

KOVETZ

**HEOROS
HATMIMIM
V'ANASH**



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English edition**



**Yud Aleph Nissan
5775**

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**HEOROS
HATMIMIM
V'ANASH**

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~ Melbourne ~

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YUD ALEPH NISSAN, 5775



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D'VAR MALCHUS

Michtav Kloli for Pesach 11 Nissan, 5744 - 1984

By the Grace of G-d
Sixth Day of the Week,
Erev Shabbos-Kodesh-Shabbos HaGodol,
11th day of Nissan 5744 ,
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Sons and Daughters of
Our People Israel ,Everywhere ,
G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

On this day of Erev Shabbos HaGodol, with only a few days remaining to Pesach which, this year, begins and ends on the Third Day of the week, a day “twice blessed with good” (as also today, the Sixth Day of the week, was “twice blessed with good,“)

It is timely to reflect on a further point that is connected with *Chag HaMatzos* , *Zman Cheiruseinu*) Festival of Our Liberation ,(pursuant to our previous letter, dated Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

* * *

One of the details which differentiate the Festival of Pesach from our other festivals is the fact that, in addition to having its exact date specified in the Torah as to the day and month of the year when *Chag HaMatzos* is to be observed (which is the case also in regard to our other festivals), the Torah emphasizes the exact *point of the day* ,the *very moment* ,when the Geulo (deliverance) from Egyptian bondage came, namely ,*bachatzi halaila*“ ,in the *very middle* of the night”; and similarly pinpoints the exact *moment* of Yetzias-Mitzraim (the Exodus from Egypt), namely ,*b'etzem hayom hazeh, bachatzi hayom*“ ,in the very middle of the day”.

It was *exactly at midnight* that the moment of the Geulo struck: Pharaoh freed the Jews immediately, bringing the Golus to an end; moreover, he ordered them and

urged them to leave Egypt, while the Egyptians did all they could to speed and aid this departure.

A turning point in this direction occurred (five days earlier, on Shabbos) at the beginning of the preparations for the *Korban-Pesach*, when every Jew told his Egyptian neighbors, with absolute certainty, that the day of the Deliverance was approaching. It evoked a response akin to the spirit of liberation, whereupon the Egyptian *firstborn*) their eldest and strongest, representing the “*bachatzi halaila*” of Egyptian society) took up arms against their king, demanding that he let the Jewish people go. This resulted in a “slaughter of Egyptians by their own firstborn,” and served as a prelude to Yetzias-Mitzraim, as emphasized also by the designation and observance of the Shabbos before Pesach as “Shabbos HaGodol”.

And it was *exactly at midday* that the Jewish people went out of Egypt “with uplifted arm,” free men and women and proud to be Jews.

“Night” and “Day” are opposite phenomena, symbolizing opposing concepts of “darkness” and “light” in the spiritual sense;

Especially “midnight” and “midday,” connoting, respectively, the bleakest darkness of the night and the brightest light of the day.

All this is also connected with the symbolic concepts of the “moon” and of the “sun,” discussed in the letter of Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

* * *

In addition to the conspicuous difference between the sun and the moon mentioned in the previous letter, namely, that the sun symbolizes *constancy* and *sameness*, while the moon represents *change* and *renewal*, yet both these contrary elements combined together are indispensable to achieve completeness in Avodas HaShem, there is a further fundamental distinction between the sun and the moon, as stated in the Torah: the sun being the “Great Luminary” to rule by day, while the moon is the “Small Luminary” to rule by night. This indicates two different and contrary ways in their “illuminating the earth”: The lunar light, however brightly the moon shines, even at its maximum fullness, does not transform night into day; the night remains night, which is synonymous with “darkness”, and “darkness He called ‘night.’” On the other hand, however weak is the light of the sun on the earth, such as at the beginning of the day or at day’s end, when the sun’s rays are at their weakest, it still makes “day,” which is synonymous with light, and “HaShem called light—‘day’”.

This difference—metaphorically speaking—is reflected also in Avodas-HaShem. As explained in our Torah, *Toras-Chaim* (“instruction in living”), Avodas-HaShem (serving G-d) encompasses the totality of a Jew’s everyday life in all, literally *all*, detailed aspects, as defined by the principle “Know HaShem in *all* your ways,” meaning, to acknowledge and serve HaShem in every way and in all activities. These comprise two categories: *Mitzvah*—the domain of religious duties, and *R’shus*—the so-called “secular” domain.

The “Mitzvah” domain embraces all those ways and actions which a Jew is obligated to carry out, because HaShem has commanded to do them; these are all matters of Torah and Mitzvos. When a Jew learns Torah and does Mitzvos, he irradiates himself as well as his surroundings and the world at large with the Divine light of *Ner Mitzvah vTorah Or* (“a Mitzvah is a lamp and the Torah is light”). Whether he does it with a full measure of inspiration or, sometimes, with less enthusiasm, it is always *Ner Mitzvah vTorah Or*—the “Great Luminary” in Avodas-HaShem.

The second category, that of *R’shus*, is the domain of ordinary matters, such as eating, drinking and the like, which in themselves and for themselves are no Mitzvah (except on Shabbos and Yom Tov, or in the case of *Pikuach-Nefesh*, etc.).

And although the so-called secular aspects of the everyday life should, and must, be ruled by the Torah, *Torah Or*, they bear no comparison with Torah and Mitzvos.

They receive their minor light of a “Small Luminary” from the Torah, the “Great Luminary,” in the way the moon is illuminated, and illuminates, by reflecting the light of the sun.

In one realm of *R’shus* in particular, because of its close association with powerful natural tendencies, special vigilance is called for in order to insure that it be *l’Shem-Shomayim* (“for the sake of Heaven.”) If even in the realm of Mitzvos there is the possibility of “performance by rote,” where routine practice could not only pose a hindrance to the principle of *ma’alin b’Kodesh* (keeping holy matters on the ascendancy), but even to the proper observance to the Mitzvos themselves—how much more so in the “secular” matters, where habit can cause, G-d forbid, a downright debasement, even to the extent of the opposite of *l’Shem-Shomayim*, e.g. gluttony, drunkenness, and the like. Hence, a special vigilance and a special effort is required to infuse in this area of the everyday life an ever greater measure of *l’Shem-Shomayim*, a growing measure of light, reaching out for the “moon at its fullest”; though even then it still is only “*l’Shem-Shomayim*,” for the sake of Heaven to be

utilized *later* in the performance of *Shomayim*-matters (Torah and Mitzvos). In the meantime it is still “night,” the realm of *R’shus*.

This is one of the lessons implied in the emphasis on the deliverance taking place *bachatzi halaila*, alluding, as mentioned, to *R’shus*-matters, which, in relation to Torah and Mitzvos, are like “night” to “day,” namely, that even in the most materialistic aspects of secular matters one can, and must, completely free one’s self from “*Golus Mitzrayim*”) ”subservience to materialism and its limitations.(

Similarly also in matters which are alluded to in *bachatzi hayom*, namely, matters of *Ner Mitzvah vTorah Or*, when one has reached the height of one’s strength and brightness—there is a need of “*Yetzias Mitzrayim*,” of breaking through and elevating oneself above all limitations and standards, including those of the realm of holiness—to break out of one’s complacency with one’s self and with one’s standards, and of the feeling of having completely satisfied one’s *Rotzon*(desire). On the contrary, regardless of how high are one’s achievements, one must strive for still higher standards. So we declare in our daily prayers, both in the day and at night: To love HaShem with all one’s *might*, meaning with *MesirasNefesh*, totally *surrendering* one’s *Rotzon* to HaShem.

Thus one proceeds “from strength to strength”—(not from weakness to strength) since there is no weakness in him. Indeed, recognizing that it is HaShem who gives him the capacity to gain strength, which is in itself a source of strength, he strives to serve HaShem as one should, totally, which means not to remain on the same level, however high it be, but to advance from one level of strength to a higher level.

The above will provide a deeper insight into the obligation to remember *Yetzias Mitzraim* every day, and both by day and by night. At first glance, having already remembered and experienced *Yetzias Mitzraim* yesterday, both in matters symbolized by “day” (Torah and Mitzvos) as well as those symbolized by “night,” what is the point of remembering *Yetzias Mitzraim* again today?

The answer is that inasmuch as a new day has come, yesterday’s level, however satisfactory it was yesterday, must now be considered “*Mitzraim*” in relation to the new level which one can attain on this new day; and also from this category of “*Mitzraim*” one should, and must, free oneself, and in a manner of an “*uplifted arm*”.

