
Sichos in English Classics 37

**The Rebbe Rashab's
Contribution**



**Shabbos Parshas Vayeira,
15th Day of MarCheshvan, 5751 (1990)**



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IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

At the Shloshim of R' Yonah Avtzon A"H, Director of Sichos in English, a resolution was taken to reprint the original weekly Sichos in English publications.

To fulfill this, a weekly booklet including a translation of a *farbrengen* as it was first published will be distributed. Our intention is to reprint the entire set in the near future.

Following the Sichos we will include an addendum with pictures, notes, and insights into the process of its publication.

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THE REBBE RASHAB'S CONTRIBUTION

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**Shabbos Parshas Vayeira,
15th Day of MarCheshvan, 5751 (1990)**

A FAMOUS STORY

1. In connection with *Parshas Vayeira* and *Chof MarCheshvan*,¹ it is related² that the Rebbe Rashab went to his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, for *yechidus* before his birthday. When the child entered the room, he began to cry. After his grandfather calmed him, he asked him to explain the reason for his outburst. The Rebbe Rashab answered that in *cheder*, he had learned that G-d revealed Himself to Avraham. He was disturbed and wanted to know, “Why doesn’t G-d reveal Himself to me as well?”

The Tzemach Tzedek replied to him. “When a Jew who is a *tzaddik* is ninety-nine years old and decides to circumcise himself, he is worthy of Divine revelation.”

Since this story is told in connection with the Rebbe Rashab’s birthday, a day of general importance when, “the spiritual source of his soul shines powerfully,” we can appreciate that it includes the totality of his service and clarifies what the central point of his service was.³

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1. *Chof Cheshvan* falls in the coming week and thus, “is blessed” by this Shabbos.
 2. It was the Previous Rebbe who told this story and ordered that it be publicized.
 3. Although the story took place when the Rebbe Rashab was a young child, it still reflects his character. Indeed, in regard to the Rebbe Rashab, we find certain dimensions of his personality revealed at his very birth. Thus, at his birth, the Tzemach Tzedek commented that the day that the Rebbe Rashab was born, *Chof Cheshvan* in the year כתר"א, reflects his connection to the level *Kesser* and his fitness for the crown of the *Nesius*.

To explain: All the *Rebbeim* were *Nesi'im* and thus shared certain common dimensions. Nevertheless, each one was also characterized by a particular dimension which reflected his individual nature. Pinpointing this quality is a challenge because it is difficult for people of our spiritual level to differentiate between the service of individuals like the *Rebbeim* who were on a much higher spiritual plane. Nevertheless, each of the *Rebbeim* manifested certain qualities more prominently than others. Thus, it is worthy to mention these differences with the intent that this lead to an increase in the fear of heaven and the service of G-d.

TO UNDERSTAND AND APPLY CHASSIDUS

In general, all of the *Chabad Rebbeim* were distinguished by their ability to draw down and enclothe the teachings of *Pnimitiyus HaTorah* within the limits of human intellect. This gave their followers the potential to internalize their teachings and personally identify with spiritual ideas, thus producing an increase — and indeed, a new dimension — in the service of G-d. The increase in knowledge of G-d led to an increase in the love and fear of G-d⁴ and thus, an increase in actual service since love is the source for the fulfillment of all the 248 positive commandments and fear is the source for the fulfillment of the 365 negative commandments.

This thrust was powerfully revealed by the Rebbe Rashab whose discourses were characterized by detailed intellectual explanations, drawing down the teachings of *Chassidus* within the limits of human intellect to a degree that surpassed his predecessors' achievements. He would present a summary and a conclusion of the discussion of spiritual concepts in a manner which allowed them to be easily understood and thus applied in actual life.

To be sure, this thrust was also evident in the Previous Rebbeim's teachings. The Alter Rebbe revealed the *Chabad*

[Nevertheless, it took many years before this potential was realized. Throughout his father's life, the Rebbe Rashab received certain dimensions associated with the *Nesius*. However, it was not until several years after his father's death, that he accepted the *Nesius* entirely.]

