

EXCERPT:
REBBE AND CHASSID

The Basics of Chassidus

A Comprehensive Anthology
of Chabad Thought

VOLUME 1

CHABAD: Its Origins,
Principles, and Purpose

RABBI NISSAN DOVID DUBOV
RABBI NAFTOLI HERTZ PEWZNER

The Basics of Chassidus

A Comprehensive Anthology
of Chabad Thought

VOLUME 1

Chabad: Its Origins,
Principles, and Purpose

RABBI NISSAN DOVID DUBOV
RABBI NAFTOLI HERTZ PEWZNER



SICHOS IN ENGLISH

THE BASICS OF CHASSIDUS
VOLUME ONE

Copyright © 2022 by

SICHOS IN ENGLISH

788 Eastern Parkway | Brooklyn, New York 11213

718.778.5436 | www.SIE.org | editor@sie.org

Second Printing - May 2022



All rights reserved, No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission from the respective copyright holder.

ISBN 978-1-9381-6318-0

INTRODUCTION

ב"ה

The Basics of Chassidus Series

Earlier this spring, Sichos in English was honored to publish the first volume of a revolutionary series *The Basics of Chassidus*. This is a first-of-its-kind, one-stop collection of *Chassidus Chabad* which is aimed to be both comprehensive and accessible. Titled *Chabad: Its Origins, Principles, and Purpose*, this inaugural volume was released coinciding with this year's milestone Yud Alef Nissan, the Rebbe's 120th birthday. Thank G-d, it has already sold in thousands of copies and has seen a recent reprint.

This debut volume covers some of the most integral ideas of Chassidus while exploring its origins, explaining its primary principles, and elucidating its mission. The purpose of existence, the chassidic approach to successful *avodas Hashem*, the worldview of *Achdus Hashem*, the role of a Rebbe, and the path towards *Mashiach* are just some of the concepts systematically explored and clarified.

This initial 470-page volume is the painstaking work of **Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov** of Wimbledon, England, Shliach of the Rebbe and author of numerous books, and **Rabbi Naftoli Hertz Pewzner**, Mashpia in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim, Morristown, New Jersey.

In the weeks since its release, the book has been met with warm appreciation from a wide spectrum of audiences. Across diverse

age groups, backgrounds, and levels of knowledge of *Chassidus*, readers are finding their journey into *The Basics of Chassidus* to be informative, enlightening, and inspiring.

This Excerpt Chapter: Rebbe and Chassid

As we find ourselves in the days preceding Gimmel Tammuz, with chassidim around the world focused on further strengthening our *hiskashrus* with the Rebbe, it is our privilege to provide a complimentary excerpt chapter from *The Basics of Chassidus* Vol. 1, titled ***Rebbe and Chassid***.

Therein, the unique relationship between a Rebbe and his followers is explored with vivid clarity and inviting approachability. Primary concepts from *Chassidus*, such as the phenomenon of a *Rosh Bnei Yisrael* and *neshama klalis* are explained step-by-step. A Rebbe's unique influence as a *ra'aya mehemna*, the benefit of being in the Rebbe's presence, and the value of *hiskashrus* are all clarified. The chassid's contribution to the relationship is also explained, providing informational guidance in cultivating this fascinating bond. Finally, in the segment titled *An Eternal Flame*, the Rebbe's permeating influence felt so palpably in our times is discussed.

As an addendum to this excerpted chapter please find the full Foreword and Table of Contents of the published volume. There, one will find the background of what inspired this series, some helpful guidance on how to best read this book, as well as a panoramic view of this volume's brimming content.

It is our hope that this publication serves its intended purpose in further bolstering our awareness of the Rebbe's influence and presence within our lives. May our intensified collective efforts usher in the true and ultimate *Geulah* immediately, Amen.

Sichos in English

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 9

Rebbe and Chassid 1

The unique relationship between a Rebbe and his followers stems from the unique soul-nature of the Jewish spiritual leader. Exploring this idea, we find clarity in the role of a Rebbe and insight into his life-changing influence. The chassid's contribution to the relationship is also explained, providing informational guidance in cultivating this fascinating bond.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. WHAT IS A REBBE 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Structure of Chassidus • The Head of the People • Feeling the Soul's Connection • Connecting to the Head • The Role of a Rebbe <p>2. UNDERSTANDING
THE HIERARCHY 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Transmitter • Bridging the Gap <p>3. THE COLLECTIVE SOUL. . . . 12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Foundational Tzaddik • The Single Soul of Israel • The Leader of the Generation • The Rebbe and the Individual | <p>4. A REBBE'S INFLUENCE 19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Nurturing Shepherd • What Being Jewish Really Feels Like • The Character of a Rebbe • In the Rebbe's Presence <p>5. CONNECTING TO
A REBBE. 29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiskashrus • Cultivating Hiskashrus • Additional Elements of Hiskashrus • Shlichus <p>6. AN ETERNAL FLAME 37</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Permeating Influence
of the Rebbe • Direction in Our Times • In Conclusion |
|--|--|

Addendum 45

CHAPTER 9

Rebbe and Chassid

1. WHAT IS A REBBE

The Structure of *Chassidus*

From the start of *Chassidus*, the movement was always structured upon the relationship of a Rebbe and his chassidim. On a basic level, the Rebbe is the teacher, guide, and leader of the chassidim, and the chassidim are the students which internalize the Rebbe's teachings, follow his directives, and are empowered by him to each fulfill their G-dly mission.

In a manner unique to *Chassidus*, this relationship is characterized by utmost dedication and love.¹

1. See *Hayom Yom*, 26 Shevat, where it describes love as the "spirit of life in the practice

The first chassidic Rebbe was the movement's founder, Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov. As described extensively in a previous chapter, the Baal Shem Tov dedicated himself to uncovering the virtue and potential of the Jewish soul, awakening the Jewish spirit in the darker times of Exile, and guiding Jews from all segments of society in the service of G-d. The Baal Shem Tov's love and dedication to his People was legendary.²

From then on, chassidic Rebbeim serve as the spiritual heirs of the Baal Shem Tov. Each in their generation, these selfless *tzaddikim* dedicate themselves completely to the physical and spiritual needs of their communities. Their teachings arouse souls and illuminate minds, their guidance transforms lives, and their inspiration reverberates throughout the Jewish world. Forever caring and available to all, the Rebbeim's love and concern for every person, chassid or not, knows no bounds.

The Rebbe's immense love is reflected by the chassidim, whose hearts are filled with love and endearment towards their Rebbe.³ A chassid goes to the greatest lengths to internalize their Rebbe's teachings, and it is this love that causes chassidim to dedicate their lives to the Rebbe's ideals.⁴

Finding historical comparison to this phenomenon is rather difficult in the least.

of *Chassidus*. It is the cable that binds chassidim to each other, and the cable that binds the Rebbe to the chassidim and the chassidim to the Rebbe."

2. See above, Chapter Three, p. 59. See also *My Story*, pp. 254-255 (JEM, 2017).

3. In the early-1970s, a young man once questioned the Rebbe as to why his followers love him so profoundly. The Rebbe responded "I love each and every one of them with overflowing love, they are apparently responding in kind."

(As heard from Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Gurevitz of Migdal HeEmek, Israel. *Yechidus*, 11 Shevat 5732/1972. At least this portion of the conversation took place in this fellow's native French, and the Rebbe described his love for the chassidim with the word *débordé*, overflowing being one selected translation of the French word. Also published in *Techayeinu*, Tammuz 5777, p. 72ff).

4. Not only are the Rebbe's direct instructions heeded to their fullest, but moreover, a true chassid is fully dedicated to the causes that the Rebbe cares for. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 29, p. 279ff; *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, p. 31.

Throughout the ages, the Jewish People were always connected with their sages and leaders. While all souls are G-dly, there are various degrees of Divine awareness and spiritual stature, and the entire community benefits from the presence of a *tzaddik*, or holy person, in their midst.⁵ However, given their exalted stature, there most often is a fair amount of distance between the people and their leaders.⁶

A revolutionary feature of the Rebbe-chassid dynamic is that despite the Rebbe's towering heights, the Rebbe and the chassidim are not distant or detached from each other. This profound ongoing connection, or *hiskashrus*, as it is often called, is described by the chassidic adage: "*Chassidus* accomplished that the Rebbe is never alone, and the chassidim are never alone."⁷

The Head of the People

To better understand the role of a Rebbe, and the vital importance of *hiskashrus* in the life of a chassid, let us first discuss the nature of Jewish leadership in general.⁸

5. See *Rashi*, *Bereishis* 28:10, where the asset a *tzaddik* is to their city as a whole is described. "When a *tzaddik* is in a city, he is its beauty and honor [the city residents are honored by his presence], he is its radiance [they learn from his deeds], he is its majesty [his presence inspires submission to G-d]..." See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 35, p. 121, where the above elucidation is determined to be the primary meaning of *Rashi's* words. See there, pp. 119-122, regarding the *tzaddik's* merit which provides protection to the city's inhabitants.

6. See also above, p. 69ff.

7. See *Hayom Yom*, 22 Iyar: "In previous eras, a Rebbe — a *Rosh Yeshivah* or a *Gaon* — was alone, and his disciples were alone. The path of *Chassidus* blazed by the Alter Rebbe brought about an awesome G-dly innovation: the Rebbe is not alone and the chassidim are not alone."

The chassidim don't feel that the Rebbe is inaccessible or distant from them, and the Rebbe elevates the chassidim to not be distant from him, enabling them to take part in his holy work.

8. Among the valuable resources available discussing the role of a Rebbe are Rabbi Dr. J. I. Schochet, *Chassidic Dimensions* (Kehot); Rabbi S. Majeski, *A Tzaddik and His Students* (SIE Publications).

Presenting extensive sourcing from the Talmud, *Midrash*, Kabbalah, and *halachah*, these books also dispel some common misconceptions and misunderstandings of the chassidic movement. As in any area of Jewish law and study, examination of the authentic Torah sources provides important insight and clarity that can foster mutual respect and community togetherness.

In the language of the Torah, leaders of the Jewish People are called the **heads** of the community. The leaders of the tribes are called “the heads of the multitudes of Israel,”⁹ and our Sages refer to Moshe himself as “the **head** of his generation.”¹⁰

Rather than being a poetic reference, this description illuminates our understanding of the structure of the Jewish community. The head is the seat of consciousness and awareness, with the entire body being directed and animated by the brain. The brain is innately aware of the body’s needs, and gears its influence to ensure that all of the person’s needs are met.¹¹

Similarly, the connections of Jewish leaders with their people are deeply soulful. They are not just talented individuals of outstanding character who are appointed to lead, instead, they have an innate sense of understanding of the spiritual and physical needs of the nation which makes them natural leaders of their people. The Jewish People is structured like one body whose various limbs and organs are all synchronized, enlivened, and directed by the brain which recognizes the purpose and needs of each limb. True Jewish leaders are this “brain” whose guidance and influence are indispensably valuable to every Jew.¹²

Feeling the Soul’s Connection

This idea likening the souls of the Jewish leaders to the heads of the nation is expounded upon in *Tanya*, where the Alter Rebbe discusses the nature of the G-dly soul and its everlasting bond with G-d.¹³ Building on the analogy of a bodily structure, he explains the various levels of G-dly awareness found within the Jewish community.

9. *Bamidbar* 1:16, 10:4.

10. *Tanchuma, Chukas*, 23. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 33, p. 135ff.

11. See *Tanya*, Ch. 51.

12. The configuration of the entire Jewish People as one body is explained in *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, 44a. See also *Taamai HaMitzvos* of the *Arizal, Kedoshim*.

13. *Tanya*, Ch. 2.

All souls are an “actual part of the Divine,”¹⁴ similar to the way a biological child is an extension of the parent because their elemental beginnings are rooted “in the brain of the father.” However, although the Jewish People are called “children unto G-d,”¹⁵ not all Jews experience the expected attachment and feelings that such a description suggests.

This insensitivity, the Alter Rebbe explains, is the effect of some souls representing the lower parts of the “body-like structure” of the Jewish People. In the analogy of a child, it is only the mind which feels connected to the parent, not the feet or toes. While the child’s entire body is the parents’ biological descendent, these body parts do not have the capacity to feel connected. Similarly, although all souls are rooted in the Divine, some feel connected, while others are more oblivious of their bond.¹⁶

However, this lack of G-dly awareness is not meant to be a permanent disability. All Jews are commanded to serve G-d with passion and connection and even “cleave to G-d.”¹⁷ Certainly, there must be a way for even lowly, insensitive souls to feel connected.¹⁸

Connecting to the Head

The disconnect of these non-sophisticated, lower souls is remedied by the leadership of “the heads of Israel’s multitudes.”¹⁹

14. *Tanya*, Ch. 2, in citation of *Iyov* 31:2, with the added emphasis *Mamash*, translated here as “actual.”

15. *Devarim* 14:1. See also *Shemos* 4:22: “Israel is My firstborn son.”

16. This is the consequence of these souls being affected by the descent into the lower, less G-dliness-oriented, realms of *Hishtalshelus*. This is similar to the embryonic process in which cells divide, and some become the head while others become the feet. See *Tanya*, Ch. 2, where the point is made regarding toenails being originally sourced in the brain.

17. *Devarim* 30:20.

18. This is especially relevant in these last generations of Exile which are referred to as *Ikvesa d'Meshicha*, the time when the “heels,” i.e., the footsteps of *Mashiach* are felt. In context of Jewish history, the stature of these last generations is likened to the very soles of the feet, the body’s lowest point, causing the connection to the head to be more important than ever. See *Tanya*, Ch. 2.

19. The following presentation is culled from *Tanya*, Ch. 2.

To explain: In the analogy of the child-parent relationship, it is wholly sufficient for only the brain, and not the body, to feel connected to the parent. The external limbs' lack of awareness of the parent, their source, is of no consequence.

In a healthy body, all limbs are constantly connected and in communication with the brain.²⁰ If the brain feels connected, the rest of the body must be bonded as well. The brain's awareness and understanding link the entire child with their parents, engaging them in a fully encompassing relationship.

Similarly, although most Jews are not naturally endowed with a sophisticated sensation of G-dliness, they are all bonded with their "head," their leader. No Jew is a stand-alone "limb" detached from the "body" of the Jewish People. Every Jewish soul is in constant contact with the "brain" of the people, the "organ" which does feel the Jewish People's connection with G-d.

