

Rizhiner's yahrzeit

3 Cheshvan 5773

Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

(Notes taken during the shiur by Moshe Genuth. Not reviewed by Harav Ginsburgh)

By hashgachah pratit we are in the hilula of the holy Rizhiner, whose yahrzeit is the 3rd of Cheshvan, may his merit protect us and all of Israel.

The Tzemach Tzedek used to refer to him as the holy Rizhiner, which is something entirely unique. His birthday is the 3rd of Tishrei and his yahrzeit on the 3rd of Cheshvan, he lived for 54 years. Of all the tzadikim that merited to sit in jail, he merited the most, for 2 whole years. He angered the czar with his regal behavior. We merited this evening to bring a new torah into the heichal, as we know that everything depends on its mazal, even the sefer Torah in the ark. The Arizal says that the sefer Torah and the ark it rests in are the yesod of Aba and Ima, the male and female above. The mazalot are thus connected with נוצר חסד which unites these two mazalot. The initials of נוצר חסד are Noach (נוח), we are now in parashat Noach. Noach is נוצר חסד. The Arizal also says that Noach himself is the yesod of Aba and that his ark is yesod Ima. And he has an even higher mazal, that makes it possible for him to bring the torah into the ark, it is connected with loving-kindness. In the 13 measures of mercy, there are two measures of loving-kindness, the sixth and the eighth. The eighth is the one that the BST said, there is no mazal for Israel. At the end of 10 years of studying with Achiyah the Shilonite, he told the BST that it is now time that you reveal yourself, before the eyes of all of Israel, the final words of the Sefer Torah, לעיני כל ישראל. And the Rizhiner was named after the BST himself, Israel.

We'll begin with a number of teachings and stories from the Rizhiner, that have to do with a new Torah scroll. There is a story, a vort that it says explicitly in the Torah. Once his Chassidim were in the forest and it was minchah time. After they finished Amidah, the Rizhiner fell on his face in the middle of the forest during tachanun. The Chassidim said that there is no Torah scroll here, so why did you fall on your face. He said, that all the Torah is included within the Name Havayah, and the entire Name Havayah is included within the yud, and the yud itself is contained within the yud's point above. And, he said, I am the point of the yud, the tip of the yud, so if I'm here, there is a Torah scroll here. The Mashiach will also reveal how the entire Torah is one Name of God, and as Hillel said, אם אני כאן הכל כאן, If I am here, then all is here. To fall on one's face during tachanun is to reach Adam Kadmon (primordial man). Every time we read in the Torah, the Arizal says that we are receiving the light from the ears (אזניים דא"ק) of primordial man, that is why we need a sefer Torah to fall on our face on tachanun. The yud's tip corresponds to the keter, the crown. So this story is a story in the keter. The yud's tip points to the head of nothingness.

The Name Havayah is the tiferet (beauty) of Aba, and the yud is contained in the yud – the wisdom of Abba and the yud is contained in the tip of the yud – the keter of Abba. Indeed in his generation, the Rizhiner was considered the Rebbe of all the Rebbe's; he was their crown. Another point that we will correspond to the crown is that one of the tzadikim who came to him was the Tzanzer. The Tzanzer, the Divrei Chaim once said

about himself that when the Mashiach will come and all the great sages of all the generations will be here, I will be one of the Sanhedrin, one of the greatest sages, the 70 greatest. When he was asked why he needs to go to the Rizhiner, he answered that when I am with him I feel that every moment of his life he sacrifices himself before the Almighty. there is no moment in his life that he does not throw himself completely before Hashem. Someone like this it is worthy to go to. Since he has constant self-sacrifice, as we've learnt that the mitzvah that will remain after all the mitzvot are annulled will be self-sacrifice, קידוש ה', but it will be continual, at every single moment. The Rizhiner was at this level, which comes after the resurrection of the dead, during his life. The pasuk says, ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל, a reflexive form of the verb, to be sanctified. So this is also connected to his crown.

