

# Living Jewish

**חב"ד**  
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צעירי אגודת חב"ד

## Tell your Children

### Chassidim of Yesteryear

Upon the passing of the Alter Rebbe, Rabbi Shneur Zalman, founder of Chabad Chasidut, his son, Rabbi Dov Ber, the "Mitteler Rebbe", assumed the mantle of leadership. He instituted many innovations which led to the wider dissemination of Chasidic teachings. One of his requirements for newly married men, was that while they still lived in the home of their parents-in-law, they devote three hours daily to study Chasidut.

With this system in place, the number of young men who were knowledgeable of Chasidut grew, and their influence also spread as they matured as teachers and mentors. As time passed, the general Jewish public become more widely exposed to the new teachings, which took hold in many towns and villages throughout the region.

There was in the town of Liepli, a Chasid of the Alter Rebbe named Reb Yekutiel. He was a salt dealer and although he was widely admired for his piety, his knowledge of Torah, and particularly of Chasidut, was meager.

Once, one of the Mitteler Rebbe's young Chasidim came to Liepli and remained there for a week, reviewing with the villagers one discourse of the Rebbe each day. The topics discussed in these brilliant discourses dealt with the most elevated and lofty concepts, things normally closed to the human intellect, but illuminated by Chasidic thought. The young teacher was very adept at explaining these subjects, so that his audience was spellbound by his words.

Poor Reb Yekutiel was among the throng of listeners, but to his utter dismay, he couldn't understand even one word. He couldn't reconcile himself to the thought that here was a man many years his junior who had so much knowledge in his grasp, while he, an elder Chasid, understood nothing.

Many years later Reb Yekutiel described this incident and the terrible inner turmoil he experienced to friends. "Here was I, a 40-year-old Chasid, having gone to the Alter Rebbe for some 15 years. One day, this young man, a mere babe, comes to the town and gives over the



Painting by Yechiel Offner, [yoffner.com](http://yoffner.com)

Rebbe's teachings with such burning fervor, while I couldn't understand a word he uttered.

"Every day I went to hear this young man and every day I grew more dispirited over my lack of understanding. I was missing out on so many profound spiritual insights, I couldn't bear the pain.

"Finally, I decided to ask the young teacher to sit with me privately and review the material. I stopped working in my business and devoted all my time to studying for three weeks, but even with all this effort, I failed to reach my goal. The teachings remained closed to me.

When, after three weeks the young man left, I was totally devastated. I wept and fasted for many days, all the while praying and begging G-d to open my eyes to these precious teachings, but all to no avail. Finally, one day, I saddled my horse and rode off to Lubavitch to ask the Rebbe what to do."

It had been almost a year since Reb Yekutiel had been to Lubavitch and many changes had taken place. Now, 60 young scholars sat and learned the Rebbe's words, reviewing them constantly with one another. The Shabbat after Reb Yekutiel arrived, the Mitteler Rebbe said two Chasidic discourses, and although Reb Yekutiel understood a bit of the first, the second was completely unintelligible to him. To the young men surrounding him, however, it was all perfectly clear! He returned to his room and wept bitterly.

When he was granted a private audience with the Mitteler Rebbe, Reb Yekutiel recounted in great detail his entire trial:

how the young teacher came to Liepli and how he struggled to understand his words, but failed in every attempt.

The Rebbe replied, "There is nothing that can stand in the way of a person's will. Although a person's will is not his essence, nevertheless it contains the power to sway the soul in the desired direction." The Rebbe explained that true desire is the key that opens the soul's faculties and powers, particularly the faculties of thought and understanding. "If you truly desire it," the Rebbe concluded, "you have the ability to broaden your understanding."

Those words had a deep impact on Reb Yekutiel. He decided right then that he would remain in Lubavitch as long as necessary to achieve his goal. He sent a message to his family, informing them of his decision, and set to work.