The role of a Jewish leader is to act as the "Brain of the People," enabling them to feel their inherent, child-like bond with G-d. Just as it takes connection with the brain for the foot to be united with the parent, similarly, connection to Jewish leaders enables every Jew to feel connected and bonded with G-d.²¹

This chassidic teaching is clearly reflected in the halachic obligation to associate with, and connect to *talmidei chachamim*, Torah scholars, who "know G-d."²² Fascinatingly, cleaving to these Sages is determined to be the fulfillment of the Biblical *mitzvah* to cleave to G-d.

As the Talmud states: "How can mortal man cleave to G-d?
By cleaving unto a Torah scholar."²³

For a Jew whose soul-connection with G-d is not felt, bonding with G-d seems impossible. However, by connecting to their soul's "brain," the scholarly leaders of their generation, every

20. Notably, even the lowest, most external parts of the body, such as the toenails, are presently connected to the brain.

21. See *Torah Ohr*, 75b.

22. See *Kesubos* 111b; *Mishneh Torah*, *HaMada*, *Hilchos De'os*, 6:2; Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim*, 156:4.

23. Paraphrase of *Kesubos* 111b.

soul can indeed become consciously attached to the Divine. This connection permeates the person's service of G-d with sincere passion and dedication, as *hiskashrus* causes the soul to experience its child-to-parent-like attachment to G-d.²⁴

The Role of a Rebbe

The status of Jewish leaders as the heads of the Jewish People revolutionizes our perception and appreciation of chassidic Rebbeim.

As discussed broadly in previous chapters, *Chassidus* is centered upon revealing the inner depths of the soul by means of the inner teachings of the Torah.²⁵ The various focuses of *Chassidus* are all inherently one. *Chassidus* teaches that G-d is the true existence, making reality completely G-d-centered. The *ye-chidah* within the soul is completely cognizant that G-d is all that truly matters, and the teachings and directives of *Chassidus* permeate our lives and the world with this ideal.²⁶

The success of *Chassidus* and its broad influence on the Jewish world is in no way accidental. It can be directly attributed to the outstanding leadership of the chassidic Rebbeim throughout the generations. The term Rebbe is an acronym for “*Rosh Bnei Yisrael*,” head of the Jewish People,²⁷ something that these chassidic leaders so clearly exemplify.²⁸

As the “heads” and “brains” of the Jewish People, the Rebbeim exhibit fascinating intuition into the needs of their people, guiding, inspiring, and uplifting countless individuals and communities.²⁹ Furthermore, the Rebbe possesses the insight and ability to guide every soul to the “switch” that will reignite their

24. *Tanya*, Ch. 2.

25. See above, pp. 70-71.

26. See above, p. 163ff.

27. See Rabbi Mordechai Hakohen, 16th century, in *Sifsei Kohan on Chumash, Shemos* 30:11.

28. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 117.

29. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 128.

inherent bond with G-d.³⁰ Inculcating the awareness, faith, and comprehension of the Divine, the Rebbeim add vitality and dedicated enthusiasm to the individual's Divine service.³¹

2. UNDERSTANDING THE HIERARCHY

The Transmitter

The idea that people must rely upon a Jewish leader to foster their Divine awareness and connection may seem surprising. We are all G-d's people, why is an external influence necessary to awaken our soul's intrinsic bond with G-d? Why are some souls designed to be unaware of their connection, requiring a Rebbe to "plug them in"? What is gained by this apparent imbalance?

This question takes us back to the very beginning of our people's history. At Sinai, G-d spoke to the entire nation as a unique event. Subsequently, Moshe, our faithful leader, was required to take on the pivotal role of delivering G-d's Torah to the people.³²

This was not by choice. Moshe preferred for all of the Jews to hear the entire Torah directly from G-d. However, the Jewish People requested that Moshe become the transmitter of G-d's word.³³ They asked for Moshe to act as an intermediary, to "stand between them and G-d."³⁴

Standing **between** the people and G-d, Moshe's task was not to intercept or disturb the flow of G-dly instruction and inspiration. Instead, Moshe channeled it towards

30. See Chabad.org/392177/; *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 27, p. 397, a segment of which was quoted above, p. 73, fn. 71.

31. As mentioned above, p. 108, the Rebbe's inspiration is not in place of personal investment in Divine service. Instead, the Rebbe's influence provides the much-needed support enabling the individual to serve G-d while maximizing their own potential.

32. As emphasized in the verse (*Devarim* 33:4): "The Torah that Moshe commanded us is the heritage of the Congregation of Yaakov." Significantly, *halachah* mandates this verse be taught to young children as soon as they start to speak. *Sukkah* 42a; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh De'ah*, 245:5; Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, 1:1.

33. *Devarim* 5:19ff; *Shemos* 20:16.

34. *Devarim* 5:5.

them, bringing it within their reach without compromising its potency.³⁵

Similar to the role of the “heads of the people” who are capable of causing ordinary people to experience advanced sensitivity to G-dliness, Moshe was responsible for conveying the G-dly empowerment that comes along with the informational instructions.³⁶

Moshe’s unadulterated transmission of G-dliness causes him to be defined as a *memutza hamechaber*, a bridging intermediary, in contrast to a *memutza hamafsik*, an intercepting intermediary.³⁷

One may wonder: Why did the people want an intermediary?

Just days earlier, during the preparation for the Giving of the Torah, the nation requested that G-d speak to them directly. Arguing that there is no comparison between hearing a message from a messenger to hearing it directly from the king himself, they pleaded, “We want to see our King!”³⁸ Why the sudden change of heart?

The concern raised by the people was that they would not be able to survive the awesome revelation, requiring Moshe to receive the Torah on their behalf.³⁹ But did they not just experience the wondrous revelation of the Ten Commandments, and yet G-d caused them to survive?⁴⁰

35. This is reflected in the statement of our Sages that the *Shechinah* spoke through Moshe’s throat; *Zohar* III, 232a; *Shemos Rabbah*, 3:15; *Vayikra Rabbah*, 2:3; *Mechilta*, *Shemos* 18:19. See *Igros Kodesh, Rebbe Maharash*, p. 101 (and sources cited in fn. 37), in the name of the Alter Rebbe, who explained this to be like a funnel which directs the flow of liquid without affecting its quality.

36. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 16, pp. 206-207, based on *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, 2d.

37. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5659, pp. 190, 194; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5682, p. 285f.

38. *Mechilta* and *Rashi* on *Shemos* 19:9.

39. *Devarim* 5:19ff; *Shemos* 20:16.

40. The people told Moshe: “...G-d has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we heard His voice from the midst of the fire; we saw this day that G-d can speak directly with human beings, yet they remain alive.” “So now, why should we die?” they asked. Explaining their fear of being consumed by this great fire, they said: “If we continue to hear the voice of G-d, we will die.” “Of all flesh,” they reasoned, “who else is there who heard the living G-d’s voice speaking from the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?”

Surely G-d was capable of extending further protection so that hearing the Torah directly from Him would likewise do no harm.⁴¹

Furthermore, they are no less G-d's children than Moshe, why should such revelation be okay for Moshe, but not for the average Jew?

Bridging the Gap

The explanation: The mission of the Jewish people is to reveal G-d's Oneness **within** this world.⁴² Therefore, inborn G-dly awareness and extensive revelation for all is not within the Jewish People's best interests.

Being a target of direct G-dly revelation is somewhat of a detachment from the world. It is an exit to a spiritual plane.⁴³ While spiritual awareness has virtue, the Sinaitic revelation of purpose is best appreciated within our world. It is here that practical, day-to-day *mitzvos* cause the world to become a home for G-d's Presence.⁴⁴

To this end, G-d made most souls suited for life in this world by being less in touch with the Divine reality. In the Jewish People's "body-like structure," most souls correspond to external, function-oriented limbs, rather than representing the spiritually-oriented brain. G-d wants us to operate within this world even at the expense of spiritual revelation.⁴⁵

Being designed to feel unaware of our soul connection to properly do G-d's work **within** the world, our holy leaders come to

Therefore: "You [Moshe] approach, and hear all that G-d will say, and speak to us all that which G-d will speak to you, and we will hear and do." *Devarim* 5:19-24.

41. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 1, p. 229.

42. See above, p. 202.

43. The natural consequence of such revelation would be for the soul to abandon the body out of yearning to exist in a place of Divine awareness rather than concealment. This was the reason that a specific act of G-d was necessary to preserve their lives during the revelation at Sinai. See *Shabbos* 88b.

44. See above, p. 34f, and Chapter Ten, below, p. 350ff

45. *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 1, pp. 229-230.

provide valuable assistance. The “heads” of the Jewish People connect us to who we truly are, connecting our function-focused actions to the depths of our Jewish identity. These dedicated “intermediaries” bridge the infinite and the tangible, strengthening our dedication to G-d and our ability to fulfill His mission.⁴⁶

On a related note, this also explains the age-old Jewish practice of asking the righteous to pray to G-d on our behalf.⁴⁷ While it may seem to be an unnecessary mediation between us and G-d, the Talmud tells us: “If someone in your household is unwell, go to the sage so that he pray on your behalf.”⁴⁸

This is well understood according to the above insight into a *tzaddik’s* keen awareness of the needs of others. Because the *tzaddik* perceives the depths of the issue and is filled with genuine concern, the *tzaddik’s* prayers can be of greater sincerity than the suffering individual or their loved ones. The prayers of the head are more effective than those of the foot, simply because the head truly cares.⁴⁹

46. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 1, pp. 399-400.

47. See *Targum Yonasan* and *Ramban* on *Bereishis* 25:22 who explain that our matriarch Rivkah went to the Sages of the time for them to pray on her behalf. See *Shaalos U’Teshuvos Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim*, 166.

48. *Bava Basra* 116a; see *Rashbam*, *ibid.*, who adds: “According to this, one should turn to a sage for assistance with prayer at any time of need, not only in a case of illness.” This teaching is codified as *halachah* in *Rema, Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De’ah* 335:10. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 11, p. 173. See also *Taanis* 23a, in reference to Choni HaMeagel, and *Berachos* 34b, in reference to Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa.

49. *Shaalos U’Teshuvos Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim*, 166. Although it is said that the prayers of the sick person are more effective than the prayers of others on their behalf (*Bereishis Rabbah*, 53:14; *Rashi, Bereishis* 21:17), this is only true when the others are impartial, or only sympathetic. However, a Rebbe is not “another,” or apart from the individual in distress. Pain is registered primarily in the brain and only then communicated to the ailing limb. Similarly, the Rebbe truly experiences the individual’s pain because they are one. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 2, pp. 31-33.

See *One By One*, p. 44 (JEM, 2019), where Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan shares the response the Rebbe gave to a struggling teenager who doubted if the Rebbe truly felt what she was going through: “When you will merit to grow up and marry, G-d willing you will have a child. The nature of things is that towards the end of the first year, the child will begin to teethe. Teething is painful and the child cries. And a mother feels that pain as if it was her own. ‘*Kach Ani margish tzaara*,’ this is how I feel your pain.”

By asking a Rebbe to pray on one's behalf, the person expresses a deep and soulful bond. The individual recognizes that the Rebbe is not simply a person of greater spiritual stature, but a leader who is one with his flock. Ultimately, one comes to realize that the Rebbe and themselves are inherently one.⁵⁰

3. THE COLLECTIVE SOUL

The Foundational *Tzaddik*

Tzaddikim are righteous individuals whose souls have a heightened awareness of G-dliness and who live completely G-d-focused lives. Natural tendencies and negative impulses are either vanquished or harnessed for holiness,⁵¹ and faith in G-d, along with passionate connection to Him, define them completely.⁵²

Transcending the standard parameters of our world, these saintly men and women have a unique G-dly mission. While most people are born to work on **transforming** the world from within, the *tzaddik's* presence serves as a burst of Divine **revelation** in a darkened world.⁵³ Along with G-dliness comes goodness, and *tzaddikim* channel additional blessing and protection for their generation.⁵⁴

Due to the benefit that *tzaddikim* offer the world, G-d strategically situated them throughout the generations. In the words of our Sages:

50. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 2, pp. 31-33.

51. See *Tanya*, Ch. 10, also mentioned above, p. 227.

52. See *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 27.

53. Just as the *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence, rested in the Temple, so does the *Shechinah* rest upon *tzaddikim*. In fact, the passing of a *tzaddik* is equated with the destruction of the Temple; *Rosh Hashanah* 18b, and *Drashos HaRan*, *Derush* 8. See also *Ramban* on *Devarim* 11:22.

See also *Igros Kodesh*, *Rebbe Rayatz*, Vol. 4, p. 313, describing the revelation caused by the chassidic Rebbeim.

54. See *Drashos HaRan*, *Derush* 8, and sources below, fn. 59. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 320ff, regarding two general categories of *tzaddikim*.

“G-d saw that the righteous were few, so He arose and spread them in every generation.”⁵⁵

Therefore, regardless of the times, there are *tzaddikim* of various levels in every generation. They are categorized by degrees of selflessness and the extent that their entire person is dedicated to Divine service.⁵⁶

Tzaddikim's encompassing dedication to G-d is largely the result of their particular level of internalizing *Achdus Hashem*. As discussed above, there are numerous degrees of *bittul* caused by the extent that G-d is perceived to be the only true existence. The *tzaddik* enjoys the benefits of Divine revelation allowing them to be innately in tune with the encompassing Divine reality.⁵⁷

Most significantly, there is always a person of the most outstanding stature who serves as the principal *tzaddik* of the generation. The constant presence of this unique type of *tzaddik* is described in the verse “*vetzaddik yesod olam, the tzaddik is the foundation of the world.*”⁵⁸

Just as it is impossible for a building to stand without a foundation, the entire framework of the Jewish People,

55. Yoma 38b.

56. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, p. 1234ff, regarding five levels of *tzaddikim*. The Talmud mentions several levels of *tzaddikim*, including the “thirty-six *tzaddikim*” who perceive G-dliness through their Torah study. See *Sukkah* 45b, and *Maharsha* there; *Sanhedrin* 97b; *Chullin* 92a; *Tikkunei Zohar*, 50b.

These *tzaddikim* are often not known, causing them to have only a limited effect on their environment. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5688, p. 21f.

See also *Shaalos U'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer, Choshen Mishpat*, sec. 98, that in every generation there is a *tzaddik* from the dynasty of King David who is worthy to be *Mashiach* in case G-d wills to bring the Redemption in his days. (See above, p. 151, regarding the personal stature expected of *Mashiach*.) See also commentary of “*Bartenura*” on Rus 4:6; *Sdei Chemed, Peas HaSadeh, Maareches alef, Klal* 70.

