

כ"ה

פארברענגען עם הרבי Farbrengen with the Rebbe



כ"ף אב

התוועדות כ"ף אב תשמ"ה

Farbrengen

With The

Rebbe

התוועדות
20 Av, 5745

Dedicated to the Rebbe with love
By Benyamin & Rochel Federman & Family



לזכות
החתן והכלה
ישעי' אלימלך שי' ודבורה לאה תחי'
פרקש
ליום חתונתם בשטו"מ
י"ג סיון תשע"ג





לזכות
החתן והכלה
שמעי' שי' ורבקה תחי'
קרינסקי
ליום חתונתם בשטו"מ
כ"ח סיון תשע"ג



The Rebbe begins by explaining the reason behind the gathering on this day, although it seemingly commemorates a private affair – the passing of the Rebbe's father. In essence however, this particular Yohrtzeit is relevant to the broader public as well, considering the self-sacrifice of the deceased to further strengthen Torah and Judaism in his surroundings for the benefit of the community as a whole.

Although it would seem that a Yohrtzeit should bring about a sense of sadness, we nevertheless commemorate this day with joy, since the passing of Tzaddikim brings their accomplishments to higher heights, which is also the reason for our wandering in exile through all these years – in order to reach an elevation otherwise unattainable.

Notwithstanding all the above-mentioned virtues brought about by the passing of Tzaddikim, the work we can accomplish here on earth while our souls are in our bodies is even greater yet.

Indeed, every day of our lives, we experience this paradox: on the one hand we put our trust in Hashem that He'll bestow only revealed good upon us, while still at the same time, we believe that everything He does, whether good or seemingly bad, is for the best.

Non-Jews experience this as well in their own G-dly service, which brings us to the subject of the Seven Noahide Laws. We must constantly remind ourselves of the obligation we have as the Jewish nation to influence the people of the world to keep to the Seven Noahide Laws.

At this Farbrengen, the children of Camp Gan Israel were present. The Rebbe showered them with attention and dedicated the third Sichah in their honor, speaking of the special qualities that Jewish children possess, and concluding with an instruction that the children say Lechaim and sing a joyous Niggun.

20 Av, 5745

Free Translation

This farbrengen marks the Yahrzeit of my father. Though on the surface, this appears to be a personal matter of relevance only to me, the very fact that many Jews gather together in itself endows an event with a general import. Furthermore, my father's Yahrzeit itself is of public significance. Indeed, it can be clearly seen that my father's involvement in matters of public welfare were the cause of his imprisonment, exile, and, ultimately, his premature death.

That self-sacrifice for the sake of strengthening Yiddishkeit in Russia has had a continued effect which persists until the present day. As a result of those efforts, there are still Jews in Russia who study Torah and fulfill mitzvos as part of their daily lives despite the difficulties present in that country.

Furthermore, my father's life also had an influence on those Jews whom he was unable to convince to practice Torah and mitzvos in the complete sense. The essence of every Jew's existence is his G-dly soul. The factors that cause a Jew to behave in a manner that does not reflect this essence (his own evil inclination, the social conditions prevalent in his country, etc.) are all external factors that are added upon his essential self.

From the time of the giving of the Torah onwards, each Jew became part of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Even though a Jew's lack of Jewish behavior will create a separation between him and G-d, ultimately, he will surely return to his source and adopt a Torah lifestyle as the prophet promises "none will ever be rejected by Him." Hence, my father's service affected many other Jews and eventually, those affects will be revealed in the behavior of these individuals.

The above concepts also provide an answer to a question which is frequently asked: How is it possible to demand that a person make a commitment of "Na'aseh V'Nishmah" -- we will do and [then] we will hear, committing himself to follow G-d's will even before he hears what is demanded of him?

On the surface, such a course of behavior appears to run contrary

to a person's basic nature. Man is a rational being. Thus, before he does anything, it is proper for him to analyze the reasons for his behavior and the effects it will produce. The very opposite is implied by Na'aseh V'Nishmah. There, he does things without understanding, without putting himself fully into his deeds. What value do such deeds have? Since he wants to be true to himself and others, why should he do things in which he does not believe?

However, according to the above, the very opposite is true. When a Jew fulfills a mitzvah and carries out G-d's will, he is expressing his true nature and inner self. When, because of certain external factors, he departs from Torah practice, he is going away from his true self. Therefore, he will ultimately free himself from these external influences and return to his true nature.