Another story is that another of the great tzadikim that came to him was Rabbi Moshe of Kobrin, the disciple of Lechovitz, Rabbi Mordechai and then his son, the author of *חסד לאברהם*. He was called "the man of truth" in his generation. When he came to the Rizhiner, he would bring him, like a chassid, some present, in spite of the fact that the Rizhiner was very wealthy and acted regally. It was a sign of his connection with the Rebbe. One time he brought him a new yarmulke. The yarmulke is keter too. The Rizhiner took it and put it on his head, and gave Rebbe Moshe his own yarmulke. Moshe of Kobrin said that when he put the yarmulke on his head, his head was on fire for 4 straight hours. The yarmulke comes from the continual self-sacrifice of the Rizhiner, every moment it is as if he is jumping into the fire, so his yarmulke is on fire.

Now chochmah (wisdom): One time someone came to the Rizhiner and said that he saw that the Sar Shalom of Belz put his holy hand on a person's stomach and the person was immediately healed. The Rizhiner said, I'll tell you where he received this power to heal in this way. There is a pasuk, ישלח דברו וירפאם וימלט משחיתותם, the initials spell יוד. From this verse he received the power in the hand, there is a whole concept of "the hand of the healer" (יד הרופא), since the root רפא appears 14, יד, times in the Torah), from which the doctor receives his power of healing. But, said the Rizhiner, I don't get my power from the initials in this verse, but rather from the final letters, the final letters spell מוח. There is healing that comes from the hand and there is healing that comes from the power of the mind, the brain. There is a connection between them, כל אשר תמצא בידך לעשות בכחך עשה, do it with the power of your mind, the power of מה, the power of wisdom. This is the strongest power in the mind, thought, which is חש במה, sensing מה, the power of wisdom. Apart from thinking good and it will be good, the healer can also transmit this feeling to the person who is ill and heal him this way. What is interesting is that there is another verse in Tehilim, there are two verses that begin with the words, ישלח דברו וירפאם (in chapter 107) and then it says ישלח דברו וימסם, to melt the ice. Connecting this to healing, there is something in the body that has hardened and it has to be melted. The initials are the same, יוד and the final letters are also the same, מוח. Apart from the fact that חכמה מוחא, wisdom is the mind, there is also the kavanah (the intent) one should have when visiting someone who is sick. This also connects this story of healing with wisdom, since the verse says, וערשו על ערש דוי, and the Arizal writes that the visitor should have in mind to transform the דוי (sickness) into יוד (yud). So the main power of healing, says the Arizal is

the power to transmute the letters in a word, like in our parashah which says, "You shall make a tzohar (צוהר) for the ark." The words צרה, difficulty, can be transmuted into צוהר, a window or a light. The yud is wisdom. The beginning of all power to heal is to first of all think good and it will be good, and when visiting someone who is sick, it is important to transmit this mentally and in words to the person who is sick. Regardless of what has happened in the past, the Aibeshter has mercy and compassion on every Jew.

Now we come to binah (understanding). Once Rebbe Itche of Vorke visited the Rizhiner. Rebbe Itche was a disciple of Rebbe Bunim of Parshischa. He asked the Rizhiner, what do you tell someone who is dirty with his sins? How do you rectify him? Rebbe Itche said, I myself when faced with such a person, I do teshuvah on all of my own sins, and then there is an auspicious time in the heavens that everyone's teshuvah should be accepted. So this person who has come to me, he is now included in the entire congregation of Israel and his teshuvah is also accepted. The Rizhiner knew that he was the all-inclusive soul of the Jewish people. Like in Chabad, where if someone comes with a certain sin to the Rebbe, the Rebbe has to find the same thing in himself (of course in a very delicate way) and know how to rectify it in himself and then he can tell this person what to do. But, here the Rizhiner says, I don't need to look for the same thing in myself, I do teshuvah. Perhaps at some level, he does find the same problem in himself, but that is not the point. Since this person has come to me, I help him by feeling that he is part of me. If I do teshuvah on my own sins, since I am an all inclusive soul, it opens the gates of heaven for everyone. Every Jew at this moment can easily, relatively easily do teshuvah to. Obviously this is connected with binah which is always connected with teshuvah.