57. This is primarily in those *tzaddikim* who are *neshamos* of Atzilus, whose souls do not undergo the typical changes which souls commonly undergo to acclimate to the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. For a specific example of this, see *Hemshech* 5666, pp. 202, 206ff (Kehot, 2010).

58. *Mishlei* 10:25. See *Sukkah* 45b; *Zohar* I, 255a.

and by extension, of the world at large, depends on this individual's presence.⁵⁹

To properly understand the role of this *Tzaddik HaDor*, “the *tzaddik* of the generation,” let us preface it with some important insight into the structure of the Jewish People.

The Single Soul of Israel

What defines Jewish identity is the possession of a Jewish soul. This soul is an “actual part of G-d,”⁶⁰ and regardless of a person's life choices, this soul is never altered or lost. A Jew remains a Jew. Outer appearances or behaviors are not the determining factors of being Jewish; it is the invincible soul that determines who we truly are.⁶¹

This soulful identity is the basis of Jewish unity. As a nation, we are one unit because we are defined by our souls rather than our externalities. Considering that G-d is One and indivisible, all souls, which are all a “part of G-d,” are one entity as well. There is no room for division when we each inherently belong to one single whole.⁶²

Furthermore, the description of each person possessing a **specific** soul is only within a limited context. This reference exists only relative to the soul's individual role to enliven a particular body and fulfill a particular mission. Within this framework, souls are **individuals**, while on a deeper level, the soul is a **communal** entity.⁶³

Each individual soul is an expression or detail of the single, general soul, which represents the Jewish People's intrinsic bond with G-d. This collective soul transcends any personal interests

59. See *Shaloh*, 299b; *Kesser Shem Tov*, sec. 5, 256; *ibid.*, *Hosafos*, p. 363 (Kehot, 2004). *Maggid Devarav LeYaakov*, sec. 165; *Ohr Torah*, sec. 15, 123.

60. *Tanya*, Ch. 2, in citation of *Iyov* 31:2, with the added emphasis *Mamash*, translated here as “actual.”

61. This will be discussed extensively in Volume Four of this series.

62. See *Tanya*, Ch. 32; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, p. 72.

63. All souls are components of the first original soul that was blown into Adam upon his creation (*Bereishis* 2:7). See *Shemos Rabbah*, 40:3.

or aspirations and is completely at one with G-d. The general soul is the root cause of the entire people feeling a sense of responsibility for each other, as we are truly one.⁶⁴

This idea is reflected in the Torah's description of our ancestor's descent to Egypt. Traveling as a family of seventy people, the Torah refers to them with the term *nefesh*, or soul, in the **singular** form, stating that they descended to Egypt numbering seventy **soul** rather than seventy souls.⁶⁵ This indicates that on a soul level, regardless of our numbers we are simply one.⁶⁶

The Leader of the Generation

This unifying idea of a single, central soul that includes all individual souls is revolutionary. Reshaping our perspective of the Jewish People, this also provides insight into the nature of the primary leader and *tzaddik* of the generation. Beyond being the "head of the people," this leading *tzaddik* represents the general soul, the *neshamah klalis*, which encompasses all the souls of the generation.⁶⁷

Our quintessential leader, *Moshe Rabbeinu*, personified this phenomenon. As *Rashi* describes: "Moshe is Israel, and Israel is Moshe; this teaches us that the *Nasi HaDor*, the leader of the generation, is equated to the entire generation because the leader is everything."⁶⁸

Moshe's concern, dedication, and influence on the people was not as an aloof outsider. His holiness and stature did not remove him from his nation. Instead, by being the people's root-soul,

64. It was Moshe who initiated the concept of "*Kol Yisrael areivim zeh lazeh*," "all of Israel are responsible for one another," *Shavuos* 39b. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 4, p. 1139ff, regarding the two levels of unity represented by this idea.

65. *Bereishis* 46:27, and *Rashi* ad loc.

66. See *Torah Ohr*, 117c. See also Tzemach Tzedek, *Maamar Shishim Ribo Ayaros* (Kehot, 2014).

67. See for example Mitteler Rebbe, *Shaarei Teshuvah*, p. 56c-d.

68. *Rashi* on *Bamidbar* 21:21. See *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Chukas*, 23; *Bamidbar Rabbah*, 19:28.

Moshe was the people.⁶⁹ Moshe knew each individual from within, and committed himself to guiding all Jews to be their best selves.⁷⁰

In every generation since, the Jewish People are similarly structured around their unified identity. Just like in that first generation, all souls belong as components of the one general soul, the soul that rests within the generation's spiritual leader.⁷¹ In this manner, Moshe's role as the *neshamah klalis*, the general soul, continues to extend throughout the ages.⁷²

As the *Midrash* states: "There is never a generation that doesn't have a leader like Moshe."⁷³ We have always had a leader which the *Zohar* describes as "the extension of Moshe that is found in every generation."⁷⁴

The Rebbe and the Individual

The concept of the *neshamah klalis* reframes our understanding of the deep soul connection between the Rebbe and chassid.

69. This is implied in the title *nasi* which literally means "the exalted one." This indicates: 1) That he is more elevated than the masses, "head and shoulders above the people" (see *Shmuel* I, 10:23, regarding King Shaul). 2) That he elevates the people. These two dimensions are interdependent, it is precisely because the *nasi* is more elevated than the rest of the people that he can elevate them as well. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5750, Vol. 1, p. 13.

70. The uniqueness of Moshe was that his soul did not just contain those souls which resonated with his particular path, rather it contained each and every soul of the generation. *Zohar* III, 216a. See also *Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 1:3 (1:64); *Mechilta* on *Shemos* 15:13. See *Tikkunei Zohar*, 70, p. 138a; *Zohar* I, 25a; II, 191b; III, 9a.

71. The Hebrew word used to describe the leader of each generation is *nasi*. See *Rashi* on *Bamidbar* 21:21 cited above. Kabbalah explains that this is also an acronym for the words "*nitzutzo shel Yaakov Avinu*," a spark of the patriarch Yaakov. Yaakov was a *neshamah klalis* containing within his own soul the souls of all seventy children and grandchildren who descended to Egypt. (See above, p. 293; *Tanya*, *Iggres HaKodesh*, Epistle 7) Similarly, the *Nasi HaDor* contains within him all the souls of the generation. See *Megaleh Amukos*, *Ofen* 84; *Kehillas Yaakov*, ent. *Rebbe*; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, p. 148.

72. The continuum of Moshe throughout all times is an expression of the truth that Moshe represents, causing it to be impossible for Moshe's presence to cease from within the Jewish People. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, p. 7ff.

73. *Bereishis Rabbah*, 56:7. See also *Shaar HaGilgulim*, 19b.

74. *Tikkunei Zohar*, 69, p. 112a, 114a. See *Tanya*, Ch. 42. See also *Rashi* on *Chullin* 93a.

Clearly unlike a standard student-teacher relationship, in which the teacher conveys information and perspective that is relevant to the student, the chassid sees his soul as **part of the *neshamah klalis*** of the Rebbe. By connecting to a Rebbe, one accesses the root of their **own** soul. The Rebbe does not seem to be an external inspiration, rather, he is the foundational *tzaddik* which constitutes **my truest self**.⁷⁵

With *Chassidus* being all about revealing the inner soul, the encompassing soul of the Rebbe is the basis of any such experience.

As discussed extensively in previous chapters, *Chassidus* is centered upon accessing the *yechidah* in day-to-day life. *Chassidus* teaches that the *yechidah*, which is the Jewish soul's core, is not meant to exist somewhere within the recesses of the Jewish heart. Instead, it ought to permeate daily life.⁷⁶ This soul revelation is meant to cause encompassing dedication to G-d as well as revolutionize Jewish unity.⁷⁷

Also discussed was *Mashiach's* statement that his arrival will be caused by spreading the wellsprings of *Chassidus* outwards.⁷⁸ The link between *Mashiach* and *Chassidus* was explained in the context of *Mashiach* serving as the "macro-*yechidah*" of all generations. As discussed above, *Mashiach's* many accomplishments are all expressions of his encompassing "*yechidah*-effect."⁷⁹

The popularization of *Chassidus* prepares the world for *Mashiach's* arrival because it is a sample of the real thing.⁸⁰ By making the *yechidah* relevant to every element of life, *Chassidus* causes the entire person to be absorbed by the *yechidah's* permeating truth. This revelation of the *yechi-*

75. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 1, p. 272, and fn. 52.

76. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 29, p. 362; *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 1, p. 345.

77. See above, p. 137.

78. See above, p. 78ff.

79. See above, p. 155ff.

80. Several examples of this idea were presented above, p. 163f.

dah is a foretaste of *Mashiach* and causes the world to be properly conditioned for *Mashiach's* arrival.⁸¹

The *yechidah* theme of *Chassidus* explains the classification of the Rebbe as being the *yechidah klalis*, the general soul of the generation.⁸² The Rebbeim's ability to uncover the depths of potential and value within every individual results from their role as the "encompassing soul of Israel." A Rebbe can realize the best within each person and guide them in bringing it to fruition because the individual is a **part** of the Rebbe's **collective** soul.⁸³

While there may have been eras in Jewish history when it was difficult to determine who the acting *neshamah klalis* was, in recent centuries it has become increasingly clear. As we approach the age of *Mashiach*, when the *yechidah* will fully permeate our existence, the leadership of the generation's general soul has become more apparent.⁸⁴ *Chassidus* is preparing us for *Mashiach's* arrival by bringing our *yechidahs* to the fore, and it is only the Rebbe which entirely lives *yechidah* who can make that happen.⁸⁵

A Rebbe doesn't seek to **change** his followers, instead, he teaches them who **they** really are. A Rebbe doesn't hand his chassidim tasks, he directs them in fulfilling **their** purpose. A Rebbe doesn't argue his point to the chassid, rather, the Rebbe elevates the chassid to a place of clarity where the Rebbe's directive is the most natural choice. Whether the chassid understands the di-

81. See above, p. 166ff.

82. See *Kuntres Inyana Shel Toras HaChasidus*, Ch. 6, fn. 43, *On the Essence of Chassidus*, Ch. VI, fn. 57; See *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 1, p. 342ff. In this manner, the Rebbeim of each generation are all one continuum. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 2, p. 106; *Sefer HaSichos* 5752, p. 150, fn. 146.

83. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 3, p. 333.

84. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, p. 283f.

85. This theme of the Rebbeim being the *yechidah* of the generation fits with the *Rambam's* description of a Jewish king being "the heart of the people" as explained above, p. 153ff. *Mishneh Torah, Shoftim, Hilchos Melachim*, 3:6; see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 19, p. 165, fn. 6; *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, pp. 348f, 222f. See also *Tikkunei Zohar*, 21, p. 50b, where this is applied to Jewish leadership in a broader degree.

rective or not is irrelevant, somehow, the Rebbe's instruction resonates as the thing that must be done.⁸⁶

4 . A R E B B E ' S I N F L U E N C E

The Nurturing Shepherd

Our Sages describe *Moshe Rabbeinu* as a *ro'eh ne'eman*, a faithful shepherd.⁸⁷

On a basic level, this is an observation of Moshe's attentive leadership. Likened to a shepherd who dedicatedly tends to his entire flock, Moshe faithfully looked after the material and spiritual needs of each and every individual.⁸⁸

On a deeper level, the Aramaic term for "faithful shepherd," *ra'aya mehemna*, provides insight into Moshe's role in fostering Jewish identity. Beyond being a **faithful shepherd**, Moshe's title can also refer to how he **shepherded** and nourished the people with **faith**.⁸⁹

Emunah, or supra-rational faith, is not an add-on to the Jewish psyche. Rooted within the subconscious of every Jew, *emunah* is representative of every Jew's intrinsic bond with G-d. Just as it is virtually impossible for a person to deny their own existence, the Jewish soul senses similar irrevocable clarity regarding G-d's existence.⁹⁰

86. The revelation of the level of *yechidah* in a person influences their entire body. See *Tanya*, Ch. 42; *Sefer HaSichos* 5747, Vol. 1, p. 3. Moreover, since *yechidah* is the essence, it permeates all levels of the soul. Notably though, the principal expression of *yechidah* is in physical action; *Sefer HaSichos* *ibid.*, p. 4, fn. 20.

87. See for example *Mechilta* on *Shemos* 14:31; *Eichah Rabbah*, *Pesichta*, sec. 24; *Esther Rabbah*, 7:13. The Aramaic version of the term, *ra'aya mehemna*, also alluding to Moshe, is used throughout the *Zohar*. See for example *Zohar* I, 106a; II, 8b, 156a, 193b. See also *Torah Ohr*, 111a.

88. See *Shemos Rabbah*, 2:4; *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 36, p. 4ff.

89. *Torah Ohr*, 111a; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5687, p. 113; *Toras Menachem*, *Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 37. See also *Zohar* III, 225b.

90. See *Toras Menachem*, *Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 39. See also *Igros Kodesh*, *Rebbe Rayatz*, Vol. 2, p. 136.

The role of the *ra'aya mehemna* is to bring this intrinsic bond to the forefront of Jewish life and observance.

While we all have this faith, we are independently un-equipped to bring it to frequent practical expression. Although every *mitzvah* we perform attaches us to G-d, we may perceive that bond to be extrinsic to who we really are. We reason, “those are my actions or even my values, but not **me**.”⁹¹

What is unique about Moshe and his subsequent “extension in every generation” is that their souls’ bond with G-d is never obscured. Moshe, or any *neshamah klalis*, remain as connected to G-d “down here,” amidst their people, as they were “up there,” in their souls’ lofty source.⁹²

It is this unique quality which allows the *neshamah klalis* to tap into our souls and reveal our intrinsic faith and identity, bringing it to everyday experience.

Therefore, Moshe specifically is tasked with “connecting the Jewish People with G-d” in a manner that exposes who **we really are**.⁹³

91. Furthermore, while the Torah we learn and the *mitzvos* we perform do bond the Jew to G-d (see *Zohar* cited above, p. 22), this newfound relationship is somewhat extrinsic to the Jew’s own self. See *Ohr HaTorah, Shemos*, Vol. 2, p. 490ff.

92. See *Torah Ohr*, 75c, 76c; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 26, p. 359ff. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 14, p. 24, regarding the particular soul stature of the *Chabad* Rebbeim.

93. This is the deeper meaning of the verse “*Ve’atah tetzaveh es Bnei Yisrael...*” literally translated as “And you shall command the Children of Israel and they shall bring to you pure olive oil...”. (*Shemos* 27:20).