For four months he struggled in his studies, often meditating on one thought for many hours, and he would review his topic of study many times. As the months went by, Reb Yekutiel felt a transformation taking place within himself. As he later told his friends, "I felt as if I had been created anew. Thank G-d, I succeeded in scouring the old pot. I had become a new, clean vessel."

In the course of time Reb Yekutiel became one of the greatest authorities on Chasidic philosophy. In fact, the Mitteler Rebbe's work, *Imrei Bina*, was written especially for him.

*Continued on page 3*

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	4:02	5:16
Tel Aviv	4:17	5:17
Haifa	4:06	5:15
Beer Sheva	4:20	5:18
New York	4:16	5:17

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## Combining Avraham & Yitzchak

This week's Torah portion, Toldot, describes the life and times of our Patriarch Yitzchak. The Talmud tells us that in the Messianic Era, Yitzchak will be referred to as "our father," implying that it is Yitzchak from among all our forefathers who has a special connection to the Messianic Era.

As we now stand at the threshold of the coming of Moshiach and the ultimate Redemption of the Jewish people, it is important to understand what exactly Yitzchak's path and service mean for us.

### A Perfect Offering

Yitzchak was the only one of our Patriarchs who lived his entire life within the boundaries of the land of Israel. Avraham was born outside of Israel and also left Israel to go to Egypt when a famine threatened. Yaakov, too, went to Charan, where he worked for Laban for many years.

However, when there was another famine in the Land during Yitzchak's lifetime, G-d commanded him to stay where he was and not to seek food elsewhere. "Do not go down to Egypt, but dwell in this land...and I will bless you." This is because after having shown his willingness to be sacrificed on the altar by his father Avraham, Yitzchak was considered a "perfect offer-

ing," too holy to dwell anywhere but in the Holy Land.

Yitzchak, therefore, symbolizes the Jewish people as they were meant to be, and as they will exist in the Messianic Era, their rightful place being in their land and not in exile in the four corners of the earth.

During our present exile, we are like "children who have been banished from their father's table." We must therefore continue to demand that G-d send the redeemer now, so that we will be able to emulate Yitzchak and live a full life of Torah and mitzvot in our own land, as we were meant to.

### Yitzchak's Approach

Yitzchak's approach to the service of G-d is also especially applicable to us today. Even though Yitzchak continued in his father Avraham's path of spreading the belief in G-d throughout the world, he did so in a different manner from his father: Avraham wandered from place to place, including Egypt, spreading G-dliness wherever he went.

Yitzchak, on the other hand, always remained in the same place, in Israel, yet others flocked to him because they were attracted by his holiness. In this way Yitzchak was able to influence others.

For the most part, the Jewish people have

followed Avraham's example during their long exile, wandering from country to country and causing G-d's name to be called on wherever they went.

### When Moshiach Comes

After Moshiach comes, however, we will follow in Yitzchak's footsteps, as G-d's holiness and light will emanate from the Third Holy Temple in Jerusalem. And at that time, as happened in the days of Yitzchak, all the nations of the world will likewise flock to Jerusalem, as it states, "And all nations shall flow unto it...for the Torah shall go forth out of Zion."

We must, in the meantime, combine aspects of both these approaches, refining our own personal spirituality, yet at the same time, not neglecting to spread holiness throughout the world at large.

*Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe; Shabbos Table and From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC*

## From our Sages

*And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb (Gen. 25:24)*

In this instance the Hebrew word for twins, "teumim," is spelled without its usual alef, relating it etymologically to the word "tamim," meaning perfect and complete. For indeed, each of the twins about to be born was perfect in his own right: Yaakov was a perfect tzadik (righteous man), and Esav was a complete rasha (evil person)...

*(Abarbanel)*

*And you shall stay with him a short time ... until your brother's fury turns away ... until your brother's anger turns away (Gen. 27:44, 45)*

Rivka advised her son Yaakov what to do: "Run away to my brother Laban and wait until your brother gets over his anger. How will you know when that time has arrived and he is no longer angry at you? When you yourself stop holding a grudge against him." Rivka understood the reciprocity of human emotions: Love is reciprocated with love, and hatred elicits a like response in others.

