NEW

לקוטי שיחות

KI SEITZEI כי תצא

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

INSIGHTS INTO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Dedicated to

Emmanuel (Mendel) Karp

1905 - 1989

son of Bernard (Berl) and Rose (Rezele)

Manny Karp was born in the United States, in 1905. His first language was Yiddish. Losing his mother to the Spanish Flu shaped his resilience and commitment to helping others, ultimately leading to a career as a guidance counselor in Philadelphia public schools. He also served many years as the director of Camp Akiba in the Poconos.

Karp's legacy is characterized by his optimism and unwavering dedication to learning and mentorship. Emmanuel Karp died in 1989.

KI SEITZEI I | כי תצא א

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered *Shabbos Parshas Ki Seitzei,* 5714 (1954)

Introduction

When there's a threat to Jewish communities anywhere in the world, our phones buzz with updates, our news feeds refresh endlessly, and we find ourselves glued to screens, anxiously following every development. Attacks on Jews command our attention like few other things can.

However, perhaps the most crucial battle we face may not be the one making headlines. What if there's a war being fought much closer to home – one that determines not just our physical safety, but our spiritual destiny?

This week's Torah reading opens with the words "When you go to war against your enemies." The Rebbe reveals that this verse speaks not only to ancient military campaigns, but to an ongoing spiritual battle that every person faces daily. It's a war we cannot avoid, yet one we're promised we can win – if we understand how to fight it.

The War G-d Commands

A Jew's Ongoing Battle

1. This week's Torah reading begins, "When you go out to war against your enemies, and G-d your L-rd will deliver them into your hand, and you will take captives:"

In a spiritual context, the phrase **"your enemies" refers to the body and the animal soul, as the Alter Rebbe explains in *Likkutei Torah,*[1] for they are a person's true enemies, and one must go out and wage war against them.**

However, the nature of this war requires explanation: **The intent is not to break** the body and the animal soul, **but rather to refine them. Nevertheless, this is a** real war, **because they do not** easily **consent to be refined. Moreover, it is a particularly difficult battle, because the animal soul "has the first claim in its arguments";**[2] i.e., it has control over the body from the moment it emerges into the world (while the G-dly soul only fully emerges later,) and the G-dly soul must struggle to dislodge it.[3]

Regarding this challenge, the Torah **tells us, "When you go out to war…." One only needs to *go out* to war, and then you are assured: "G-d your L-rd will deliver them into your hand." You will conquer them, not the reverse, G-d forbid. Moreover, you will gain an additional** benefit – **"you will take captives." This refers to the sparks of holiness that are embedded within physical entities,** as the verse states,[4] **"the power of an ox [yields] abundant crops."**[5]

א. דִי הַיְינְטִיקֶע סֶדְרָה הוֹיבְּט זִיךְ אָן: כִּי תֵצֵא לַמִּלְחָמָה עַל אֹיְבֶיךָ וּנְתָנוֹ ה׳ אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ וְשָׁבִיתָ שִׁבְיוֹ.

דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן דֶעם אִין רוּחְנִיּוּת אִיז:

אֹיְבֶיךָ גֵייט אוֹיפְן גוּף וְנֶפֶשׁ הַבַּהֲמִית, - ווִי דֶער אַלְטֶער רֶבִּי אִיז מְפָרֵשׁ אִין לִקּוּטֵי תּוֹרָה[א], - ווָאס זֵיי זַיְינֶען דִי אֱמֶת׳עֶ אוֹיְבִים פוּן אָדָם, אוּן מֶען דַארְף אַרוֹיסְגֵיין מִלְחָמָה הָאבְּן מִיט זֵיי.

אֱמֶת טַאקֶע אַז דִי כַּוָּנָה אִיז נִיט בְּרֶעכְן זֵיי, נָאר זֵיי מְבָרֵר זַיְין, אָבֶּער פוּנְדֶעסְטְווֶעגְן אִיז דָאס אַ מִלְחָמָה, ווָארוּם זֵיי לָאזְן זִיךְ נִיט מְבָרֵר זַיְין, אוּן עֶס אִיז נָאךְ אַ שְׁווֶערֶע מִלְחָמָה, ווָארוּם דֶער נֶפֶשׁ הַבַּהֲמִית אִיז אַקְדִּימָא טַעֲנָתֵיהּ[ב].

אוֹיף דֶעם זָאגְט עֶר: כִּי תֵצֵא לַמִּלְחָמָה. מֶען דַארְף נָאר אַרוֹיסְגֵיין אוֹיף מִלְחָמָה, אוּן דֶעמָאלְט זָאגְט מֶען דִיר צוּ אַז וּנְתָנוֹ ה׳ אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ, אַז דוּ ווֶעסְט אִים אַיְינְעמֶען אוּן נִיט חַס וְשָׁלוֹם פַארְקֶערְט, אוּן נָאךְ מֶערֶער, עֶס ווֶעט דִיר צוּקוּמֶען אַ תּוֹסֶפֶת, וְשָׁבִיתָ שִׁבְיוֹ, ווָאס דָאס אִיז דִי נִיצוֹצוֹת שֶׁבִּדְבָרִים הַגַּשְׁמִיִּים, וְרָב תְּבוּאוֹת בְּכֹחַ שׁוֹר.

(משיחת ש״פ תצא, תשי״ד)

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1. *Likkutei Torah,Devarim,* p. 35b.

2. See *Zohar,* Vol. I, p. 179aff.

3. See *Sefer HaMaamarim 5709,* p. 228.

4. *Mishlei* 14:4.

5. In a spiritual sense, the intent is that the refinement of the sparks of G-dliness embedded in material existence provide added energy that a person can employ in his Divine service.

א) דברים לה, ב.

ב) זע ספר המאמרים ה׳תש״ט עמוד 228.

KI SEITZEI II | כי תצא ב

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Yud-Gimmel* Tammuz, 5716 (1956)

Introduction

Every major life transition brings a similar dilemma. At the very moment we feel most challenged, our old defenses no longer work. The college student entering the workforce, the newlywed building a household, the retiree facing an empty schedule – each discovers that the strategies that served them in their previous phase of life may be inadequate for what lies ahead.

This isn't a flaw in the system; it's how growth works. Transitions create vulnerability precisely because they demand we reach beyond our current capacities. The question isn't how to avoid this challenge, but how to navigate it successfully.

The Torah's command to build a guardrail when constructing a new home addresses this universal dynamic. As the Rebbe reveals in the teaching that follows, this *mitzvah* speaks not just to architectural safety, but to the spiritual architecture of growth itself. He invites us to channel energy from a source higher than our own understanding to gain the protection we need as we enter a new phase – whether in our careers, relationships, or spiritual development.

The Spiritual Architecture of Growth

Two Distinct Commandments

1. I received a letter regarding the subject of a guardrail (*maakeh*), raising the following issue:

The reason for building a guardrail is to prevent **danger, as the verse states,[1] "[so that] you shall not [cause] blood [to be spilled] in your house lest one who falls fall from it."** ***Rambam*** rules[2] **that we do not recite a blessing over a** ***mitzvah*** **whose purpose is** to prevent **danger. However, in that very same chapter,[3]** ***Rambam*** **also rules that when constructing a guardrail, one must recite the blessing, "...Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to erect a guardrail."** Since constructing a guardrail is for the express purpose of preventing danger, seemingly a blessing is unnecessary.

It would appear that the issue **could be resolved straightforwardly: The obligation to prevent "blood [from being spilled] in your house" can be fulfilled through other means – not** necessarily **by building a guardrail. For** example, **a guardrail is only required when the house is ten handbreadths higher than ground level.[4] Therefore, one has the option to lower the roof or raise the ground level of the public domain.** Furthermore, **there is** yet **another option: to build** a home with **a slanted roof.**[5] Since people will not stand on such a roof, **one will have averted** the possibility of **"blood [being spilled] in your house."** Therefore, **the** ***mitzvah*** **of** building **a guardrail would not apply. Consequently,** when one builds a roof requiring a guardrail, **one must recite a blessing when**

א. װעגן דעם ענין פון מַעֲקֶה - האָט מיר אײנער געפֿרעגט אין אַ בריװ: דער טעם פון מַעֲקֶה איז דאָך מִשּׁוּם סַכָּנָה, װי עס שטײט אין פּסוק וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ כִּי יִפֹּל הַנֹּפֵל מִמֶּנּוּ, און דער רמב"ם[ג] פּסק'נט אַז אויף אַ מִצְוָה שֶׁמִּשּׁוּם סַכָּנָה מאַכט מען ניט קײן בְּרָכָה, אָבער אין דעם זעלבן פּרק גּוּפָא[ד] פּסק'נט דער רמב"ם אַז בְּשַׁעַת מען מאַכט אַ מַעֲקֶה דאַרף מען מאַכן אַ בְּרָכָה: אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת מַעֲקֶה.