The Torah generally phrases G-d’s instruction for Moshe to convey the commandments to the Jewish People with imperative expressions such as, “Speak to the Children of Israel,” “Command the Children of Israel,” and the like. Here the verse states, “And you shall command the Children of Israel.” This unusual wording implies that Moshe is the one **issuing** the command, when in truth Moshe was merely an agent to transmit G-d’s commandments to the Jewish People. *Chassidus* therefore illuminates that *tzivui*, the Hebrew word for command, relates to the word *tzavsa*, which means “connection” or “bond.” Thus, the verse “And you [Moshe] shall *tetzaveh* the Children of Israel” carries with it the implication that Moshe binds and connects the Jewish people with G-d. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5679, p. 254; *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 34. See also *Torah Ohr*, 82a.

The specific virtue of this connection is explained in *Ohr HaTorah, Shemos*, Vol. 2, p. 490ff.

What Being Jewish Really Feels Like

The “nourishment of faith” caused by these dedicated leaders has wide-ranging relevance.⁹⁴ They cultivate within us a palpable sense of Jewish identity that has numerous important expressions. Among them are the following four ideas:

1) ***Daas in Elokus***: Usually translated as knowledge, *daas* describes a deep sense of acquisition and connection to an idea. The concept resonates deeply with the person, causing permeating and lasting results.⁹⁵

Daas in G-dliness means that the Divine truth reverberates through the person, not as an informational understanding, but as an absolute reality.⁹⁶ While faith may be abstract and facts can easily be disregarded, *daas* carries a conviction that is sure to have personal relevance.⁹⁷

The *ra'aya mehemna's* teachings carry unique potency. Rather than only conveying information, they prompt a sense of *daas* and internalization. This causes the Jew to experience complete immersion in the ideals taught, causing proper dedication to G-d. Rather than being a subject of study, it becomes who we are.⁹⁸

2) ***Mesirus nefesh***: Jewish self-sacrifice is not limited to knowledgeable or devout Jews. History has shown that even the most misguided Jews possess an inner sense that makes it impossible for them to knowingly separate themselves from G-d. When put to the test of persecution, Jews

94. The following ideas follow the pattern of the presentation of the *maamar VeAtah Tetzaveh* 5741. Published in 1992 just weeks before the Rebbe's stroke, this was the last *maamar* that the Rebbe personally edited for publication. Standing for hours, the Rebbe personally distributed this *maamar* to thousands of men, women, and children. Only in hindsight was it realized just how relevant these messages are for our time. See below, p. 315ff.

95. See *Tanya*, Ch. 3, 42. See also *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 4, p. 37ff.

96. See *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 4, p. 45.

97. See *Berachos* 63b, describing a thief who prays to G-d for success while in the midst of perpetuating a crime. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5687, p. 120.

98. See *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 37, and p. 41, fn. 56.

of all backgrounds gave the ultimate sacrifice. Throughout the ages, millions of men, women, and children have forfeited their lives rather than forsaking their G-dly bond.⁹⁹

In times of persecution, the “Moshes” of those generations worked tirelessly at nurturing the soul-connection of the Jewish People. They strengthened the Jewish spirit and brought the depths of the soul’s conviction to the fore.¹⁰⁰ They caused ordinary people to apply *mesirus nefesh* to the everyday. These “shepherds of faith” caused the realization that beyond **dying for the faith**, every effort should also be extended in **keeping all of G-d’s mitzvos**.¹⁰¹

3) **Wanting *Mashiach***: When times in Exile are calm and prosperous, one may expect the longing for *Mashiach* to abate somewhat.

After all, we were born into this reality of *Galus*, as were our ancestors before us. After almost two thousand years, how uncomfortable can we possibly feel about living another day in Exile? Isn’t this our “normal”? If we are not facing abject suffering and torture, are we not expected to feel comfortable in our assumed home?

However, the *ra’aya mehemna’s* effect in revealing our core identity changes that completely. Rather than only revealing our true connection to G-d as a last resort, the “Moshe of the times” can empower us to live with this sense of identity in prosperous times as well.¹⁰²

99. See above, p. 238f, from *Tanya*, Ch. 18. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 20, p. 75ff, regarding the unique characteristics of Jewish martyrdom.

100. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 334.

101. See *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 36. Even beyond empowering adults for *mesirus nefesh* in their own religious obligation, the *ra’aya mehemnas* also exhibit endless dedication towards the education of young children. See *ibid.*, as to how this was exhibited in Mordechai’s leadership during the story of Purim. In this sense, Mordechai was a model of a true “shepherd of faith” for all time. This is stated in *Midrash*: “Mordechai in his generation was like Moshe in his generation;” see *Esther Rabbah*, 6:2.

102. This aligns with a central theme of *Chassidus Chabad* in which the core of the soul’s Jewish identity is meant to permeate the entire psyche to the point that the person thinks, feels and functions according to the perspective of the *yechidah*. See above, p. 168ff.

We can come to realize that this unbreakable bond is what **really** matters to all parts of our psyche. We realize that what matters most to us is for G-d and His beloved people to finally come home. This sense is so pervasive that the comforts of the times do nothing to quell our souls' unsatiable yearning. In this light, another moment in Exile is an excruciating impossibility. The expectation that *Galus* will not continue is in our bones, and we dedicate all our efforts to intensify our Torah and *mitzvah* activities to bring *Mashiach* now.¹⁰³

4) **Jewish Unity:** Our common G-dly identity is the primary factor that unites us as a people. Being that all of our souls are an "actual part of G-d,"¹⁰⁴ and G-d is One, we are all inherently one.¹⁰⁵ Idealistically beautiful as it sounds, it is rather difficult to accomplish.¹⁰⁶ To view every person **solely** by their most soulful G-dly spark is an obvious detachment from the here-and-now of everyday life. One must deemphasize the noticeable distinction between people, and highlight the common inner soul to make it happen. This can be accomplished by deep internal *avodah*, but is there a way to cherish every person for their external selves too?

Here is where the *ra'aya mehemna's* effect in cultivating our Jewish consciousness comes into play. When the person integrates their *yechidah* into their being, they can begin to view others in a similar way.

103. See *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 39ff. See also above, p. 171ff.

104. *Tanya*, Ch. 2.

105. *Tanya*, Ch. 32.

106. Therefore, aside from rare moments in history such as the encampment at Mt. Sinai when the Jewish People came together "like one person with one heart" (*Rashi* on *Shemos* 19:2), Jewish unity has been a challenge. Strife and disunion have plagued communities throughout our history, despite this being the antithesis of true Jewish identity. The heightened focus on Jewish unity in our times can be attributed to the extensive influence of the "faithful shepherds" of our times, who bolstered this awareness in preparation of the *Geulah*. *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 15, p. 283ff.

One recognizes that just as their whole self is intrinsically bound to and expressive of their Jewish core, so too, every Jew is **entirely Jewish through and through**. Although a Jew may be lacking **full expression** of their Jewishness in some behaviors, that is most probably due to **misguided** instruction rather than blatant disregard of their true self.

With this insight, Jewish unity encompasses the whole Jew, body and soul, from their internal core to their external character.¹⁰⁷

The Character of a Rebbe

Having explored the deep soul element of a Rebbe, ultimately explaining their role as Israel's collective soul, one could only expect that a Rebbe possesses a wide array of strengths and virtues. Our nation is diverse; individuals have various needs, and the Rebbe is the one leader who is meant to be there for each and every one.¹⁰⁸

As a leader with this broad capacity, the Rebbe exhibits a wide array of personality strengths and capabilities. The Rebbe is a Rebbe for so many, causing there to be numerous appreciations of what a Rebbe is.

For the scholar, the Rebbe is a Torah genius, to the spiritually inclined, the Rebbe is a *tzaddik*, for the person in need, the Rebbe is a miracle worker, and so on.

The Rebbe addressed this in a public letter several months after the passing of his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz:¹⁰⁹

“Many people seek to pinpoint and characterize the virtues and preeminence of each of the *Chabad* Rebbeim... in various terms: The paradigm of self-sacrifice, a *Gaon*, a man of exemplary character traits, a *tzaddik*, an individual endowed with Divine

107. See *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 42. This idea brings to light that not only does the *ra'aya mehemna* connect the Jewish People with G-d (see above, p. 298, fn. 93), they also connect the Jewish People with each other. See *ibid.*, p. 34, fn. 8; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 31, p. 69ff.

108. See *Bamidbar* 27:18

109. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 117, Chabad.org/2278234/.

inspiration, an individual accustomed to performing miracles, and so on.¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, the essential point is missing here: The fact that they are leaders who are defined as *nessi'im*, and of the *Chabad* model of such leadership.

A *nasi* by definition is referred to as 'the head of the multitudes of Israel.'¹¹¹ In relation to the people, he is the 'head' and 'brain'; their nurture and life-force reach them through him; and by cleaving to him they are bound and united with their Source in the Supernal worlds.

Some *nessi'im* convey their influence in an internalized manner; others diffuse their influence in an indirect and encompassing manner. Some leaders endow their recipients with insights into the revealed plane of the Torah (*nigleh*); some endow their recipients with insights into the mystical plane of the Torah, and some do both together; some instruct their followers in the paths of *avodah* and *Chassidus*; some direct material benefits to their followers; and so on.

The model of *Chabad's* leaders is that from the Alter Rebbe and onwards, up to and including my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, they incorporated all of the above attributes: They radiated both inward and encompassing influence in Torah, *avodah*, and the practice of good deeds, and they conveyed blessings both spiritual and material. Consequently, the *nessi'im* of *Chabad* have been bound with all '613 organs of the soul and body' of those who were connected with them."¹¹²

110. The Rebbe further points out that "when one considers how the teachings of *Chassidus* define what self-sacrifice really means, what being a *Gaon* really means, and so on, these are indeed extremely laudatory terms."

111. *Bamidbar* 1:16, 10:4.

112. The Rebbe concluded the letter by writing: "Every single one of us must ponder upon and know this idea. That [the Rebbe Rayatz] is indeed the *nasi* and the head; from him and through him are directed all material and spiritual benefactions; and by being bound to him (which in his letters he has taught us how this is accomplished) we are bound and united with the spiritual root, with the ultimate Supernal spiritual root."

This letter clarifies that all of the personality strengths of a Rebbe are only a means by which he fulfills his true mission, being the caring and guiding leader of the people.¹¹³

With this in mind, among the **secondary** traits of a Rebbe are the abovementioned themes of outstanding Torah scholarship, performing miracles, exhibiting *ruach hakodesh*, and giving blessings relating to the physical and spiritual, etc.

The Rebbeim have the unique ability to both receive communication from their predecessors and to hear Torah being said in higher worlds.¹¹⁴

Chassidim routinely ask the Rebbe for blessings in both material and spiritual matters.¹¹⁵ Often, clear miracles happen as a result of a blessing of the Rebbe.¹¹⁶ Significantly, in

113. See also *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 4, pp. 30-31, and fn. 69, there. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 34, p. 217ff.

114. There are numerous displays of this phenomenon including when the Rebbe mentioned in passing instructions he received at the gravesite of the Rebbe Rayatz, which he visited frequently. See for example *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 64, p. 35.

This is in addition to the more standard form of *ruach hakodesh* which was once commonplace for Torah sages. See Endnote 6, on p. 447.

115. In *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 22, the Alter Rebbe exhorted *Chasidim* to only ask for spiritual mentoring, since guidance in material matters was in the realm of the prophets. (See *Shmuel I*, Ch. 9, that *Shmuel HaNavi* was approached by Shaul to help find some missing donkeys.) Nevertheless, even after this exhortation, chassidim continued to seek the guidance and blessing of the Rebbeim in material matters, which the Rebbeim would give. See for example *Sefer HaSichos 5751*, Vol. 2, p. 790, and fn. 101 there.

116. While typically blessings only draw down what is already destined in higher worlds, the blessings of a *tzaddik* can cause a new source of blessing. See also *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 2, p. 117ff. See there, fn. 15, where it indicates the importance that the recipient of the blessings create a “receptacle” for the blessing of the *tzaddik* by adding in Torah and *mitzvos*. This power of the *tzaddik* is reflected in the following statements of our Sages: “A *tzaddik* decrees and G-d fulfills.” *Zohar II*, 15a. “G-d decrees and a *tzaddik* has the power to nullify His decree.” *Moed Katan* 16b.

Sippurei Tzaddikim are replete with stories of this phenomenon. For recorded contemporary stories of the Rebbe, see *To Know and To Care* (SIE Publications); *My Story* (JEM).

These blessings would often be conferred through physical objects such as *kos shel brachah*; see *Likkutei Dibburim*, SIE, Vol. 2, p. 161, an item of the Rebbe, such as a coin or dollar bill; see *Bava Basra* 15b; *Sefer HaSichos – Toras Shalom*, p. 177, the gaze of a *tzaddik*; see *Shabbos* 33b.

Tanya, it describes the miracles of *tzaddikim* as a way in which G-dliness becomes revealed in the world.¹¹⁷

The Baal Shem Tov described the *tzaddik* of the generation as “the *Baal Teshuvah*,” translating *baal* as owner and saying that he is the “owner of *teshuvah*.”¹¹⁸ Simply put, the *tzaddik* of the generation possesses the keys of *teshuvah*, which spiritually revives that generation.¹¹⁹

In the Rebbe's Presence

As they have a captivating effect on their surroundings, being in the presence of a Rebbe is a most elevating experience.¹²⁰ Throughout the generations, chassidim have always flocked to their Rebbeim to spend time in their presence. In particular, chassidim always made it a point to travel to the Rebbe for Jewish holidays which are meant to inspire for the months ahead.¹²¹

117. Our Sages taught that “Originally, it arose in G-d’s thought to create the world through the attribute of stern judgment, He saw, however, that in this manner, the world could not endure, so He associated the attribute of mercy in its creation.” (See *Rashi* on *Bereishis* 1:1; *Bereishis Rabbah*, 12:15.) This is manifested through the miracles and wonders of Torah and of *tzaddikim*; *Tanya*, *Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah*, Ch. 5; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 29, pp. 359-360.

Seeing and hearing miracles of *tzaddikim* strengthens one’s faith in G-d and His faithful servants. See above, p. 64, regarding the miracles of the Baal Shem Tov and their purpose in revealing G-dliness in this world. Although, in previous times, in *Chabad* circles there was not so much focus on miracles performed by the Rebbeim and the main focus was on their *Chassidus*, in our times, we see clearly that *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe is enhanced through seeing miracles. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 42; *Sefer HaSichos 5747*, Vol. 2, p. 567; *Sefer HaSichos 5751*, Vol. 2, p. 470. See also Endnote 7, on p. 448.

