition. On the contrary, he is empowered to proceed in his Divine service with happiness and satisfaction. This in turn will hasten the completion of the task, and the coming of the era in which we will receive “generous recompense for our efforts”³⁶ — “the era which is all *Shabbos* and rest for life everlasting.”³⁷

(Adapted from *Sichos Yud Shvat*, 5718)



36. Cf. *Koheles* 4:9.

37. The conclusion of tractate *Tamid*.

it surpasses even the complete entry of the soul that takes place at the time of a child’s *Bar Mitzvah*.

May it be G-d’s will that the days preceding *Yud-Tes Kislev*, which represent birth and the preparation for the *bris*, serve to prepare us to study *Chassidus* and follow the paths of *Chassidus*, and to do this with happiness and gladness of heart.

(Adapted from a letter from *Yud-Beis Kislev* and *Sichos Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5722)

HEARING A CHILD’S CRY

Everything which takes place is ordained by Divine providence.¹⁸ The present year marks 150¹⁹ years since the passing of the Alter Rebbe, founder of the *Chabad-Lubavitch* approach. Indeed, the dinner of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim* is being held on his *yahrzeit*, 24 Teves.²⁰ Surely his life can provide us with a lesson in our Divine service.

My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, who transplanted the Lubavitcher *yeshivos* to America and established them in this country, related many stories about the Alter Rebbe. I would like to choose one which I feel is appropriate for this gathering. This story is characteristic of the approach of *Chabad-Lubavitch*, and reveals its fundamental thrusts.

18. Publisher’s Note: The *sichah* to follow was delivered by the Rebbe in conjunction with the annual dinner of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*. In this *sichah*, the Rebbe focuses on a story concerning the Alter Rebbe. We find it appropriate to publish this story in connection with *Yud-Tes Kislev*, the day of the Alter Rebbe’s redemption from prison.

19. The significance of this number is reflected in our Sages’ statement (*Tanna d’Bei Eliyahu Rabbah*, ch. 6) that 50 years is considered “an eternity.” See also the commentaries of Rabbeinu Bachaye and *Tziyuni* to *Shmos* 21:6.

20. Indeed, this year the date falls on the same day of the week as it did in the year 5573, the year the Alter Rebbe passed away.

As stated in the introduction to *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, the Alter Rebbe passed away at about 10:30 on *Motzoei Shabbos Parshas Shmos*, “after reciting the evening service and the *Havdalah* prayers... being of sound and composed mind, with wondrous *deveikus*.”

ish child. For this reason, from circumcision onward, a child is assured a portion in the World to Come.¹⁴

This is also one of the fundamental dimensions of the *Chabad* approach; *Chabad* requires an inner bond.¹⁵ The three dimensions of Divine service alluded to by the *mitzvah* of circumcision must not be observed in a merely superficial manner, empowered by our potential of faith, but instead must be internalized. First, they must permeate the intellectual powers — *chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas* — of the G-dly soul and ultimately, they must permeate the intellectual powers of the animal soul, and even our brains, the physical organ associated with thought. This reflects the entry of the soul of holiness into the physical body, and the subsequent inner bond.

FIRST STAGES

The *bris* is only the beginning of the connection between the G-dly soul and material existence. Nevertheless, based on our Sages' statement,¹⁶ "All beginnings are difficult," it is possible to explain that the soul's first entry into the body confers additional power, and affords an advantage¹⁷ not present in the more developed stages of the soul's entry that accompany a child's education in Torah and *mitzvos*. Indeed,

14. *Sanhedrin* 110b. This is also reflected in the ruling of the *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh De'ah*, ch. 263:5. In another section of the *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* (ch. 124), the *Ramah* and the Alter Rebbe rule according to the other opinion mentioned in *Sanhedrin*, *loc. cit.*, that a child receives a portion in the World to Come from the time he begins to answer *Amen*. There is not necessarily a contradiction between the two views. Indeed, even though the wording of the *Talmudic* passage appears to imply that there is a difference of opinion, the two positions can be reconciled. For it is possible to explain that the two positions refer to two different levels in the World to Come. (See similar explanations in *Likkutei Torah*, at the conclusion of *Parshas Korach*, and in *Kuntres U'Mayon*, Discourse 22, ch. 3.)

15. *Likkutei Dibburim*, p. 546.

16. *Mechilta*, *Yisro* 19:5, quoted by *Rashi* in his commentary to that verse. *Tosafos*, *Taanis* 10b.

17. See *Nedarim* 31b; *Likkutei Torah*, *Naso* 29a, *Eikev* 15b-c.

YUD-TEs KISLEV

THE PARALLEL BETWEEN YUD-TEs KISLEV AND CIRCUMCISION

Among the concepts which my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, shared with regard to *Yud-Te* Kislev is the following:¹ "*Yud* Kislev marks the birth of a chassid, and *Yud-Te* Kislev is the *bris* (circumcision)."