These concepts are reflected in Torah law. For example: a sacrifice has to be brought willingly. Nevertheless, if a person who is obligated to bring a sacrifice refuses to do so, the court is required to compel him to consent to its being offered.

How can such a sacrifice be considered as "willful?" Clearly, the only reason the person consented to bring it was the court's compulsion.

The Rambam explains:

If a person's evil inclination compels him to negate the observance of a mitzvah or to violate a prohibition and, then, he was hit until he did the thing he was obligated to do...this is not considered against his will... Since he desires to be part of Israel and he desires to fulfill the mitzvos and separate himself from all sins, it is his evil inclination that attacks him. Since he was hit until his inclination was weakened and said "I want," his actions are considered willful.

Thus, we see how the true nature of every Jew is to observe Torah and mitzvos.

This concept is further emphasized by an appreciation of the Rambam's personal nature. The Rambam was a "guide to the perplexed," for his generation and, through his books, for all generations. Therefore he wrote the majority of his books in Arabic so that the majority of the Jews of his day, who spoke that tongue,

could benefit from his teachings. Nevertheless, his major work, the Mishneh Torah, was composed in Hebrew, the language of the "holy nation." This emphasizes how the diaspora is not the true place for any Jew.

A Jew's true inner nature stands above exile. Furthermore, the exile itself does not create a separation between a Jew and G-d. Though exile implies that we are not found in our natural place, we are "sons who were exiled from their father's table," nevertheless, it was G-d's will that we were exiled. To quote the statement made by the Previous Rebbe before his exile to Kostroma: "We were not exiled from Eretz Yisroel willfully...our Father and our King, exiled us from our land and sent us into exile."

Thus, when a person realizes that the only reason he is in exile is G-d's will, he understands that his life in exile is also a fulfillment of G-d's will and by fulfilling G-d's will, he becomes united with G-d.

Therefore, if a person's only intent in life is the fulfillment of G-d's will, it makes no difference to him whether he is in exile or in the Temple. In both cases, he has the opportunity to fulfill G-d's will. There are times that G-d desires that we serve Him as "free men" and other times when He desires that we serve Him in exile. In either of these circumstances the union with G-d achieved by carrying out His will is the same.

Thus, exile does not really separate us from G-d. On the contrary, the Shechinah is also in exile. Our "Father" is in exile together with us. Furthermore, the very fact that we are in exile is a revelation of G-d's will.

In addition, the reason we are in exile is to raise ourselves to an even higher level than before. It is a descent for the purpose of ascent. Thus, exile is not an end in itself, but merely a means to lift the Jews to a higher rung than before.

The latter concept is clearly understood. The Baal Shem Tov said that G-d's love for every Jew can be compared to the love parents have for an only son born to them in their old age. Would these parents consider causing pain to their son for no purpose? On the contrary, they love their son and hold him dear and don't want him to lack anything. What greater lack is there than exile, to be sent

away from "our Father's table" to a situation in which we cannot perceive G-dliness?

This forces us to say that:

This is a descent for the purpose of ascent. Indeed, the ascent to be achieved through the Messianic redemption will be great enough to make the time we spend in exile worthwhile.

There is no other means for us to reach this high rung. Were we able to make this ascent without going through the pains of exile, G-d surely would not have exposed us to them.

The above concept also helps clarify a difficult problem in regard to the death of Tzaddikim. The Talmud (Moed Kattan 25a) compares the death of a Jew, any Jew, to the burning of a Torah scroll. Rosh Hashanah 18b explains that the death of a Tzaddik is like the burning of the Temple. If so, how can G-d let such a thing happen? As the Midrash comments on the verse "He tells His words to Ya'akov, His statutes and His judgments to Israel," then, how can He allow a situation comparable to the burning of a Torah scroll?

However, the answer is the same as above. The passing of the Tzaddik allows us to reach a high level that could not be approached through any other means. Therefore, this ascent compensates for the tremendous loss caused by death.

If the above is true regarding the passing of any Tzaddik, it surely applies regarding the passing of a Tzaddik who sacrificed his life for the entire people. Indeed, his self-sacrifice caused him to die before his time. Surely, the only reason for such a passing is the ascent achieved through it.

The aspect of my father's premature death raises a question. He was involved in the spreading of Torah and mitzvos, so why wasn't he allowed to continue that service for the amount of years allotted to him?

The question can be answered through a story told regarding R. Yosef Caro, who was told that he would die "Al Kiddush Hashem," for the sanctification of G-d's Name. Afterwards, he was informed that because of a personal failing, he would be denied that privilege.