אין פּשטות האָט מען געקענט זאָגן, װײַל דער ענין פון וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ קען מען באַװאָרענען אויך דורך אַן אַנדער אופן, ניט דורך מאַכן אַ מַעֲקֶה, װאָרום אַ מַעֲקֶה איז מען מְחוּיָב דַּוְקָא בְּשַׁעַת דער בַּיִת איז גָּבוֹהַּ מֵהַקַּרְקַע יו"ד טְפָחִים[ה], האָט ער דאָך אַ בְּרֵירָה צו מאַכן נידעריקער דעם גַּג אָדער אויפֿצוהײבן די קַרְקַע פון רְשׁוּת הָרַבִּים; עס איז דאָ נאָך אַן אופן, צו מאַכן דעם גַּג בְּשִׁפּוּעַ, װעט ער באַװאָרענען דעם לֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ און פונדעסטװעגן האָט ער ניט די מִצְוָה פון מַעֲקֶה. דערפֿאַר דאַרף מען מאַכן אַ בְּרָכָה בַּעֲשִׂיַּת

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1. *Devarim* 22:8.

2. *Rambam, Hilchos Berachos* 11:4.

3. Ibid. 11:8.

4. See *Bava Kama* 51a and *Rashi's* commentary there.

5. *Aruch HaShulchan, Choshen Mishpat* 427:5.

constructing the guardrail because, in this instance, there is an element beyond the requirement of "you shall not [cause] blood [to be spilled] in your house."

However, this explanation is insufficient. Ultimately, if the entire reason for constructing a guardrail is only to prevent **danger, the original issue remains and no blessing should be recited over such** a ***mitzvah*.**

However, in truth, "you shall make a guardrail for your roof" and "you shall not [cause] blood [to be spilled] in your house" are two distinct commandments. "You shall not [cause] blood [to be spilled] in your house" is not the reason for the commandment "you shall make a guardrail."

Proof of this: *Rambam* states a general principle in his outline of **the rules for enumerating the *mitzvos***[6] in *Sefer HaMitzvos:* An instruction that serves as **a reason for a *mitzvah*** and the *mitzvah* itself **are not counted separately in the enumeration of 613** *mitzvos.*[7] **Nevertheless, when enumerating the** 613 ***mitzvos*, *Rambam* counts** the two commands regarding a guardrail as **two separate *mitzvos*. When listing the positive commandments, he includes the *mitzvah* of** "you shall make a guardrail,"[8] **and when listing the negative commandments, he includes the *mitzvah* of** "you shall not [cause] blood [to be spilled]."[9] **This shows that "you shall not [cause] blood [to be spilled]" is not the reason for "you shall make a guardrail," but that they are separate *mitzvos*.**

***Rambam's* source is the *Sifri,*[10] which states, "'You shall make a guardrail for your roof' – this is a positive commandment. 'You shall not [cause] blood [to be spilled] in your house'** – this is a **negative commandment."**

מַעֲקֶה, ווײַל דָא אִיז דָא אַן עִנְיָן אוֹיסֶער דֶעם וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ.

אָבֶּער דֶער בִּיאוּר אִיז נִיט מַסְפִּיק, ווָארוּם סוֹף סוֹף אוֹיבּ דֶער גַאנְצֶער טַעַם פוּן עֲשִׂיַּית הַמַּעֲקֶה אִיז נָאר מִשּׁוּם סַכָּנָה אִיז הַדְרָא קוּשְׁיָא לְדוּכְתָּא, אַז אוֹיף דֶעם אִיז נִיט שַׁיָּיךְ קֵיין בְּרָכָה.

נָאר דֶער אֱמֶת אִיז, אַז וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה לְגַגֶּךָ אוּן וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ זַיינֶען צְווֵיי בַּאזוּנְדֶערֶע צִיווּיִים. וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ אִיז נִיט אַ טַעַם אוֹיף דֶעם וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה.

אַ רְאָיָה אוֹיף דֶעם: דֶער רַמְבַּ"ם זָאגְט אַ כְּלָל אִין שָׁרָשֵׁי הַמִּצְוֹת[ו], אַז דִי טַעֲמֵי הַמִּצְוֹת רֶעכֶענֶען זִיךְ נִיט פַאר בַּאזוּנְדֶערֶע מִצְוֹת בְּמִנְיַן תַּרְיַ"ג, אוּן פוּנְדֶעסְטְווֶעגְן בְּמִנְיַן הַמִּצְוֹת רֶעכְנְט דֶער רַמְבַּ"ם צְווֵיי בַּאזוּנְדֶערֶע מִצְוֹת. אִין מִנְיַן מִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה רֶעכְנְט עֶר דִי מִצְוָה פוּן וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה[ז], אוּן בְּמִנְיַן לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה רֶעכְנְט עֶר דִי מִצְוָה פוּן וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים[ח], זֶעט מֶען דָאךְ אַז דֶער וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים אִיז נִיט קֵיין טַעַם אוֹיפְן וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה נָאר עֶס אִיז אַ בַּאזוּנְדֶערֶע מִצְוָה.

דֶער מָקוֹר פוּן דֶעם רַמְבַּ"ם אִיז אִין סִפְרִי. אִין סִפְרִי[ט] שְׁטֵייט, וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה לְגַגֶּךָ, זוֹ מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה, וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ, מִצְוַת לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה.

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6. *Sefer HaMitzvos, Shoresh* (General Principle) 5.

7. As *Rambam* states in that source, in the event of the death of a close relative, a *Kohen Gadol* is commanded (*Vayikra* 21: 12), "He shall not leave the Sanctuary, and he will not desecrate what has been consecrated." *Rambam* is stating that "he will not desecrate what has been consecrated" is not a separate *mitzvah* but the reason why the *Kohen Gadol* may not leave the Sanctuary: If he leaves, he will desecrate the sacrifices he was offering.

8. Positive commandment 184.

9. Negative commandment 298.

10. *Sifri,* commenting on *Devarim* 22:8.

Setting Out on a New Course

2. There is an **application of this concept in** everyone's **Divine service: When a Jew builds a new structure** – i.e., begins a new phase of life – **the protective measures** (the guardrails) **he had** employed **previously and which had helped him withstand all the trials** he had confronted beforehand **are no** longer **sufficient. Consequently, it is possible that,** with false confidence, **"he will bless himself in his heart, saying, 'I will have peace,'"**[11] thinking, **"'Most of my years have passed and I have not sinned,'**[12] **and most likely, I will not sin in the future."** Herein lies the lesson from the command to erect a guardrail.

The Torah introduces that command with the phrase, "When you build a new home…." In a personal sense, this means that **one must know that since he is moving into a new dwelling,** a new phase of life, and **thus** beginning **a new** phase of **Divine service,** he must take protective measures that will **safeguard him** and enable him **to withstand the different challenges that may arise in this new** stage of **service.**

This is particularly relevant to *yeshivah* students who **leave** the sheltered environment of **the walls of the study hall and enter the world at large.**[13] There, **a new** phase of **Divine service begins;** the student **encounters matters that he has not had to deal with until now.**

In microcosm, **a similar** transition is faced by **every person each day. The beginning of the day should be** a sheltered space in time, devoted to **the service of prayer, followed by Torah study.** It is only **when one leaves the "four cubits of prayer" and the "four cubits of *halachah*"** that he engages **in the thirty-nine categories of weekday labor.** Before making that transition, **he must erect a guardrail to ensure that** his involvement in **worldly matters and weekday activities will be**

ב. דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן דֶעם אִין עֲבוֹדַת הָאָדָם:

בְּשַׁעַת אַ אִיד בּוֹיט אוֹיף אַ בִּנְיָן חָדָשׁ זַיְינֶען נִיט גֶענוּג דִי גְדָרִים וָואס עֶר הָאט גֶעהַאט פְּרִיעֶר אוּן וָואס עֶר אִיז בַּיְיגֶעשְׁטַאנֶען דוּרְךְ זַיי אַלֶע נִסְיוֹנוֹת, וּבְמֵילָא קֶען דָאךְ זַיְין אַז וְהִתְבָּרֵךְ בִּלְבָבוֹ אַז שָׁלוֹם יִהְיֶה לִּי. עָבְרוּ רוֹב שְׁנוֹתָיו וְלֹא חָטָא׳. עֶר דַארְף אָבֶּער וִויסְן, אַז ווִיבַּאלְד עֶר גֵייט אִיבֶּער אִין אַ בַּיִת חָדָשׁ, הָאט עֶר אַ נַיְיעֶ עֲבוֹדָה אוּן עֶר דַארְף זִיךְ בַּאוָואָרֶענֶען אוֹיף בַּיְיצוּשְׁטֵיין דִי נַיְיעֶ נִסְיוֹנוֹת וָואס קֶענֶען זַיְין אִין דֶער עֲבוֹדָה חֲדָשָׁה.