Now in da'at: Rashi on Bezalel says that da'at is the holy spirit (ru'ach hakodesh) ואמלא אותו בחכמה בינה ודעת. Wisdom is what a person is able to learn from others, binah is his analytic understanding and da'at is the holy spirit. Someone once asked the Rizhiner what ru'ach hakodesh is and how to attain it? He answered that of course, every Jew has a level of ru'ach. All one has to do is to ensure that one's spirit is not defiled and then immediately he receives the holy spirit, ru'ach hakodesh. Everybody has the potential for this. You were born with it. Just don't defile it. This is also all-inclusive. His chiddush is that you are just like me. Perhaps you were not careful with your spirit to keep it pure, but if you do, you too will receive the holy spirit. What is the spirit in each of us, apart from the fact that it is the breath of life. What does it mean that each of us has ru'ach. Ru'ach refers to awakening (התעוררות), it is the heart. It is like having a dream, something that he believes in very strongly and wants to make it happen in reality. If a long time passes and what he wanted does not happen, then sometimes the spirit falls. This itself is a defilement of the spirit. טמטום הלב, the thing that most defiles, the spirit, the awakening of the heart is despair (אינש). But, if we're careful not to despair and not to defile our spirit we merit the holy spirit.

So far we have covered keter, chochmah, binah, and da'at. We have to stop for a few minutes because there is another course that needs to be served.

Lechaim lechaim.

We reached chesed (loving-kindness), where we have the mitzvah of Ahavat Yisrael, Rabbi Akiva says this is the great principle of the Torah. The Rizhiner once explained this mitzvah, *ואהבת לרעך כמוך*, that there were two friends, and one of them was sentenced to death by the king. The king on the day that the sentence was to be carried out, announced that everyone has to come and see the hanging. Everyone came, including the very good friend of this person, who didn't know that it was his friend who was about to be hung. When he saw him going up to the scaffold, he cried out, "My King, please allow me to take his place, it was I who did it." He yells this out very strongly. The crowd parts and he reaches the king. He again claims that it was he who did what his friend was now being hung for. The king asks him, How do you know it wasn't your friend who did it? He says, I know him, he couldn't have done such a thing. The friend hears this, seeing his best friend trying to save him, and he too says to the king, It was not him, it was indeed I. So the king thinks about this more and more deeply until he understands that they just are very good friends and each is willing to die for the other. So the king says, I pardon you both, but I ask of you one thing, please add me into your friendship, into the covenant between you. This is a mashal from the Rizhiner, it says that this is the meaning of You shall love your fellow as you love yourself, that when God sees how much we love one another, He says that He too wants us to include Him in our covenant.

In gevurah (might), when the Rizhiner was with his father, Rabbe Shalom Shechna of Prohvitch, the son of Rabbi Avraham the Malach. His father was also a Rebbe and once when he was talking with his Chassidim, he said to his son, Yisrael, the young Rizhiner, What do you think about what I just said to these Chassidim? The Rhizhiner answered that in the king's palace, when they want to clean things, everything is done with extreme care, with just a brush. But, in the house of a simple person, there is a broom. While in the kennel of animals, we just use a *רידער*. He says, father, you are trying to clean these people with a gentle brush when they really need a *רידער*, used for animals. So we see this young child has might, gevurah. To be able to use gevurah in the right way requires a wide mind (*גדלות מוחין*). His name is Yisrael, he is all love of Israel, and from his mind that heals, he also knows how to use the proper instrument of gevurah in order to get the task done in the proper way, to rectify the soul of each person in the way that is right for them. The extension of binah (teshuvah) is this *רידער*. We speak in our school of psychology that we need instruments, apparently we need three different ones: a brush, a broom, and a *רידער*.

Now we come to tiferet (beauty). There is a lot in common in all these stories. Once he was on his way and he met Rebbe Moshe of Savrainia, a disciple of the Berditchever. They were very friendly, the Sovrainia and the Rizhiner and they met by some motel on the way, but there was no room for them. So each took a wooden box and sat on it and they farbrengened together. The Sovrainer asked the Rizhiner, a lot of people come to you for Rosh Hashanah, what do you do with them? The Rizhiner said, *כולם נסקרים בסקירה*, *אחת*, they are all surveyed in one glance. Said the Sovrainer, but this is said about Hashem, what do you do? Said the Rizhiner, indeed, so what do you do with the many people that come to you for Rosh Hashanah? Said the Rizhiner, on the eve of Rosh