4. As the Alter Rebbe writes in *Tanya*, *daas* is the source for the emotions and their vitalizing power.

(wisdom, understanding, and knowledge) approach. The Mittler Rebbe expressed those teachings in greater depth, being comparable to “the broadening of the river.” Nevertheless, the Rebbe Rashab’s teachings, however, put a far greater emphasis on bringing out a conclusive summary of the subject matter so that it would be able to be implemented in the Chassidim’s everyday lives. For this reason, the Chassidim referred to the Rebbe Rashab as “the *Rambam of Chassidus*.” The *Rambam’s* uniqueness was expressed in his collection of the entire Oral Law and his presentation of it in a manner in the form of clear and easily comprehensible directives governing every aspect of our conduct. The Rebbe Rashab made a similar contribution within the context of the *Chabad* tradition.

The Rebbe Rashab’s approach was revealed in the *hemsheichim*⁵ (treatises which included a series of *maamarim*) in particular, the *hemsheichim* which began in the years 5666 and 5672 which explained fundamental *Chassidic* concepts in a clear manner that enabled them to be understood and applied in actual life.⁶

A NEW KIND OF YESHIVAH

This thrust was also expressed in the Rebbe Rashab’s establishment of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*. The *yeshivah* was intended to allow for a systematic and settled⁷ approach to the study of *Chassidus*. In the *yeshivah*, *Nigleh* (the revealed teachings of Torah law) and *Chassidus* were both studied in a manner which reflected how they are two dimensions of a single Torah. The students were taught to appreciate a *Chassidic* dimension in their *Nigleh* studies and to approach a *Chassidic* concept with the same thorough intellectual approach that characterizes Talmudic study. This, in turn — enhanced by the sharing of ideas and intellectual and spiritual give and take among the students that characterizes

5. The practice of reciting *hemsheichem* was begun by the Rebbe Maharash (although it appears that the Alter Rebbe did recite a series of *maamarim* on occasion). This was a revolutionary step, for previously the *Rebbeim* would recite and publish their *maamarim* individually.

6. This is particularly evident in the summaries which the Rebbe Rashab added to each of the chapters in the first portion of the *hemshech* 5672. This provided a student with a clear summary of the ideas discussed in each chapter.

7. The word *hisyashvus* “settled manner,” and *yeshivah* share the same root.

yeshivah study — gave a student the opportunity to apply the concepts he learned in his own life and to share them with others.

Thus, the founding of the *yeshivah* was associated with the service of spreading the wellsprings of Torah — the wellsprings of *Nigleh* and the wellsprings of *Chassidus* as they are fused together — outward.⁸ In this manner, the students of the *yeshivah* become “candles which illuminate” and fulfill their mission as *temimim* as the Rebbe Rashab emphasized in his discourse, “Whoever goes out to the wars of the House of David.”

Thus, the founding of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim* by the Rebbe Rashab added a further stage of completion in the efforts that G-dliness should be appreciated and grasped through studying *Chassidus* and that this study should lead to deed.

In particular, this refers to the deed of “raising up many students,” beginning with the founding of the *yeshivah* by the Rebbe Rashab. Furthermore, the Rebbe’s intent when founding the *yeshivah* was that it should spread and that new branches should be established in many places. This activity was furthered by the director of the *yeshivah*, the Previous Rebbe, who brought the *yeshivah* to “the lower half of the world” (America), from where branches were established throughout the world.⁹

FULFILLING HIS CHILDHOOD DREAM

There is a connection between the above concepts and the Rebbe Rashab’s tearfelt outburst that G-d should reveal Himself to him just as He revealed Himself to Avraham, our Patriarch. What the Rebbe Rashab wanted, even as a young boy, was to see G-dliness openly revealed. Throughout his life, he worked towards that goal and this was the purpose of his achievements in revealing *Chassidus* and establishing the *yeshivah*.