בְּשַׁעַת מֶען גֵייט אַרוֹיס פוּן כּוֹתְלֵי בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ אִין וָועלְט, וָואס דָא הוֹיבְּט זִיךְ אָן אַ נַיְיעֶ עֲבוֹדָה, עֶס הוֹיבְּן זִיךְ אָן בַּיי אִים עִנְיָנִים, וָואס בִּיז אִיצְטֶער הָאט עֶר נִיט גֶעהַאט צוּ טָאן מִיט זֵיי,

אוּן אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ בַּיי יֶעדְן מֶענְטשְׁן אִין יֶעדְן טָאג, וָואס דֶער אָנְהוֹיבּ טָאג דַארְף זַיְין עֲבוֹדַת הַתְּפִלָּה, דֶערְנָאךְ לִימּוּד הַתּוֹרָה, אִיז בְּשַׁעַת עֶר גֵייט אַרוֹיס פוּן ד׳ אַמּוֹת שֶׁל תְּפִלָּה אוּן ד׳ אַמּוֹת שֶׁל הֲלָכָה אִין דִי ל״ט מְלָאכוֹת עוּבְדִין דְּחוֹל,

דַארְף עֶר מַאכְן אַ מַעֲקֶה, צוּ בַּאוָוארֶענֶען אַז דִי עִנְיָנֵי עוֹלָם אוּן עוּבְדִין דְּחוֹל זָאלְן זַיְין ווִי

11. *Devarim* 29:18.

12. See ***Yoma* 38b.** The interpolated text that follows is also reflected in the *Gemara* there.

13. The Rebbe was speaking to students who – in accordance with the prevailing mode of the time – were leaving the *yeshivah* environment and getting married. However, his words are clearly relevant to any *yeshivah* student who transitions out of that environment.

as they should be, that "blood will not be [spilled] in your house" and the "one who falls will [not] fall."

In the physical realm, the guardrail must be higher than the house – higher even than the roof of the house. Similarly, in the spiritual realm, one must take a guardrail from a place that is loftier than oneself, accessing **assistance from a place that is more elevated.**

Therefore, it is not only appropriate but necessary to recite a blessing over erecting a guardrail. For how else can one build a guardrail – i.e., how can one draw from a place that is higher than the place where one finds himself?

Doing so **requires a blessing;** in other words, it is the blessing that makes this possible. To cite **our Rabbis'**[14] **interpretation** of the concept of a blessing: ***Berachah,*** the Hebrew for blessing, **has the same root letters as the term** *hamavrich,* as in the phrase,[15] ***hamavrich es hagefen,*** "one who extends a vine." In other words, a blessing **draws down** Divine light. Saying ***Boruch Atah Havayah,***[16] ***Elokeinu Melech HaOlam*** (**"Blessed are You, *Havayah,* our G-d, King of the Universe"** describes a process of drawing down transcendent G-dliness into this world. ***Havayah*** represents G-dliness that **transcends the world.** Light from this dimension of G-dliness is drawn down **through *Elokeinu,*** the possessive form of G-d's name *Elokim*, the dimension of G-dliness associated with **might and contraction.** *Elokeinu* ("our G-d") implies that this process of contraction is **for our sake.** This G-dly light is then **drawn down** into the dimension of G-dliness that is **"King of the Universe,"** G-dliness as it relates to our material world.

This leads to ***vetzivanu…,*** **"He commanded us to erect a guardrail."** ***Vetzivanu* shares its root letters with the word *tzavsa,* connection and bond.** Reciting this blessing **endows us with the power to erect a guardrail ten handbreadths**

מֶען דַארְף, אַז אִין דֶעם זָאל נִיט זַיְין דָמִים בְּבֵיתֶךָ אוּן קֵיין יִפּוֹל הַנוֹפֵל.

אַזוֹי וִוי אִין גַשְׁמִיוּת דַארְף דִי מַעֲקֶה זַיְין הֶעכֶער פוּן בַּיִת, הֶעכֶער אֲפִילוּ פוּן גַג הַבַּיִת, אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ אִין רוּחְנִיוּת דַארְף מֶען נֶעמֶען דִי מַעֲקֶה פוּן אַן אָרְט וָואס אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן זִיךְ, אַ סִיוּעַ מִמָקוֹם עֶלְיוֹן יוֹתֵר.

אוּן דֶערְפַאר אִיז שַׁיָיךְ, אוּן נִיט נָאר שַׁיָיךְ נָאר מֶען דַארְף מַאכְן אַ בְּרָכָה אוֹיף אַ מַעֲקֶה. וָוארוּם וִוי אַזוֹי קֶען מֶען מַאכְן אַ מַעֲקֶה, נֶעמֶען פוּן אַן אָרְט וָואס אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן דֶעם אָרְט אִין וֶועלְכְן מֶען גֶעפִינְט זִיךְ?

אוֹיף דֶעם דַארְף מֶען מַאכן אַ בְּרָכָה, אוּן לוֹיט דֶעם פֵּירוּשׁ פוּן רַזַ"ל[יא]: בְּרָכָה - מִלְשׁוֹן הַמַבְרִיךְ אֶת הַגֶפֶן, דָאס הֵייסְט אַ הַמְשָׁכָה - בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה הֲוָיָ', וָואס הֲוָיָ' אִיז הֶעכֶער פוּן וֶועלְט, אִיז דוּרְךְ אֱלֹקֵינוּ (גְבוּרָה וְצִמְצוּם צוּלִיבּ אוּנְז) אִיז מֶען דָאס מַמְשִׁיךְ אִין מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אוּן דוּרְךְ דֶעם וֶוערְט דֶער וְצִוָנוּ, מִלְשׁוֹן צַוְתָא וְחִיבּוּר, לַעֲשׂוֹת מַעֲקֶה; דָאס גִיט דֶעם כֹּחַ אוֹיף מַאכְן אַ מַעֲקֶה גָבוֹהַ עֲשָׂרָה טְפָחִים

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14. See the sources cited in the index to *Torah Or, erech berachah;* the series of *maamarim* entitled *Chayav Adam Levareich,* 5638.

15. *Kilayim* 7:1.

16. The text of the blessing uses G-d's name *Havayah.* Nevertheless, because of the holiness of that name, it is not pronounced as written in Hebrew but as *A-donai.* As mentioned in the main text, *Havayah* refers to G-d's transcendent dimensions, the aspect of G-dliness that is past, present, and future as one.

high on the roof of *Olam HaBeriah,* "the World of Creation,"[17] which is the ground level of *Olam HaAtzilus,* "the World of Emanation,"[18] as stated in the writings of the *Arizal.*[19]

אוֹיפְן גַג פוּן עוֹלָם הַבְּרִיאָה וואָס דאָס אִיז דִי קַרְקַע פוּן עוֹלַם הָאֲצִילוּת, ווִי עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין כִּתְבֵי הָאֲרִיזַ"ל.

Upgrading One's Home

3. There is a precise lesson resulting from these concepts, one that resembles the directive of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe [Rayatz,[20]] that every Rosh HaShanah, a person **should** resolve to **add to** his Torah observance, accepting **a *hiddur,* thus "adding beauty and meticulousness" to his fulfillment of** a particular **positive commandment and/or becoming more vigilant in the way he observes a** particular **negative commandment, as well as increasing his positive conduct as a whole.**

ג. דִי הוֹרָאָה מְפוֹרֶשֶׁת פוּן דֶעם אִיז:

עַל דֶרֶךְ ווִי דִי הוֹרָאָה פוּן כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת מוֹרִי וְחָמִי אַדְמוּ"ר, אַז יֶעדֶער רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה דַארְף מֶען עֶפֶּעס מוֹסִיף זַיְין בְּהִידּוּר מִצְווֹת עֲשֵׂה, בִּזְהִירוּת מִלֹּא תַעֲשֶׂה וּבְהַנְהָגָה טוֹבָה,

This applies even to one who previously conducted himself as required in all aspects. The rationale is that, **as stated in** *Tanya,* ***Iggeres HaKodesh,***[21] **every Rosh HaShanah, a new** and greater **light is drawn down,** requiring an added dimension of Divine service commensurate with this new and higher form of light. **Similarly, whenever a Jew begins a new** phase of **Divine service, he must upgrade his previous** level of service. This concept applies on many levels, for example, to **one who leaves** the protective environment of **the walls of the study hall and** enters **the world** at large. Similarly, it applies to every **person, each day, when he begins his involvement with worldly matters following his** morning **prayers and study.**

- אֲפִילוּ אוֹיבּ אוֹיךְ פְרִיעֶר זַיְינֶען גֶעווֶען אַלֶע זַיְינֶע הַנְהָגוֹת ווִי מֶען דַארְף -

ווַיְיל יֶעדֶער רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה ווֶערְט נִמְשָׁךְ אַן אוֹר חָדָשׁ, ווִי עֶס שְׁטֵייט אִין אִגֶּרֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ[ב],

אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ, בְּשַׁעַת אַ אִיד הוֹיבְּט אָן אַן עֲבוֹדָה חֲדָשָׁה, צִי בְּשַׁעַת עֶר גֵייט אַרוֹיס מִכּוֹתְלֵי בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ אִין ווֶעלְט, אָדֶער יֶעדְן טָאג גּוּפָא נָאכְן דַאווְנֶען אוּן לֶערְנֶען אִין דֶער פְרִי - ווֶען עֶר הוֹיבְּט אָן צוּ טָאן מִיט עִנְיָנֵי עוֹלָם, דַארְף מֶען עֶפֶּעס מוֹסִיף זַיְין אוֹיף זַיְין פְרִיעֶרְדִיקְן מַעֲמָד וּמַצָּב.