Hashanah thousands come to me, when I see that each one has to be with me on Rosh Hashanah, I look at him and he looks at me, and his face is engraved on my heart. When the time for blowing the Shofar comes, I open my heart to the Aibeshter and then all the notes given to me by everyone, it is given directly to Hashem. It is known that when a person comes to the Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah he gives him a note (tzetel). The Lubavitcher had bag loads of such notes with him during the time of blowing the shofar. The Rhizhiner says that he doesn't need these tzetel's these notes, everyone's face is in his heart, and then when he opens his heart, all the faces are given directly to Hashem. This is similar to the idea of the Rhizhiner doing teshuvah for everyone. The idea here is that the yesod of Ima (teshuvah) reaches all the way to tiferet. A true tzadik, whomever who connect with him and is seen by him, that person's face is engraved on the tzadik's face. The tzadik doesn't need to think explicitly of each one separately. He just opens his heart and since he is an all-inclusive soul, everyone who is engraved on his heart is immediately inscribed for a good and sweet year.

Now there is a teaching from him that is connected with netzach and hod (victory and acknowledgment). There is a verse in Tehilim that reads, עַד אֵנָה אִשִּׁית עֲצוֹת בְּנַפְשִׁי. This is connected with our year 5773, the year of אבן השתייה, the foundation stone, which as we explained in another shiur is about giving advice (עצות) to people. There are certain things that one must indeed be in despair from (for instance this world, which if a person doesn't despair from, he cannot begin to connect with Hashem). Normally despair is negative, but one must despair of the false fantasy that he has that this world belongs to me. If a person needs some salvation from Heaven, he has to despair from being able to give himself the right advice. This is what this verse is saying. Once I despair of giving myself the right advice to get out of my predicament, only when I've come to the conclusion that God alone can give me the right advice, that is when I have rectified the sefirot of netzach and hod. The existential state of man requires that he despair from his own advice, his own ideas about how to get out of his problems.

In yesod (foundation) we have resurrection of the dead. This is because yesod is about a "live organ" and a "dead organ" referring to the two states of the reproductive system. The rectification of yesod is resurrection of the dead. One of these is a teaching the Rizhiner has about לֹא הַמַּתִּים יִהְיוּ לֵיהֶם, that a person is dead when he stops giving praise to God. The advice then is that even in a state when you feel that you are close to death, do not stop praising God. Never come to a state of being inanimate, like וְלֹא כָל יוֹרְדֵי דוֹמָה, the continuation of the verse. Don't despair of speaking God's praise. If you believe and pray out of pure faith that God is compassionate, infinitely compassionate, that he will certainly have mercy over you, then you will not stop praising him, out of this pure faith. He doesn't say this, but it is like what king Chizkiyahu learnt from him, that even when a person has a sharp sword on his neck, he should not despair of God's compassion. Of all the tzadikim, the Rizhiner consistently, every day, recited stories about other tzadikim. If a person does not give up on praising God, he will be resurrected, even out of the worst situation. This is one teaching, the dead being someone who has stopped praising God. This is from below to above. But, now we'll say another teaching that is from above to below. The yesod has to awaken in order to affect

malchut (kingdom), to affect it from above to below. After Yakov completes 7 years of working for Laban he says, *הבה את אשתי בי מלאו ימי ואבואה אליה*. The Rizhiner says that Yakov is at this stage 84 years old, this number is connected with the rectification of the covenant. How many more years does he have to live? 64 (he lived to 147). He has never seen his seed spilled. Reuben was his first seed. What did he do for these 84 years? He has annulled his inclination for marital relations. So why does he talk in this way, a manner that Rashi says, that even the lowest of the low does not use? Says the Rizhiner, that he needs to awaken his inclination for marital relations. There is a type of speech that does awaken it, to awaken his ability to affect kingdom, his wife, his malchut. He uses his speech to do this. Normally, we associate speech with malchut, but here speech is being used to bring the dead back to life. In the first teaching, the dead is brought back to life by praise. Here, like sometimes a Rabbi has to awaken himself in order to affect a very distant audience.