May HaShem grant that since we still find ourselves in the “night” of the Gulus, and, moreover, with *darkness covering the earth* ,prior to the imminent coming of Moshiach,

We should all very soon merit to see the true Geulo, to be celebrated as the Geulo from Mitzraim was celebrated while still in Mitzraim, in the middle of the night, and with such a measure of enthusiasm and joy as to “break through the roof,” being the preparation and prelude to Yetzias Mitzraim in the ordinary sense, and with *uplifted arm, in the very middle of the day*;

And merit it we will, through strengthened (*bitochon*) trust) in HaShem, the deliverer of our people Israel, and through heightened desire and “*hope for Your liberation every day* ”,hoping and praying every day and the whole day, and every minute of the day, for the Divine liberation through MashiachTzidkeinu.

And this will hasten still more the fulfillment of the prophetic words referring to our true and complete Geulo:

Your light shall shine forth in the darkness, and your profound darkness shall be as the noonday.

In accordance with the prophecy that the wonders of the coming Geulo will be wonderful even in comparison with the miracles and wonders of the Exodus from Mitzraim: At that time it took hours from “midnight” to “noonday,” whereas the forthcoming Geulah will come *immediately* ,from profound bleakness to the brightness of high noon. In words of our prophets:

Arise, shine forth, for your light is come, and the glory of HaShem shines upon you . . . Nations shall walk by your light . . . Your sun shall no more go down, nor shall your moon withdraw, for HaShem will be your everlasting light . . . And all (nations) shall know that you, whose Name is HaShem, is the only Supreme Ruler over all the earth.

With esteem and with blessing for a
Kosher and Joyous Pesach,

/Signed : Menachem Schneerson/



NIGLEH

An answer to what Tosfos leaves as a question

Hatomim Menachem Mendel Leiter

Talmid in Yeshiva Gedolah

The Mishnah says in Gittin¹: if after sending the *Get* to his wife through a Shliach the husband precedes his Shliach and reaches his wife first to nullify the *Get*, the *Get* is nullified. The Gemoro explains the need for the Mishna to state this Din: I would have thought that if the husband is reaching his wife on his own, he's only going too cause her pain, but he does not really intend to nullify it. Therefore the Mishna had to tell us that his nullification **does** work negating the above way of thinking.

Tosfos asks²: The Mishnah could have introduced this idea in a much better way, by bringing a case where the husband was going to pick up some groceries, and by chance happened to meet his wife there and upon meeting her, he nullified the *Get*. Being that in this scenario there is much more of a reason to think that he really just intends to annoy her but not to actually nullify it, since he wasn't looking for her he just chanced upon her. Therefore it would be much more innovative to teach that nevertheless even in such a scenario we consider the *Get* nullified?

¹ Beginning of 4th Perek Hasholeach page 32, a

² ד"ה איהו דלא

Tosfos does not give an answer to his question. But it's possible to answer that since it's uncommon for the husband to just bump into the wife (especially since both are living in two different cities, and back in those days, it was not common for people to travel between cities on a constant basis), Therefore the Mishnah didn't want to mention it, because it's so uncommon.

Just like Tosfos himself explained earlier³ in regards to the Mishnah not mentioning the case of nullifying the *Get* in Beis Din according to Rebbi's opinion that nullifying in Beis din works, where Tosfos explained: being that it is very rare that one would nullify the *Get* in such a way the Mishnah therefore omitted that case. So too here we can say that the Mishnah didn't want to mention the scenario of the husband bumping into his wife since it is so unlikely!



³ Firt Tosfos on the page ד"ה גט שנתתי

HALACHA

One who neglects to say “Leshaim Kedushas Sefer Torah” when writing letters at a siyum sefer Torah.

Rabbi Eliyahu Refael Hakohen Gutnick
Sofer Umagiha Musmach

Introduction

Anyone who has participated in the writing of the final letters at a siyum sefer torah will be aware that the concluding lines are written differently to the rest of the sefer Torah. These last letters are formed in two stages. First, the sofer will write or sketch osiyos chalolos (just the outline of the letters). Then, at the siyum ceremony itself, people will be honoured to complete these letters (or, as is the primary custom in Australia, these letters are purchased by individuals, with the money going to Tzedokah). The sofer will then fill in or ink the letters, thereby completing them.

The primary reason for sketching the outline first is so that people can participate by writing their letters in the Torah themselves. Under the watchful eye of the sofer (who is qualified to clean up any blunders), an individual can ink his own letter(s), or write part of a letter and let the sofer finish it.

However many communities will not allow individuals to fill in letter(s) themselves but rather, nominate the sofer to write all letters as a “shaliach” of the individual. There are several reasons for this: Firstly, from a practical perspective, it is common for people to smudge or ruin their letter, which can be difficult to fix and often presents last minute halachic problems. Secondly, not all participants are suitable to write in a sefer Torah because they may not be shomer Shabbos etc. (It

is not considered “politically correct” to allow some to write on their own and to prohibit others, therefore the sofer does all.)

Additionally, even if the sofer writes all the letters himself, he still benefits from the pre existing osiyos challolos (outlined letters) as this allows him the flexibility of being able to skip around and fill in letters out of order, to meet the requirements of specific letters people want written. Without the outline, this would be very difficult to do while still maintaining the integrity of the line spacing and placement of letters.

Having said the above, even here in Australia we still have instances when people insist on filling letters on their own. Often this may be family or close friends of the owner of the sefer.

A problematic scenario

From my own experience the most potentially problematic consequence of allowing individuals to fill in letters by themselves is that any people are unaware that they must proclaim the words “Leshaim Kedushas Sefer torah “ prior to writing even part of a letter in a sefer Torah. Saying this is mandatory, as all writing in a sefer torah has to be written “lishmoh” - with special intention that one is writing for the sanctity of a sefer Torah. According to most opinions⁴ (including Shulchan Aruch Harav⁵) if even a single (defining part of a) letter is written without a person making this proclamation verbally at the commencement of writing, the entire sefer Torah is not kosher!

Thankfully, this does not happen often, because when individuals are given the opportunity to write themselves, the supervising sofer will instruct them to say “lesham” verbally. Often there will be a placard at hand that will specify this requirement. However all it takes is a small lapse of concentration or the sofer leaving the scene temporarily for this to occur.

⁴ Keses Hasofer Siman 4 Si'f 1

⁵ Siman 32 Si'f 31

While the option remains to quickly erase and rewrite the problematic letter, it is common that the perpetrator may have filled in multiple letters. Often he may not recall exactly where these letters were. Sometimes it is more than one person who did such, and knowing exactly which letters need to be rewritten can be very challenging.

Over the years I have discussed what to do if this happens with a number of noteworthy rabbonim, so that I could be prepared in the event this happens close to the conclusion of a siyum ceremony, where the situation will likely need to be dealt with decisively and expeditiously.

What are the practical options?

I have received different answers (as well as seen different answers printed) as to how this matter should be dealt with. The answers range widely and may depend on a number of factors. The idea of simply inking the letters again quickly, *lishmoh*, is not a practical option because there is a *machlokes* by *ksav al gabei ksav* (letters inked twice) as to which layer is the *ikkur* (top or bottom)⁶. There is a strong case to argue that all letters must be erased and re written in full, something which requires much skill and time. The time required for this type of action may not be available when hundreds of people are waiting to commence the parade or continue with the proceedings.

After much discussion and investigation I have reached a fairly solid conclusion as to how to proceed if such a scenario arises.

Establishing the halachic status of the Osiyos Challolos (outlined letters).

The key to the solution is the rule that “*lishmah*” is only necessary when completing either a whole letter or writing a vital part of a letter that is required to make it kosher. An example of the latter would be when a *sofer* is repairing a broken letter, for example in an old *sefer*

⁶ Keses Hasofer Siman 4 Si'f 3

Torah. If one adds ink to an already kosher letter without fulfilling the verbal (or mental) requirement of lishmah, it would not be a problem.

At a siyum ceremony, the outline of the letter is already present, written lishmah at a prior sitting by the sofer. There is a famous klal in safrus - “ain shiur beuvei haos” - that there is no minimum measurement for the thickness of a letter. Even if part or the entire letter is razor thin, it is still kosher. Here, with the outline, do we have an acceptable kosher tzurah (formation)? The letters are formed, but only in thin outline. If they are kosher as such there may be no problem if one forgets to say “leshaim” when filling in the outlined letters.

This matter is discussed by some who argue that if osiyos challulos are kosher, perhaps they should not be used for a “siyum” ceremony at which the purpose is to complete the sefer i.e. make it kosher upon completion. If osiyos challulos are kosher anyway, is it the best way to conduct a siyum, at which time the sefer is officially completed and becomes kosher?

Although I have never seen it in print, I am aware of a number of Gedolei Haposkim who have supposedly commented on this matter⁷, who maintain that osiyos challolos are kosher unfilled, with the exception of the letter yud. The reason is obvious. All other letters are recognizable on their own in outline. So since there is no minimum thickness required for the parts of letters necessary to make it kosher - so long as all the parts are joined and not broken - the letter is kosher.