8. “Outwards” can be applied both in the personal and general realm. In the personal realm, it implies studying Torah — *Nigleh* and *Chassidus* — in a manner that allows the animal soul to understand as well. In the world at large, it implies spreading those teachings until they reach the furthestmost corners of the world.

9. The potential for this activity was generated by the Rebbe Rashab’s naming of the *yeshivah* during the *Hakkafos* of Simchas Torah, 5659, *Tomchei Temimim*, in connection with the phrase from the liturgy, “Supporter of the perfect (*Tomeich Temimim*), save us.”

To express these concepts on a deeper level. G-dliness is revealed within and through the medium of the Torah, which is G-d's will and wisdom and which is totally united with Him. "G-d and His Torah are one." G-d invested Himself in the Torah as evident by our Sages' interpretation of the word *Anochi* as an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, "I wrote down and gave over Myself."

This was revealed in an open and manifest manner at the time the Torah was given as the Torah declares, "You have been shown to know that the L-rd is G-d." Then, we actually saw the revelation of G-dliness. The Ten Commandments — which include the entire Torah — reflect His inner will, where there is no hiddenness or veiling.

Within the various disciplines of Torah, there is a greater dimension of revelation in the realm of *halachah*. Thus, our Sages interpreted the expression, "The word of G-d" as referring to *halachah*, and the expression, "G-d is with Him," as "the *halachah* follows his view."¹⁰

Similarly, there is a greater dimension of Divine revelation associated with the study of *Pnimitiyus HaTorah* which is described as "the tree of life, where there are no questions emanating from the powers of evil." In this realm of knowledge, G-dliness and spiritual subjects are discussed openly in contrast to the study of *Nigleh* where these subjects are not openly revealed.¹¹

Within the realm of *Pnimitiyus HaTorah* itself, there is a unique emphasis on the *maamarim* recited by the *Rebbeim*. Rav Hillel of Paritch would say that hearing a Rebbe recite a *maamar* is like receiving "the word of G-d on Mount Sinai."¹² This particularly

10. The name of G-d used in these expressions is Y-H-V-H, the essential name of G-d. In general, the name of G-d used in connection with Torah study is the name *E-lohim* which alludes to a lower dimension of G-dliness as in the expression, "These and these are the words of the living G-d." *Halachah*, however, refers to a higher rung, the name *Y-H-V-H*.

11. On the contrary, the uniqueness of the study of *Nigleh* is that it deals with physical matters and subjects within our material world.

12. In contrast, after the recitation of the *maamar* is completed, that dimension is no longer present. Thus, it is possible to debate the subject matter discussed in the *maamar* even with the author of the *maamar* himself.

applies, regarding the Rebbe Rashab, the *Rambam* of *Chassidus*, who would bring out spiritual concepts in the form resembling a clear *halachic* decision that could be applied in one's service of G-d.

The preparation for and the first stage of the Rebbe Rashab's service was reflected in his tearfelt desire that G-d reveal Himself to him.¹³ He wanted to see the actual revelation of G-dliness. It was this desire that was expressed through and channeled the direction of his service and his revelation of *Chassidus* in the years that followed.

This service was continued by the Previous Rebbe who explained and amplified his father's Chassidic teachings. Furthermore, he instructed that these teachings be translated into other languages. Similarly, he continued his father's work in expanding the activities of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim*, transferring its base to America and establishing new branches throughout the world.

* * *

HOW TO EDUCATE A CHILD

2. In addition to the insights the story reveals concerning the Rebbe Rashab and his lifework, in and of itself, it serves as a fundamental lesson for every Jew. Every Jew, even a young child, must desire the revelation of G-dliness within the context of his life within this material world.

We must — and we have the potential to — express this desire with the simplicity and single-mindedness of a child for each Jew possesses a childlike dimension, as the verse relates, “Israel is a youth and I love him.”¹⁴

Similarly, this story gives us insights regarding the education of our children. We should educate our children so that G-d is a real and powerful force in their lives. They should care about G-dliness and feel a genuine lack that G-d does not reveal Himself to them.