This is the meaning of **"when you build a new home, you shall make a guardrail for your roof." From Above, a person is endowed with the power to erect a guardrail. This guardrail must be ten handbreadths**

אוּן דָאס אִיז: כִּי תִבְנֶה בַּיִת חָדָשׁ וְעָשִׂיתָ מַעֲקֶה לְגַגֶּךָ. מִלְמַעְלָה גִיט מֶען כֹּחַ אוֹיף מַאכְן אַ מַעֲקֶה, וואָס אַ מַעֲקֶה דַארְף זַיְין יוּ"ד טְפָחִים,

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17. The World of *Beriah* is the loftiest level of created existence, a rung that sees itself as separate from G-d.

18. The World of *Atzilus* is considered the lowest of the "Worlds of Infinity," the *sefiros* of *Atzilus* which see themselves as extensions of G-dliness and not as separate entities.

19. See *Eitz Chayim*, *Shaar* 42, ch. 12; *Shaar HaMitzvos, Parshas Ki Seitzei.*

20. *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim,* Vol. 1, p. 132.

21. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh,* Epistle 14.

high, i.e., he is to **draw this new light into the ten powers of his soul from his intellectual powers of *chochmah, binah,* and *daas*** (“**wisdom, understanding, and knowledge**”) **into his power of action. In this way, he** precludes a disaster, as per the command, “**You shall not** [cause] **blood** [**to be spilled**] in your house… **lest one who falls fall** from it.” **On the contrary,** his house will be representative of “**the beauty of a man** [**who**] **dwells in a home.**”[22]

22. *Yeshayahu* 44:13.

אוֹיף מַמְשִׁיךְ זַיְין דֶעם אוֹר חָדָשׁ אִין אַלֶע זַיְינֶע עֶשֶׂר כֹּחוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ, פוּן דִי כֹּחוֹת חַבַּ"ד בִּיז דֶעם כֹּחַ הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, וָואס בְּמֵילָא וֶועט דֶעמָאלְט בַּאוָואָרְנְט דֶער וְלֹא תָשִׂים דָּמִים, וְלֹא יִפּוֹל הַנּוֹפֵל וגו׳. וְאַדְּרַבָּה, עֶס וֶועט - כְּתִפְאֶרֶת אָדָם לָשֶׁבֶת בָּיִת[יג].

(משיחת י"ג תמוז, תשט"ז)

ג) הלכות ברכות פרק יא הלכה ד.
ד) הלכה ח.
ה) זע בבא קמא נא, א און אין רש"י דארט.
ו) שרש ה.
ז) מצות עשה קפד.
ח) מצות לא תעשה חצר.
ט) דברים כב, ח.
י) יומא לח, ב.
יא) זע ווי אנגעצייכנט אין מפתח צו תורה אור ערך ברכה. המשך חייב אדם לברך תרל"ח.
יב) סימן יד.
יג) ישעי׳ מד, יג.

KI SEITZEI III | כי תצא ג

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered on *Shabbos Parshas Zachor,* 5716, (1956)

Introduction

The disciples of the Baal Shem Tov were once in a quandary. They had run out of candles to light up the study hall and and they knew that their Rebbe loved light.

Indeed, when he entered, he said: "Among Jews, there must be light. My Divine service is to bring light to the Jews." When his disciples told him that there were no more candles, he told them to take icicles hanging from the roof and light them. The students did so and the icicles burned.[1]

In describing Amalek's attack against the Jews when they were going out of Egypt, the Torah[2] uses the words, *asher korcha baderech,* which literally means, "how they encountered you on the way." However, *korcha* (קרך) can also be translated – as the Midrash[3] interprets it – that they "cooled you off."

Amalek is a force associated with spiritual frigidity. The Torah's command to "remember what Amalek did to you" isn't just about ancient history. As the Rebbe reveals in the teaching that follows, Amalek's attack continues in a different form – not as a physical enemy, but as the force that cools our spiritual enthusiasm and dampens the energy stemming from our connection to G-d.

We are commanded not only to remember,[2] but also to wipe out Amalek.[4] Besides being conscious of this spiritual frigidity, we have to endeavor to destroy it by investing more energy into our prayers and Divine service. With his teachings the Baal Shem Tov gave us the spiritual vitality to transform even the ice of Amalek into fire and light.

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1. *Sefer HaSichos – Kayitz, 5700,* pp. 173-174.

2. *Devarim* 25:18.

3. *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Ki Seitzei,* sec. 9.

4. *Devarim* 25:19.

A Safeguard Against Spiritual Frigidity

Fulfilling a Scriptural Commandment

1. **There are** *halachic* **opinions that** consider **reading** ***Parshas Zachor*** **a Scriptural obligation,**[1] fulfilling **the positive commandment,**[2] **"Remember what Amalek did to you." In addition to the mandate to remember, there is also a prohibition,**[3] **"Do not forget." This is also one of the reasons for the opinion**[4] **that women are also obligated in the** ***mitzvah*** **of remembering Amalek: Since they are obligated** to observe **the negative commandment** not to forget Amalek's attack, **they are, as a matter of course, also obligated in the positive commandment** to remember it.[5] **From the fact that this obligation is universal, we can appreciate how important it is to remember** the acts perpetrated by **Amalek.**

א. פַּאראַן דֵיעוֹת אַז קְרִיאַת פַּרְשַׁת זָכוֹר אִיז מִדְּאוֹרַיְתָא[יד], מִצַּד דֶער מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה פוּן זָכוֹר אֵת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְךָ עֲמָלֵק.

אוֹיסֶער דֶער עֲשֵׂה פוּן זָכוֹר, אִיז אוֹיךְ פַּאראַן אַ לַאו, לֹא תִּשְׁכָּח. אוּן דָאס אִיז אוֹיךְ אֵיינֶער פוּן דִי טַעֲמִים פוּן דִי דֵעוֹת[טו] אַז אוֹיךְ נָשִׁים זַיְינֶען מְחוּיָּב בִּזְכִירַת עֲמָלֵק, וַוְיל זֵיי זַיְינֶען דָאךְ מְחוּיָּב אִין דֶעם לַאו, זַיְינֶען זֵיי בְּמֵילָא אוֹיךְ מְחוּיָּב אִין דֶער עֲשֵׂה.

פוּן דֶעם פַאְרשְׁטֵייט מֶען אוֹיף וִויפְל עֶס אִיז נוֹיטִיק דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן זְכִירַת עֲמָלֵק, אַז אַלֶע זַיְינֶען מְחוּיָּב אִין דֶעם.

Eradicating Amalek in the Present Era

2. **The** ***mitzvah*** **to obliterate Amalek**[6] **does not apply** in a literal sense **in the present era.** To begin with, **there are** *halachic* **authorities**[7] **who maintain that the** ***mitzvah*** **is incumbent only upon the king; he must rally the Jews to obliterate the descendants of Amalek. And even according to the authorities who maintain that the** ***mitzvah*** **is incumbent upon**

ב. הֲגַם אַז מְחִיַּית עֲמָלֵק בְּגַשְׁמִיּוּת אִיז אִיצְטֶער נִיט שַׁיָּיךְ. עֶס זַיְינֶען גָאר פַּאראַן דֵיעוֹת אַז דִי מִצְוָה אִיז מוּטָל נָאר אוֹיפְן מֶלֶךְ[טז] אַז עֶר דַארְף מְגַיֵּיס זַיְין דִי אִידְן לִמְחוֹת זַרְעוֹ שֶׁל עֲמָלֵק. נָאר אֲפִילוּ לְפִי הַדֵּיעוֹת אַז דִי מִצְוָה

1. ***Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*** **685:7,** in the name of "there are those who say."

2. *Devarim* 25:17; *Rambam, Sefer HaMitzvos,* positive commandment 189; *Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah* 603.

3. *Devarim* 25:19; *Rambam, Sefer HaMitzvos,* negative commandment 59; *Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah* 605.

4. ***Minchas Chinuch*** on *Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah* **603;** see also **the sources cited in** ***Orchos Chayim*** by Rabbi Nachman Kahana, **sec. 685.**

5. Since one of the reasons for remembering Amalek's attack is to arouse our desire to fulfill the commandment to wipe out Amalek, one might think that since women do not wage war, they are not obligated in the *mitzvah* to remember Amalek's attack. Nevertheless, the Sages maintain that they are obligated in this *mitzvah.*

6. *Devarim,* loc. cit.; *Rambam, Sefer HaMitzvos,* positive commandment 188; *Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah* 604.