Conclusion

Based on the above, it would seem that while in a simple case where a letter or two may have been written by someone without first fulfilling the requirement of lishmah - and we know which letters they are - they (or a defining part thereof) may be quickly erased and

⁷ For further information, please see this link:

<http://www.stamforum.com/2015/01/machlokes-between-who.html#comment-form>

rewritten without a major disruption to the siyum ceremony. However unless one of these letters is a yud, it is not really necessary to do this.

In the more complex scenario of when there are multiple letters or when we don't know for certain which are the problematic letters, if the outline was solid prior to the siyum ceremony, the sofer would need to erase all the yudin (plural for the letter yud - except obviously those in Hashem's name which are pre written and never outlined anyway) and rewrite them.

Since there are only a handful of yudin in the final lines normally left in outline for the siyum process, this should only take a few minutes for a skilled sofer to complete, thereby not delaying or disrupting the event in a serious way.

It is however important to reiterate the above solution only applies when the letters were written in solid outline prior to the siyum. Some sofrim sketch the outlined letters so rudimentarily that breaks can be seen between parts of the letters. It is recommended that such an outline should be strengthened and joined by the presiding sofer before the ceremony, and if one neglects to do so he cannot rely on the above solution.

Post Script

To keep things simple for the reader I did not bring down the less common practice of using osiyos nifsakos (as opposed to osiyos challolos) at the siyum ceremony. Osiyos nifsakos are when the letters are left incomplete, with full breaks between parts of the letters (see picture). This custom is prevalent amongst Sephardim.

Obviously if the same scenario presented itself with such a sefer Torah, the halacha is far more complex, as the leniency of ein shiur beuveiy haos cannot be applied when there is no outline. Most likely all the letters or (essential parts) will need to be erased and rewritten in our case of sofek lishmoh.

It is important to note that because of the popular position that osiyos challulos are kosher, many sofrim will make the last lamed of the sefer Torah in outline, but also disconnected at the neck of the

lamed. This ensures that the completion final letter is the point where the sefer becomes kosher for the first time, and is indeed the halachic moment of completion. Yet the last letter is almost always done by or in the presence of the sofer, and if not, because it is the final letter it can be easily verified who did it and if they did so lishmoh. In the worst case scenario, it would only be one letter to fix, which does not present a major problem.

CHASSIDUS

Chassidus applied

Chabad Chassidus is one of the deepest and most profound Jewish philosophies, which has been taught, studied and deeply thought about for over two centuries. Chassidus takes the most mystical parts of Judaism and brings them to a level of comprehension where anyone can understand it.

The purpose of the Alter Rebbe (the founder of Chabad Chassidus) undertaking such a major task, was not only just to make the world aware of these lofty topics, but rather, that by understanding these concepts, a Jew will then have totally transformed his mindset and approach to life, to be able to both tackle and illuminate the different obstacles G-d put in the world we live in. For these revolutionary ideas should affect every step one takes in his personal life having realized why he is here in this world, what he can accomplish himself and how he can accomplish it.

Recently a program launched by Rabbi Simon Jacobson was extended to our Yeshivah (YG) and during the past month there were several bachurim who took it upon themselves to share different aspects of their personal lives which were affected and illuminated by their learning of Chassidus - how they were not only inspired intellectually by the profound ideas of Chassidus, but how they then took those ideas and practically applied them to the simple details and actions of their day-to-day lives.

It is our honour and privilege to present to you the following five essays. We would like to thank the bachurim for allowing us to share them with the public.

It is our hope that sharing these essays will inspire the readers to emulate these outstanding bachurim, to realize that Chassidus is not just something that should remain in the books, but on the contrary that it is more practical than ever in our lives today, as you will discover upon reading them.

With hope and belief that this should be the last action needed to be taken to bring about the revelation of Moshiach now!

Guiding Over All

Hatomim Yakir Yaakov Havin

Talmid in Yeshiva Gedolah

At the dawn of the age of *Chassidus*, it was perceived as an esoteric and far-removed subject. I say 'subject' because at that time (mid eighteenth century), those unfamiliar with it branded *Chassidus* as merely a strand of knowledge to be learned only by the most pious and devout. Today, however, *Chassidus* is readily available for all to study, irrespective of one's status of religiousness or position on Judaism. But study alone is not enough. To be fully effective, *Chassidus* must be applied to ourselves, such that it becomes an intrinsic component of everyday life. The words themselves sound plain enough, but this can be an arduous and seemingly insurmountable task. Personally, I'm no expert, but I can relate how one Chassidic concept can influence the daily life of a Jew.

The existential crisis is a well-documented psychological phenomenon whereby individuals begin to question and doubt their fundamental reason for being. When people do not understand the purpose of their creation, their actions suddenly lose meaning, and all motivation vanishes. Motivation is an underestimated tool which helps drive people to function and to achieve. When this is no longer prevalent, it may become difficult to find the will to move forward with a passion, or even at all – both physically and figuratively. People experience this crisis in different measures and to different extents: some become depressed about simply living on a great mass of earth hurtling through space, their lives devoid of any meaning or value; some develop anxiety because they need an ultimate goal in order to live and thrive; and some lose the passion which used to infuse their actions with an element of joy and alacrity. In some ways, passion is crucial to a happy life, because without it, day-to-day operations can become burdensome, thereby diminishing a person's chance of contentment. So in truth, leading an apparently purposeless life is a psychological problem which can cascade beyond the confines of the

mind and also affect the actions, creating a severe impediment to a happy, rewarding life.

This is where the concept of Divine Providence (*Hashgacha Pratis*) rises to the fore. Divine Providence is a term thrown about quite often, by people with varying levels of understanding of the phrase. Too frequently, however, people only mention that "so-and-so occurred due to Divine Providence" when something fortunate happens. In truth, as *Chassidus* (*Baal Shem Tov* [quoted in *Likutei Sichos*, section 8]) explains, *Hashgacha Pratis* exists in all facets of creation, both the physical and the spiritual. Even occurrences that appear unfortunate are considered a component of G-d's supervision of the world, as they are part of a holistic picture which only G-d himself can view. The famous adage⁸ declares that G-d created the universe because he wished for a dwelling place in the 'lower' (physical) world. Practically, this implicates all beings in every generation in the Divine Scheme of G-d Himself. The *Tanya*⁹ states that "he who denies Divine Providence is called a heretic", underscoring *Chassidus's* standpoint on the subject – that everything which happens only does so because it is constantly under G-d's guidance.

By applying this concept to contemporary life, people can find meaning and purpose in all that they do. The knowledge that "every blade of grass that sways in the breeze is part of G-d's design"¹⁰ serves to revitalise the dormant soul and restore purpose to thought, speech and action. Concentrating and meditating on the fact that G-d has a Divine Intention for all things can afford inner tranquillity to the anxious, relief to the depressed and passion to the apathetic. I myself am only eighteen, and cannot claim to have experienced an existential crisis to its fullest degree, but there have been many moments where shadows of doubt have crept in from my periphery regarding why I

⁸ *Medrash Tanchuma, Parshas Naso*, chapter 16

⁹ *Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*, chapter 2

¹⁰ *Hayom Yom, Cheshvan* 28

get up each morning, and more specifically why I continue to follow the precepts and directives of Judaism and *Chassidus*. And I can certainly testify that each time, the awareness that I am being guided by *Hashgacha Pratis* has comforted me, and has allayed the ominous storm clouds of apprehension.

But the knowledge that G-d is continuously supervising and planning is not a complete solution, for another dilemma presently arises. If it is so, that almost six thousand years of history and all that is yet to come is part of a grand scheme of G-d, of what significance, then, is one single individual? It would not be unusual for someone to suddenly feel a deep sense of inadequacy in proportion to G-d's Divine Plans. If everything is methodically thought out and prepared, what impact will one person be able to have?

Here too, though, *Chassidus* has the answer. It is true that everything which has occurred and will occur in the world has been preordained by G-d. It is true that everything that happens is sourced in this ordination. And it is true that Divine Providence itself the life-force and maintained existence of every creature. But it is not true that the deeds of a single person are deemed minor and insignificant because of this. On the contrary, The *Tanya*¹¹ quotes a *Mishnah* in *Sanhedrin*¹² that "each man is obligated to say 'for my sake the world was created'". In addition, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi¹³ cites the Sages who derive from the verse "I (G-d) will dwell in them" that each Jew is required to refine himself to the extent that he is an appropriate receptacle for G-dliness. This indicates that each individual has a specific and unique mission on this earth, without the fulfilment of which the world will not be complete. It is thus understood that although G-d's plans ultimately dictate the course of history and the future, no one should ever despair that they are unimportant, for they are certainly not.

¹¹ *Likutei Amarim*, chapter 41

¹² chapter 4, *Mishnah* 5

¹³ *Likutei Torah, Parshas Naso*

Chassidus, in general, can be learned on various different levels. One may simply skim the surface of the words, translating them at face value. Or one may delve into the very essence and meaning of the numerous discourses and sayings. In truth, however, it is the understanding that *Chassidus* must be applied practically, and the application itself, which will culminate in finding true happiness, true inner tranquility, and true meaning in our lives.



