

The
CHASSIDUS
PERSPECTIVE
 with Reb Yoel Kahn

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HISKASHRUS TODAY PART ONE

***Gimmel Tamuz* is approaching, and everyone is in a state of heightened preparation and inspiration, but there are two general questions that are on everyone's mind: (1) How can we connect ourselves to the Rebbe today when we can't see the Rebbe? How especially can the young generation which has never seen the Rebbe have meaningful *hiskashrus*? (2) How does one become *mekushar* to the Rebbe? What exactly does that involve?**

In response to the first question: I recall a *Yud Shvat farbrengen* where the Rebbe compared the *histalkus* of the Frierdiker Rebbe on *Yud Shvat* 5710 to the period when the Frierdiker Rebbe had left Russia, *Isru Chag Simchas Torah* 5688.

During that period, there were times when there was no communication at all. The GPU, the Russian police, would conduct searches in Chassidim's homes and would search for the Rebbe's picture, and if they found one it was considered treasonous and arrests were made, and that was that. Otherwise, however, there was no communication with the Rebbe.

They had these same questions back then. The Frierdiker Rebbe left Russia *Isru Chag Simchas Torah* 5688 and Communism fell in 5751, quite a bit of time, during which they didn't hear or see the Rebbe. Nevertheless, *bochurim* came out of Russia with a strong connection to the Rebbe.

On that *Simchas Torah* before he left, the Frierdiker Rebbe said that space won't separate between him and the chassidim. This message was absorbed by those present, and so no matter where he was later, whether in Riga, Warsaw or later in Brooklyn, they knew that space didn't separate them. That was what they would dwell on during their *farbrengens*.

The *farbrengens* at the time focused on the past, present and future, and that was reflected in everything. They each relived their past; one chossid would remind himself of a *yechidus*, another of a special *davening*, another of a *farbrengen*, etc. As for the present, there was one thing they knew, and that was that notwithstanding the distance in space, space didn't separate them, and that the Rebbe was thinking of them even then, awakening Heavenly mercy for them, and always keeping them in mind. And their wish for the future was that they'd meet the Rebbe again, and that was all. And that really worked.

Similarly today, the majority of the young generation is excited about learning another *sicha* and another *maamar* and about learning another detail of what things were like; they focus on the past and that's what interests them. It's the adults that come and confuse them with questions, but the young ones don't seem to have a problem.

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But how can we compare to 5668 when there was only a distance in physical space, when it's a lot more than that today?

Yes, that's unquestionably true. However, the Rebbe addressed this as well.

There is a letter from the Rebbe to a widow whose husband was killed, and, as is apparent from the letter, there were girls at home who needed to get married already, but the home was enveloped in brokenness and sadness, and they just didn't stop mourning. The Rebbe writes that everyone understands that a bullet can only harm the body but not the soul, and the soul is still interested now in what's happening in its home, and experiences pain from the fact that due to its absence there's depression and brokenness in the home. And so when a wedding will be made, when there will be happiness, the soul will share their joy.

To whom did the Rebbe write this and about whom? The Rebbe wrote this to a simple woman, which means that even a simple

woman can understand this. And about whom? About a simple Jew as well, which means that even where a simple Jew is concerned, even a simple woman can understand the soul's continuing presence and involvement.

How much more so in our case, where, first of all, there's the famous idea in *Igeres Hakodesh* that a *tzadik's* life is of a spiritual nature, *emuna*, *yirah* and *ahava*. Even when it's invested in a body, this unique soul retains its nature. Based on this, it says in *Iggeres Hakodesh* citing the Zohar, *tzadikim* who have passed away are present in all of the worlds more than during their lifetimes, and 'all of the worlds' includes this world. All of this is true about any *tzadik*. Additionally, we know that the specific *tzaddikim* who are "the shepherds of Israel won't abandon the sheep of their flock".

So if we can speak of how a simple Jew is watching and is interested in seeing how his home is doing, how much more so that a *tzadik*, and especially a shepherd of Israel, is completely involved in what's happening with the sheep of his flock.

If so, how is this different from all the previous Rebbeim, who also possess spiritual life and are also shepherds of Israel?