This story is difficult to comprehend. After these events, Rav Yosef Caro composed the Bais Yosef and the Shulchan Aruch, two great Halachic works that have guided our people for generations. If he would have died Al Kiddush Hashem, these texts would never have been written. Thus, we are forced to say that had he died through dying Al Kiddush Hashem, he would have attained an even higher spiritual rung.

The same surely applies to my father. His premature death in exile allowed him to reach an even higher level than would have been possible through service in this world. Furthermore, this ascent does not apply to him alone. As explained in Iggeres Hakodesh 28, a Tzaddik's passing "works salvation in the midst of the earth." Furthermore, as explained in Iggeres Hakodesh 27, his influence is even greater than during his lifetime.

Though the expression Histalkus -- departure -- is used to describe a Tzaddik's death, nevertheless, as explained in the Ma'amarim associated with Yud-Shevat, that term also implies a transcendent revelation, a revelation that goes beyond the limits of this world, as in the revelation of the light of Sovaiv Kol Almin -- the light that encompasses all the worlds.

The above is related to the commemoration of a *yahrzeit*. It is Jewish custom to mark a *yahrzeit* by saying *L'chayim* and singing a joyous *Niggun* (Polish Chassidim refer to this as "*Tikkun*" -- improvement). Why should such an event be commemorated through happiness?

The explanation is: It is only on a superficial level as perceived by physical eyes that make it seem as though the Tzaddik is lacking. In a spiritual sense, which is the essence of a Jew's life, the Tzaddik's death allows him to reach a higher level and lets him draw down greater influence to others.

Thus, regarding the present *farbrengen*, in addition to the great happiness that is caused by many Jews coming together, we must appreciate an additional reason for happiness, the added influence to our lives that comes from the soul of my father because of his *yahrzeit*.

The goal of this *farbrengen* is to add to our lives in a practical

sense, by adding to our study of Torah and fulfillment of mitzvos. This will bring about additional happiness because "the commands of G-d...make glad the heart."

The involvement in Yiddishkeit on the yahrzeit of a Tzaddik strengthens the influence of the Tzaddik regarding those who were involved with him during his lifetime and similarly, those who study his works. Furthermore, by adding to our Torah practice as a result of the Tzaddik's influence, we allow him to reach an even higher level and, thus, provide even greater influence for those associated with him.

These activities will hasten the coming of the Messianic redemption and afterwards, the ultimate reward, the resurrection of the dead. May that come as a result of our activities. May this farbrengen bring about an addition to our study of Torah and fulfillment of mitzvos and thus, bring closer the Messianic redemption.

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Despite the previous statements regarding the high level reached through one's death, the ultimate goal of a Jew's life is to live in this world, a soul in a body, and fulfill his mission in making the world "a dwelling place for G-d." The preeminence of this service is emphasized by the fact that the ultimate reward we will receive will be resurrection of the dead when the souls will be enclothed in a body.

Thus, we see two seemingly contradictory concepts. In regard to the concept of death, we have to emphasize how through it, the highest levels can be achieved as above. However, together with this awareness, we must also know that a Jew's essential role and mission is achieved through his service within the body and he should not seek to sacrifice his life.

The interrelation of these two concepts is expressed within the context of our daily life: One of the foundations of Torah is Bitachon -- trust in G-d, trusting that everything will be good, and that good will be opened and revealed. Even though a particular situation may appear difficult, a person should reinforce his belief (through his

efforts in prayer and good deeds) that the present difficulty will be transformed into open and revealed good. Moreover, it will result in the even greater good that results from the transformation of darkness into light.

Furthermore, since he believes that ultimately the situation will result in good, he is obligated to pray for that from G-d. The Rambam states: "It is a positive command to pray...to request one's needs." Indeed, the main body of the Shemoneh Esreh is made up of prayers for material benefits.

Nevertheless, if something bad happens, a person is obligated to bless G-d "for the bad as he blesses for the good." He should accept negative influences with joy, just as if they were open and revealed good.

Our sages taught: "Everything G-d does is for good" and "This is also for good." Thus, a Jew should always trust in G-d and pray for the best. However, if his prayer was not accepted and a seemingly negative situation came about, he must realize that "everything G-d does is for the good," that a greater evil is prevented, and "this is also for the good," that the negative factors themselves become transformed into positive influences.

To phrase the matter slightly differently: A Jew has to live with constant faith in the living G-d. This should be expressed by fulfilling the directives of "the living Torah" with joy and energy which express his life. Thus, since all the different influences which effect him do not change the essential fact that he is alive, he should react to them all with happiness, serving G-d with joy in every particular situation.

