

Mittler Rebbe's birthday and yahrzeit

9 Kislev 5773

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

Today is the 9th of Kislev. The 9th day of the 9th month. The ninth in the ninth. About the letter tet, the ninth letter it says that its good is hidden within it. The 9th of the 9th is the essence of the goodness that is hidden and kept for the tzadikim, as it says about the light that God saw was good. 9 also alludes to the 9 months of pregnancy. The mittler Rebbe is binah, the width of the river. The BST is Atik, the Magid Arich, the Alter Rebbe is Abba and the Mittler Rebbe Ima, and the Tzemach Tzedek is da'at. Dov here is named after the Magid as was the Mittler Rebbe. The Alter Rebbe used to call the BST grandfather and the Magid father. Sometimes a spiritual descendant is more essential than a physical descendant. For instance the same was true with regard to Moshe Rabbeinu. Therefore the Mittler Rebbe was the Magid's grandson, as it were, and it was accepted among the Magid's students that Dov Ber of Lubavitch was indeed the same soul. The Alter Rebbe merited bringing that same neshamah down a second time. This is also the connection between the 9th of Kislev and the 19th of Kislev, again the concealed good, the power of giving birth, all the children that are concealed in pregnancy. Among the great tzadikim, he is the only one who was born and passed away on the same day, as we know that God fulfills the years of tzadikim. What about all the other great tzadikim? There is a single example, the Mittler Rebbe who teaches us the rule, that this is true by all tzadikim. Particularly in our generation, where all Jews are tzadikim, and so in essence each one completes and fulfills his years fully, from day (of birth) to day (of passing). Again the name is Dov, the Mittler Rebbe's and the Magid's. The simplest acronym is "a dwelling place below" (דירה בתחתונים). The highest reason for why God created the world is so that he would have a dwelling place below. It is a craving that has no rational explanation behind it. May it be that Dov here will also continue to make God a dwelling place below.

About the Magid it says that once one of his great students, when he came home, and was asked what he saw there. He said to come to Mezritch where the Magid is, is like entering a forest, entering its depth, and suddenly out of nowhere this great big bear appears, and the bear is שוקק, the sound the bear makes. This same word also means "craving" (תשוקה). Since this is how it was with the Magid, apparently it was also the same by the Mittler Rebbe.

About Ya'el the wife of Chever Hakeini it says that she should be blessed of all women in the tents, for having killed Sisra, the minister of war of Yavin the king of Chatzor. For this she is considered to be equal to all four matriarchs. All four matriarchs, are all connected with the Mittler Rebbe, that we said corresponds to Ima. All of them are included within the act of bravery performed by Ya'el. Of all the women in the tents refers to the matriarchs. The gematria is that אשת חבר הקניי is equal to שרה רבקה רחל לאה. The wife of Chever is like the wife of a chaver, a talmid chacham. The Keini is also a synonym for someone who makes jewelry, a צורף. We should learn from Yael in the Tanach to our own Yael, that she was as important as all the matriarchs.

Earlier we said that the final stories of the matriarchs begin in our parashah. Yaakov we already met in last week's parashah. His journey to Haran was to spread forth in all four directions, north, south, east, and west, corresponding to his four wives. There are many things we can connect with this. There is midrash that the Rebbe brought a number of times, Midrash Rabbah states that when Yakov left Be'er Sheva, it was fleeing from the well of a vow, from the possibility that he saw that if he would remain in the land of Israel, he too would have to make a vow to Avimelech, just as his father had done after Abraham. Because of this vow, the redemption took seven more generations and only after 7 generations did his descendants enter the land of Israel. There is a question about whether Yitzchak's restatement of the vow caused another delay. The Rebbe leans to the opinion that it did, so it took 8 generations from Yitzchak. If God forbid, Yakov sees with his holy spirit, he will have to make the vow once more to Avimelech. This is a peace treaty with the Philistines, which were living in the coastal strip that is around Gaza. He fled therefore to prevent this from happening, to prevent another delay in the return to the land. Every vow made to Avimelech the king of the Philistines, you delay things for 7 generations. This is a terrible thing. The first one to flee in order not to have to sign a peace treaty was Yakov, ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע. In the sichah, it states that usually this verse is explained as when someone leaves the land of Israel, which is the highest place in the world, and ends up in Haran, the worst possible place in the world, it was all to transform darkness into light. The task of clarification (עבודת) (הבידורים) is one that he undertakes to perform in Haran. But, in another sichah, the Rebbe says it can be understood like Lech lecha. That it was actually an ascent from below to above—so there is something in Haran that makes it higher than Be'er Sheva. It says in Kabbalah that the name Haran (חרן) that when the ח is interchanged with a ה, it becomes, רנה, singing. When I there song? It says that when Yakov returns to the land of Israel, he settles into his father's role (בארץ מגורי אביו), and Yitzchak is the one who sings, as we say, יצחק ירנן.