The connection between *Yud-Te* Kislev and a *bris* can be understood based on the concept that the *mitzvah* of circumcision contains three dimensions:²

- a) the actual act of circumcision — cutting the foreskin;
- b) the fact that as a result, a person remains circumcised;
- c) that he is no longer uncircumcised.

As explained, the realization of only two of these dimensions is not enough; the *halachah* requires that all three be completed. These three dimensions have parallels in our Divine service. "Being circumcised" refers to our efforts to "do good,"³ revealing and expressing the good which every Jew possesses. "Not being uncircumcised" refers to "turning away from evil,"³ not being under the authority of "the uncircumcised one," i.e., the *yetzzer hora*.⁴ And both these dimen-

1. *Likkutei Dibburim*, p. 976.

2. See the *sichah* of *Parshas Lech Lecha* in this series, and the sources mentioned there.

3. Cf. *Tehillim* 34:15.

4. *Sukkah* 52a.

sions must come through effort — as alluded to by the act of circumcision itself.

These concepts enable us to appreciate the statement of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, that “Yud-Tes Kislev is the *bris*.” Yud-Tes Kislev is the time when the teachings of *Chassidus* emerged victorious and were “redeemed in peace.”⁵ It is the Rosh HaShanah of *Chassidus*.⁶ And thus, each of the three dimensions of the *mitzvah* of circumcision reflects a fundamental thrust in the teachings of *Chabad Chassidus*.

Chabad Chassidus mandates that all the good which a Jew achieves be accomplished through toil. No one should be satisfied with good that comes effortlessly. To cite a well-known story:⁷ A chassid once came to the *Tzemach Tzedek* and asked him to bless his grandson with a good memory. He asked that the child “remember everything he sees and hears from the Rebbe and the chassidim, so that *without effort* he will be G-d-fearing.”

The *Tzemach Tzedek* answered him: “For 50 years, my grandfather (the Alter Rebbe) and my father-in-law (the Mit-teler Rebbe) have worked so that Chassidim will come to the fear of G-d through painstaking toil, and not merely achieve fear of G-d effortlessly.”

This is the fundamental difference between *Chabad Chas-sidus* and the Chassidic approaches prevalent in Poland.⁸ *Chabad* holds that it is not enough to rely on the Divine service of the *tzaddik*, expecting his service to elevate his followers. Instead, everyone should — and must — toil in his Divine service with strenuous physical and spiritual effort, as

it is written:⁹ “Man is born to toil.” This parallels the act of circumcision.

Chassidus requires that *Yiddishkeit* and Torah be spread everywhere, and that efforts be made on behalf of our fellow Jews. As the Rebbe Rashab stated:¹⁰ “A chassid is one who commits himself to seek out his colleague’s welfare.” This is the parallel to being circumcised in our Divine service.

Frequently, circumcision is associated with the heart,¹¹ the seat of our emotions. Our hearts should be circumcised, i.e., they should be permeated by good. The good each of us possess will then be revealed, and we will show concern for the welfare of all Jews.

One of the objectives of *Chassidus* is the altering of the natural thrust of our emotions. As the Alter Rebbe stated:¹² “The entire motive of *Chassidus* is to change the nature of one’s emotional qualities.” This rising above one’s natural, inborn tendencies is the parallel to not being uncircumcised.

AN INNER BOND

Another fundamental concept associated with circumci-sion² is that the holiness of the soul — the connection a Jew shares with G-d — enters the body and is internalized through this *mitzvah*. Therefore the Alter Rebbe rules¹³ that the *mitzvah* of circumcision marks “the entry [i.e., an internalized connection] of the holy soul” into the body of a Jew-

5. Cf. *Tehillim* 55:19. This verse is associated with the Alter Rebbe’s redemption from prison, for directly after reciting it he was informed of his forthcoming release (*HaYom Yom*, entry 19 Kislev).

6. See the letter of the Rebbe Rashab of Kislev 15, 5662, printed in the Hebrew edition of *Kuntres U'Mayon*, p. 17; *Igros Kodesh* of the Rebbe Rashab, Vol. I, p. 259.

7. *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz* 5700, p. 57.

8. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, p. 282.

9. *Iyov* 5:7.

10. *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz* 5700, p. 32-33. See also the maxim of the Rebbe Rashab (cited in the *sichos* of 3 Tammuz, 5701, and explained in the *sichos* of 13 Tammuz, 5722) that a chassid is a lamplighter.

11. See *Devarim* 30:6.

12. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, p. 56.

13. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, second edition, 4:4.