7. **See Rav Yehudah Yerucham Fishel Perlow's commentary on Rav Saadia** ***Gaon's Sefer HaMitzvos,*** **positive commandment 59 (p. 262), and on the listing of** ***parshiyos, parshah*** **61 (p. 218).**

every individual Jew, the *mitzvah* is presently **not applicable in a literal sense because** such an action **is relevant only when a) the Jewish people are in a position of dominance, and b) when one is certain that** the individuals involved are **descendants of Amalek.** This is no longer possible since **Sennacherib**[8] moved the nations he conquered from one land to another, **confusing** the lineage of the nations **of the world.**[9] **From that time onward,** the lineage of an individual has been judged **according to the majority** of people in the world at large, based on the principle, **"anything which separates, separates from the majority."**[10]

Only with the coming of *Mashiach* will the Jewish people be in a position of dominance[11] **and will it be clarified which** non-Jews **originate from Amalek. *Mashiach* will then obliterate all** traces **of Amalek: Men, women,** children, and all their possessions.

Although this commandment is not currently applicable **in a literal sense, it is relevant in the spiritual sense, even at present. All Jews are obligated to remember Amalek's** attack. **Even women, who are not obligated to go out** and wage **war, are obligated in this** *mitzvah*.

The *mitzvah* of remembering Amalek's attack **does not apply only once in a person's lifetime, nor even** only **once a year, but must be fulfilled every day.**[12] **This is a lesson, teaching how relevant remembering – at least in a spiritual sense – Amalek's** attack **is to our Divine service at all times.**

אִיז מוּטָל עַל כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, אִיז אוֹיךְ, לוֹיט דֶער שִׁיטָה, אִיצְטֶער נִיט שַׁיָּיךְ דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן מְחִיַּית עֲמָלֵק בְּגַשְׁמִיּוּת, וַוייל:

א) דֶער עִנְיָן אִיז שַׁיָּיךְ נָאר בִּזְמַן שֶׁיַּד יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּקִּיפָה. ב) נָאר וֶוען מֶען ווייס קְלָאר, ווֶער עֶס אִיז מִזַּרְעוֹ שֶׁל עֲמָלֵק, אָבֶּער מִשֶּׁבָּא סַנְחֵרִיב וּבִלְבֵּל אֶת הָעוֹלָם[ז], גֵייט מֶען לוֹיטְן רוֹב, וְכָל דְּפָרִישׁ מֵרוּבָּא פָּרִישׁ[ח].

נָאר וֶוען מָשִׁיחַ וֶועט קוּמֶען, ווָאס דֶעמָאלְט וֶועט זַיְין יַד יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּקִּיפָה, אוּן מֶען וֶועט מְבָרֵר זַיְין ווֶער עֶס שְׁטַאמְט פוּן עֲמָלֵק'ן, דַאן וֶועט דֶער מֶלֶךְ הַמָּשִׁיחַ מוֹחֶה זַיְין אַלֶע עִנְיָנִים פוּן עֲמָלֵק'ן מֵאִישׁ וְעַד אִשָּׁה וגו'.

דָאס אִיז אִין גַשְׁמִיּוּת, אָבֶּער אִין עֲבוֹדָה רוּחְנִית, אִיז פַארַאן דֶער עִנְיָן אוֹיךְ אִיצְטֶער, אַז אַלֶע אִידְן זַיְינֶען מְחוּיָּב בִּזְכִירַת מַעֲשֵׂה עֲמָלֵק, וַאֲפִילוּ נָשִׁים שֶׁאֵינָן יוֹצְאוֹת לַמִּלְחָמָה, זַיְינֶען אוֹיךְ מְחוּיָּב אִין דֶעם.

אוּן דִי מִצְוָה פוּן זְכִירַת מַעֲשֵׂה עֲמָלֵק אִיז נִיט נָאר אֵיין מָאל אִין לֶעבְּן אָדֶער אֵיין מָאל אִין יָאר, נָאר עֶס דַארְף זַיְין יֶעדְן טָאג[ט], ווָאס דָאס אִיז אַ הוֹרָאָה, אוֹיף וִויפְל עֶס אִיז נוֹגֵעַ זְכִירַת מַעֲשֵׂה עֲמָלֵק, בְּרוּחְנִיּוּת עַל כָּל פָּנִים, אִין עֲבוֹדַת הַשֵּׁם, אִין אַלֶע זְמַנִּים.

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8. The King of Assyria who ruled from approximately 3202 (558 BCE) to approximately 3125 (455 BCE)* and conquered much of the civilized world of that time, including the Ten Tribes of the Kingdom of Israel. He displaced them and the other nations he conquered so that none of his vassal states would have an ancestral connection to the land in which they lived.

* The exact dates of his rule are a matter of question among both Jewish and secular historians.

9. *Berachos* 28a; *Yoma* 54a.

10. *Berachos,* loc. cit.; *Yoma* 84b; *Kesubos* 15a. The principle stated in the main text applies in a broad context of applications. In the present context, the intent is that after the actions of Sennacherib, the lineage of any individual, group, or larger collective – with the exception of the Jewish people – can no longer be traced with certainty to the nations mentioned in the Tanach. Therefore, each individual person is considered as deriving from the majority of humanity. Thus, no individual or group can be identified as Amalek. (See *Likkutei Sichos,* Vol. 19, p. 173ff.)

11. A common Rabbinic expression; see *Kesubos* 26b-27a, *Bava Kama* 97b, *et al.*

12. See the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 60:4.

What Fervent Prayer Can Achieve

3. **The spiritual counterpart of** our ongoing conflict with the people of **Amalek is** reflected in the phrase describing their attack, ***asher korcha baderech,*** which literally means, “who encountered you on the way.” However, *korcha* (קרך) can also be translated **– as the Midrash[13] interprets it – to mean that he “cooled off.”** Accordingly, the verse can be read, Amalek “cooled you in the path” – meaning that Amalek cooled the Jews’ warmth **on their path of the Torah and its *mitzvos*. Every day, we must wage war against the frigidity of Amalek. It is not sufficient that yesterday one** was able to spiritually **warm himself** and enthusiastically engage in **Torah study and prayer. Today, he must continue battling the coldness of Amalek.**

Every day, even before a person **goes out to involve himself in matters of the world, he must warm himself** spiritually, **waging war against Amalek.** This battle takes place **during prayer. Through fiery prayer, he will be able to battle Amalek when he** later encounters his influence while **involved in matters of this world. This is** also the **preparatory step towards obliterating Amalek’s descendants in the physical sense, which will be achieved with the coming of *Mashiach*; may it be speedily in our days.**

ג. דער ענין פון עֲמָלֵק אין רוחניות איז, אֲשֶׁר קָרְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ, וואָס ער מאַכט קאַלט - ווי דער מדרש טייטשט[13] - אין דעם דֶּרֶךְ פון תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת. און אַנטקעגן דער קְרִירוּת פון עֲמָלֵק'ן דאַרף מען מִלְחָמָה האַלטן יעדן טאָג. עס איז ווייניק וואָס ער האָט זיך נעכטן אָנגעוואַרעמט אין תּוֹרָה און עֲבוֹדַת הַתְּפִלָּה. ער דאַרף היינט ווייטער מִלְחָמָה האַלטן אַנטקעגן דער קְרִירוּת פון עֲמָלֵק'ן.

יעדן טאָג נאָך איידער מען גייט אַרויס האָבן צו טאָן מיט די עִנְיָנֵי עוֹלָם, דאַרף מען זיך אָנוואַרעמען און מִלְחָמָה האַלטן אַנטקעגן עֲמָלֵק'ן, וואָס דאָס דאַרף זיין אין דאַוונען. דורך דער הִתְלַהֲבוּת אין דאַוונען וועט ער קענען מִלְחָמָה האַלטן מיט עֲמָלֵק'ן בִּשְׁעַת ער האָט צו טאָן אין עִנְיָנֵי עוֹלָם.

און דאָס איז אַ הֲכָנָה צו מְחִיַּת זַרְעוֹ שֶׁל עֲמָלֵק אויך בְּגַשְׁמִיּוּת, וואָס דאָס וועט זיין בְּבִיאַת מֶלֶךְ הַמָּשִׁיחַ בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ.

Protecting Those in Need

4. **This is what must be publicized: The war against Amalek has to be waged in every generation and on every day. We cannot content ourselves with the past, feeling gratified** with the fact that **we had a grandfather** who was an upstanding Jew in every way, or that our **father**

ד. וואָס עס איז נוֹגֵעַ לְפַרְסֵם איז, - אַז מִלְחֶמֶת עֲמָלֵק דאַרף זיין בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר וּבְכָל יוֹם וָיוֹם, און מען קען זיך ניט באַנוגענען דערמיט וואָס עס איז געווען פריער.