13. In addition to serving as a preparatory step for the Rebbe Rashab's later service, his question also had an immediate effect, bringing about the revelation of a new teaching by the Tzemach Tzedek.

14. This also relates to the statement, “I pray with the intention of a child,” which the Tzemach Tzedek quotes as a desirous approach to prayer.

This desire is more than a preparation for the study of Torah and the service of G-d at a later time. It is, itself, a stage of service which must continue at all times. Before studying Torah, it is necessary to recite a blessing which reflects our appreciation of G-d, the Giver of the Torah. Similarly, our study of Torah and service of G-d should constantly be vitalized by the earnest desire for the revelation of G-dliness.¹⁵

* * *

ESTABLISH NEW BRANCHES OF THE YESHIVAH!

3. In particular, the above is relevant this year, the 130th anniversary of the Rebbe Rashab's birth. From year to year, there must be an increase in the influence of the Rebbe Rashab's birthday the day when the "spiritual source of his soul shines powerfully," for "we must always increase in regard to holy matters." Each year, a birthday is a day of general importance. This is particularly true regarding the birthday of a *Nasi* who is a general soul.

The uniqueness of this day was reflected in the Rebbe Rashab's custom of reciting a *maamar* to the Previous Rebbe on the day of his birthday. This custom continued even after the Rebbe Rashab's passing. The Previous Rebbe related a detailed vision, describing how, on the Rebbe Rashab's birthday, the Rebbe appeared to him on *Chof MarCheshvan* and recited a *maamar*. (He was also joined by the *Rebbeim* who preceded him who each recited a *maamar* as well.)

In particular, the number 130 reflects a unique level for it is 5 times 26 (the numerical equivalent of the name *Y-H-V-H*). Five is connected with the Torah which is given in five books. Five is also intrinsically related to the Rebbe Rashab for he was the fifth of the Chabad *Nesi'im*.¹⁶

15. This should be the only desire which affects us while involved in Torah study. Our Sages taught, "The Torah was given only to those who ate *Manna*." While the Jews were in the desert, G-d took care of all their material needs and thus, they had no worries or concerns regarding material things. Similarly, when a Jew studies Torah, the Torah should be his only concern and nothing else should be on his mind.

16. It is also significant that this milestone of 130 years is reached in the third generation after the Rebbe Rashab. Our Sages taught that there is a unique significance in the

Since the Rebbe Rashab was a general soul, the heights reached on his birthday (and particularly this year, the influence of five times the numerical equivalent of the name *Y-H-V-H*) is relevant to every Jew. Each Jew is given the potential to serve G-d in a manner in which G-dliness becomes part of his mundane day-to-day experience. Each Jew should feel a yearning desire for G-dliness which should motivate an increase in the study of Torah (both *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*, and in particular, the *maamarim* of the Rebbe Rashab). Furthermore, this study should be grasped and comprehended within our intellectual faculties¹⁷ and thus, bring about a change in our actual conduct.

This should lead to spreading the teachings of Chassidus outward and “raising up many students” with the establishment of branches of *Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim* in new places. There should be a stress on Jewish education and in particular, on raising children with a desire and yearning that G-d reveal Himself to them.

May these activities speed the coming of the Redemption and thus, we will merit the fulfillment of the prophecy, “And your eyes will behold your teachers,” with the Resurrection of the Dead. Thus, on *Chof MarCheshvan*, we will merit to hear the Rebbe Rashab (and the *Rebbeim* who preceded him) recite a *maamar* here in this physical world. Similarly, we will merit the revelation of “the new Torah which will emerge from Me.” May this be in the immediate future.



perpetuation of Torah study for three generations, thus establishing a *chazakah*. This is also reflected in the statement, “The crown of the elders is grandchildren.”

(In this context, we can understand why the *yeshivah* was founded in connection with the Previous Rebbe’s wedding. Then, the possibility for “grandchildren” was granted.)

17. Although the emphasis is on intellectual comprehension, the explanations of *Chassidic* ideas must be taken from the works of the *Rebbeim* and not brought in from outside sources.

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