The Paradox of Self

Hatomim Avrohom Karp

Talmid in Yeshiva Gedolah

People are dominated by their realities. That's my theory anyway. For some, it's the tangible world. They see physical objects as a means to achieve something within themselves and in the world around them. They see the possibilities that exist within the matter they manipulate and seek to leave their mark on this corporeal world. There are others, who are the so called "idea people". They see the possibilities in all existence. Building and overturning vast mountains of intellectual thought as they attempt to ascertain the fundamental theories of creation. And I, I exist in a reality of people. Each encounter is full of possibilities. Ever since I was small child, I wanted to know what motivated people. What fueled their dreams, desires and hopes? I wanted to know their stories, what they judged the essence of their existence to be. By viewing life through their perspective I gained insight into my own.

I began my quest towards the goal of understanding the quintessential nature of mankind by devouring a multitude of books on subjects ranging from psychology to philosophy. While these various subjects contained certain truths, they lacked descriptive information about the internal nature of man. Who he is; what he was born to do; who he was born to be. I refused to accept that man was

completely, hopelessly subjugated by his every thought and temptation. My Judaism I decided would not be governed by what I could rationalize. My everyday decisions would not be a product of a philosophical battle within my consciousness. I needed to connect to something greater than myself. Since every idea in philosophy by its very nature has a counterpoint, I spent my time combatting the constant onslaught of questions regarding myself and my faith.

My life changed one day when I began studying Tanya, which I was familiar with but had never studied in depth. I had questions about mankind's seemingly paradoxical behavior. One moment people could be manifestations of positivity, trying to make the world an uplifted positive place. The next instant they would cave into their every desire and whim. I wondered how human beings could be so seemingly hypocritical. As I began learning I began discovering answers to my questions. I was getting a "glance under the hood" so to speak. I was being shown the essence of man.

Tanya discusses what is commonly referred to as the "Human condition". The Alter Rebbe breaks down the human being into two components namely, the G-dly soul and the animal soul. The G-dly soul is responsible for the divine connection. It is the element of another plane of time gone and yet to come. The most existential part of the universe contained within our mortal vessel of mere flesh. It is what guides us in our darkest hour to seek the light of G-dliness within ourselves and others. We are all part of a cosmic whole containing a spark of G-d's essence. It is the vehicle that allows us to transcend this earthly existence and become something more spiritual, more refined. It enables us to reach the pinnacle of human achievement. In a sense we transcend ourselves, we leave our physical limitations in the dust behind us, by connecting to something limitless; by connecting to G-d.

Then we have the animal soul. Our proverbial sparring partner. The beast within us all, whose desires fuel our daily physical existence. "Eat, sleep, enjoy life", these are the words we hear whispered in our ear constantly. However, when we turn our heads to look for the demon on our shoulder, we find none. We are grappling with

ourselves. The animal soul is not evil, however, upon inspection, it remains the creature it always was. A manifestation of our gluttony, our laziness, and above all, the desire to be physically comfortable. "Leave spiritual advancement for another day" it says. "Today eat, drink, and be merry. For tomorrow we will die."

When you view a man, you are witnessing a being at war with himself. A fight for his very existence is taking place every minute. His basic attributes vying with his metaphysical elements for dominance of his life. Will he succumb and plunge into the murky waters of materialism? Or will he soar high above his physical self and embrace his divinity. Tanya compares the human body to a small city with two rulers. Each ruler attempts to seize control and rule the populace. These "rulers" refer to the two souls battling each other for control over man (Chapter 9).

Our job does not end with merely embracing the spiritual and leaving our physical faculties to rot and ruin, however. Our mission is to seize those very same lowly attributes, which by their very nature try to obstruct and obscure the path we must travel to achieve what we can become. We must elevate them and raise them above their current state of existence. We must use them for positivity, thereby fulfilling the purpose G-d created them for. Take the seemingly negative aspects and utterly transform them to the divine service.

We must realize that our life is a never-ending climb upwards and onwards, towards an increased revelation of G-d and one's self. The fact that every day is a struggle is not a symptom of a spiritual malady within oneself. It is precisely for this reason we have been created. By way of analogy, Tanya suggests that when one has alien thoughts during prayer the prayer itself is not lacking, rather they are due to the animal soul struggling for dominance (chapter 28). Recognizing that the struggle itself constitutes divine service, has aided me tremendously in my life. I would labor and work towards the goal I sought to achieve, namely to refine myself and make myself a better man. When temptation would come calling as it always does, I would dismiss it. Once, twice, and even a third I could resist. But sooner or

later I would cave. "Has everything I have worked for been in vain?" I would ask myself. "Why bother if the struggle will inevitably end in failure?" Shlomo Hamelech (King Solomon) once said; Great men stumble just as ordinary men do. The key difference between them however, is that the great man will pick himself up, dust himself off and plunge into the fray with renewed vigor (Proverbs 24:16). Tanya taught me that the fact that I would fail after a time should not cause me to despair, rather it taught me to recognize failure for what it is, a hurdle to be overcome on the path to greatness. My animal soul will always keep directing me towards the material aspects of this world; however I will keep striving upward toward true G-dly existence.

Now, we as a people can find meaning in the struggle of our day to day lives. We can recognize depression and anxiety for what they are, symptoms of the struggle. Of humanity itself, questioning, yearning and reaching. We know that as we ourselves are struggling, others are struggling as well. We draw strength from them and they from us. We truly have now been privy to the essence of humanity.



An inner struggle

Hatomim Shneur Zalman Mangel

Talmid in Yeshivah Gedolah

Confusion. Perplexity. Guilt. Internal Conflict. Discord. Indecisiveness. Uneasiness. The prevailing theme being a measure of unhappiness. But why is this? Why does one constantly feel that he is living an internal conflict? Why does one feel that one is consistently acting contrary to what one internally feels is correct? Why is it that at one point one feels **this** is appropriate, and the next moment one feels it is completely "evil"? Why does one regularly feel that he recognizes the truth, yet is always plucked away? These challenges can lead any individual into utter confusion. Feelings of guilt, discomfort, lack of self respect, and depression. But why? Why do I feel this way? Why do

I become so troubled and confused about such feelings? Where is it all developing from?!

This is where the understanding of one of the most fundamental and elementary concepts in *Chassidus* comes to the rescue! The Kabbalist R' Chaim Vital elucidates, "there is a verse which says, " And *neshamot* (souls) which I have made¹⁴" - the word souls written in the **plural** form (while the verse is discussing an individual Jew) -" to teach the concept of The Two Souls. The idea that every single Jew - whether righteous or wicked - possesses an Animal Soul, and a G-dly Soul. A soul driven towards materialism and selfishness, and a soul driven towards spirituality and G-dliness. When I comprehend how my entire life is a tale of the battle between my souls, a battle between the physical and the spiritual, between selfishness and selflessness, I will become more aware as to why I make the decisions that I do. My misdeeds do not make me an inherently "evil" individual. This awareness of my spiritual make-up will give me confidence in my decision making, making me more comfortable with myself. This ultimately leads to a happier and more meaningful life.

The first Chabad Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe, explains the why and where at great lengths in the first and second chapters of his famous work, *The Tanya*. The Alter Rebbe clarified, why is it that one feels as if he is in a constant tug of war? Because "every Jew, whether righteous or wicked, possesses two souls.... One soul is sourced in the *Kelipot* (concealments).... The second soul is truly a part of G-D". The Alter Rebbe explains in depth in Chapter One - that **all** one's self-serving characteristics and tendencies stem from the Animal Soul. The Animal Soul is driven by a search for physicality and comforts. One can call it the Egoistic Soul - the soul that is solely looking for means of ego-enhancement. The term "Animal Soul" is an extremely suitable name for this soul, being that its' entire drive and quest is identical to that of

¹⁴ *Isaiah* 57:16

an animal - in that all it does, all it exerts its effort towards, is solely to satisfy its lusts for physicality and materialism¹⁵.

The other soul, which every single Jew possesses, (regardless of one's stature) is termed the G-dly Soul - a soul driven by the desire to be unified with G-d in His Essence. The G-dly Soul inclines towards spirituality and G-dliness, and is therefore the fountainhead of all one's spiritual aspirations. The Kabbalists bring forth the verse¹⁶ "a part of G-d Above", as an illustration of the Jews' pure soul, the G-dly Soul; meaning, this soul found within **every Jew** is **TRULY** a portion of G-d - its' core and essence is utterly bound with Divinity and G-dliness. To elaborate, the Alter Rebbe quotes a verse regarding the Jewish nation, "Israel is My firstborn son¹⁷". This verse is expounded to mean, "that just as a child is derived from the brain of its' father (his essence and inner being), so too is the soul of every Jew derived from G-ds" Essence and Inner Being. The Previous Rebbe illustrates the nature of this G-dly Soul, and its' relevance in one's daily life in two aspects: ¹⁸(a) "A Jew innately recognises G-dliness and is inherently sensitive to that which is supernatural. He needs no proof of this. (b) No Jew is willing - and no Jew is able - to remain separate from G-dlines." The G-dly Soul may otherwise be known as the Altruistic Soul - the soul that seeks connection to truth and eternity.