The first ma'amar, the foundation of Torat Chaim by the Mittler Rebbe begins with the verse, חכמות בחוץ תרונה, wisdoms will sing outside. Indeed, the Mittler Rebbe was always referred to by the Lubavitcher Rebbe as רחובות הנהר, and the letters of הנהר are הרנה, the singing. The wisdoms referred to here are the higher wisdom and the lower wisdom. These are the wisdom of Atzilut and the wisdom of King Solomon. King Solomon had 3000 levels of parable with which he was able to bring the supernal wisdom to common understanding. With it he enclothed the wisdom of Atzilut so that it could be understood in our lower worlds. This is the wisdom of nature, as Rebbe Hillel says regarding the need to have parables based on the wisdom of nature and as the Rambam says that with meditation upon by nature, we come to love and fear God. What is the wisdom of Atzilut? It is the wisdom to judge wisely. Solomon had the wisdom of God, allowing him to judge wisely and with this he won over the hearts of the people. What Solomon did with the two harlots is not something that is usually done in a beit din. But, that is the particular wisdom that Solomon had. Anyone who wants to learn Choshen Mishpat has to know what this Divine wisdom is, maybe it's between the lines. These two types of wisdom are both needed. The higher wisdom, knowing how to judge

wisely together with the wisdom of nature. When they combine, they can go out, they can reach Haran and there they will be transformed into song, בהויץ תרונה. Someone who is only sitting in the world of holiness, in Be'er Sheva, maybe he can make do with just the Divine wisdom. But, when he goes out like Yakov to Haran (to make a Chabad House) he also needs the wisdom of nature. One needs to combine the wisdom of nature together with the wisdom of Torah. When they combine, you have a method with which to transform darkness into light. This transformation is באבוד רשעים רינה.

The two types of wisdom also allude to Yakov's wives that he marries in Haran. The higher hei (Leah) and the lower hei (Rachel) who correspond with the concealed world (עלמא דאתכסיא), the Divine wisdom and with the revealed world (עלמא דאתגליא), the wisdom of Solomon. But, he had 4 wives. Why? Twice wisdom (חכמה) is 146, the value of world (עולת). So each world actually requires two types of wisdom, as we have explained many times what the two different types of wisdom in each of the revealed and concealed worlds is. In the concealed world they corresponds to Leah and Zilpah and in the revealed world they correspond to Rachel and Bilhah.

As Bruriah explained to her husband, Rabbi Meir, the sins should disappear and not the sinners. When Yakov went out to Haran, the midrash says that he was revealing that from God comes an intelligent wife (מה' אשה משכלת).

In the sichah we mentioned earlier, how does he explain that it could be an ascent from Be'er Sheva to Haran? Until now we've said that Haran is song, and thus the wisdom's sing outside, in Haran. But, the Rebbe adds that Haran can also be understood as freedom (חוריק). Who is free? He who learns Torah, this was of course Yakov, the man of tents. Whenever and wherever he is, he is always learning, even when working hard. He is always stealing time from the toil of this world to learn, to perform what the Alter Rebbe writes in the laws of Talmud Torah. So even though he is now leaving the land of Israel for chutz la'aretz, if you leave and commit yourself to learning Torah and to transforming the darkness into light, then you become free. This is the greatest ascent you could achieve. If you can't stay in the land of Israel because you will be forced to make a vow to Avimelech, it is better to leave. The Tzemach Tzedek says you should make wherever you are the land of Israel. So when Yakov reaches Haran, with his learning and his toil of clarification, he makes it the land of Israel. And there he reaches his greatest ascent and gives birth to 11 of his 12 children.