מען קען זיך ניט באַנוגענען דערמיט וואָס ער האָט געהאַט אַ שיינעם זיידן,

13. *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Ki Seitzei*, sec. 9; *Pesikta D’Rav Kahana, Parshas Zachor.*

conducted himself in such a manner, **or even that we ourselves** lived this way in the past. **Instead, we must continually battle the frigidity that Amalek engenders.** As the verse also relates,[14] Amalek **"cut off your stragglers at the rear." Since,** in a personal sense, **each one of us has "stragglers** at the rear" – aspects of our personalities that are not spiritually enthused – we must constantly struggle to protect ourselves from an attack by a spiritual Amalek.

Ultimately, this will – with the arrival of *Mashiach* – lead to the fulfillment of the *mitzvah,*[4] **"You shall absolutely obliterate the memory of Amalek." And,** in turn, it will lead to the fulfillment of the Divine promise,[15] **"I will certainly obliterate the memory of Amalek." May this take place in the immediate future.**

אַ שֵׁיינֶעם טַאטְן, אָדֶער עֶר אַלֵיין אִיז אוֹיךְ גֶעוועֶן פְּרִיעֶר אַ שֵׁיינֶער אִיד, נָאר עֶר דַארְף שְׁטֶענְדִיק מִלְחָמָה הַאלְטְן אַנְטְקֶעגְן דֶער קַאלְטְקַיְיט פוּן עֲמָלֵק'ן, - ווָארוּם מִצַד דֶעם ווָאס עֶס אִיז פַארַאן בַּיי אִים דֶער הַנֶחֱשָׁלִים, קֶען זִיךְ אַרַיְינְכַאפְּן עֲמָלֵק אוּן וַיְזַנֵב בְּךָ כָּל הַנֶחֱשָׁלִים אַחֲרֶיךָ, -

בִּיז מֶען ווֶעט פּוֹעֵל'ן בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ דֶעם מָחֹה תִּמְחֶה אֶת זֵכֶר עֲמָלֵק אוּן דֶעם מָחֹה אֶמְחֶה אֶת זֵכֶר עֲמָלֵק בְּקָרוֹב מַמָּשׁ.

(משיחת ש"פ זכור, תשט"ז)

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14. *Devarim* 25:18.

15. *Shmos* 17:14.

יד) שולחן ערוך אורח חיים תרפה, ז.

טו) זע מנחת חינוך מצוה תרג, (ובספרים שנסמנו בארחות חיים (החדש) סימן תרפה).

טז) זע פירוש ר"י פערלא לספר המצות הרס"ג עשין נט (דף רסב) אויך מנין הפרשיות פרשה סא (דף ריח).

יז) ברכות כח, א. יומא נד, א.

יח) ברכות דאָרט. יומא פד, ב. כתובות טו, א.

יט) זע שולחן ערוך אדמו"ר הזקן סימן ס סעיף ד.

כ) תנחומא סוף פרשת תצא. פסיקתא דרב כהנא פרשת זכור.

KI SEITZEI IV | כי תצא ד

Adapted from a *sichah* delivered *Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, Chai Elul,* 5716 (1956), *Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-VaYeilech,* 5715 (1955)

Introduction

The *Zohar*[1] teaches, "The World Above imparts effluence [to the world below] only according to its state. If [the world below] manifests a luminous countenance, in the same way, a luminous countenance shines down upon it from Above. And if it manifests melancholy...."[2]

How pertinent is this teaching at this time of year, as we approach Rosh HaShanah, the Day of Judgment!

As the sichah to follow explains, *Chai Elul* – the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe – opened up a new pathway to Divine service, one that infuses joy and vitality into the service of *teshuvah*.

This leads to a change in perspective. Instead of approaching Rosh HaShanah with fear about our impending judgment, we should remember that the Judge is "our Father, our King." And what happens when a child approaches his father with a loving smile?

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1. *Zohar,* Vol. II, p. 184b.

2. Following the Rebbe's characteristic pattern when citing this teaching, we have omitted its conclusion, "…strict justice is mirrored back at it."

When Elul Comes Alive

Injecting Energy Into Elul

1. This week includes the 18th of Elul (*Chai Elul*). The name is significant. **As my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe** Rayatz,[1] **related in the name of elder chassidim, *Chai* ("life") *Elul* brings vitality (*chayus*) into Elul.**

Elul is the month in which **we must recti**fy our conduct of **the past year and, through this, become worthy of a good and sweet new year. *Chai Elul* brings vitality into** these efforts to upgrade our **Divine service.** Needless to say, **this spiritual work cannot be performed like "a command of men learned by rote."**[2] **Furthermore, even when our service is carried out** thoughtfully, **with preparation and** proper in**tent, it can still lack vitality. *Chai Elul* ensures that Divine service will be carried out with vitality and lively energy.**

***Chai Elul* is the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov. As my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe** Rayatz,[3] **emphasized, it is not only his birthday in a physical sense, but also the birthday of his soul.**[4] **Moreover, the day of the Baal Shem Tov's revelation – years later**[5] **– also occurred on *Chai Elul*.**

The [above] **refers to the revelation of** *Chassidus* **in general. Later came the Alter Rebbe, whose birthday was also *Chai Elul*, who transmitted these** teachings **also within the framework of intellectual understanding**

א. הַיְינְטִיקֶע וואָך אִיז דָאךְ חַ"י אֱלוּל. אוֹיף דֶעם עִנְיָן פוּן חַ"י אֱלוּל הָאט כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת מוֹרִי וְחָמִי אַדְמוּ"ר גֶעזָאגְט[כא] בְּשֵׁם זִקְנֵי הַחֲסִידִים, אַז חַ"י אֱלוּל אִיז דֶער פְּשַׁט, אַז עֶס בְּרֶענְגְט אַרַיְין אַ חַיּוּת אִין אֱלוּל. דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן אֱלוּל אִיז, וואָס מֶען דַארְף מְתַקֵּן זַיְין דֶעם פַאַרְגַאנְגֶענֶעם יָאר אוּן דוּרְךְ דֶעם זוֹכֶה זַיְין צוּ אַ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה אִין דֶעם קוּמֶענְדִיקְן יָאר, אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן חַ"י אֱלוּל אַז עֶס בְּרֶענְגְט אַרַיְין אַ חַיּוּת אִין דֶער עֲבוֹדָה. נִיט נָאר עֶס זָאל נִיט זַיְין בְּדֶרֶךְ מִצְוַת אֲנָשִׁים מְלֻמָּדָה, נָאר אֲפִילוּ ווֶען עֶר טוּט עֶס בַּהֲכָנָה וּבְכַוָּנָה, קֶען דָאךְ זַיְין אַז דָאס אִיז אָן אַ חַיּוּת, טוּט חַ"י אֱלוּל אוֹיף עֶס זָאל זַיְין מִיט אַ חַיּוּת אוּן אַ לֶעבֶּעדִיקַיְיט.

חַ"י אֱלוּל אִיז דֶער יוֹם הוּלֶּדֶת פוּן בַּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב, אוּן ווִי דֶער רֶבִּי כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת מוֹרִי וְחָמִי אַדְמוּ"ר הָאט גֶעזָאגְט[כב], אַז דָאס אִיז נִיט נָאר יוֹם הוּלַּדְתּוֹ בְּגוּפוֹ, נָאר אוֹיךְ דֶער יוֹם הוּלֶּדֶת בְּנִשְׁמָתוֹ, אוּן אוֹיךְ דֶער יוֹם הִתְגַּלּוּת פוּן בַּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב - מִיט יָארְן שְׁפֶּעטֶער - אִיז אוֹיךְ גֶעווֶען אִין חַ"י אֱלוּל, וואָס דָאס אִיז דָאךְ דִי הִתְגַּלּוּת פוּן חֲסִידוּת הַכְּלָלִית.

דֶערְנָאךְ אִיז גֶעקוּמֶען כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת אַדְמוּ"ר הַזָּקֵן - דֶער אַלְטֶער רֶבִּי - אוּן הָאט דָאס אוֹיךְ אַרָאפְּגֶעטְרָאגְן אִין הֲבָנָה וְהַשָּׂגָה, וואָס דָאס אִיז חֲסִידוּת חַבַּ"ד -

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1. ***Likkutei Dibburim*****, Vol. 3, p. 946.**

2. Cf. *Yeshayahu* 29:13.

3. ***Likkutei Dibburim*****,** Vol. 1, **p. 64.**

4. Perhaps with this expression the Rebbe is intimating that it was on *Chai Elul*, the Baal Shem Tov's, 26th birthday, that the Prophet Achiyah HaShiloni was sent from Heaven to teach the Baal Shem Tov.