*(Baal Hahaflaah)*

*Yaakov was a simple man, dwelling in tents. (25:27)*

The commentator Rashi explains, "One who is not sharp-minded in deceiving is called simple." The Rebbe of Lublin expounds on this comment: "One who doesn't know how to deceive is, indeed, simple. But, one who knows how to deceive, but refuses to use deception, is called a simple person. He has mastered his simplicity and rules over it. This was true of Yaakov who, in his dealings with Laban, chose not to deceive him.

*And these are the generations of Yitzchak...and the first came out...and they called his name Esav (Gen. 25:19;25)*

Esav is symbolic of the forces of evil and impurity, which were created for the purpose of the Jew transforming them into goodness and light. (In fact, it is due to this inner, positive reason that the Torah refers to Esav as "the generations of Yitzchak.") The name Yitzchak is related to the word for laughter. When "Esav" is successfully changed into good, G-d "laughs," as it were, and derives great pleasure from the transformation.

*(the Rebbe)*

### The Power of Joy

The Mittler Rebbe's *kapelia* included two groups of chassidim, musicians and horse riders, who would enliven joyous occasions. The Rebbe's son Reb Nachum was one of the horse riders.

One ordinary day, the Rebbe called for a performance and stood by his window to watch.

Suddenly, Reb Nachum was flung from his horse and was badly hurt, but surprisingly, the Rebbe motioned that the performance should continue.

Meanwhile, a doctor was called, and after examining Reb Nachum, concluded, "He has only broken his leg."

Some chassidim later asked the Mittler Rebbe why he had ordered that the performance continue, despite the accident.

"Why don't you ask the reason for calling for a performance on a regular day?" responded the Rebbe, and he explained:

"I became aware of a harsh decree being issued in Heaven on my son, and since simcha sweetens stern decrees, I called for the *kapelia*.

"The simcha helped, for his fall turned out much less harmful than what had been planned for him.

"Then, to ensure a complete recovery, I instructed that the festivities continue. With HaShem's help, he will recover completely."



# Chassidus page

## Battle of the Souls

Every Jew resembles our matriarch Rivka at the time when her "children were struggling inside of her." In the same way that Yaakov and Esav were seeking to prevail over the other while still in the womb, so too does every Jew have two souls engaged in a similar wrestling match.

Our divine soul inhabits one side of this existential tug-of-war; on the other side is our animal soul. Not only does the agenda of the one stand in direct opposition to the other, but each constantly seeks to topple the other to achieve the greatest prize of all: control over us.

### The Need for Novelty

It is not enough merely to overcome the animal soul. Rather we must actually revolutionize its entire agenda by convincing it of the benefits to be gained by following the dictates of the divine soul. By so doing, the animal soul can acquire a degree of appreciation for the divinity found within the spiritual realms.

This endeavor is summarized in the Shema: "You shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart" (whereby the Hebrew word for heart is written in the plural form, indicating with both your animal and divine souls). Our task is to therefore bring the animal soul to a love of G-d, explaining in terms and imagery it can relate to that G-d is the source of all life and truth. Such a revolution within the ranks of the animal soul causes great pleasure Above.

Chassidic teachings point out that when an angel is nullified before G-dliness we

aren't especially surprised; but for the animal soul to generate a love for G-d when its whole essence is rooted in its material surroundings – this is a true novelty. (Sefer HaMa'amarim of the Rebbe Rayatz, p.101, 1927)

### Transforming the Darkness

Although the divine soul is a veritable part of G-d, it is limited by nature, even in regards to its capacity to love G-d. However, via its ability to influence the animal soul to similarly strive for a love of G-d, the divine soul does indeed attain an unlimited degree of love.

We find an analogy of this in nature: The lowly material elements of earth and stone can be combined to create a dam. The water which now gushes forth from this dam does so with a far greater intensity than the original flow. (Likutei Torah of the Alter Rebbe, Massei, 91:3) So too does Chassidut interpret the passage: "Man and beast you deliver, O L-rd" as meaning the revelation of Divine light must penetrate into the depths of the animal in us – to the core of our animal soul.