After he left Be'er Sheva it says that he made a vow (נדר), If God will be with me on my way, and give me bread to eat and clothes to wear and I will return peacefully to my father's home, then all that you will give me, I will give a tenth to You. The sages say that Yakov was the first to make a neder in a time of need. The sages stress that the right time for a person to make a neder (a vow before God) is when one is facing a difficult time. That is the time to make a vow (נדר) before God, that if you save me, I will do so and so for You. The reason God gives this difficulty is exactly in order that the person search inside and find the power and strength to dedicate himself to something more than what he has done so far. Yakov was the first to do this, to make a vow before Hashem. The sages say that there were 4 who made such a vow, 2 merited from it and 2 did not. The 2 that did not merit (נודר ומפסיד) were Yakov and Yiftach. The 3 people about

whom it says, ויִדְר נֹדֵר, Yakov (here in our parashah), then the entire Jewish people, ויִדְר ישראל in the Book of Bamidbar, and then Yiftach. For Yiftach it did not turn out good because he had to give up his daughter. With all that Yakov was a tzadik, he did not merit something good from his vow, his neder. This fits with our principle that every new reality begins with a chaotic instance (תהו) and only later is rectified. If you are the first to start something new in the world, it doesn't usually occur in a rectified way. Yakov when he came back to the land of Israel and reached Beit Kel, he was supposed to make that the House of God, as he had promised to. But, he didn't, and he lost his beloved wife and Rachel was buried on the main road there. The Almighty has his reasons for what He does, and there is a good reason that Rachel is buried where she is.

Who made a vow and benefited from it. The first are the Jewish people, when they vowed that if the Almighty would help them defeat the Amalekites. This is all connected with the 9th of Kislev because every vow that is a neder, is related to Ima, כל הנודר נודר בחיי המלך. That a neder is made in a time of difficulty, what is this? This is connected with the verse, ועת צרה היא ליעקב וממנה ישוע. What is Yakov's difficulty? He is leaving to go to Haran and entering Lavan's house, a very difficult kelipah to overcome. And from this very difficulty says the Ba'al Shem Tov, comes the salvation. All this if the difficulty motivates you to make a neder. Every Jew who has a difficult time in his life, that is called עת צרה ליעקב, a time of difficulty for Yakov, and from it he will be saved. How is this done, by revealing the inner strength that he has inside him and using that strength to commit to doing something for Hashem. Every neder is related with Yakov, as it says in Tehilim, נדר לאביר יעקב, since Yakov was the first to make a neder, every neder is through him.

Who was the second whose vow benefited him? This was Channah, Shmuel's mother. She merited giving birth to Shmuel who is equal to Moshe and Aharon together. Since for 2 it turned out well and for 2 it didn't, that means it's a 50/50 chance. This itself tells us what the mindset of someone making a neder is. That the chances of benefitting in such a situation are themselves 50/50.

Now let's look at the 3 verses making up Yakov's neder. ויִדְר נֹדֵר is equal to 474, the value of "knowledge" (דעת). Da'at is the inner aspect of tiferet, Yakov. Da'at is Moshe's soul. All trials that Hashem sends a person are in order for the person to gain in da'at—כי מנסה ה' אלקיכם אתכם לדעת. A neder can be annulled or "opened" by a talmid chacham, but first of all you need to find the strength to make the neder itself. The Mittler Rebbe is Ima, where the neder is made and the Alter Rebbe is Abba, where the neder is annulled. Every neder begins with the word, אם (If), alluding to Ima, to the mother principle, which is how we know that all nedarim are in Ima. If is a condition. The whole concept of conditions (תנאים) we take from Yakov's neder. Yakov says, if you give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and the sages learn from this that these are not trifles. This doesn't refer to physical bread and clothing, it could also refer to Torah (bread of God) and a talit. It could also refer to the face-bread and to the garments of the priests, both in the Temple. But, in pshat, that is what Yakov asked for. These words, bread to eat and clothing to wear are the main part of the condition. After that, "if I return in peace to my

father's house" is a continuation of his condition, and "Havayah will be my God" is already part of the description of what he will do in return. Apparently, every neder should follow this formula.