Chassidus and primarily the Tanya enlightens me to this concept, that my life is the tale of the conflict between the Animal and G-dly Souls. My life is a perpetual battle, between my physical needs and cravings, and my appetite for spirituality. Yet, the Previous Rebbe taught in the renowned discourse of *Basi L'Gani* - that the G-dly Soul is actually "**Melubash**" (**enclothed**) within the Animal Soul. This was G-ds desire - that my G-dly Soul would purify and refine my physicality.

¹⁵ *Rabbeinu Bachaye Genesis 2:7*

¹⁶ *Job 31:2*

¹⁷ *Exodus 4:22*

¹⁸ *Hayom Yom 25 Tammuz*

It is therefore apparent, that my two souls are in a perpetual battle, yet in truth are absolutely congruent.

When I further my understanding and application of this Chassidic concept - that G-d wired me in such a manner, I will automatically understand why I make the decisions that I do, and why these decisions lead me to tangible or intangible feelings of unhappiness. I now realise that these feelings are completely reasonable. Facing the reality that my Animal Soul is the reason for my frequent self-gratifying choices, and not due to any particular defect in myself - will in turn provide relief from those all too familiar feelings of guilt, self-deprecation, and overall uneasiness that result in a measure of unhappiness. I will now understand that those selfish choices were made due to the dominion of the Animal Soul at that specific time - not due to any inherent inner faults. In addition, I will be inspired to elevate my Animal Soul towards G-dly objectives - which will likewise, dramatically lead me to an increased measure of happiness.

Regardless if one is old or young, man or woman, experienced or novice - one is continually faced with challenges and crises'. Some of these are minuscule challenges, while others come sizably more than one feels they can handle. Throughout one's life, one is faced with the challenge of how to think, talk, and act. One is regularly challenged by the contemporary secular world, peer pressure, and desires for immediate gratification, which runs in contrast to one's upbringing and the likings of one's G-dly Soul. There are endless examples and scenarios as to how the knowledge and application of The Two Souls can provide assistance and support to one confronted with such challenges. One need only to realize the origin of one's conflicting emotions - the Two Souls within each and every one of us; one selfish, and the other selfless.

One such example and challenge in my life - is the challenge of giving *Tzedakah*, charity. Charity can be understood in various manners, generally including the contribution of time, talent, treasure, or any combination thereof. Spontaneously as I am approached by another, to assist with my time, talent, or treasure - I am faced with the

choice of either conducting myself in a selfish or selfless manner. On impulse, my forceful Animal Soul pipes up and chooses self. "Why would you relinquish your hard earned money? You do not have time to help him out, you are a busy man!" Thereupon, my altruistic G-dly Soul joins the fight and persuades me to the contrary. "G-d provided you with such monies to make a difference to the world! Do not be greedy, you have plenty of time!"

Prior to my exposure of the idea that I am a composite of an Animal and G-dly Soul, I may feel extremely troubled and bothered as to why I am being tugged in different directions as such. I can become confused as to why my one decision changed the day for the better, and the other made me feel uneasy, and guilty.

As I slowly begin implementing the ways of *Chassidus*, I begin to value the importance of *Tzedakah*, and the effects it brings to the world. I observe, that the more I exert myself in this area, the more delightful it becomes. As soon as I advance in my knowledge, and apply the concept of The Two Souls, I understand that the inner joy caused by my contributions, are in essence the triumph of my G-dly Soul over my coarse Animal Soul. I am in essence winning my inner battle and conflict, thus achieving the goal of inner peace. Yet, when I choose the all too easy path of the Animal Soul, the short route, I am in essence permitting the "enemy" to be triumphant. Needless to say, this will subsequently present me with a measure of uneasiness, guilt, and unhappiness.

Nevertheless, I cannot totally neglect the desires of my Animal Soul, the desire for recognition, which emphasize man's independence and individuality; in contrast to the G-dly Soul's stress of obedience and self-nullification. The "animal" in me desires to be recognized, and demands attention. Completely disregarding my Animal Soul will end up in failure in most scenarios. The Animal Soul is an absolute part of my makeup. Consequently, I must take the desires of the Animal Soul, and shepherd them towards G-dly purposes. I must arrange my Animalistic lusts congruently with my drive for G-dliness. For instance, my Animal Soul has an immense passion for financial wealth

and success. Therefore, once that state of success has been achieved, I can apply that animalistic desire, as an opportunity and avenue for the desires of my G-dly Soul; which will result in inner peace, joy, and happiness. With the above stated conclusions and applications of the concept of The Two Souls, I can be extremely confident that I will find tremendous tools when confronted with **any** challenge or crisis.

When an individual understands and internalizes this concept that G-d equipped a Jew with a G-dly and an Animal Soul, one can attain the long sought after target of inner peace. The knowledge of the explained idea does not justify one's decisions; it merely clarifies the cause of the decision, which will subsequently cause a great measure of relief from unproductive feelings. It gives clarity, which allows one's self to be propelled to self growth. This is accomplished through continually exercising one's G-dly soul, and prevailing over the Animal Soul. The more one thinks, talks, and acts from the G-dly Soul, the more in touch he is with his better self, which will subsequently result in a more enhanced life. With this added dimension brought by the concept of The Two Souls infused in one's life, one can comfortably develop and appreciate one's mission in life. Ultimately, with the joy, peace, happiness, meaning, and mission one receives from *Chassidus* in general, and the concept of The Two Souls in particular - one will have done myriads to 'alleviate one's fears, anxiety, and impediments', which will result in one's leading an exceedingly meaningful life.



Developing willpower

Hatomim Elchonon Marozow

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By reading this essay, you'll have mastered the ability to overcome tiredness that constantly holds you back from accomplishing. You'll suddenly find that you can summon up the strength to do something you just didn't have the heart for before...

That's what I'm here to discuss with you.

You, dear Reader, want to know how to stand up to calls of laziness and get involved in your tasks at hand. I will discuss how to overcome that self-indulgent, lazy part in each of us. The part that wants the easiest, workable way out.

The Chassidic thoughts which inspired this resolution include:

- The potency of willpower.
- The fact that no Jew, no matter how low he deems himself, wants to separate from his Father in Heaven. Instead, you my friend, really wish to unite with G-d's -as it were- thought, speech and action.

Let's first clarify the issue. Laziness, A disease that prevents us from achieving what we want and need. As I personally experienced, instead of leading a productive life, changing the world for the better, I sat on the couch stoshing potato chips. Can you imagine, now I'm the head of a major corporation. Had I not acted so lazily, I could have been so much more productive. As you can see, laziness can make it break or break it for you, your family and the entire world.

Now that we've identified the problem, we can propose a solution. Looking at the Alter Rebbe's words in Tanya, we can glean a method of dealing with laziness.

"The brain rules the heart by virtue of its innate nature. For man was so created from birth, that every person may, with the power of the will in his brain -i.e. the will created of his mind's understanding- restrain himself and control the drive of his heart's lust, preventing his heart's desires from finding expression in deed, word and thought, and [he can, if his mind will it] divert his attention completely from that which his heart craves [and turn his attention] to the exactly opposite direction." -Tanya Ch. 12.

We see the idea of self control. Granted, you might feel like turning over in bed and sleeping the day off. Yet, with a bit of thought into the matter, you can conjure up the willpower to overcome that urge. In fact

-we see from the Tanya- one can direct his efforts to the point that he will be **more** productive than usual.

Well, we've discussed the effectiveness of willpower, determination, resolve.

Within will itself there are two levels, one higher than the other.

- A. There is the desire towards physicality.
- B. A higher yearning to remain connected to our spiritual life-force.

Each of us has inherited a love of G-d from our forefathers. The dynamics of this love include a desire to connect to G-d as well as a fear of self-extinction.

Every moment of our lives, G-d is creating us and the world around us. Committing a sin causes our life support to be disconnected. Our great love for G-d doesn't allow for such misconduct. Therefore, all that is needed to prevent one from giving into temptations from the 'other side' is to reveal his innate love.

One's self love is powerful enough to prevent him from jumping off a bridge. In a similar vein, once one realizes that committing a sin is akin to jumping the bridge, connecting to one's G-dly love is all one needs to stop himself.

-Tanya ch. 14

Think: "I don't want to be a Rasha-wicked one, even momentarily. I don't want to separate myself from G-d." (Doing a sin separates one from G-d. We see this (in Isaiah 59:2): "Your sins separate [you from G-d].")