118. See *Tzavaas HaRivash*, sec. 125; *Kesser Shem Tov*, sec. 270, 397. See also *Ohr Torah*, sec. 156; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 557ff.

119. The *tzaddik*’s role in spiritually reviving the generation was clearly manifest in the Rebbe’s *mitzvah* campaigns. An example of this occurred in 5727/1967, when the Rebbe launched the *tefillin* campaign. The notion of approaching a stranger in the street and asking him to lay *tefillin* was revolutionary and indeed sparked quite a debate at the time. Nevertheless, the *tzaddik hador* is the owner of *teshuvah* for the generation and saw this approach as a key to *teshuvah* in our times. This is evident in the fact that countless Jews have subsequently returned to Torah observance through this specific initiative, as well as the Rebbe’s other *mitzvah* campaigns.

120. See also *Kesser Shem Tov*, *Hosafos*, p. 344f (Kehot, 2004).

121. See also *Mishneh Torah*, *HaMada*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, 5:7. See also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 2, p. 254. This has at least some comparison to the concept of *aliyah leregel*, *Toras*

Being in the Rebbe's environment itself is conducive to spiritual growth,¹²² and witnessing the Rebbe go about his *avodah* blowing the Shofar, dancing on *Simchas Torah* and so on, leaves an impression of *yiras Shamayim* for the times to come.¹²³

Of primary significance to a chassid is the ability to hear the Rebbe's *sichos* and *maamarim* directly from him, rather than studying them from the text. This solidifies the absorption of the teaching to a much greater extent.¹²⁴

The ultimate highlight of a chassid's experience in the Rebbe's presence is the opportunity to have a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. This is the term chassidim use to describe a personal meeting between Rebbe and chassid.¹²⁵ In this setting, the chassid presents the Rebbe with their standing in life and *avodah*, requests the Rebbe's blessings, and asks for guidance in the way forward.¹²⁶

Menachem 5747, Vol. 1, p. 465.

122. A Rebbe is intrinsically attached to the *beis midrash* where he lives and delivers his teachings. Beyond being the place in which Jewish unity is felt to a greater extent due to the countless Jews from all backgrounds flocking there for guidance and inspiration, it is also the place where the Rebbe's presence can be felt in a heightened manner.

In the case of the Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe, this was 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, New York. Today, chassidim are still drawn to "770" and absorb the teachings and ways of *Chassidus* there. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5747, Vol. 1, p. 376; *Sefer HaSichos* 5752, Vol. 2, p. 465-475. (See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5751, Vol. 2, p. 641 where it mentions that the number "770" is numerically equivalent to the Hebrew word *poratzta*, which means "spreading forth," indicating the role it plays as being the center of *Chabad's* global outreach.)

123. See for example *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 7, p. 279ff.

124. See *Toras Menachem* 5746, Vol. 4, p. 311. To some extent this can be similarly attained by watching video recordings of such occasions. See *Toras Menachem* 5751, Vol. 4, pp. 108, 114.

125. The physical place of *yechidus* is versatile. Traditionally, *yechidus* was reserved for the Rebbe's room which is known as *Gan Eden HaElyon*, (see *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. 2, p. 275a), however, in the early 1980s, the Rebbe began accepting *yechidus* in group settings in the *Shul* at 770. The Rebbe also said that the "dollar line" or a *farbrengen* can be a setting for *yechidus* in a condensed form. In our times, *yechidus* is fully possible at the Rebbe's *Ohel*, see below, p. 318ff. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, p. 239.

126. This requires appropriate preparation, since there is no holiness without preparation. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 162.

The *yechidus* is related to the word *yechidah*. The entry of a chassid into *yechidus* is primarily a meeting of the *yechidah* of the chassid with the *yechidah* of the Rebbe.¹²⁷

By tapping into the inner soul, the chassid is granted the strength and resolve to persevere despite the difficulties which may present.¹²⁸

5. CONNECTING TO A REBBE

Hiskashrus

In the personal life of a chassid, being connected to the Rebbe is more than affiliation or alliance. *Hiskashrus*, as this connection is called, is an encompassing ideal which influences the full scope of one's psyche and deeds.¹²⁹ The chassid sees *hiskashrus* as essential to maintaining one's footing in *avodas Hashem*.¹³⁰

The chassid aspires to the revelation of their *neshamah*, and the ability to live in a true consciousness of *Achdus Hashem*.¹³¹ The chassid wishes to live as a Jew through and through, with *Yiddishkeit* being the sole determining factor in every element of

127. In *Hayom Yom*, 10 Elul, several meanings of the word *yechidus* are explained. Citing elder chassidim of the Alter Rebbe it is said that *yechidus* means "clear," "designated," and "united." (See there for sources of these meanings in *Shekalim* 6:2, *Yevamos* 62a, and *Bereishis Rabbah*, 20:7.)

Simply put, *yechidus* is: to **clarify** one's own standing, to **designate** a mode of *avodah*, and connect oneself to the Rebbe in total **oneness**.

128. See *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 2, p. 7, fn. 51.

129. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 20, p. 131.

130. *Koheles* 5:1 states: "G-d is in heaven, and you are on the earth; therefore, let your words be few." For people of average spiritual stature, maintaining a relationship with G-d while living on earth is quite challenging. Having a Rebbe to answer to, one who offers guidance, inspiration, and spiritual connection, is quite imperative. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 47, p. 106.

Regarding *hiskashrus* it is said: "When one is connected above, they do not fall below." *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 20, p. 115.

131. See *Ohr HaTorah, Devarim*, Vol. 1, p. 220, regarding the wording of *Shema Yisrael*, in which Moshe refers to G-d as *Hashem Elokeinu*, G-d **our** G-d, rather than *Hashem Elokecha* or *Elokeichem*, G-d **your** G-d, as common throughout the book of *Devarim*. This signifies the assistance of Moshe in enabling every Jew to properly internalize *Achdus Hashem*. See also *Maamarei Admur HaZakein* 5564, p. 204f.

life. The chassid wishes to feel connected to G-d, and to be able to apply this connection in wholesome *ahavas Yisrael*.

The chassid knows that the most effective way to accomplish this is to connect to their Rebbe. The chassid seeks to make themselves a “vessel” to their Rebbe’s influence and become a conduit to their Rebbe’s ideals. The more the chassid dedicates themselves to their Rebbe, the more attuned they will become to G-dliness and their G-dly mission.¹³² The greater the *hiskashrus*, the more meaningful and G-dly the chassid’s life will be.¹³³ The chassid is certain that living a life of *hiskashrus* is to their personal benefit both physically and spiritually.¹³⁴

Cultivating *Hiskashrus*

At this point in our discussion the question becomes: So, how is *hiskashrus* accomplished?

Establishing an encompassing and close relationship can be hard with someone on your own level, how does one bond with a Rebbe who is a G-dly *tzaddik* well beyond your league?

It is said: “You can **meet** a Rebbe, but you can’t **know** a Rebbe.”¹³⁵ A Rebbe’s inner world is pure G-dliness with no inkling of *yeshus*, something completely beyond the average person’s frame of reference. Despite a chassid’s best efforts, they will never be able to truly understand their Rebbe or his inner world.

How does this Rebbe-and-chassid connection take form?

132. When the Torah speaks of the Jewish People’s faith in G-d in the wake of the miracles of the Exodus, it states: “They believed in G-d and in Moshe His servant” (*Shemos* 14:31). Noting that the Torah uses the very same verb (“*vaya’aminu*,” “and they believed”) to refer to Israel’s belief in Moshe and in the Al-mighty, the *Mechilta* (ad loc.) declares: “One who believes in the faithful shepherd, [Moshe], believes in G-d.” See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 17, p. 132.

133. See also *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 358f, regarding the joy in serving G-d that is contributed by *hiskashrus*.

134. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 178ff.

135. See for example Rabbi C. M. Perlow, *Likkutei Sipurim*, p. 143f (1992 ed.), in citation of Rabbi Hillel of Paritch and the Tzemach Tzedek.

This is where it is important to reiterate that the bond between the Rebbe and any Jew is actually intrinsic. A chassid doesn't **become** connected to the Rebbe, the chassid's *hiskashrus* simply reveals their natural bond. When one considers the Rebbe's role as the *neshamah klalis*, the encompassing soul, who dedicatedly tends to cultivating the *neshamah* within every Jew, one realizes that *hiskashrus* is just about revealing and solidifying what is already there.

On a general level, chassidim build their *hiskashrus* by the two following means:

1) Learning the Rebbe's Teachings: A primary role of a Rebbe is being a teacher of Torah. A Rebbe invests his entire being in the teachings which he conveys to his students, giving the students a means to access the Rebbe's core.¹³⁶ When the students learn and understand these teachings, they not only internalize the messages conveyed, they also fuse with the Rebbe who revealed these teachings.¹³⁷

On a more basic level, by learning the teaching of a Rebbe, one will gain deep insight into the Rebbe's ideals and perspective. Ultimately, the teachings of a successful teacher "rub off" on the students, and they gradually begin to think like their teacher thinks. Similarly, by studying their Rebbe's teachings, the chassid begins to live life with their Rebbe's perspective and valuing their Rebbe's ideals.

2) Following the Rebbe's Instructions: Each Rebbe issues directives to his chassidim reflecting the mission of the time. In consideration of the ever-advancing process of preparation for *Mashiach*, every time has its primary field of focus. The Rebbe's guidance can be directed to the general generation and chassidim as a whole, or it can be directed towards individual

136. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 27, p. 24ff. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 93f, 162ff.

137. This can be understood to be in similarity to how G-d invested Himself fully into Torah, making Himself fully accessible by means of its study. So too, *tzaddikim*, who are "likened to their creator" (*Rus Rabbah*, 4:3), make themselves fully accessible through their Torah teachings. For this reason, we find that the Rebbeim of *Chabad* taught both *Chassidus* and *nigleh*. More than being a personal outlet to their outstanding Torah scholarship, this was to allow for their chassidim maximum opportunity for *hiskashrus*. *Sichos Kodesh* 5737, Vol. 1, p. 521f.

chassidim, privileged enough to receive instructions relating to their particular circumstances.¹³⁸ Characteristically, the chassid makes every effort to fulfill the Rebbe's instructions to the utmost extent possible.

Acting upon the Rebbe's instruction causes a twofold reinforcement to *hiskashrus*.

- 1) The Rebbe-chassid relationship becomes experienced in day-to-day life and in tangible deed.
- 2) Unlike learning which is intellectually appreciated, practical directives may not always be understood. Rather than questioning: "Why? How much?" and so on, the chassid fulfills the Rebbe's instructions with dedication and self-transcendence, affecting a powerful *bittul*.¹³⁹

To explain: The empowerment a Rebbe bestows can be placed into two categories. First, the Rebbe uncovers the potential that each person is capable of. Second, the Rebbe empowers the person to transcend their limitations, enabling them to achieve what would otherwise be impossible.¹⁴⁰

Therefore, a chassid is not deterred when the Rebbe's instructions seem insurmountable. The chassid realizes that along with the directive comes the empowerment to fulfill it. One needs to only be *battel* and not challenge this influence, and what would seem in our eyes to be impossible can be attained in stride.¹⁴¹

138. Each Rebbe introduces specific *takanos*, or general directives for the chassidim. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 54f, that these introductions provide *tikkun*, or rectification, for this particular era. In our times a significant *takanah* of the Rebbe is the daily study of *Rambam*, as well as the *mitzvah* campaigns. Also of worthy mention is the daily study of *Chumash*, *Tehillim*, and *Tanya* (*Chumash* and *Rashi* of the daily section of the weekly Torah portion, *Tehillim* as apportioned according to the days of the month, *Tanya* as apportioned to the days of the year), which is known as *Chitas*. Instituted by the Rebbe Rayatz, this practice was constantly encouraged by the Rebbe.

139. A Rebbe invests his utmost into guiding the Jewish People, causing it to be appropriate that chassidim reciprocate with utmost dedication as well. See *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 40f.

140. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 30, p. 226ff.

141. The Rebbe-chassid relationship is characterized by a tremendous amount of trust. The chassid recognizes that the Rebbe gave this directive altruistically and for the chassid's personal benefit. The chassid yearns for G-dly direction and to fulfill his purpose in this world, while the Rebbe is devoted wholeheartedly to helping each person reach

The combination of studying the Rebbe's teachings and fulfilling the Rebbe's directives creates a wholesome sense of connection, where the person and their *avodah* are filled with the awareness that "I am not alone, my Rebbe is with me, assisting me in my efforts."¹⁴²

Additional Elements of *Hiskashrus*

Beyond these primary expressions of *hiskashrus* there are a number of other means to further solidify the connection between chassid and Rebbe.

They include:

Visualizing the Rebbe: Chassidim typically have a picture of the Rebbe in their home and on their person. From time to time they will contemplate the face of the Rebbe, imagining themselves in his presence.¹⁴³

Reciting the Rebbe's Chapter of *Tehillim*: A tradition from the Alter Rebbe received from the Baal Shem Tov is that every person should recite the chapter of *Tehillim* corresponding to one's age on a daily basis.¹⁴⁴ Beyond reciting their personal chapter,

that goal. The chassid understands that the Rebbe's directives convey the tools needed to properly connect to G-d and sees this instruction to be a transmission from G-d through the Rebbe. The chassid is confident that these directives are relevant, timely, and achievable, even if a particular directive seems impossible at first.

142. In a sense, these two modes of strengthening one's *hiskashrus* crystalize two dimensions within the Rebbe-chassid relationship. 1) A relatable Rav or teacher: The Rebbe is the chassid's primary Torah teacher, and in the case of *Chassidus* reveals the level of *yechidah*, which illuminates all dimensions of study. In a student-teacher relationship, the most important element is to understand and comprehend the teaching. This requires review and analysis, followed by integration in *avodah*. 2) An exalted *Melech* or kinglike figure: By issuing directives to the chassidim, which they will dedicatedly fulfill with *bittul*, the Rebbe serves as a conduit for G-d's Kingship and majesty. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 2, p. 123.

143. See *Sotah* 36b, in reference to Yosef being held back from sin upon seeing a vision of his father. Contemplating the picture of a Rebbe is known as *tziyur pnei haRav* which chassidim always considered to be an *avodah*. One envisions themselves being in the Rebbe's presence and somewhat experiences the feelings associated with the setting. It arouses one's feeling of connection with the Rebbe, boosting their *hiskashrus*, and transporting the chassid to a higher plane; *Toras Menachem* 5750, Vol. 3, p. 628.