Within the condition there are four parts, which correspond to the four letters of Havayah. First "if God will be with me." What does this mean? It is something unto itself, but it also connects with "and keep me on the way I am now following." Keeping, guarding, protection, is always related to the makifim of Ima, it is the higher hei of Havayah. But, in order for their to be protection, God has to be with me (יהיה אלקים עמדי), the word "will be" (יהיה) is clearly related to chochmah. These are the concealed that are for Hashem. They are concealed because keeping you safe, is not a visible revelation of what God is giving you. The next two things, bread to eat and clothing to wear, they correspond with vav (bread is what keeps the body—tiferet—alive) and the hei, where clothing is itself called כבוד, honor, malchut. This is all a very clear yud-hei-vav-hei. The fact that I feel that God is with me, even before He protects me, that it the Atzilut of the condition. If Hashem is with you, then certainly he will give you what you need. All this is on his way to Haran.

After this, Yakov talks about coming back from Haran. He wants to enter and leave with his earnestness, to return with peace to his father. After all the traumas and difficulties, if I return peacefully, then Havayah will be my God and this stone that he placed there he will make into the House of God. But, what we see here is that to give a tenth is actually more important than building a house for God, in a certain sense the whole purpose of the house of God is so that we will be able to give a tenth there.

Let's now focus on these words, והיה הווי לי לאלקים. This is a big chiddush that Havayah, the Name of mercy, the essential Name will be Elokim (my God). I would have thought it should be exactly the opposite, that Elokim should become Havayah. The Rebbe's all explain that as it says, ושבת עד הווי אלקיך, a teaching from the Magid saying that you should return so far in repentance to the point that Havayah will become your God. This is the toil of the ba'alei teshuvah. So as much as Yakov is the choice of the patriarchs, we see that he performs the task of a ba'al teshuvah—he is the one who knows that you have to make Havayah your God and not the opposite. It is the ba'al teshuvah who understands that he needs to go out to build a Beit Chabad. The main example of making Havayah your God is to make Havayah, God's essence which is above nature, into your very nature. When Rebbe Zusha heard this teaching from the Magid, he said it was too difficult for him, so he split the word תשובה teshuvah into 5 different verses, 5 different types of spiritual toil. But, the Magid simply said, make Havayah your God. In chapter 69 of Tehilim, the verse we say everyday is ואני תפילתי לך הווי עת רצון, אלקים ברוב חסדך. At first it is prayer to Havayah, and when Havayah becomes Elokim, that is a sign of a time of goodwill (עת רצון). Thus, there are 3 verses that discuss this transformation of Havayah into Elokim. In our methodology it is moving up from Divine consciousness into natural consciousness. Where does this happen? It happens in the land of Israel, and that is what Yakov is referring to when he says, ושבתו בשלום אל בית אבי, When I return peacefully to my father's house, then he can make Havayah his Elokim, his God. This is one explanation:

that Divine consciousness elevate even further to the point where it builds the partzuf of Rachel, and creates what we call Yiddishe natur, Jewish nature.

There are beautiful remazim in this phrase, והיה הווי לי לאלקים. Each of the patriarchs is very different from the others. Still, as much as Yakov is more like Abraham than he is like his father Yitzchak, and still he wants to return to his father's home, he feels the greatness of Yitzchak his father. והיה הווי לי לא-להים is equal to Yitzchak (208) exactly. So Yitzchak himself is the power to transform Havayah into Elokim. The sages say that in merit of these 4 words that Yakov spoke, all the promises the prophets make about Mashiah, about the good that will come, all begin with the word, והיה, the letters of Havayah (י-הוה) of course. This particular permutation is the 7th, corresponding to the 7th month. If we take out והיה, which is equal to 26, then we retain 182, יעקב Yakov. If we take out the Name Havayah in this phrase, we will be left with 156, the value of Yosef (י-ס-פ). If we take out the לי, we will be left with 116, the value of Kislev (כ-ס-ל-ו), this all happens in the month of Kislev.