You'll be gratified to realize that your craving for physical pleasure has dissipated.

We see here two desires. The desire for connection to G-d overpowers the desire for physical pleasure.



Bridging material with spiritual

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Overview

The purpose of this essay is to address the problem of Meaning in life (or lack thereof). I intend to offer an explanation of its causes, its effects, and how all other approaches which try to solve it are inadequate and lack the pragmatic, relevant, and (strikingly) all-encompassing approach of Chassidus. The idea in Chassidus upon which I will base this approach will be the idea of Dira Bitachtonim; I will try to explain what it is and the way in which Chassidus enhances it and applies it to our day-to-day conflicts and struggles in life. How it contains not just a "*cognitive* therapy", as it were, but rather a complete transformation of a person's way of life and personal development; through thought, speech and action.

Meaning

A human's life is one of meaning. More than nutrition, more than money, more than all the physical pleasures, meaning is something which we need in order to lead a happy, fulfilled life. Someone who knows what *his* life is all about can never be thrown off course; for he has a goal and direction. He sees past the possibly uncomfortable here-and-now, the delicate balancing act on the tightrope of life, and focuses only on getting closer towards that goal. Such a person can never fall; he has something higher, more important, to focus on. Conversely, take away a person's purpose, and his happiness, drive, and sense of self-worth go along with it. Life becomes monotonous and futile. And yet so many of us are still searching for meaning. So many of us aren't quite sure where we fit in the greater story we call life. Even those of us who **do** know our goal sometime get distracted and forget about where it's really at.

Alternative solutions

To solve this problem, let us first look at the different approaches given. Ironically, the upbringing which we get at home and at school has disappointingly little -if anything- to say on the matter. We are taught to read, to write and to calculate. We are taught so much about the world around us, but the ultimate purpose of both us and of the world is left unexplained. Science glibly tries to get around the issue of Meaning and Purpose (Teleology) by treating it as a non-question which needn't be answered. This stance is obviously quite unhelpful and inadmissible, not just for the purposes of our discussion but also - and mainly- for any human being interested in personal growth. We see clearly that even when it comes to inanimate, man-made objects we assume that they were made with a specific purpose in mind; why should we assume less of an intelligent human being? Man's superiority over the animal, as the Alter Rebbe explains, more than his intelligence or physical advantages, is the spirituality in him - his striving towards something higher.

Torah solutions

One approach in Torah, *Mussar*, emphasizes the lowliness of the body and its animalistic nature and views it as a hindrance in the service of the creator. It therefore focuses on abstaining from physicality as much as possible. This approach, besides being impractical - and possibly detrimental - for our age¹⁹, also does not begin to explain how the world is ultimately G-dly; which it must be, since G-d by definition is infinite and is therefore not limited to holy, spiritual objects etc. This approach also does not really give a person specific ontological meaning in this world, something which makes his task different from that of all of the other people living the exact same way. For if you remove - or in this case abhor - the concept of the physical world in which we live, it can become quite difficult for a human being of flesh and blood, living in that world, to find

¹⁹ פרשת וארא, לקו"ש ח"א p. 119

contentment with himself. On the contrary, he may get depressed that he isn't where he believes he should be.

Chakirah is more "philosophical": The focus is primarily on the "how-do-we-know" of Judaism. If you were looking for a logical proof for the existence of G-d, or for a discussion about the problem of evil etc., you'd probably go to study *Chakirah*. But the physical still remains taboo. And as we know, ignoring an obstacle (even granting that it is an obstacle) doesn't help for long, not in our mind and not in reality. To be sure, philosophy does attempt to answer our search for meaning: The ultimate goal is transcendence; to understand the greatness of G-d, of spirituality, and try to get closer to it, and farther from materiality. But a *weltanschauung* which has a relevant, down-to-earth methodology is still needed. To quote our Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Binyomin Cohen שליט"א, "The problem with philosophy is that it's philosophy." It is *Chassidus* which takes all of these seemingly abstract ideas and concepts and brings them down to our level where we can fully internalise them and use them as a way of life, not just a way of thought.

Chassidus

The approach of *Chassidus*, though very distinct from the two aforementioned paths, combines them and adds its own dimension²⁰, one which gets rid of the "dichotomy" of physical and spiritual. The approach of *Chassidus*²¹ teaches the unique quality of Matter when it is refined and the unique quality of Form when it is integrated with Matter.

The first place in *Chassidus* where we find the idea of *Dira Bitachtonim* is in the Alter Rebbe's *Tanya*²²: " In a well-known statement, our Rabbis declare that the purpose for which this world was created is that the holy one, blessed be he, desired to have an

²⁰ p. 323-332 להבין ענין תורת החסידות, סעי' ז'-ט, אג"ק אדמו"ר מוהרריי"ץ נ"ע ח"ד

²¹ *Hayom Yom* 7 Kislev, Eng. Ed. SIE, 2012

²² ch. 36 (Eng. ed. Vol. 2, p. 474)

abode in the lower worlds (=Dira Bitachtonim) [i.e. the physical world, which is, in terms of revealed G-dliness, the furthest from G-d]". And further in the same chapter: "...The purpose [of the "descent" from *Or Ein Sof* - the infinite G-dly presence (lit. light) ... is this lowest world, for such was His will - that he find it pleasurable when the *sitra achra* is subjugated [to holiness]..."²³

To put it differently, there are three spiritual "degrees":

- *Kedusha* (Holiness): Completely holy and ultimately good. G-dliness permeates its very being. Highest degree of spirituality. Anything used for a positive commandment in the Torah is vivified by *Kedusha*.

- *Klipat Nogah* (lit. "Shell of Brightness/Radiance): In this level the power-force is in a kind of "limbo" state. All things which are neither forbidden nor commanded - i.e. most of the world - belong to this category, having the potential to be either transformed to *Kedusha* or, G-d forbid, to the lower level:

- *Shalosh Klipot Ha'tmeot* (three impure *Klipot*): "Rotten to the core", predominantly bad, the G-dliness inside remains dormant. The evil side is also referred to as *Sitra Achra*, meaning "the Other Side" (self-explanatory). *Klipot* means "shells;" just like a shell covers over that which is inside it but is - in and of itself - completely useless, so too the *Klipot* "cover" the G-dliness within. *Klipat Nogah* is an admixture of good and evil and is therefore still connected to holiness; whereas the impure *Klipot* are predominantly evil, though they still have a G-dly spark which they need for their existence and which they receive through the "intermediary" of *Klipat Nogah*²⁴.

Our job is to elevate everything we come in contact with to *Kedusha*, making it into a dwelling place for G-d. The reason this must be done specifically in a physical world can be understood with an example

²³ Also להבין ענין תורת החסידות, ס"ב

²⁴ סה"מ תרס"ה ע' ק"ג וק"ה-ק"ז

from human experience²⁵: Think of something you've grown up with. Something you "take for granted." If you wanted to truly appreciate its greatness, you'd probably try living without it for a while. Then, when you really understand how much it means, your appreciation of it is much greater, more than it was before. So too with G-dliness. G-dly light is nice and all, but light's true virtue is brought out when it comes out of darkness, i.e. specifically our physical world.

This elevation we do, as explained at length in Ch. 37 of Tanya, by taking physical objects and fulfilling G-ds will with them. When this happens, the G-dly force within becomes revealed, and the object, the person, and energy through which the act was done become elevated. Through this we elevate the *Klipat Nogah*; simultaneously cutting off the lifeline of the *Klipot*. Every mundane action, performed not for the pleasure derived but for a greater purpose, becomes holy. Furthermore, even when one temporarily abstains from thinking, doing or saying something permitted but not urgently necessary; "Even by the slightest subjugation of the *sitra achra* here below, the glory of G-d and his holiness is greatly elevated on high." (Ibid. Ch. 27)

We now return to the issue at hand, that of Meaning. For one who lives by the teachings of *Chassidus*, life never becomes meaningless. Every situation becomes either an opportunity to grab or a challenge to overcome in his service of the Creator. The world as a whole is not a temptation to be avoided or transcended. Rather, it is the sum total of G-ds decision to give us all a place in the "bigger picture." The evil is to be transformed, not broken. Each of us has his/her corner of the world which only they can improve on. *Chassidus* is different in that it "zooms in" on the world and those in it and says that G-d created the world for you. G-d created the entire universe so that each and every human being, with their different (and unique) lives, talents, paths and circumstances, can - and is invited to - make this world a better, G-dlier place, one good act at a time. Every good - albeit small - act you do

²⁵ also מאמר ד"ה כל המאריך באחד "Oneness In Creation", p. 30 and on

makes an everlasting difference for the better, in yourself and in the world.