144. See *Kesser Shem Tov, Hosafos*, p. 414 and references there (Kehot, 2004). See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 10, p. 75, fn. 31.

chassidim have the practice of reciting the Rebbe's chapter as well. This serves as a spiritual aid to boost personal internalization of the Rebbe's ideals.¹⁴⁵

Writing to the Rebbe: Throughout the Rebbe's written correspondence, a recurring theme is the Rebbe's request for people to stay in touch with him.¹⁴⁶ The Rebbe continuously reminds people to keep him informed of their personal goings-on. Writing to the Rebbe should not be reserved for times of crisis. Instead, by keeping the Rebbe informed, one channels the Rebbe's blessings in an increased manner, at times causing the crisis to be entirely avoided.¹⁴⁷

Associating with Other Chassidim: *Avodas Hashem* is not a lone effort. When we connect with others around us and engage in strengthening ourselves in the ideals of Torah and *Chassidus*, we all become stronger. This is the central purpose of chassidic *farbrengens*.¹⁴⁸ In terms of *hiskashrus*, by coming together with other chassidim, our personal bond to the Rebbe is strengthened as well.¹⁴⁹

Seeking Advice According to the Rebbe's Instructions: Chassidim were always known to consult with their Rebbe on all matters of importance. Which home to buy, which treatment to pursue, or how to handle any life situation were all forwarded to the Rebbeim throughout the ages.¹⁵⁰

In the first several decades of the Rebbe's leadership, the Rebbe gave a staggering amount of personal guidance to countless individuals. In the 1980s, the Rebbe scaled back to some extent from this practice, saying that enough teachings are available,

145. See also *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 151b.

146. See for example *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 12, p. 52.

147. See *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 12, p. 174.

148. See above, p. 275.

149. *Hayom Yom*, 24 Sivan. The greatest *nachas* to a parent is when their children are lovingly united. This is similarly true in regard to a Rebbe and his chassidim, that the unity of chassidim is most appreciated and causes an increase in G-d's blessings in all matters.

150. See above, p. 304, fn. 115.

making such individual guidance no longer necessary.¹⁵¹ The Rebbe stated that the time had come that his intent can be clarified by utilizing several general guidelines:

In matters pertaining to health, one should consult an expert doctor.¹⁵² Ideally this doctor should be a friend for whom the patient's welfare is of personal concern.¹⁵³ When possible, a second opinion should also be sought and if they disagree, consult a third and then follow the majority opinion.¹⁵⁴

In financial matters, such as income and work, one should consult friends who have an understanding of the situation.¹⁵⁵

In spiritual matters, one should seek the advice and direction of a Rav or *Mashpia*.¹⁵⁶

Shlichus

An advanced level of *hiskashrus* became highlighted in our generation by the expansion of the *Shlichus* movement. The Rebbe appointed thousands of his chassidim as his personal emissaries to strengthen *Yiddishkeit* and care for every Jew around the globe. Furthermore, on a more general level, the Rebbe asked that every Jew see themselves as a *Shliach*.¹⁵⁷

This phenomenon gives a tremendous boost to the Rebbe-chassid connection. In addition to the chassid seeing *hiskashrus* as a

151. *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, pp. 240, 247-248, and fn. 64, there. This was also due to time constraints, see *Toras Menachem* 5742, Vol. 4, p. 2178; *Toras Menachem* 5747, Vol. 3, p. 8; Vol. 4, p. 307f.

152. *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, p. 240;

153. *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, p. 248, fn. 59; *Toras Menachem* 5747, Vol. 4, p. 308.

154. See *Berachos* 60a.

155. See *Mishlei* 11:14, 24:6. *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, pp. 240, 247-248; *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 1, p. 402.

156. *Avos* 1:6,16. *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, pp. 240, 247-8; *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 1, p. 402. See above, p. 277.

157. See below, p. 405ff, 416.

personal avenue of spiritual advancement, *hiskashrus* becomes what the person is all about.

In *halachah*, there is discussion in regard to the principle of *Shlichus*, where an agent of the person acts on their behalf. The discussion revolves around the extent to which the agent becomes the representative of the sender. Does the sender merely gain the **fruits** of the agent's labor, or do we view the relationship as implied by the Talmudic language of "*shlucho shel adam - kemoso*,"¹⁵⁸ "the messenger of a person is **equivalent to one-self**." Namely, that the *Shliach's* ability to act, or even their very existence becomes an **extension of the sender**?¹⁵⁹

While on a halachic level this question is not completely resolved, nevertheless, when it comes to the thousands of men, women, and children which the Rebbe appointed as his *Shluchim*, he made it clear that they are empowered with the highest levels of fusion possible between the sender and messenger.¹⁶⁰ Being a *Shliach* means that one's day-to day life is pervaded by the sender, the Rebbe's ideals, because in a sense that is the *Shliach's* assumed identity.¹⁶¹

Hiskashrus between Rebbe and chassid is taken to the highest levels because the Rebbe's presence becomes integrated within the *Shliach's* identity.¹⁶² The Rebbe's influence on the *Shliach* is encompassing and the *Shliach* acts with the unique abilities

158. *Kiddushin* 41b; *Berachos* 34b, et al.

159. See *Lekach Tov*, 1; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 33, p. 113ff.

160. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 25, p. 340ff. See also *Toras Menachem* 5743, Vol. 4, p. 1909; *Toras Menachem* 5744, Vol. 4, p. 2449, for further insight regarding yet higher dimensions of *Shlichus*.

161. On many occasions the Rebbe emphasized to *Shluchim* that "*ich fohr doch, mit eich*," "I am coming on this journey **with you**." Unlike a military general who issues a command and then sits in his headquarters expecting the soldier to battle on his own, the Rebbe appoints the chassid as a *Shliach*, an extension of himself. The chassid knows that they are not alone, nor operating "under their own steam," but that they are empowered by the Rebbe.

162. This is reflected in the Torah's first *Shliach*, Avraham's servant Eliezer who was sent to find a wife for Yitzchak. His name is not used in the Torah's lengthy account, instead Eliezer introduces himself as "*eved Avraham anochi*," "I am the servant of Avraham" (*Bereishis* 24:34). See *Sefer HaSichos* 5752, p. 99ff, and fn. 34, there.

of the Rebbe, their sender.¹⁶³ The power of the Rebbe to awaken souls is now entrusted into the hands of the *Shliach* who extends the Rebbe's presence to the furthest corners of the globe.¹⁶⁴ The Rebbe and chassid are fused to the greatest degree possible.¹⁶⁵

6. AN ETERNAL FLAME

The Permeating Influence of the Rebbe

In previous chapters, we discussed the permeating nature of the *yechidah*. Despite it being the most profound element of the soul, the *yechidah* can be the most relevant. It need not remain as a last-resort mechanism, it can become the basis of one's everyday self-perception.¹⁶⁶

As was explained, a focus of *Chassidus Chabad* is to cause the *yechidah* to be absorbed within the entire psyche. The *Chabad* approach provides intellectual presentation of the soulful ideals of *Chassidus* specifically for this purpose. While fielding them towards practical application, the wellsprings of *Chassidus* are brought outside.¹⁶⁷

Also highlighted above was the vital importance of the *yechidah* having this permeating effect. If the *yechidah* is seen as abstract, other-worldly, or non-relatable, then it is not truly *yechidah*. Is it a fifth, loftiest level of the soul? Indeed it is, but that is not the core essence of the soul. A true essence must not be relegated to a specific mode of being. Only when the *yechidah* carries

163. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, p. 100; *Sefer HaSichos* 5751, Vol. 1, p. 34, in regard to the personal success of the *Shluchim*. The more a *Shliach* does in the furtherance of their *Shlichus*, the more empowerment they receive, both for the *Shlichus* and for their personal needs; *Sefer HaSichos* 5749, Vol. 1, pp. 49, 75. One can reach the highest levels specifically through the *Shlichus*. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

164. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5747, Vol. 1, p. 138ff.

165. This is yet further enhanced when the *Shliach* learns the Torah teachings taught by the *Meshaleiach*, their sender, thereby becoming bonded to yet a greater extent. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, p. 98.

166. See above, p. 169.

167. See above, p. 165ff.

the paradoxical ability to be both abstract **and** relatable, does its true nature as the very core of the Jew come to the fore.¹⁶⁸

Now, in a similar vein, this is relevant in terms of the role of a Rebbe, the general *yechidah* of the generation. Beyond being the nerve-center who feels for, and tends to, the needs of the Jews of his times, a Rebbe is also meant to become **integrated** within the people. A Rebbe does not only exert influence over his followers; instead, he imbues them with his *yechidah* ideals so that they, too, begin living *yechidah*-focused lives.

Ultimately, for a Rebbe's "*yechidah*-effect" to be entirely successful, he must engage his followers so that they too contribute to the effort. If the Rebbe remains the sole "broadcaster" of influence, his followers are only "receivers." In this manner, the Rebbe's *yechidah* will never become who they truly are. "Receiving" revelation becomes what they are accustomed to, but it has yet to become **their own**.¹⁶⁹

Instead, to maximize the absorption of the *yechidah*, a Rebbe must empower the chassidim to involve their own efforts, allowing them to truly discover the *yechidah* within. In this manner, the *yechidah* will fully resonate within the "outsides," the everyday lives of the chassidim. As explained, this integration of the *yechidah* reveals the essence of what the *yechidah* truly is. It uncovers the true essence of the Rebbe and the power of his influence.¹⁷⁰

Interestingly, this idea is hinted at in the verse describing the influence of Moshe, the first *neshamah klalis*, within the Jewish People.¹⁷¹

"*Veatah tetzaveh es Bnei Yisrael veyikchu eilecha shemen zayis zach... leha'alos ner tamid,*" literally translates as "And you shall command the Children of Israel and they shall bring you pure olive oil... to kindle an eternal

168. See above, p. 147f, from *Kuntres Inyana Shel Toras HaChassidus*, Ch. 21, *On the Essence of Chassidus*, Ch. XXI.

169. See *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 40ff.

170. *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 42f.

171. This follows the explanation presented in the *maamar VeAtah Tetzaveh 5741, Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, p. 34ff, also cited above, p. 298ff.

light.”¹⁷² Describing G-d’s directive that Moshe instruct the people regarding the lighting of the *Mishkan’s Menorah* with pure olive oil, the Torah states that they were meant to bring the oil to Moshe. Now, Moshe was not the one to kindle the *Menorah*, why did the oil need to be brought to him?¹⁷³

Chassidus explains that on a deeper level this verse describes the kindling of the inner soul caused by Moshe. “*Veatah tetzaveh es Bnei Yisrael*” can also be translated “And you [Moshe] shall **connect** the Children of Israel [with G-d].”¹⁷⁴ However, along with the directive that Moshe should reveal this deepest bond with G-d is the instruction that the Jewish People should **contribute** to the effort, “They shall bring you pure olive oil.”

Beyond Moshe’s inspiration, the masses should supply fuel for this inner fire, and they should bring Moshe the benefit of their own efforts.

The result of the people’s contribution is that the lamp will become “an eternal flame.” The true essence of the soul is always applicable and knows no bounds, it is simply who we are. However, this is only revealed when Moshe’s influence is integrated within the people to the point that they bring Moshe the benefit of their own homemade efforts. It is the oil that they produce which solidifies this influence to last forever, “*lehalos ner tamid*.”¹⁷⁵

While this idea of *yechidah* absorption is relevant to the Rebbe’s model of leadership, and his *Shlichus* movement as a whole, this becomes especially pertinent and obvious in this “post-*Gimmel Tammuz* era.”

In a manner that defies conventional thinking, the Rebbe’s presence, leadership and influence are all continuously expanding. Empowered by the Rebbe, his chassidim and Jews of all walks of

172. *Shemos* 27:20.

173. See *Ramban* ad loc.

174. See above, p. 298, fn. 93.

175. *Toras Menachem, Sefer HaMaamarim Melukat*, Vol. 3, pp. 41-43.

life continue to further advance his life-changing messages. The Rebbe's "yechidah-effect" continues to resonate in an increasing manner, illustrating that this was not a temporary influence; it is an "eternal flame" kindled within the hearts of this generation. This became who we are.

To cite the words of the Rebbe in 5745/1985, regarding the expanding influence of the Rebbe Rayatz some thirty-five years after his passing:

"One cannot say that he is not here. On the contrary, every year he becomes more alive, stronger, and more active between us and in us, and through us in every Jew and in all Jews and in the entire world."¹⁷⁶

Somehow, the Rebbe's presence continues to be felt within the Jewish People and the world at large. The Rebbe's "yechidah influence" is present within his chassidim, and by its means the Rebbe remains active within today's world.¹⁷⁷ One can easily recognize the Rebbe as the most influential Jewish leader of the 21st century, just as he was in regards to the latter half of the 20th century. With the Rebbe involving anyone who was willing to join in his efforts, the Rebbe kindled an "eternal flame" of Jewish identity and mission.

Direction in Our Times

An integral element of the Rebbe-chassid relationship is the Rebbe's availability to offer guidance and blessing to all those who turn to him. In the Rebbe's own teachings, he emphasized that a Rebbe's physical passing does not stop this flow of personal connection.¹⁷⁸

176. 15 Tammuz 5745, *Chabad.org*/531039/.

177. As stated in *Taanis* 5b: "Our forefather Yaakov did not die, for just as his children live on, so does he live on [through them]." His children are not just his legacy, they are an extension of his presence. See *Sichos Kodesh* 5741, Vol. 2, p. 82ff. See also *Toras Menachem* 5745, Vol. 4, p. 2515, that the cause of "the children living on" is because of the Rebbe's presence within them.

178. This was a primary theme of the Rebbe's guidance in the year following the passing of his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz. See *Proceeding Together, The Earliest Talks of the Rebbe After the Passing of the Previous Rebbe in 1950* (SIE Publications).

Regardless of a Rebbe's place in the spiritual realms, as a true "shepherd of Israel," the Rebbe does not abandon his flock.¹⁷⁹ The Rebbe continues to care for his people, and as the *Zohar* teaches, he is "present in this world more than in his lifetime."¹⁸⁰ The constraints of time and space no longer cause even the slightest limitation, and his soul continues to draw G-d's blessings into the world in an abundant manner.¹⁸¹

This heightened connection causes that every person, regardless of their background or previous relationship with the Rebbe, can seek the Rebbe's blessing and guidance in their personal lives.