Now we'll try to understand something more about what it means that Havayah will be Elokim. We learn this by noting that all these verse are all a vow that Yakov is making before God, but the Name he uses is Elokim, ואם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני וגו'. Who is going to fulfill all these conditions? Elokim! And then, after Elokim just did all this for me, Havayah will be Elokim for me. In addition, what he promises to do in return is to build the House of Elokim (בית אלקים), not the House of Havayah. It might be that he is addressing Havayah and saying ואם יהיה אלקים עמדי, if Elokim will be with me. But, still what he stresses here is Elokim and not Havayah. In all three verses there are 3 instances of Elokim which allude to the three mochin of katnut, of small-mindedness in binah. Now, there value is אלקים הווי לאלקים אלקים = 314, which equals ש-ד-י, the holy Name Elokim. The 3 Elokim equals 288, the 288 sparks of holiness and 288 and Havayah equals 314, the Name Shakai. So the main mass here is in Elokim, but the highlight is when Havayah will become Elokim, that Havayah will become my nature. How else can we understand this? If we've said that Yakov knows that he is not exactly like his father, but he wants to reach his father's level. He knows that Yitzchak loves his brother, Esau, not him. Yitzchak loved Esau because Esau was more similar to him than Yakov. Yakov though is different from his father, he has a different character. And now he has to flee the land of Israel, whether it is because he is fleeing Esau or fleeing the peace treaty with Avimelech. But, inside, in his heart, he really wants to return to his father's house and to take Yitzchak's place. He wants to return there, in spite of all the difficulty he has experienced with his father. But, he knows that Yitzchak is a revelation of Divine essence. He is atzmut, there is more essence in Yitzchak's gevurah (מפי הגבורה) then there is in all the other patriarchs. So why does he invoke the Name Elokim? Because Elokim is the Name that corresponds with Yitzchak's gevurah. So it is as if he is saying that he wants Yitzchak to come with him. He wants to come to terms with his father. Who told him to leave for Haran? It was his father. And now he's saying that if God's trait that was with his father, be with him, then Havayah, who is Yakov himself (the Name corresponding with tiferet) will be Elokim. Meaning, that all that he will do will all be to commemorate his father, to commemorate Elokim, which is why he calls it the house of

Elokim and not the house of Havayah. The goal here is to follow in his father's footsteps. He wants to love his father, he wants his father to love him. This is something wondrous.

According to all this, what then would Havayah will be my Elokim mean? Havayah is God's Name of compassion, and it is a mitzvah to be like God, compassionate like God, merciful like God, etc. Elokim is the Name of gevurah as we said. There is a lot of current events here. There are many who say that we who received the Torah we became known by three traits: merciful, humble, and the performance of acts of loving-kindness (רחמים, ביישנים, גומלי חסדים). Every Jew has his Chabad House. In order to bring people close, you have to have a lot of softness, you have to speak softly and compassionately. But, sometimes you have to speak harshly, with gevurah. These types of words are needed when someone is shooting missiles at you. It is very important to know how to say things in this manner too. We might think that today there is no point in saying what needs to be done, because no one is listening. Still there is someone who needs to speak harshly, and this is especially true in the land of Israel. Because, as we know the Zohar says that the children of Abraham are in exile among the children of Esau and the children of Yitzchak are in exile among the children of Yishma'el. The mentality outside the land of Israel, the way in which you should do berurim is with Abraham's chesed, loving-kindness. But, in the land of Israel, we need Yitzchak's gevurah. Yakov is saying, the fact that until now I only spoke Havayah, only spoke kindly and softly, I was a gutter, from now on Havayah will become Elokim for me, and I will learn how to speak harshly when needed. Just as there are preparation courses for opening a Chabad House, here in the land of Israel, we need to be prepared and well versed in our knowledge of Hilchot Melachim in the Rambam. One needs to learn Torah and then learn how to disseminate it properly. You can't do it with an angry countenance, but you have to know how to say these harsh words. The first thing in Shulchan Aruch is not to be embarrassed because of those scolding you. All the goodness in every Jew (because every Jew is compassionate) it wants to become Elokim. Only then we will be successful here in the land of Israel, if we are not submissive before the nations of the world.

Now let's end with another beautiful gematria. If we take all that Yakov says here in these 3 verses, $אם יהיה אלקים עמדי... וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך$ = 9702, or the product of 22 and 441, where 441 is the value of "truth" (אמת), or 22 times 21 squared. $f[n] = (n \text{ plus } 1) n$ squared. All this is an inner connection between Yakov and Yitzchak. We said that the source of truth is in Yitzchak. 21 is Yitzchak's generation and 22 is Yaakov's generation. 21 squared is truth here, as we just said, while Yaakov is 22, the 22 letters of Torah, which is what Yaakov represents.

Lechaim lechaim. May we merit being those who make vows and benefit from them.