The faith in G-d described above also applies to gentiles, to all men. Gentiles are forbidden to worship false gods and, thus, the opposite of that, belief in G-d, is a fundamental matter for them as well. They are also obligated to believe that G-d creates and controls the world. Though their concept of faith need not be as developed as that of the Jews, nevertheless, the Torah obligates every man to negate the worship of false gods and believe in G-d.

Implicit in that belief, must also be the trust that G-d will be good to His creations. Our faith in G-d must be directed in a manner

that will affect our behavior leading us to the fulfillment of His commandments in this physical world and following a lifestyle that tends towards stability. Thus, we must believe that since G-d is the ultimate of good and the nature of the good is to benefit others, therefore, He commanded His creations to follow a stable lifestyle. Thus, they also must appreciate how "everything G-d does is for the good" and "this is also for the good."

Thus, together with the belief in G-d, they are also obligated to pray to G-d and request their needs from Him. We see that Yonah was sent by G-d to arouse the inhabitants of Ninveh, gentiles, to pray to Him. Even though a decree had already been issued against them, they had the potential to nullify that decree.

Thus, the obligation mentioned by the Rambam to compel the gentiles to observe the Seven Noachide Laws also includes within it the need to teach them that G-d is the ultimate of all good and that He dispenses good to all of His creations.

The obligation to compel the gentiles to observe these laws has a Messianic dimension. The future redemption will not only effect the Jews, but will "perfect the world under the sovereignty of the Almighty." Thus, each Jew must do whatever is dependent upon him to hasten the fulfillment of the prophecy "then I will transform the nations to a refined tongue..." by spreading the faith in the Creator and Controller of the world and stressing the performance of His mitzvos among all men.

A Jew who associates with gentiles because of his business affairs should utilize that connection, not only to earn his livelihood, but also, (indeed, this should be the primary reason for his associations with the gentiles) to bring them to an awareness of the Creator and Controller of the world and as a result fulfill His mitzvos.

The above applies to an even greater degree to those individuals who have ties with gentiles in positions of influence, whether in a community, city, state, or country. When a person approaches such a leader and stresses that he is speaking because of a mission with which G-d charged him in order to raise the level of humanity and reveal a greater degree of G-dliness, his words will have an effect. When he speaks from his heart, then his words will enter the heart

of his listeners. This is particularly true when the gentiles will see his persistence and sincerity, how he is not acting for the sake of honor or financial gain, but rather out of a genuine desire to help others.

All of the objections raised against this concept that it violates the separation of church and state -- are empty. Indeed, the President of this country recently spoke on this issue.

Thus - to return to the concept mentioned above, the contrast between the high level reached by sacrificing one's life *Al Kiddush Hashem* with the importance of a stable life within the context of our physical world. It is in life within the physical world, a soul together with a body, that we can fulfill G-d's mission regarding ourselves, the people around us (Jews and gentiles) and also in the world at large, living a life permeated with the knowledge and service of G-d. Fulfilling G-d's mission in this manner will bring a person to a higher level than that which is reached through sacrificing one's life.

The above relates to the contrast between the self-sacrifice of Avraham and that of Rabbi Akiva which the Previous Rebbe developed in his discourses. The Talmud describes the great self-sacrifice of Rabbi Akiva. When the Romans were combing his skin with iron combs, he recited the Shema. His students were amazed at his devotion. He told them:

During my entire life I felt pain: when would I fulfill the command "love G-d with all...your soul," interpreted to mean "even if one takes your soul"? I would ask myself: when will I have the opportunity of fulfilling it?

Thus, Rabbi Akiva sought self-sacrifice.

In contrast, the Patriarch, Avraham, did not seek to sacrifice his life. Rather, he sought to spread the awareness of G-d throughout the world. On the verse, "and Avraham called there the name of G-d," the Talmud (*Sotah 10a*) states: "Do not interpret the word as 'call,' interpret it as 'make others call.'" However, his commitment to spread G-dliness throughout the world was so great that he took no notice of any obstacles. If self-sacrifice was required, as when Nimrod cast him into the fiery furnace, he was prepared to take that

step. However, the sacrifice of his life was not an end in itself, but rather, part of his total commitment to spread G-dliness throughout the world.