Hiskashrus is fully possible, and more so, in an increasing manner. The chassid realizes that if the Rebbe-chassid bond defies the bounds of human expectation, it must truly be a *yechidah* connection. The true value and strength of this bond is appreciated, and the chassid invests their all into realizing its potential, living up to the ideals that such *hiskashrus* deserves.

The greatest levels of spirituality are connected to the lowest elements of existence; therefore, the Rebbe's presence is especially felt at his physical resting place.¹⁸² Known as the *Tziyun* or *Ohel*, it is a place of connection and spiritual recharge.¹⁸³

179. See for example *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 19; *Igros Kodesh, Rebbe Rayatz*, Vol. 1, p. 141.

180. *Zohar* III, 71b, also quoted in *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 27.

181. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 27.

182. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 67f. See also *Derashos HaRan, Derush 8*.

183. The tradition of praying at the gravesites of *tzaddikim* that they should intercede on our behalf has sources in the earliest generations of Jewish tradition. See *Sotah* 34b, where it discusses Kaleb's choice to pray at the cave of Machpeilah during his trip into the Land as one of the scouts (as alluded to in *Bamidbar* 13:22). "Rava said: Kaleb separated himself from the group and went and prostrated himself on the graves of the forefathers in Hebron. He said to them: My forefathers, pray for mercy for me so that I will be saved from the counsel of the spies." See also *Taanis* 16a and 23b; *Zohar* III, 70b and the sources cited there in *Nitzutzei Zohar*. See also *Shaalos U'Teshuvos Minchas Elazar*, Vol. 1, sec. 68.

For an in-depth look at the subject of praying at the gravesite of a *tzaddik*, see *Whispers Between Worlds* (SIE Publications). In brief, when one visits the gravesite of *tzaddikim*, there should be two intentions:

1) In the merit of the *tzaddik* who is buried in this place, one is hopeful that their

A visit to the *Ohel* is a meeting of souls where the Rebbe's *yechidah* bonds with the *yechidahs* of the visitors.¹⁸⁴ The empowerment and clarity of the Rebbe's perspective can be sensed,¹⁸⁵ and one can be sure that the Rebbe hears the individual and their requests.¹⁸⁶ It is customary to put one's requests in writing and after one reads their letter, it is usually torn and left on the *Ohel*.¹⁸⁷

When one connects to the Rebbe, asking him for blessing and direction in any given matter, the Rebbe "will find the way to answer."¹⁸⁸ Utilizing whatever spiritual means are available to him, the Rebbe will orchestrate matters in order for the person who wants to fulfill his mission to do so regardless of the circumstances.¹⁸⁹

A further mode of achieving the correct decision is by learning and engaging in the Rebbe's Torah teachings. When one does so, powers are granted from the Rebbe to succeed in doing the right and desired thing.¹⁹⁰

prayer to G-d will be well-received On High.

2) At the gravesite, one connects deeply with the soul of the Rebbe, causing the Rebbe to beseech G-d on the chassid's behalf.

See *Kuntres HaHishtatchus* attributed to the Mitteler Rebbe (*Maamarei Admur HaEmtza'i, Kuntreisim*, p. 19ff). See also *Maaneh Lashon* and the selections of *Zohar* printed there.

184. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 11, p. 30; see also *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 10, p. 264, regarding the appropriate preparation such an experience deserves.

185. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 1, p. 108. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 2, p. 503.

186. See also *Shaalos U'Teshuvos Maharam Shik*, sec. 293.

187. The letter of request written by a chassid is known as a *pan* or *pidyon nefesh*, which literally means "redemption of the soul," in which one asks the root-soul of the *tzaddik* to arouse mercy from Above and bestow blessing and success upon the chassid. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5750, Vol. 2, p. 503; *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 25, p. 502. See also *Shaalos U'Teshuvos Minchas Yitzchak*, Vol. 8, sec. 53.

188. *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 3, p. 266.

189. Additionally, the very fact that one is devoted to the Rebbe and cares to live according to his instruction causes that even when one does not seem to receive an answer, they will merit to follow through with what the Rebbe wants of them. *Toras Menachem*, Vol. 3, p. 237.

190. See *Sefer HaSichos* 5748, Vol. 1, p. 240.

Finally, the general instructions which the Rebbe has given for decision making are comprehensive and well known.¹⁹¹

In Conclusion

In all, we have discussed the role of a Rebbe and its centrality to *Chassidus*. Connection to the Rebbe is what transforms *Chassidus* from the theoretical to the actual. Living with *hiskashrus* is what powers the personal *yechidah* revelation, and is what guides the individual in fulfilling their soul's true potential and purpose. As we approach the culmination of purpose in preparation for *Mashiach*, *hiskashrus* is more relevant and possible than ever.

191. These instructions were presented above, p. 312f. By implementing these principles anyone who wishes to live in accordance with the Rebbe's direction has the ability to do so.

Addendum

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword. xi

Acknowledgements xix

CHAPTER 1

Foundations. 1

The contextual origins of *Chassidus* are found in some of Judaism's fundamental principles. Ideas such as the cognitive knowledge of G-d, recognition of His Oneness, and the Sinaitic instruction of purpose are integral components of *Chassidus*'s general framework. A discussion of these primary Jewish ideals provides the background to understanding the nature of *Chassidus*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. GETTING STARTED 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Chassidus Chabad About <p>2. TWO KEY MITZVOS 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Know G-d • Faith vs. Reason • G-d's Oneness | <p>3. SINAI 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Revelation of Purpose <p>4. LIVING WITH PURPOSE. 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To Serve G-d • Reward: The Two Worlds • All-Encompassing Purpose • In Conclusion |
|---|--|

CHAPTER 2

Multi-Layered Torah. 17

The wisdom of *Chassidus* is an element of the Torah's inner dimension. This classification leads to an examination of the various dynamics within the Torah and an identification of their underlying cohesive theme. The interplay between these many elements provides the context for understanding the gradual revelation of the Torah's mystical arena, the root origin of *Chassidus*.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. DEFINING THE TORAH 17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Is the Torah? • Torah as Divine Instruction • Torah as G-d's Delight • Can These Two Distinct Themes Be Reconciled? | <p>2. THE EXPLANATION 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Unifying Waterfall of Torah • The Four Layers of Torah Interpretation • The Practical Halachah |
|---|--|

3. FUSION	26	6. THE INNER DIMENSION	39
• The Claimed Treasure		• The Body and Soul of Torah	
• Making Peace		• The Concealed Soul	
4. ANOCHI	29	• The Soul Revealed	
• Pre-Sinaitic Revelation		7. REVELATION	45
• Anochi, the Revolution of Sinai		• The Beginning of the Revelation	
• Unity of Realms		• The Various Schools of Kabbalah	
5. THE ONE TORAH	36	• The Golden Age of Kabbalah	
• Unchanging Truth		8. MUCH-NEEDED WISDOM	51
• Sinai, a One-Time Event		• The Mitzvah to Reveal Kabbalah	
• An Analogy		9. IN CONCLUSION	53
		• Torah in Its Entirety	
		• Torah’s True Character	

CHAPTER 3

Chassidus 57

The advent of *Chassidus* brought a new flavor to Jewish life and practice. An in-depth look at the Baal Shem Tov’s life, teachings, and primary goals provides important insight into what *Chassidus* is all about. Clarifying its role in the lead-up to *Mashiach’s* arrival, we can appreciate the traditional emphasis of “bringing *Chassidus* outwards.”

1. THE BAAL SHEM TOV	57	4. REVIVING SOULS	73
• The Advent of Chassidus		• The Timing of the Baal Shem Tov	
• The Baal Shem Tov’s Youth		• Unconventional Healing	
• Revelation		5. THE PATH TOWARDS	
• The Teachings of the		MASHIACH.	77
• The Miracles of the Baal Shem Tov		• Chassidus as a Preparation	
2. THE MOVEMENT		for Mashiach	
TAKES SHAPE.	65	• A Meeting with Mashiach	
• The Expansion of Chassidus		• A Permanent Redemption	
• The Movement Gets a Name		• To Transport a Spring	
3. WHAT CHASSIDUS		• Spreading the Wellsprings	
CHANGED	68	6. NOW IS THE TIME	85
• The Effect of Chassidus		• Of Challenges and Opportunities	
• Revelation of the Torah’s Soul		• Marching Proud	
• The Light of Chassidus			

CHAPTER 4

Chabad89

The development of *Chassidus* saw the emergence of the intellectual-themed *Chabad* approach. A discussion of its virtue clarifies its place within the world of Chassidism and brings to light some of *Chassidus Chabad's* primary themes. Additionally, an overview of the history and contribution of each of the seven *Chabad* Rebbeim provides a better understanding of the movement and its mission.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. THE INTELLECTUAL APPROACH89</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Emergence of Chabad • Comprehending the Divine • Essential Mitzvos Enhanced by the Wisdom of Chabad <p>2. AUTHENTIC CHASSIDUS98</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chassidus Chabad: An Adaptation or Innovation? • Unpacking a Condensed Torah • The Parallel Pattern of Chassidus's Development • Self-Achieved Divine Service <p>3. IN PREPARATION FOR MASHIACH104</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Focused • The Visit From On High | <p>4. THE PATH OF CHABAD107</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avodas Hashem From Within <p>5. THE REBBEIM AND THEIR WRITINGS109</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The First Generation — the Alter Rebbe • The Second Generation — the Mitteler Rebbe • The Third Generation — the Tzemach Tzedek • The Fourth Generation — the Rebbe Maharash • The Fifth Generation — the Rebbe Rashab • The Sixth Generation — the Rebbe Rayatz • The Seventh Generation — the Rebbe |
|---|---|

CHAPTER 5

Yechidah133

To properly define *Chassidus* requires an exploration of the soul's true nature. Identifying the G-dly soul's various levels clarifies the purpose of the Torah's numerous dimensions. The parallel between *Chassidus* and the soul-dimension of *yechidah* offers incredible insight into the enigmatic profundity and accessibility of *Chassidus*.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. DEFINING CHASSIDUS133</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Four Dimensions of Torah • The Enigma of Chassidus | <p>2. THE EXPLANATION135</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fifth Dimension • The Yechidah of Torah |
|---|---|

3. BEYOND KABBALAH 139	4. CHASSIDUS ABSORBED . . . 143
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Distinction Between Kabbalah and Chassidus • The Revelation of Chassidus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Permeating Nature of Chassidus • The Torah Unwrapped • Bringing Chassidus Outward

CHAPTER 6

Mashiach 149

The righteous leadership of *Mashiach* will characterize the Future Redemption. Understanding *Mashiach's* role and his unifying “*yechidah*-effect” provides important insight into the centrality of this fundamental Jewish ideal. The connection between *Chassidus* and *Mashiach* is also clarified, contributing significant instruction on how *Chassidus* is meant to be experienced.

1. THE ERA AND ITS LEADER 149	4. BRINGING MASHIACH 161
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Perfection • Mashiach, the Person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leadup to Redemption • The Explanation • Mirror Image • Yechidah in Daily Life
2. MASHIACH'S PERSONALITY 151	5. CHABAD'S ROLE 166
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mashiach as a King • The Heart of the Jewish People • Mashiach as the Yechidah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Yechidah Absorbed • Yechidah Redefined • A Light From the Future
3. THE YECHIDAH EFFECT . . . 155	6. MASHIACH AND ME 171
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A World of Singularity • Transformative Oneness • True Peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Takeaway

CHAPTER 7

Achdus Hashem 175

A broad, multi-stage discussion explores and emphasizes the relevance of the fundamental chassidic principle of absolute Divine Oneness. The resulting recognition of the extent of G-d's constant engagement with our world illuminates *Chassidus's* G-d-centered outlook.

1. ENCOMPASSING RELEVANCE 175	2. THE ONLY G-D 178
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cornerstone of Chassidus • The Way of the Future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Basic Definition of Divine Unity • Nature Revisited • Human Control • Hashem Echad

3. THE ONLY EXISTENCE.	185	6. INTERNALIZING ACHDUS HASHEM	203
• Achdus Hashem as Revolutionized by Chassidus		• Multi-Tiered Oneness	
4. IS THERE REALLY NOTHING ELSE?.	186	• Gradations of Bittul	
• Reality in Question		7. BITTUL HAYESH'S AUTHENTICITY	207
• Transcendent Oneness		• The Two Knowledges	
• Permeating Oneness: Echad vs. Yachid		• True Bittul	
• Bittul		8. IN CONCLUSION	211
5. THE PRIMARY EXPLANATION	192	• Living Achdus Hashem	
• The Sustaining Utterance			
• The Implication			
• The Need to Know			
• The Argument for Perpetual Creation			
• Unnatural Existence			
• None Besides Him			
• Oneness Within the World			

CHAPTER 8

Avodas Hashem 213

Chassidus is primarily a path of the service of G-d. An exposition of this approach defines what it means to serve G-d, maps out the internal human struggle, and goes through some of *Chassidus's* basic methods of successful progress. The unique tools provided by *Chassidus*, its study, attitudes, and practices further crystallize this dynamic system.

1. WITHIN REACH	213	4. WHO AM I	226
• The Theme of Tanya		• The Beinoni	
2. DEFINING AVODAH	214	• Climbing With No Plateau in Sight	
• To Serve G-d		• The Path for All	
• Business Minded		5. THE METHOD	231
• Jewish Identity Matters		• The Way to Gain Control	
3. THE INNER STRUGGLE	220	• 1) Recognizing G-d's Authority	
• The Two Souls		• Shaping the Mindset	
• The Constant Struggle		• 2) Recognizing G-d's Oneness	
• The Infrastructure of the Soul		• 3) The Hidden Love	
• Priorities		• Remembering Mesirus Nefesh	
		• Appreciating Mitzvos	
		• 4) When All Defenses Fall	

6. THE LABOR TO LOVE	248	8. LIFESTYLE	267
• The Significance of Love		• Upbeat Living	
• How to Love G-d		• When Mitzvos Don't Come Easy	
• Ahavas Yisrael		• Attitudes	
7. INTERNALIZING CHASSIDUS	255	• Darkei HaChassidus	
• Learning Chassidus		• In Conclusion	
• Transformative Study			
• Chassidic Meditation			
• The Importance of Chassidic Prayer			
• Engaging One's Inner Animal			

CHAPTER 9

Rebbe and Chassid 279

The unique relationship between a Rebbe and his followers stems from the unique soul-nature of the Jewish spiritual leader. Exploring this idea, we find clarity in the role of a Rebbe and insight into his life-changing influence. The chassid's contribution to the relationship is also explained, providing informational guidance in cultivating this fascinating bond.