Yes, true, they too are certainly shepherds of Israel. Yet, it says in Tanya that the entire *knesses yisroel* is like one person, one body, and just like a body has a head from which energy is distributed to all the limbs, even the nails, similarly the *chayus* of the *nefesh-ruach-neshama* of all ordinary Jews comes from the *nefesh* of the *tzadikim* and *chachamim* who are the *roshei bnei yisroel* of their generation.

In every generation *klal yisroel* is one person, and so there's the body of this generation, and then there's the body of another generation, and then another. The Alter Rebbe was the head of one generation, and then the Mittlerer Rebbe was the head of

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a second generation, and so on. The spiritual energy which is assigned from Hashem to every Jew is drawn down through the *tzadik* who is the head of that particular generation, until the time comes for their passing like the Alter Rebbe on *Chof Daled Teves* etc.

So yes, the shepherds of Israel don't abandon the sheep of their flock, and the Rebbe applied this maxim to the Rebbe Rashab. However, although they don't abandon the sheep of their flock, a new generation came and they were led by a new shepherd. So while it's true that the sheep of the flock weren't abandoned on *Beis Nissan*, which is what the Rebbe says, but the Friediker Rebbe took over then. And

on *Yud Shvat* 5710, the Rebbe became our leader, which means that this generation is led by the Rebbe.

These are all spiritual things, but what does this mean practically for us?

These are spiritual things, you're right, but spirituality is connected with practicality.

How do we see this?

Let's return for a moment from the situation after *Gimmel Tamuz* to before *Gimmel Tamuz*.

We speak of a head and the soul inside, and how the energy for all the limbs of the body comes from the soul and the head, or as it's called in *seforim*, a *neshama klalis*. While the *neshama klalis* is a kabbalistic concept and a spiritual thing, at the same time, it's quite a practical matter as well, and this expresses itself both in the shepherd and in the sheep.

Everyone knows the Rebbe's concern for every Jew in every

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aspect. There certainly were some *gedolei yisroel*, true *gedolei yisroel*, each of whom cared about a specific thing. Some were mainly concerned about physical things like *parnasa*, while others were concerned about spiritual matters. Within spirituality itself, one cared about the study of Torah, another cared about Shabbos, another for kashrus; each was concerned about a specific thing for Klal Yisroel. Additionally, each was preoccupied mainly with his community.

But in the Rebbe we find one Jew who cared about every single Jew in every location. The Rebbe cared about physical matters, like not giving land to the Arabs because it's a matter of danger, which he said was the most crucial factor. [While he also spoke about the benefit of a complete *Eretz Yisroel*, it was the *din* in *Shulchan Aruch siman Shin Chof Tes*, the fact that it's simply a danger and a matter of life and death, that was the main thing.]

This same person sent *shluchim*, and was concerned that if some young man was involved with a non-Jewish woman, that he drop it. And this same individual who was involved with and cared for that Jew, was no less concerned at the same time that a *bachur*

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should learn more *chassidus* and *daven* with more *geshmak*.

How does one Jew care about all of these things? The answer is: The head, the soul, gives everything, and the head feels everything that's happening in every limb, and that's what matters to it.

This is all on the shepherd's end, but we witness the same phenomenon with the sheep:

Jews of all backgrounds were drawn and came to the Rebbe, but why would they all come to the Rebbe? There are so many kinds of people, each with their own nature, some are head-people

while others are heart-people, yet all were drawn to the same place. I'm not even talking about the Jews of all backgrounds, from *shomer ha'tzair* to *neturei karta* who came here, because that is more of a physical division. Yet there was also a diversity of temperaments, head-people and heart-people, and all were drawn to this place.

What does that show us? That the soul, the head, gives something to everyone, and that being the case, we see this reflected both in the shepherd and in the sheep. And it's this same Jew who was concerned about everyone in every way, and to whom all Jews were drawn, who was not affected by *Gimmel Tamuz* 5754.