5. On the Baal Shem Tov's 36th birthday, ten years after he began studying with Achiyah HaShiloni.

and comprehension; this is what distinguishes *Chabad Chassidus*. **In other words,** ***Chai Elul*** **represents the revelation of general chassidic teachings and the revelation of** ***Chabad Chassidus.*** The mode of Divine service that stems from these teachings **brings vitality into all aspects of the Divine service of Elul, and vitality – as is well known – is connected with joy.**

אִיז זַיְין יוֹם הוּלֶדֶת אוֹיךְ חַ"י אֱלוּל. דָאס הֵייסְט אַז חַ"י אֱלוּל וָואס אִיז דֶער גִילוּי תּוֹרַת הַחֲסִידוּת הַכְּלָלִית וְגִילוּי תּוֹרַת הַחֲסִידוּת חַבַּ"ד, בְּרֶענְגְט אַרַיְין חַיוּת אִין אַלֶע עִנְיָנִים פוּן דֶער עֲבוֹדָה פוּן אֱלוּל, וָואס חַיוּת אִיז כְּיָדוּעַ פַארְבּוּנְדְן מִיט שִׂמְחָה.

The Paradox of *Teshuvah* – Simultaneous Joy and Bitterness

2. The Divine service of Elul is ***teshuvah*** – which includes **regret for the past and good resolutions for the future.**[6] Inherently, such service **involves bitterness. How** then **can it be combined with joy?** Seemingly, they **are opposites.**

ב. הֲגַם דִי עֲבוֹדָה פוּן אֱלוּל אִיז דָאךְ תְּשׁוּבָה, חֲרָטָה עַל הֶעָבַר וְקַבָּלָה טוֹבָה עַל לְהַבָּא, וָואס דָאס אִיז דָאךְ בִּמְרִירוּת, אִיז ווִי קֶען זַיְין צוּזַאמֶען דֶערְמִיט דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן שִׂמְחָה וָואס אִיז הֵיפֶךְ דֶערְפוּן?

The explanation is as follows: Firstly, ***Rambam***[7] **emphasizes that every** ***mitzvah*** **must be performed with joy because one is fulfilling the will of the Creator,** as implied by **the** Torah's warning[8] that negative consequences will come **"because you did not serve G-d your L-rd with joy."**[9] **Consequently, since** ***teshuvah*** is also **a** ***mitzvah,***[10] ***teshuvah*** **must also be performed with joy. However,** according to that concept, **the joy stems from an ancillary aspect, not from the** essential **nature of the** ***mitzvah*** **itself.** Instead, **because one is fulfilling a** ***mitzvah,*** **he rejoices that he is fulfilling the Divine will.**

נָאר דִי דֶערְקְלֶערוּנְג פוּן דֶעם אִיז: אוֹיסֶער דֶעם וָואס ווִי דֶער רַמְבַּ"ם[כג] פַּסְקְ'נְט אַז יֶעדֶער מִצְוָה דַארְף זַיְין בְּשִׂמְחָה, מִצַּד דֶעם וָואס עֶר אִיז מְקַיֵּים דֶעם רְצוֹן הַבּוֹרֵא, אוּן עֶר טַיְיטְשְׁט דָאס אִין דֶעם פָּסוּק תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָבַדְתָּ אֶת הֲוָיָ' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה[כד], וּבְמֵילָא ווִיבַּאלְד אַז תְּשׁוּבָה אִיז דָאךְ אַ מִצְוָה[כה], דַארְף אוֹיךְ תְּשׁוּבָה זַיְין בְּשִׂמְחָה. - נָאר דָא אִיז דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן שִׂמְחָה מִצַּד אַ עִנְיָן צְדָדִי. נִיט מִצַּד דֶעם עִנְיָן פוּן דֶער מִצְוָה עַצְמָהּ, נָאר ווַיְיל עֶר אִיז מְקַיֵּים אַ מִצְוָה, אִיז עֶר בְּשִׂמְחָה וָואס עֶר אִיז מְקַיֵּים דֶעם רָצוֹן הָעֶלְיוֹן. -

However, ***Chai Elul*** **– i.e., the teachings of** ***Chassidus*** revealed as a result of that day – **brings about** a change within ***teshuvah*** **itself.** Although **in general,** *teshuvah* **involves bitterness,** *Chassidus* sees **joy** as an inherent element of ***teshuvah.*** This is the **meaning of** ***Chai Elul:*** **vitality in the concept of Elul itself. Thus, the joy** of *teshuvah* **is not a contradiction to the bitterness** of *teshuvah.*

אָבֶּער חַ"י אֱלוּל, דָאס הֵייסְט תּוֹרַת הַחֲסִידוּת, טוּט אוֹיף אַז תְּשׁוּבָה גוּפָא, וָואס בִּכְלָלוּתָהּ אִיז דָאס מְרִירוּת, אִיז אִין דֶעם אַלֵיין פַארַאן שִׂמְחָה. חַ"י אֱלוּל, אִיז דֶער פֵּירוּשׁ, אַ חַיוּת אִין דֶעם עִנְיָן פוּן אֱלוּל גוּפָא. אוּן דִי שִׂמְחָה אִיז נִיט קֵיין סְתִירָה צוּ דֶער מְרִירוּת.

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6. See *Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:2.

7. ***Rambam, Hilchos Lulav*** **8:15.**

8. *Devarim* 28:47.

9. See Rabbeinu Yonah's commentary **on** ***Berachos,*** **the beginning of ch. 5;** ***Shalah, Torah Shebichsav, Parshas Ki Savo; Tanya,*** **ch. 26.**

10. ***Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah*** **1:1.**

As the Alter Rebbe states in ***Tanya***[11] **regarding** ***teshuvah*****, there must be "weeping embedded firmly on this side of the heart, and joy embedded firmly on that side of the heart." At the same time and concerning the very same matter, both opposite emotions can exist. As the Alter Rebbe concludes in that source, even at the time of anger and bitterness – which are due to the animal soul – at that very moment, he should be joyful due to the feelings of his Divine soul,** having **complete trust that "no one will [remain perpetually] banished from Him,"**[12] **and** that every Jew is **"the branch of My planting, the work of My hands in which I take pride."**[13] **As a result, "all Israel has a portion in the World to Come."**[14]

ווִי דֶער אַלְטֶער רֶבִּי זָאגְט אִין תַּנְיָא[כו], אִין דֶעם עִנְיָן פוּן תְּשׁוּבָה, אַז עֶס דַארְף זַיְין בְּכִיָּה תְּקִיעָא בְּלִבָּאי מִסִּטְרָא דָא וְחֶדְוָא תְּקִיעָא בְּלִבָּאי מִסִּטְרָא דָא, אִין דֶעם זֶעלְבְּן זְמַן אוּן דֶעם זֶעלְבְּן עִנְיָן גּוּפָא קָאנֶען זַיְין בֵּיידֶע תְּנוּעוֹת הָפְכִּיּוֹת. ווִי עֶר פִירְט דָארְט אוֹיס, אַז אוֹיךְ אִין דֶעם זְמַן פוּן יַרְגִּיז וכו' וּמְרִירוּת, ווָאס דָאס אִיז מִצַּד דֶעם נֶפֶשׁ הַבַּהֲמִית, אִיז דֶעמָאלְט גּוּפָא זָאל עֶר זַיְין בְּשִׂמְחָה מִצַּד דֶעם הֶרְגֵּשׁ נֶפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית וּבִטָּחוֹן הַגָּמוּר אַז לֹא יִדַּח מִמֶּנּוּ נִדָּח[כז], אוּן לְעוֹלָם גו' נֵצֶר מַטָּעַי מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהִתְפָּאֵר[כח], ווָאס דֶערְפַאר אִיז כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא[כט].

As such, it is understood that the joy stems from the ***teshuvah*** **itself. At that time and in the very movement of** ***teshuvah*****, when one feels bitterness, arousing** his **anger at the evil inclination,**[15] **simultaneously he rejoices because his Divine soul is turning to G-d.**

אִיז דָאךְ פַארְשְׁטַאנְדִיק אַז דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן שִׂמְחָה דָא אִיז מִצַּד דֶער תְּשׁוּבָה גּוּפָא. אַז אִין דֶער תְּנוּעָה פוּן תְּשׁוּבָה אַלֵיין, ווָאס עֶר שְׁטֵייט בִּמְרִירוּת אוּן יַרְגִּיז עַל הַיֵּצֶר הָרָע, אִין דֶער זֶעלְבֶּער תְּנוּעָה אִיז עֶר פְרֵיילֶעךְ מִצַּד דֶעם ווָאס דֶער נֶפֶשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית קֶערְט זִיךְ אוּם צוּם אוֹיבֶּערְשְׁטְן.

A Reckoning of Light

3. My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz,[16] **related that the** twelve days from – and including – ***Chai Elul*** **until Rosh HaShanah are twelve days of spiritual accounting (*****cheshbon hanefesh*****) for the past year, one day for each month.**

ג. ווֶעגְן דִי טֶעג פוּן ח"י אֱלוּל בִּיז רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה הָאט דֶער רֶבִּי, כְּבוֹד קְדֻשַּׁת מוֹרִי וְחָמִי אַדְמוּ"ר, גֶעזָאגְט[ל] אַז דָאס זַיְינֶען דִי צְווֶעלְף טֶעג פוּן חֶשְׁבּוֹן הַנֶּפֶשׁ פוּן פַארְגַאנְגֶענֶעם יָאר, יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ יוֹם לַחֹדֶשׁ (אַ טָאג פַאר אַ חֹדֶשׁ).