And on the passage: "The preeminence of man over beast is naught" (Ecclesiastes 3:19), Chassidut explains that the advantage of our superiority over the beast can only be fully actualized by elevating and refining the animal soul, transforming its egotistical sense of self into the "naught" of standing before G-d's presence. (Ohr HaTorah, Chanukah, p.926)

*translated & adapted from Sichat HaShevuah, Darchei HaChassidut*

## Speaking to the Animal Soul

A well-known saying posits that "the animal has never seen the heavens, nor even knows of its existence."

In that the animal by its very nature is only attracted to the coarse physicality of materialism, it has no conception of any other reality.

In the same vein, we find the animal soul fixated solely on worldly pursuits. It has no sensitivity to spirituality. (Sefer HaMa'amarim of the Rebbe Rayatz, p. 96, 1942)

Chassidus provides the language to speak to the animal soul and to arouse within the animal soul a desire for spirituality.

## Chassidim of Yesteryear

*Continued from page 1:*

Reb Yekutieli lived to the age of 100, having been blessed by the Alter Rebbe with longevity. In his later years he was a Chasid of the Mitteler Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek (third Chabad Rebbe) and the Rebbe Maharash (fourth Chabad Rebbe).

Indeed, the Tzemach Tzedek said of him, "Reb Yekutieli is a living example of our Sages' words: If someone says he has expended effort and found what he was looking for, you can believe him!"

Reb Yekutieli returned home with his mission accomplished. Many years later the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe said in reference to this story: "One can see from this story the attitude that prevailed amongst the Chassidim of yesteryear. When a Chasid heard in his private meeting with the Rebbe, that his desire, his will, is a crucial tool for his personal transformation...he disregarded any discomforts or difficulties, and never flagged in his efforts until the desired end was achieved."

*The 9th of Kislev is the anniversary of the birth & yahrzeit of the Mitteler Rebbe and the 10th of Kislev is the anniversary of the liberation of the Mitteler Rebbe.*

## Moshiach Now

### Crown of Moshiach - The Joy of Doing a Mitzvah

The Mitteler Rebbe explains that the real joy of a mitzva is a person's delight in having performed the physical mitzva and having carried out HaShem's Will. This joy is greater than the emotional feeling and the intent that one may have while performing the mitzva. This simple joy made the AriZal worthy of being granted ruach hakodesh.

The Mitteler Rebbe concludes, "It follows that even though in these later generations we are completely lacking the G-dly light of love and fear of Hashem that Yidden had previously, and we only have the physical mitzvos and the joy in completing them, nevertheless we can reach even higher levels than they did. And it is this joy that creates the Crown of Moshiach."

*Moshiach Now and The Power of Joy reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*

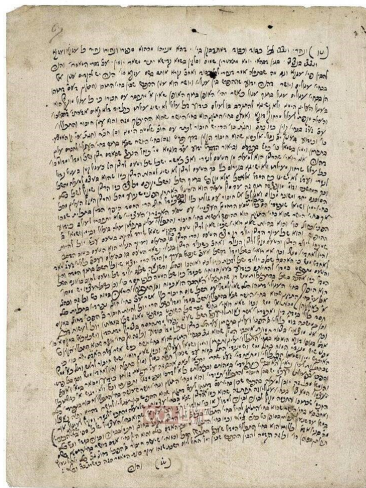
## Human Interest

### Unknown Writings of the Mittler Rebbe Discovered

A long-time collector of Chassidic books and manuscripts, Rabbi Kaltmann, who directs Chabad of Columbus in Ohio, has discovered numerous priceless treasures in recent years. One of those finds are 53 Maamarim (Chassidic Writings) of the Alter Rebbe written by the Mittler Rebbe, R' Dovber of Lubavitch (1773-1827).