It's crucial that we recognize that when a Jew visits the *ohel*, that it isn't just a case of visiting *kivrei tzadikim*. Although visiting *kivrei tzadikim* is also significant, that's not what this is about. He's visiting his Rebbe, and when he complains about something, either in person or via a fax or other forms of contact, and he complains about a specific problem, then the Rebbe has literal anguish, and the Rebbe prays for him. And when there's an improvement, and the Jew comes again and relates that things are better now due to the Rebbe's intercession, the Rebbe has literal *nachas ruach*.

The concept that the shepherd is involved with every aspect of every individual Jew is still in force now in the same way. Although this is something which we can't overtly observe, we still witness various miracles, amazing things, which demonstrate clearly to us that the Rebbe cares and *davens* for everyone.

But this is also true on the sheep's part: if this relationship

To be continued...

Hiskashrus Today Part 2

How can every person be part of "the Rebbe's army"?

How can we be sure that the Rebbe's mission still relevant today?

What should we do when we have questions?



were just a natural thing, then the logical result after *Gimmel Tamuz* would be, as people, and these were friends of Lubavitch, assumed, that things would hold together maybe two months, three months, but no more, with the Rebbe's seeming absence.

In reality, not one of the *shluchim* has left his place as a result, no *mosad* has closed, and on the contrary, more and more *mosdos* were added, and more *shluchim* embarked on *shlichus*, and the work expanded so much. So now they'll probably attempt to propose various reasons and rational explanations, but these same individuals who think they're offering answers were the very people who'd said earlier that it wouldn't hold for more than 2-3 months, so what happened?

The same Jewish shepherd is leading now, both on the shepherd's and sheep's part. Jews from all walks keep coming, just as before, and even more; there are Jews from all backgrounds who essentially book a ticket especially to come here, they go to the *mikva*, visit the *ohel*, and take a plane back. What is that? We see here that the head, where the soul is, is still present, and is running everything. Everything is the same in this regard.

What do you mean when you say that the attraction to the Rebbe wasn't a natural thing? Didn't the Rebbe have a lot of traits and attributes which drew people?

He certainly had those traits and attributes, no question. Interestingly, the Rebbe said a number of times in the name of Baal Shem Tov that we can visualize Hashem's love to every Jew, because it's like parents who didn't have children, and then an only child was born to them in their old age. In truth, that's just a *mashal*, but in the *nimshal* it's far greater than that. This is something we can relate to because every Jew is really an only child.

Ordinarily we recognize that an only child is referred to as such because there isn't another one, and it might sound strange to state that everyone is an only child, but our understanding of an only child is limited. Regular parents can't direct the love of their

entire souls to two different children, and so if there's another child in the picture, their love is limited, but Hashem's love is unlimited.

The same is the case for *tzadikim*, not just ordinary *tzadikim*, but for a Rebbe. It's a G-dly thing, it's a *neschama klalis* which is of a different caliber. But all spiritual things manifest themselves in a physical way, and this is the reason that the Rebbe had all of those traits and attributes.

“Why did he have such a drawing power? I've seen people write about the Rebbe's eyes, which is true! But is that the point? Rather, because of who he was, his eyes were that way!”

Why did he have such a drawing power? I've seen people write about the Rebbe's eyes, which is true! But is that the point? Rather, because of who he was, his eyes were that way!

This is all from the shepherd to the sheep, and it's the same thing from the sheep to the shepherd. I mentioned earlier that people from both *ha'shomer ha'tzair* and *neturei karta* went to the Rebbe, which you can find hundreds of reasons for, but it remains a strange phenomenon even with all of the explanations. The

real explanation is that the energy of the body comes from the source, all of the particulars of the energy of the body come from the head, which is the Rebbe, and so therefore it manifested itself in natural ways.

Practically speaking, there are a few days until *Gimmel Tamuz*. What should we do during this time?

Certainly our *hiskashrus* should be increased in every way, both our own and that of others; our own through learning more of the Rebbe's Torah, and making more *chassidische farbrengens* during these days, and obviously all the things that the Rebbe wrote in his letter for *Yud Shvat* must be applied and observed. But it can't simply be limited to just these few days; we must place ourselves in a completely different mindset, and enter the Rebbe's army.

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