Previously,[17] **we discussed the concept that "there are ten levels of holiness"**[18] – the implication being that **they exist in** all the three dimensions[19]

מֶען הָאט גֶערֶעדט פְרִיעֶר אִין דֶעם עִנְיָן פוּן עֶשֶׂר קְדֻשּׁוֹת הֵן, אַז זֵיי זַיְינֶען פַארַאן אִין עוֹלָם, שָׁנָה וְנֶפֶשׁ. אוֹיךְ אִין

11. ***Tanya,*** *Sefer shel Beinonim,* **chs. 31-34;** ***Iggeres HaTeshuvah,*** **ch. 11.**

12. ***II Shmuel*** **14:14, using slightly different wording.** See the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 4:3; *Tanya,* the conclusion of ch. 39.

13. ***Yeshayahu*** **60:21.**

14. ***Sanhedrin*** **11:1.**

15. See *Berachos* 5a.

16. **See** ***Kuntreis Chai Elul,*** **5703, p. 42 (*****Sefer HaSichos 5703,*** **p. 177).**

17. The Rebbe is referring to statements he made in an earlier *sichah* delivered at that *farbrengen.*

18. Cf. *Keilim* 1:6-9. See *Toras Menachem* 17, p. 199ff.

19. *Sefer Yetzirah,* chs. 5-6, states that all existence is comprised of these three dimensions of being.

of **space, time, and soul. Prayer also contains these levels, for** since it is **"a ladder set on the earth with its top reaching heavenward,"**[20] it encompasses all aspects of existence. **In general,** these different levels represent **the difference between the weekday prayers, which contain requests for a person's needs, and the *Shabbos* prayers, which are composed solely of G-d's praise.**

A **similar** distinction exists in the realm of **Torah: There is a difference between the revealed dimension of the Torah,** referred to as **"the tree of good and evil,"**[21] **because the revealed Torah discusses material entities – which involve the** task **of refinement (*birurim*) – and the inner dimension of Torah (*pnimiyus haTorah*), which** focuses **solely on G-dliness.**

The primary spiritual accounting during the twelve days from *Chai Elul* until Rosh HaShanah should focus on the inner dimension of Torah (*pnimiyus haTorah*). Certainly, one must make an accounting regarding all 613 *mitzvos* and all their details and precise observances. Indeed, "action is what's essential."[22] **However, this** aspect of one's spiritual stock-taking **should be completed before *Chai Elul*. From *Chai Elul* – the revelation of *Chassidus* – onward, the order should follow the pattern** indicated by the question,[23] **"In what was your father most careful?" *Zahir,*** translated as "careful," also has the meaning "brilliant" **and "shining."**[24] *Chassidus* imbues a person with the potential to **shine, and the luminance** it produces **permeates all of his concerns. Accordingly,** at this time of year, **the primary focus – and** thus, the **energy – of** a person's **accounting should concern the inner dimension of Torah.**

תְּפִלָּה וואָס דָאס אִיז סֻלָּם מֻצָּב אַרְצָה וְרֹאשׁוֹ מַגִּיעַ הַשָּׁמָיְמָה, זַיְינֶען פַאַראַן דִי מַדְרֵיגוֹת. בִּכְלָלוּת אִיז דָאס דֶער חִילוּק פוּן תְּפִלָּה דְחוֹל, וואָס דָארְטְן אִיז פַאַראַן בַּקָּשַׁת צְרָכָיו שֶׁל אָדָם - בִּיז תְּפִלָּה דְשַׁבָּת, וואָס דָאס אִיז נָאר שְׁבָחוֹ שֶׁל מָקוֹם.

אַזוֹי אוֹיךְ אִין תּוֹרָה אִיז דָאס דֶער חִילוּק פוּן גַּלְיָא שֶׁבַּתּוֹרָה, וואָס אִיז אִילָנָא דְטוֹב וְרָע, וואָרוּם אִין גַּלְיָא שֶׁבַּתּוֹרָה רֶעדט זִיךְ וועֶגְן עִנְיָנִים גַּשְׁמִיִּים, וואָס דָאס אִיז דָאךְ דֶער עִנְיָן פוּן בִּירוּרִים - בִּיז פְּנִימִיּוּת הַתּוֹרָה, וואָס רֶעדט זִיךְ נָאר וועֶגְן אֱלֹקוּת.

דֶער עִיקַּר חֶשְׁבּוֹן הַנֶּפֶשׁ, אִין דִי י״ב יָמִים פוּן ח״י אֱלוּל בִּיז רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, דַארְף זַיְין בְּנוֹגֵעַ פְּנִימִיּוּת הַתּוֹרָה. אַ וַדַּאי דַארְף זַיְין דֶער חֶשְׁבּוֹן אִין אַלֶע תַּרְיַ״ג מִצְוֹת אוּן אִין אַלֶע פְּרָטִים אוּן דִקְדּוּקִים. אוּן אַדְּרַבָּה - הַמַּעֲשֶׂה הוּא הָעִיקָּר. אָבֶּער דֶערְמִיט דַארְף עֶר זַיְין פַארְטִיק נָאךְ פַאר חַ״י אֱלוּל. פוּן חַ״י אֱלוּל אָן - הִתְגַּלּוּת תּוֹרַת הַחֲסִידוּת - אִיז דֶער סֵדֶר עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲבוּךְ בְּמַאי הֲוֵי זָהִיר טְפֵי[לא], זָהִיר מִלְּשׁוֹן זְהִירוּת וּבְהִירוּת, לַיְיכְטְן, אוּן דוּרְךְ דֶעם לַיְיכְט אִים אַרַיְין אִין אַלֶע זַיְינֶע עִנְיָנִים - אַזוֹי דַארְף זַיְין דֶער עִיקַּר וְחַיּוּת הַחֶשְׁבּוֹן בְּנוֹגֵעַ פְּנִימִיּוּת הַתּוֹרָה,

נִיט נָאר בְּנוֹגֵעַ דֶעם לִימּוּד, נָאר אוֹיךְ בְּנוֹגֵעַ דֶער הַנְהָגָה עַל פִּי חֲסִידוּת, דְּגָדוֹל תַּלְמוּד שֶׁמֵּבִיא לִידֵי מַעֲשֶׂה[לב].

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20. *Bereishis* 28:12.

21. *Zohar,* Vol. I, 26b-27a; *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh,* Epistle 26, *et al.*

22. Cf. *Avos* 1:17.

23. **Shabbos 118b; *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh,* Epistle 7.**

24. It appears that the Rebbe's intent is twofold: a) that at this time of the year the person's Divine service should be focused primarily on the light generated by *Chassidus,* and b) *Chassidus* has the potential to fill all dimensions of the person's Divine service with light.

This applies **not only regarding study, but also regarding conduct according to *Chassidus*, for "great is study because it leads to action."**[25] **This will bring light** and energy **also into every aspect of** a person's **spiritual accounting.**

Making **such a reckoning will lead to good resolutions for the future – that "your wellsprings,** the wellsprings of *Chassidus,* **spread outward"**[26] **to the external** dimensions of **one's own** personality, **and also outward in the literal sense,** to others on the outer peripheries of Jewish life. **Through** such efforts, **"the Master – the *Mashiach* – will come." May it be speedily in our days.**

און דָאס וועט דוּרכְלַייכְטְן דֶעם חֶשְׁבּוֹן הַנֶּפֶשׁ אוֹיךְ אִין אַלֶע זַיְינֶע עִנְיָנִים.

און דֶער חֶשְׁבּוֹן בְּרֶענגְט דָאךְ צוּ דֶער קַבָּלָה טוֹבָה עַל לְהַבָּא, אַז עֶס זָאל זַיְין יָפוּצוּ מַעְיְנוֹתֶיךָ חוּצָה, אִין דֶעם אֵייגֶענֶעם חוּץ, און אוֹיךְ אִין חוּצָה מַמָּשׁ, ווָאס דוּרךְ דֶעם וועט זַיְין דֶער קָאָתֵי מַר, מַלְכָּא מְשִׁיחָא, בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ.

(משיחת ש״פ תבא,
ח״י אלול, תשט״ז)

25. ***Kiddushin*** **40b.**

26. See the letter of the Baal Shem Tov printed at the conclusion of the text *Ben Poras Yosef,* and in other sources.

כא) לקוטי דיבורים עמוד 946.
כב) לקוטי דיבורים עמוד 64.
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כה) דארט.
כו) פרק לא־לד. אגרת התשובה פרק יא.
כז) זע לקו״ש ח״ב עמוד 313 הערה 20.
כח) ישעי׳ ס, כא.
כט) סנהדרין פרק יא, משנה א.
ל) זע לקו״ש ח״ב עמוד 383 הערה 24.
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לב) קידושין מ, ב.

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