Furthermore, even Rabbi Akiva who saw self-sacrifice as a goal, did not voluntarily bring himself to a situation where he had to give up his life. On the contrary, such behavior violates the Torah's command to protect your health and life. Rather, once the opportunity of self-sacrifice presented itself, he was happy. Nevertheless, the majority of his life and his major efforts involved the service of G-d, within the context of this world, a soul in a body, making the body a vessel to reveal the soul.

This is implied by the Rambam's statement: "[Maintaining] the body's health and complete state is among the paths of the service of G-d." The Zohar declares "The strength of the body is the weakness of the soul." However, that does not imply any contradiction to the above. Rather, when the emphasis on the body's strength comes from the body, then it weakens the soul. However, if the emphasis on the body's strength comes because of the Torah's command, it will surely strengthen the soul. On the contrary, such an approach will weaken the material nature of the body and make it a more complete vessel for the soul.

A parallel to this concept exists in Halachah. On Shabbos, we are forbidden to carry articles from one domain to another. However, a sacrifice was only required for the inadvertent violation of this law if an article of sufficient size was transferred. If a person transfers an insignificant amount of food, he is not liable. Furthermore, even if he carries this amount of food in a large vessel, he is also free of liability. Had he transferred the vessel alone, he would not be free of liability. Nevertheless, when the vessel contains food, it is not considered as an independent entity, but only as a container of the food.

Similarly, the body should be considered only as a vessel for the soul with no independent existence

The above applies to our daily service of Torah and mitzvos. However, when dealing with the question of death in its own right, its particular advantage must be stressed. Therefore, together with

the unhappy aspects of a yahrzeit the advantages must be stressed. Indeed, even the unhappy aspects, for example, the recitation of kaddish, are themselves an expression of G-d's greatness.

Commemoration of a yahrzeit in this manner adds to the merit of the Jewish people as a whole and hastens the coming of the Messianic redemption and, afterwards, the ultimate reward of the resurrection of the dead.

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The commemoration of a yahrzeit must lead to an increase in life among others. What is a sign of life? Growth. Plants and animals manifest life by growing.

For humans, the major aspects of growth come in the primary years. When a youth reaches twenty, his growth stops entirely. Even before then, it is during the primary years, those before Bar Mitzvah in which a child grows most apparently.

Another one of the signs of life is energy and vitality, the inability to remain at rest. This quality is also more manifest in children. Adults seek rest at times. In contrast, a child is always active, always busy. A lack of activity runs contrary to the child's basic nature.

Parents and educators must find the means to channel this energy in a positive direction. Even though they personally may seek rest, they must acknowledge the natural vitality of the children and find the means to direct that energy to positive outlets, allowing the child to proceed from strength to strength in the service of G-d.

In this context, it is proper to take notice of the many children who are participating in this farbrengen. They are making proper use of their vacation.

In this country, there is a strange custom that in the summer, schools and to a certain extent, even Yeshivos, cut down their regular schedules of activities. However, we can compensate for this by sending the child to a summer camp which will infuse him with the spirit of the living Torah. This will enable him to transform even the environment that is "a public domain" into a Torah place. Similarly, it will have an effect upon him throughout his life as

implied by the verse "Educate the child according to his way, even when he grows older, he will not depart from it."

Therefore, to emphasize their connection with life, let them and their teachers and counselors say L'chayim and sing together a happy Niggun. May their song lead to the ultimate song to be sung at the Messianic redemption, may it be speedily in our days.

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כאילו רואה בעיניו

"אע"פ שלמד... ב"קונטרס", ב"לקוטי שיחות", הרי הכל טוב ויפה, אבל אין זה דומה כלל לעבודה באופן ד"ראה אנכי נותן לפניכם היום", היינו, שעבודתו היא באופן כאילו רואה בעיניו ממש את המשלח, נשיא דורנו, שנותן לפניו היום שליחות זו!

ובלשון הירושלמי בפירוש הכתוב "אך בצלם התהלך איש" - "יהא רואה בעל השמועה עומד נגדו", אשר, ענין זה הוא מצד גודל העילוי דראיית פני רבו, "עיקר הלימוד מרבו בראיית פנים, כדכתיב והיו עיניך רואות את מורידך"... ובפשטות: כש"צלם של רבו", נשיא דורנו, עומד לנגדו - הרי כל המניעות והעיכובים כו' למילוי שליחות רבו מתוך שמחה וטוב לבב, או למילוי השליחות בכלל - מתבטלים לגמרי!"

(משיחת ש"פ ראה תשמ"ו)

מוקדש

לחיזוק ההתקשרות אל

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