Finally we come to malchut. Yosef says to Pharaoh: *בלעדי האלקים יענה את שלום פרעה*. Then he says to his father: *שמני אלקים לאדון לכל מצרים, רדה אלי, אל תעמוד*. The Rizhiner explains that this word, *שמני* (I have been placed), which appears only this one time in the Torah and which appears only one more time in the entire Tanach, actually means that, "I have put Elokim as a master for all of Egypt." In the next generation, this teaching by the Rizhiner was repeated many times, they though write that *שמני* should be read as *שמתי*. We'll begin with the Shem Mishmu'el: He asks how can the Rizhiner say that *שמני* means "I put him [Elokim]," it means "He [God] put me." He answers that Yakov did not want to go down to Egypt because if he leaves the land of Israel, he will receive his sustenance through the angel of Egypt, and not directly from God. Says Yosef to him, since God placed me as the master of all of Egypt, and since I am the master, I myself have appointed God to be the Master here in Egypt. So Yakov, my father, you have nothing to fear of coming down to Egypt, their angel has no more power and no function. Another book, the *ישמח ישראל* of Alexander asks the same question, and he answers that the Rizhiner understands the word *שמני*, like a notrikon, standing for *שם אני*, meaning "I am placing [God] as the master of all of Egypt." Let's note something that is not written. That *שמני* and *שמתי* can be transmuted into the words for "two," in the male (*שנים*) and the female (*שתים*) forms. In the beginning of Keter Shem Tov, we have from the BST that everything in the Torah has a male and female aspect to it. So *שמני* is the male and *שמתי* is the female. However we explain these two, they have some relationship between Yosef and Elokim. When Yosef first came to Pharaoh, he already made it clear that it wasn't him solving Pharaoh's dream but God. Right away, Yosef is working with God as his partner: You God will take me out of this jail and appoint me a ruler, and then I will do the same for Him. This is like an agreement before an election. It says that, "the two are better than the one." It says that the two are indeed better than one, when they receive their power from the One. There is a Jew and there is God, like the partners in every person (his mother and father, and the Creator). Before God created reality, He and His Name were one. So the one being appointed here master is not God's essence but His Name, and in this respect God is working together with Yosef in order to appoint God's Name and Yosef as rulers.

Finally, we will add another teaching that corresponds to malchut. The moment that I am up for election for becoming the king, my entire purpose is only in order to make God the master of all of Egypt—this is the goal of the true tzadik. The Rizhiner was in jail for the longest time because of his Meshichist attitude towards himself. The Kotzker was surprised by the amount of regality he showed outwardly. How did he have the courage to act this way before the establishment? There is a story that in the city of Ludmir there was a virgin who was held to be a prophetess, she was called the maiden of Ludmir. One time she said in her prophecy that the author of the סמיכת חכמים is thankful to Rebbe Yisrael of Ruzhin. This was told to the Rizhiner and he nodded. It's very true he said and told a story. The story was that a few generations before him it was the Semichat Chachamim that acted regally. He was so regal that he had a pillow made of silk, which he placed on his heart and that little pillow cost an incredible amount of money. When he passed away, he stood before the heavenly tribunal. They said there that we know that all your regal behavior was for the sake of heaven, but for what reason did you have to have this pillow? Since it was not yet time to have a king again in the Jewish people, it is as if the Satan was angry at him and therefore asked him about this pillow. So, says the Rizhiner, that since now I act even more regally, certainly the Semichat Chachamim was off the hook.

When the Rizhiner was in jail he explained the verse, גם כי אשב בגיא צלמות לא אירא רע. He had no fear whatsoever (even from childhood) and even when walking in the valley of the shadow of death he had no fear, and explained that the only think that bothers him is that the Divine Presence is hurting when there is anything wrong with me. This is the descent of malchut into the lower worlds.

Let's connect back to the beginning and to our Sefer Torah. We'll connect it with Ayin Beis and with the parashah, parashat Noach. Let's meditate about some simple laws about the Torah scroll. One thing is that every letter has to be surrounded by the parchment, the letters cannot touch. Second, every letter has its own shape and cannot be written any differently. A third law is that the Sefer Torah requires all 600,000 letters, there are 600,000 letters to the Torah, the initials spell ישראל, Israel. What is the connection between these three laws. First, the letter must be entirely on parchment, then it must have the proper shape, and certainly we need all the letters together. In the Rebbe Rashab's ma'amar for this week, these are the three types of inter-inclusion. Each subsequent level of inter-inclusion requires more mindfulness, because mindfulness connects the measures of the heart together. The first type of inter-inclusion comes when the mind of wisdom causes each trait to weaken, ensuring that each midah (sefirah in the heart) gives space for the other midot. So the first level of inter-inclusion is called "giving room for the other." This was not the case in the world of Chaos. This corresponds to each letter needing to be surrounded by parchment, none of the letters take up the space of another letter.