This approach also works amazingly for any feelings of sadness or inferiority. *Chassidus* shows us²⁶ that "bad" events really originate from a higher level than good events. G-d's logic is beyond our comprehension. ²⁷Similarly, there exist events which are truly good, but due to their high state cannot manifest themselves as revealed positivity. And here too, one who realizes the "bigger picture" knows that misfortune, like the world, is [not something to be afraid of, it is] "a descent for the sake of an ascent"; the greater the challenge the greater is the rewarding feeling of overcoming it. Happiness is more "real" when preceded by its opponent. As the saying goes, for the believer there are no questions; for the non-believer there are no answers. A true *Chossid* says "I may not like what is going on, but I trust that G-d knows what he's doing, and my conflict, therefore, is [not a personal/private occurrence/event, but] part of G-d's plan.

Chassidus, I believe, is about two general ideas:

- Seeing - or thinking about - the "bigger picture"; the "greater good". Kabolat ol, Bitul, Shlichus etc., All are somehow linked to this principal.
- Transform - not break. One must view every situation as an aid (or at least a challenge) to be worked with, not an enemy.

Chassidus, more than any other study of life - *Mussar*, *Chakirah*, science, psychology, you name it - goes out with you into the street and helps you make sense of the world and of your personal life. It's not limited to the religious (or secular) mind. Anyone can use and share it. In fact, that's what *Chassidus* is all about. Take what you've learned and spread the light to someone else, in the spirit of Dira Bitachtonim.



²⁶ Tanya, Ch. 26, 27

²⁷ ישע'י נ"ה, ח

The purpose of life

Hatomim Yaakov Halevi Schachna

Talmid in Yeshivah Gedolah

In life, humans are constantly searching, searching for meaning, for fulfilment, for something that truly gives them a sense of direction. Jewish beliefs dictate that every single being in existence has its very own comprehensive as well as a tailor made goal to fulfil in this world. If a person's whole existence is predicated on the aim of accomplishing a particular objective, having a clear definition of said objective should galvanise a greater opportunity to complete this goal in the utmost fashion. The main goal of the Jewish nation is, in simple terms, to create a dwelling place for G-d. This objective that G-d has dispensed to the Jewish nation contains two main proponents, the art of *iscaphia* and *ishapcha*. This is the power of self control and the ability to transform things to a higher and holier level of existence for the sake of G-d. In order to genuinely fulfil this lofty goal a spirit of holy *shtus*, that is, a spirit that transcends reason and logic is required.

The main purpose of life is to create a dwelling place for G-d. *Chasidus* explains in many places²⁸ that this is the purpose of all creation. This was temporarily achieved during the presence of the Beis Hamikdosh, the Holy Temple. In reference to the Beis Hamikdosh the Torah states, "and they shall make me a dwelling place and I shall dwell in **them**." There is an idiosyncrasy present within this possuk as, if G-d wants to dwell in the Beis Hamikdosh, why does the possuk say that he aims to dwell within "them," insinuating that G-d is referring to people and not a specific location? The lesson to expound from this is that G-d wishes to dwell within every single Jew. Thus it is every Jew's task to create a dwelling place for him. Furthermore, as we are expected to create a dwelling place for G-d within ourselves, the most

²⁸ such as Basi Legani tof shin yud

exemplary instance exhibiting how to achieve this is the actual physical dwelling place of G-d. Concerning the sacrifices offered in the Beis Hamikdosh and the Mishkan (original temporary dwelling place of G-d), the word *mikem*, meaning 'from oneself' is peculiarly placed as if referring to the person as opposed to the offering that needs to be taken from one's own flock. The lesson to learn from this is that the service of G-d is dependant and must come from oneself specifically. Thus according to Chasidus, the greatest revelation from above are only experienced once a person has first inspired himself down below in this world to achieve higher levels of service towards G-d. This goal applies even to people who may develop apprehension towards this goal, feeling that this mission is not pertinent to their exceptionally busy lives. However Chasidus explains that when G-d commands that "all *amei ho'oratz* should know that G-d is our G-d," it refers specifically to those entrenched within the physical world who may feel that life is too busy and demanding to truly focus on the ultimate service of G-d. This point is especially applicable in this day and age where due to the development of new technology and thus increased distractions, people can easily lose touch with what really matters in this world. Furthermore "G-d doesn't demand from people that which they are not capable of fulfilling," and thus people should not feel despondent and worry that they are unable to achieve the lofty goal placed before them. Concerning this point a saying comes to mind that "G-d doesn't ask according to his ability but rather according to your abilities." Thus once we realise that we have a general goal that is relevant to everyone no matter who they are or what level they believe they are on, the next step is explore the process of fulfilling this goal.

The way to create a dwelling place for G-d is through the exercising of *iscaphya* and *ishapcha*. The way the *yetzer harah* (evil inclination of a person) manipulates a person to drift away from the path of G-d is through entrenching him within many worldly and physical desires. When a person's desires becomes well-established the issue can distend until he completely loses touch with G-dliness and spirituality. Thus a person must develop self control (*iscaphia*) to assuage the propensity to follow his worldly desires. This is because G-d loves

when people are able to overcome their desires for his sake. Chasidus explains that G-d's glory ascends when people practice the art of self control. This concept of self control doesn't just apply to avoiding sin, even the slightest imposing of self control concerning non necessities such as an excess of food can have a positive spiritual effect. Just like the more a person gives into his physical desires, the more he becomes entrenched within a cesspool of gluttony and physical pleasures, when a person increases his G-dly activity, he will ascend even higher spiritually. Thus through self control a person can become closer to G-d. The second process is *ishapcha*. This involves taking things that may not be considered holy and morphing it for the sake of heaven. As mentioned previously we can turn to the service in the Beis Hamikdosh to find perfect examples as how to behave in our day to day service of G-d. Thus just like the holy offerings involved sacrificing an animal to G-d, in a similar vein, we must 'sacrifice' (so to speak) our 'animal' for the sake of heaven. Chasidus accentuates that a person comprises two souls the 'G-dly soul' and the 'animalistic soul.' *Ishapcha* involves a catharsis between our 'animalistic' and 'G-dly soul.' This involves deep contemplations about the wonder of G-d which will lead to the animalistic soul becoming submissive and encompassed within the G-dly soul causing the animalistic soul to become fully transformed for god's sake. Thus the animalistic soul will become stronger and will aid a person in his aim to draw down the spiritual holiness into this world. In our day to day lives we must strive to channel our own energy and talents for the sake of G-d, as opposed to directing it at baseless activities, in order to create a dwelling place for G-d.

An assistance to overcome various challenges that may hinder the ability to achieve this goal is to acquire a spirit of *shtus d'kedusha*, a foolish spirit higher than reason and logic. It is known that the only reason a person sins is because a foolish spirit has infiltrated his mind. Thus in diametric opposition, the way to overcome the propensity to sin is with a 'holy foolishness.' In other words we should take this spirit that causes us to sin, and apply *ishapcha* to focus it on the purpose of creating a dwelling place for G-d. This involves a person pushing his boundaries and pushing himself to constantly develop. There are some

people whom the saying applies, "today is like yesterday and tomorrow will be like today." This could be fine; however people need to push themselves to go beyond the norm, to do things outside their comfort zone. People should strive to achieve that which they have looked upon and said that they could not do because it was simply too arduous. Practically speaking, if someone struggles with his prayers, for example, it is specifically upon prayers that he should focus his energy on fixing as opposed to concentrating only on that which he enjoys or finds comes with ease. It doesn't even matter how far gone a person believes he is. A person should never think that he cannot return to G-d and push himself to achieve greater heights within his Judaism. Throughout history, even absolute deniers of G-d and his Torah have, when push comes to shove, died for the sake of G-d. People have to constantly grow as when it comes to Judaism, life is like riding a bicycle up a hill, a very strenuous activity where it is impossible to remain stationary, the moment you stop pedalling, you immediately regress. This concept is also symbolised within the Mishkan, as the Mishkan's outer wall was built out of cedar wood-*atzei shitim*. The word *shitim* shares the same root as the word *shtus* and we can learn from this that just as the dwelling place of G-d was surrounded by *atzei shitim* we must surround ourselves in a spirit of *shtus d'kedusha* within all facets of our daily lives. Conservatives may be content to remain stagnant, encompassed in the comforting senses of stability and necessity. However we must strive to transcend this fear because the whole point of life boils down to growing. Once you stop growing, you stop living.

It is by no accident that the many features of the physical dwelling place of G-d as well as the various services present symbolise how we should aspire to act in our own lives. The conflicting choices facing individuals to strive to push themselves to impose self control and transform things for the sake of G-d are central to the Jewish responsibility to create a dwelling place for G-d and to hasten the coming of the redemption. Through this we can achieve this peaceful redemption where at last "swords will be beaten into ploughshares,

spears into pruning hooks and nation will not make war against nation anymore.”