Also discovered in the last few years were some halachic works of the Mittler Rebbe, which were said to have burned in a fire that broke out in the town of Lubavitch at the same time as the Mittler Rebbe's passing on 9 Kislev (which was also his birth date).

Most of the thousands of his manu-



Writing of the Mittler Rebbe

scripts that were in the room were destroyed in the fire. Included in those manuscripts were almost all of his writings in nigleh (the revealed Torah), as is explained in the Sefer Hachadash. The discovered pages are the Mittler Rebbe's halachic commentary, many of which have never been seen before – some of which have never even been printed before, Rabbi Kaltmann says.

Rabbi Kaltmann said he is working with the Kehot Publication Society, Chabad's official publishing house, to prepare them for printing.

Adapted from COLlive.com

### Cooking Tip of the Week

#### Tools to Help your Preparation:

This week I purchased a peeler that julienned vegetables. With minimal work and almost no clean up (versus my food processor), the vegetables were julienned. Another handy tool is a large wide peeler that easily shreds cabbage. Minimal cleanup, storage space and outlay in cost.

Alizah Hochstead,  
alizahh@hotmail.com

### Halacha Corner – A Chazzan's Proficiency

A shliach tzibur (prayer leader) should be one who is familiar with the verses from Torah, Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings) that are so numerous in the prayers, so as not make mistakes in pronunciation. There are poskim (halachic authorities) who say that even a temporary shliach tzibur should not be appointed to the position unless he is capable of articulating the words smoothly and correctly. Nevertheless, the custom is that for an occasional yahrtzeit or similar occasion we are lenient and allow people to lead the prayers even if they are not very proficient in the verses.

There are many reasons for this leniency. One is the difficulty of maintaining this standard, since many people have yahrtzeit throughout the year and it is very important for them to lead the prayers; we do not want to create distinctions among community members, causing unpleasant situations. Another reason is that nowadays the shliach tzibur is not actually exempting us from our personal obligation: each of us davens on our own, and consequently, there is some room for leniency. However, it is definitely preferable that the person who leads the prayers should say the words properly, without mistakes.

Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, member of the Badatz of Crown Heights, One Minute Halacha, #176, crownheightsconnect.com

## Farbrengen

**Question:** My husband and I have always had a hard time finding a shul we connect with. We have four children ages 4, 6, 10 and 12 so we also want the shul to be a good environment for our children. I guess I have two questions. What should we be looking for and how should we find our place in a shul?

**Answer:** Community is developed when people join together who share a common mission. The mission is the glue that joins and propels the community forward. When a common mission is absent, there will be a lack of cohesion, commitment and growth.

So too with a shul. A shul is not only a place to daven but is a community where simchas and life cycle events are shared, learning takes place and friendships are built. There is comradery and support. What should you be looking for? A shul with a mission and purpose that you and your wife support.

This can encompass a number of different facets. Some shuls encourage a lively atmosphere with song and dance; others a serious and structured learning environment; while others want a Chassidic atmosphere; or perhaps cater to a specific group (i.e. Chabad, Breslov, etc.). For some the mission is outreach or, simply, an accepting atmosphere where everyone feels welcome.

Choose the shul you feel shares your goals and where you feel most comfortable. Commit for at least one year. All beginnings are difficult and expect ups and downs. It takes time to feel comfortable in a new environment. Too often, people make the mistake of walking away too quickly.

In addition, be active and get involved. Don't wait for people and opportunities to come to you. When you see an opportunity to join a class, committee, event planning, chesed group or even suggest new ideas, go for it! You can be a leader or a participant, but the main thing is to get involved, to invest yourself. You will feel a part of the shul, that you have your place.

Becoming religious requires learning how to be part of a community. In the secular world the emphasis is on the individual whereas in the religious world the emphasis is on community.

What you are experiencing is normal; it is a process and takes time. However, once you commit to a shul and become a contributing member of the community, you will see many benefits both for yourself and your family.

Aharon Schmidt - marriage, family & individual coaching. For an appointment or to send a questions contact:  
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