These three levels of inter-inclusion correspond to the three instances of Noach in this week's parashah's first verse. Each Noach is a type of inter-inclusion. Who defiled the ark? It was Cham who had marital relations in it, against God's will. This is like a letter connecting with another letter, because it is like it is extending itself in its space, in

its ark (משמש בתבה). The second son, יפת is the form of the letter. Each letter has its particular beautiful form which must be different than other letters in the Alefbet. The yud for instance is just a point, but it is not a dimensionless point, it is actually quite complex and has a form and shape. The complex shape ensures that every letter inter-include in itself all the other letters. This requires more mindfulness. Finally, the fact that all 600,000 letters of the Torah are needed, that is Shem, because the entire Torah is one Name. This requires the most mindfulness, because it requires that the health of the Torah, like the health of the Jewish people, be based on the individual health of every single Jew. Each letter helps every other letter attain its perfect state. This is not like the inter-inclusion of the second level, where each letter includes all the others. Here all the letters are coming together, in a single cause, to create a Torah scroll. Likewise, all the sefirot come together to create a single whole. But, here loving-kindness is the final goal of all the sefirot together. How can we understand this better? It says that Noach was a tzadik, a tzadik is a person who is comfortable to be with (נח). The BST said this and everyone fell unconscious. How can this be? How can a tzadik be nice to everyone, he also has the task of rebuking? The strongest explanation (the only one that works) is that the inter-inclusion of a tzadik is at the second-level, not the third. A sage according to the way that the disciples understood before the BST said what he said is someone whose blood is still boiling, who rebukes others. That is not what the BST was talking about. He was talking about an inter-inclusion where everything in the sage is serving the sage's wisdom. This is a reality in which the sage can even rebuke others, but then they still continue to love him. What does the repetition אלה תלדות נח נח? Noach Noach might refer to his being comfortable for those below and for the Heavens. Just as he does not rebuke people, he does not get into arguments with God. This is a good non-Jew. He doesn't pray too much and anger God, and he doesn't get on anyone's nerves here below. About this the sages said that he is a sage—but he is almost like a non-Jew. Can there be someone who is above this level? Yes, but only if he attains the third level of inter-inclusion alluded to by Noach being Shem's father, where everything can come together even under rebuke. The Rebbe said that there can be a person who coerces all the Jewish people, but all with compassion. No one knows exactly what he means. He is a person who doesn't refrain from coercion, from rebuke, he is not politically correct, yet everyone still loves him. The Mashiach, when he was young, he rebuked out of love. But, when he grows older, he is so full of love, that his rebuke is all love, and so everyone loves him even more.

The second level of inter-inclusion, which requires more mindfulness, the mind of Ima, this is loving-kindness using the measure of gevurah for its own purpose. Like what we said before about using a רידער and not a delicate brush. Every midah, every sefirah of the heart inter-include all the others.

We'll say another story from the Rizhiner. He told his disciples: you should daven (pray) on time. Why? Because there was once a woman who cooked for her husband every morning. This went on for years, until one day she wasn't able to. He came back from shul and waited and waited, but nothing came. When finally at 12 noon she gave him his usual morning meal, he told her. Look, every day when I come back from shul,

you give me the same usual meal. Today, when I saw that you hadn't prepared the usual, I thought maybe you were preparing something special. But, now I see that it's the same old thing. So said the Rizhiner, don't delay your davening, because you're not preparing anything special (I, the Rizhiner can really delay, because maybe I am preparing something special). The Chassidim when they heard this were really taken in by it. They left Rizhin to go back home and on the way met an old man who when he heard there new teaching from the Rizhiner, he said: this is all true when there is no real love between a man and woman, but if there is, the husband does not at all care what his wife prepares for him. They turned around and headed back to the Rizhiner and told him how this old man had contradicted his teaching. The Rizhiner said, this old man is already not alive, since this was his whole purpose for coming into the world.