A New Pair of Glasses

Hatomim Hashliach Menachem Mendel Gurary
Shliach in Yeshivah Gedolah

יתרון האור מן החושך means the advantage of light over darkness. One of the many explanations for this phrase is that we can realise the advantage of light specifically after we become aware of the darkness. In other words, one only appreciates the light after seeing the previous darkness. Sometimes, a child raised in a palace doesn't appreciate his privileged background because he was brought up that way.

Sometimes, even though we have great benefits as being a Yid and being a Chossid, but we don't even appreciate these great innate advantages that it offers. In order to appreciate them, we must consider how life would be without them, and then what it means to have them.

Below is a selection of various differences between expressing what ones perspective would be when just looking at these things superficially, and how through Chassidus ones eyes are opened and illuminated to their deeper dimation. When one perceives life through the spectacles of Chassidus, it uplifts and enriches one's life and practice of Torah and Mitzvos. Included are the subjects of Hashem, Neshamos, Torah, Mitzvos, Reward, Punishment, and a general world view. For further elaboration of the following differences, learn Chassidus that discusses these subjects.

The Superficial Perspective	The Chassidic Perspective
<u>Hashem</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hashem Echad” means that there's only one God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Hashem Echad” means that there is no other existence aside from Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hashem is the Creator of the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hashem is way above creating the world, and He “lowered Himself” to

	create the world
• Hashem is spiritual	• Hashem is above spirituality and physicality equally

Neshamos

• Ahavas Yisrael means to act in a kind way towards a fellow Jew	• Ahavas Yisrael means to feel a love to a fellow Jew <i>as your own self</i> , because every Jew has a Neshama which comes from the same Source, so we are indeed all one
• A Rasha is a wicked evildoer	• A Rasha has a part of Hashem within him, which is in captivity, so even though a Rasha's actions are undesirable, <i>he</i> contains good
• A Rebbe is a leader of Jewry	• A Rebbe has a Neshama Klolis, which includes all the Neshamas of that generation, and connects them to Hashem
• Torah & Mitzvos are only one of life's objectives	• Chassidus reveals the Yechidah of one's Neshama, which feels no purpose in life without a connection to Hashem
• Humbleness means to ignore one's qualities	• Humbleness means to realise that one's qualities come from Hashem, not one's own
• Haughtiness is a problem, because it is a negative character trait	• Even to feel one's own existence is a problem, because it a contradiction to the complete Oneness of Hashem
• Tzaddikim only do Mitzvos; Resha'im only do avairos; and Benonim do a mixture of both	• Tzaddikim don't have any desire for forbidden things; Benonim don't want to do avairos; Resha'im don't have the yoke of Hashem upon him
• A Tzaddik is on a higher spiritual level than a Ba'al Teshuva	• A Ba'al Teshuva's connection to Hashem is much stronger than a Tzaddik's, because he was in an lowly situation and nevertheless decided to do Teshuva and return to Hashem
• A Yeshiva Bochur is on a higher spiritual level than a businessman	• A businessman has the advantage of remaining connected to Hashem even while involved in his mundane affairs

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Neshama is at a higher spiritual level than the body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The body has the advantage over the Neshama, because it was chosen by Hashem (see Tanya chapter 49)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is of greater value to serve Hashem with understanding and emotions than with Kabolas Ol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kabolas Ol is sourced from the essence of one's Neshama which is above understanding and emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The desires within a Jew to do Mitzvos or avairos comes from a good inclination and an evil inclination, within him 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The desires within a Jew to do Mitzvos or avairos comes from a G-dly soul, which is a part of Hashem, and an animalistic soul, both within him
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One who serves Hashem and one who doesn't serve Hashem is determined by whether he does Torah and Mitzvos or not 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One who serves Hashem and one who doesn't serve Hashem is determined by whether one goes beyond his nature in service of Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desires are negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desires can be positive if used for good purposes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Jew's connection with Hashem is determined by his practice of Torah and Mitzvos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Jew's connection with Hashem is independent of his practice Mitzvos, being that a Jew is intrinsically connected with Hashem through his Neshama which is a part of Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kabolas Ol conflicts with one's feeling of freedom to be oneself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kabolas Ol doesn't conflict with one's self, rather it is who a Jew truly is
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tzaddikim can do avairos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It might seem to be an avaira, but in truth no bad exists by a Tzaddik
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The basis of Torah and Mitzvos is Emuna alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to Emuna one must understand Hashem, since understanding intellectually makes the Emuna an element of the person i.e. to affect the person internally

Torah

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torah is a guidebook for how one should act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torah is not only a guidebook, but it is the wisdom and desire of Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mishpatim are established by Hashem because they are logical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mishpatim are established because they are Hashem's desire, and they also have a logical reason
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative stories in the Torah are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything in Torah has a spiritual

negative	meaning, and contains a positive lesson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stories in Torah are historical facts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything in Torah is a lesson to us even today
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main novelty at Mattan Torah was that Hashem gave us the Torah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main novelty at Mattan Torah was that Hashem gave the Jewish people the power to connect physicality and spirituality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teshuva means to correct one's wrongdoings and make new resolutions for the future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teshuva means that the Neshama returns to the way the Neshama was previously connected to Hashem before it came to this world
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tefillah means to request what you need from Hashem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tefillah means a time that we connect with Hashem through contemplating his greatness of and arousing a love and fear towards him

Mitzvos

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitzva means "command of Hashem" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitzva means connection to Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One doesn't give more than a fifth of his earnings to Tzedaka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just as one pays everything one has for the sake of one's physical health, how much more so one gives all one to atone for spiritual health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prohibition of Lashon Horah is with done speech only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prohibition of Lashon Horah is also done with thought
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem with Lashon Horah is that it damages the person being spoken about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The problem with Lashon Horah is that it separates one Jew and another
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Shabbos, one rests from doing any act of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Shabbos, one must also rest from speaking or thinking about mundane affairs, and it is a time to focus on one's connection with Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One is closer to Hashem when one's feel spiritually inspired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One is equally close to Hashem when you feel spiritually inspired as when you perform a physical Mitzva
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minhag is just a Jewish custom which is less important than a Mitzva 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minhag has an advantage over a Mitzva, because it expresses a dedication to Hashem, to do things that one wasn't commanded to do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitzvos are just actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing a Mitzva must involve one's

	intellectual and emotional powers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing a Mitzva without intention is meaningless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One's real, innermost intention is for Hashem's sake, but it is yet to be revealed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Nigun is a melody, usually put to lyrics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Nigun is an expression of the Neshama, which cannot always be expressed in lyrics

Reward and Punishment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torah and Mitzvos are done for the reward, and to avoid punishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The greatest reward is the Mitzva itself which connects one to Hashem, and the greatest punishment is the avaira which separates o from Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moshiach is the long-awaited reward for our avoda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moshiach is not only a reward, but it reveals Hashem in this world, which is the objective of all the Mitzvos we do

General world view

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During Davening and learning, one is focusing on Hashem, and during the remainder of the day, what one does isn't related to Hashem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every part of one's day must be related to Hashem, and done for the sake of Hashem
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are forbidden things; permissible things; and holy things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's no such thing as 'permissible things' – if it's for the sake of Hashem, then it's holy; and if it's because of your personal desire, then it's undesirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the world was created by Hashem, its existence is no longer reliant on Hashem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hashem constantly recreates the world, so it doesn't have its own existence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business is the source of one's livelihood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is Hashem's blessings that sustains the business, so one's main focus is to make a proper vessel for Hashem's blessings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undesirable situations are only negative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undesirable situations are really for ultimate elevation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Things can happen by chance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everything that happens is planned by Hashem

מוקדש

לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

יה"ר שיראה הרבה נחת מבניו – התמימים בפרט
משלוחיו, חסידיו, וכלל ישראל בכלל
ונזכה להגאולה האמיתית והשלימה
תיכף ומיד ממש

*

מוקדש ע"י ולזכות

התלמידים השלוחים

מנחם מענדל שי' גורארי'
מנחם מענדל שי' שפיצער
מנחם מענדל שי' שוחאט
מנחם מענדל שי' ראסקין
מרדכי שי' רובין
ניסן אייזק שי' הלל
מנחם מענדל שי' אקוניו
יהודה ארי' ליב הלוי שי' גורביץ
מנחם מענדל שי' ווינבויס
מתתיהו שי' חאריטאן
שמואל שלמה שי' ליזאק
עובדיה גרשון דוד שי' ראגאלסקי



לזכות הבחור הבר מצוה
הת' יהושע זעליג הלוי שי'
לרגל הכנסו לגיל מצות ביום ר"ח אדר
ויה"ר שיגדל להיות חסיד וירא שמים ולמדן

*

נדפס ע"י ולזכות הוריו
הרה"ת מנחם מענדל הלוי וזוגתו שיחיו
גורביץ

שיזכו לגדלו להיות חסיד ירא-שמים ולמדן
ושימלא השי"ת כל משאלות לבם בכל
המצטרך,

בגשמיות וברוחניות,
כרצו"ק ולנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