1. WHAT IS A REBBE	279	4. A REBBE'S INFLUENCE	297
• The Structure of Chassidus		• The Nurturing Shepherd	
• The Head of the People		• What Being Jewish Really Feels Like	
• Feeling the Soul's Connection		• The Character of a Rebbe	
• Connecting to the Head		• In the Rebbe's Presence	
• The Role of a Rebbe		5. CONNECTING TO A REBBE	307
2. UNDERSTANDING THE HIERARCHY	286	• Hiskashrus	
• The Transmitter		• Cultivating Hiskashrus	
• Bridging the Gap		• Additional Elements of Hiskashrus	
3. THE COLLECTIVE SOUL	290	• Shlichus	
• The Foundational Tzaddik		6. AN ETERNAL FLAME	315
• The Single Soul of Israel		• The Permeating Influence of the Rebbe	
• The Leader of the Generation		• Direction in Our Times	
• The Rebbe and the Individual		• In Conclusion	

CHAPTER 10

Dirah BeTachtonim 323

A primary teaching of *Chassidus* is its insight into the purpose of existence. An in-depth discussion facilitates appreciation of this purpose and the manner in which it is meant to be accomplished. This discussion provides a revolutionary perspective on the substance of our physical world and its future transformation into a home for G-d.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. WHY PURPOSE MATTERS . 323</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Value of Existence <p>2. WHERE TO FIND PURPOSE 324</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G-d's Garden • Physical vs. Spiritual <p>3. THE 'WHY' OF PURPOSE . . 330</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Question of Purpose • Illumination of Purpose • The Talking Bird • Thinking Deeper • Higher Than Reason • A Convergence of Opposites <p>4. THE NOVELTY OF THIS APPROACH 339</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting the Big Picture • Reasonable Reasons and Their Limitations <p>5. CREATING THE DWELLING 343</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made From Within • A Different Take on Ego • The Jew's Role • Of Friends and Foes | <p>6. UNDERSTANDING THE STRATEGY. 350</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study vs. Deeds • Deeds vs. Feelings • An Illuminated Dwelling • Men, Women, and G-d's Homey Residence • Teshuvah <p>7. REMAKING EXISTENCE . . . 359</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bold Revelation • Understanding Revelation • The Big Question • Subduing, Replacing, and Transforming • Illuminating the Darkness • When Darkness Will Shine • The Real World <p>8. ACHIEVEMENT 371</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The True Realization of Achdus Hashem • When the Heavens Lend a Hand • Selfless Living <p>9. IN SUMMARY 377</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coded Depth • A Closer Look • A Last Word |
|--|--|

CHAPTER 11

The Personal Mission 383

The basic principles of *Chassidus* discussed in previous chapters bring vivid clarity to the individual's mission on earth. These messages guide the person in their responsibility to influence their environment while also advancing one's personal growth. The dynamics of these roles are clarified, along with empowering motivation for applying this life-changing wisdom.

1. THE SOUL'S DESCENT	383	4. THE DIRAH WITHIN	395
• A Most Relevant Message		• Inviting G-d Into Daily Life	
• Empowerment		• Building the Sanctuary	
2. CHANGING THE WORLD	386	5. THE SOUL'S ATTAINMENT	400
• Doing Our Part		• Climbing Higher	
• Time and Place		6. SHLICHUS	403
• Illuminating One's Surroundings		• The Messenger	
3. HOW TO	392	• The Shlichus Movement	
• Give It Your Best		• The Life of a Shliach	
• The Awaited Moment		• A Last Word	

CHAPTER 12

Our Generation. 413

Our current era provides timely relevance to the internalization and application of *Chassidus*. As we stand upon the threshold of *Mashiach's* arrival, it is we who are tasked with completing the process of welcoming G-d into our world. This agenda is central to *Chassidus*, and engaging in this effort provides the truest expression of its ideals.

1. THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT	413	3. ULTIMATE OPPORTUNITY	425
• Where We Are Today		• Special Empowerment	
• The Rebbe's Influence		4. MAKING IT A REALITY.	429
2. SHECHINAH ONTO EARTH	418	• The Mashiach Campaign	
• The Seventh Is Cherished		• Living With Mashiach	
• How This Process Began		• Practical Application	
• Going Further		5. CHASSIDUS'S MISSION STATEMENT	438
• The Role of Chassidus		• In Conclusion	
• The Seventh Generation			

Endnotes. 441

Glossary 455

FOREWORD

Welcome

If you are holding this book, chances are that you have some interest in *Chassidus*. Whether this is your first serious introduction or you have been learning *Chassidus* for decades, this book is designed with you in mind.

Chassidus is the Torah wisdom which was first taught by the Baal Shem Tov and later developed into an encompassing philosophy and worldview by the seven Rebbeim of *Chabad*. Clarifying the nature of our relationship with G-d, the value of Torah and *mitzvos*, and the depths of Jewish identity, these teachings come together to form a cohesive set of ideals.

In this volume, you will find a comprehensive presentation of this wisdom, focusing on its origins, explaining its primary principles, and elucidating its mission. The ideas are presented with extensive detail and lucid explanation which provide a rich understanding and informed appreciation of the topics.

This is the first of a multi-volume series titled, *The Basics of Chassidus - a Comprehensive Anthology of Chabad Thought*.

As the name *The Basics of Chassidus* implies, the goal of this series is to present a cohesive and accessible body of the wisdom of *Chassidus*. Just as any library might be equipped with comprehensive works covering “*the basics*” of various fields, our mission is to provide English readers with an equivalent collection of *Chassidus*.

In a structured and well-organized manner, we seek to offer the reader a complete picture of *Chassidus*. This will allow people

of all levels of study to broaden their horizons and enhance their understanding and appreciation of *Chassidus's* structure of ideas and day-to-day relevance. Our sincere hope is that this volume and the series to follow will provide this resource.

What Inspired This Series

The original teachings of *Chassidus*, as delivered by the Rebbeim, are not organized by topic. Ideas are explored, explanations are offered, and clarification is provided, but not in a single structure. A satisfying “Aha” of clarity often comes after amassing a significant amount of information gained from a wide array of texts and lessons.

Similarly, later chassidic texts often rely on knowledge taught in the early generations. Unsurprisingly, though, it is common that a touch of compelling explanation in the more recent works brings an entire idea to life.

The many hundreds of volumes of *Chassidus* can be seen as an interwoven tapestry displaying a single vivid picture.

In many ways, *Chassidus* is an accumulative study. The more one learns, the greater the understanding and appreciation. The broader one's scope of study, the richer the presentation.

In recognition of this dynamic of *Chassidus*, the seventh Chabad Rebbe made note of the need for an organized presentation of *Chassidus*. He described how such a composition would allow for a richer learning experience, while

Organizing *Chassidus*

The Rebbe's efforts to amass *Chassidus* into a single structure began in the 1930s. Seeking to set the stage for a comprehensive encyclopedic collection of *Chassidus Chabad*, the Rebbe started creating indexes and offering cross-references on classic chassidic texts.

In the years of calm before war started to rumble in Europe, the Rebbe painstakingly began composing indexes on *Tanya*, *Torah Ohr*, and *Likkutei Torah*, the three most foundational texts of Chabad thought. Later, while fleeing from the Nazis *ym"sh*, the Rebbe continued to work extensively on this project. Years later, in a rare autobiographical remark, the Rebbe noted that “The variations of circumstances of calm and turbulence, safety and danger, caused differences of style within these compositions.”²

After coming to New York in 5701 (1941), the Rebbe was appointed by his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, to oversee the publication of the

also granting wider audiences the opportunity to enjoy these teachings.

As the Rebbe wrote in 5731 (1971): “In Talmudic subjects, there are several compositions which organize information alphabetically or according to topic. More so in *halachah*, there are numerous such collections that summarize entire areas of Jewish law. Even in the mystical teachings of Kabbalah there are several such works; only *Chassidus* lacks such a presentation. *Chabad* emphasizes that one should truly comprehend the concepts of *Chassidus*, so that they can be integrated within one’s entire psyche, yet I have not seen even an initial effort in creating such a work.”¹

For this purpose, the Rebbe commissioned a chassidic encyclopedia to amass these vast teachings and organize them by topic. It was named *Sefer HaArachim – Chabad*, and structured in alphabetical order. To date, this chassidic encyclopedia, the life-work of the venerated scholar of *Chassidus*, Reb Yoel Kahan z”l, who was appointed by the Rebbe to lead this project, consists of nine volumes.

With exhaustive presentation and extensive sourcing, the *Sefer HaArachim* caused tremendous influence in the furtherance of the study of *Chassidus*. With topics elaborately structured over hundreds of pages, Reb Yoel exhibited how every detail of explanation offered by the Rebbeim through the generations enhance the full picture of chassidic teaching. A staggering accomplishment, this work was truly one of a kind.

With the earnest desire to further perpetuate the Rebbe’s vision for *Chassidus* to be presented in an organized structure,

full library of Chassidic writings. Here, as before, the Rebbe continued to write indexes and notations seeking to bring this vast collection of teachings into a single unified body.

After assuming the role of Rebbe in 5710 (1950), these efforts intensified. Over the decades since, almost all Chassidic texts have been published with extensive indexes and references.

Nevertheless, the Rebbe sought to further enhance the learning experience and provide a cohesive presentation of *Chassidus*.

This is what led to the commissioning of *Sefer HaArachim-Chabad* which the Rebbe saw as the realization of his dream of organizing *Chassidus*.

As the Rebbe phrased in a correspondence: “I have felt this need for decades, but it has been delayed for many reasons. I began the preliminary work for a *Sefer HaArachim* decades ago, through creating indexes of the foundational works of *Chassidus*.”³

the present series of *The Basics of Chassidus* was conceived. The ambitious goal of this project is to present to the English readership a first of its kind, a comprehensive and organized collection of *Chassidus Chabad*. In recent years, there has been a tremendous expansion of the study of *Chassidus* in English and this work is set to enhance the learning experience of the novice and veteran student alike.

Accessibility

In the effort to make this work as engaging and approachable as possible, we have chosen to forgo the wrappings of the classic encyclopedia format. This series is for the average person, not only for the academically minded.

The first and most striking modification is that ideas are organized by **topic**, rather than in **alphabetical** sequence. This change enables these volumes to be read in a natural flow, with one chapter following the other. By reimagining the wide scope of teachings to be presented in this series in a “by topic” format, we identified a number of key themes upon which to structure the series.

Each volume will be dedicated to a specific field of study and experience. This initial volume focuses on the basis of what *Chassidus Chabad* is about and is titled, *Chabad: Its Origins, Principles and Purpose*. The second and third volumes will cover the scope of *Chassidus* relating to the study of G-dliness and the process of creation commonly known as *Seder Hishtalshelus*. The fourth volume will focus on the dynamics related to Torah, *mitzvos*, and the Jewish People. The fifth volume will cover the ideas which relate to daily life as a Jew as illuminated by *Chassidus*. Following volumes will feature the themes of Shabbos, the holidays, life events, and more.

A second deviation from the traditional encyclopedia format is that the text is not broken into complex numbering systems and fractured sub-sections. Although it covers a wealth of ideas in a relatively condensed format, it is designed to be **fully readable**.

Each volume follows a logical trajectory and can be appreciated as a single structure. Nevertheless, the reader can enjoy any individual chapter as a stand-alone piece, as well.

To accommodate the learning process and to make it easier to navigate the book, the chapters are divided into subchapters and smaller segments. A full listing of these sub-titles appears in the Table of Contents.

With G-d's help, this restructured encyclopedia will provide the intended benefit. Volume by volume, we hope that the series will provide an organized and accessible presentation of the complete picture of *Chassidus Chabad*.

How To Read This Book

Notably, each paragraph is saturated with a wealth of information which can serve as a springboard for thought and discussion. Because of this fullness, it is best appreciated not as a one-go read. Instead, a healthy pause between paragraphs or segments may be necessary to properly process each idea.

A unique typographical feature of this work is that paragraphs which are somewhat **supplementary** to the presentation at hand are **indented** from the primary margin. This visual distinction further eases the delivery of information in a seamless fashion.

The reader will notice that extensive footnotes embellish this work and provide sources which enable them to further their learning. Due to the vastness of the Chabad library, and a wide array of choices to reference any particular idea, care has been taken to select sources that the reader may find more accessible. This will hopefully enable the reader to not only find sources to verify the information but also provide the means to expand and deepen one's understanding of any idea presented. The footnotes also clarify potential questions that may arise during the learning process or share additional insights and anecdotes, enhancing the reader's appreciation of the topic. Additionally, there are endnotes to the book which give more context and add further explanation to specific topics and discussions.

The Benefit of Organic Study

Convenient as this volume may be, it is only a supplementary conversation of *Chassidus*. It is in no way meant to replace the study of the original teachings of *Chassidus* as taught directly by the *Chabad* Rebbeim. Although not codified by topic, it is only by delving into the gems of wisdom as presented in the original teachings and writings of *Chassidus* that one can appreciate *Chassidus* for what it truly is. Through studying these raw texts one can get a glimpse of infinity well beyond these structured presentations. This series is merely intended to present “the basics of *Chassidus*,” opening gateways of understanding and appreciation for *Chassidus*.

With this in mind, painstaking effort has been invested in referencing source materials to provide original references rather than referring the reader to other adaptations. This is to allow the reader to take any topic one step further, learning it directly from the source, within the original teachings of the Rebbeim. Additionally, despite the aim to make this series as comprehensive as possible, inevitably, it cannot be fully exhaustive. To fully appreciate the scope of *Chassidus*, there is no alternative to organic study. Lastly, despite our best efforts, the information presented here is only a glimmer of *Chassidus Chabad* that we, the compilers, accessed in our own study of *Chassidus*. There is no way we got it all.

Our Hope

The vision for this volume and the series to follow is to reimagine the presentation of *Chassidus* available in English. We hope that this project enhances the understanding and appreciation of the broad scope of *Chassidus* and its application. Perhaps more than readers will learn about ideas, perspectives will be fostered which will teach us about ourselves as well.

May the toil invested in learning and sharing the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov open channels for wellsprings of clarity, connection, and dedication in our lives as we speedily usher in

*the arrival of Mashiach when the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d.*⁴

Sichos in English

11 Nissan 5782 (2022)

The 120th anniversary of the Rebbe's birth

1 Free translation of *Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 27, p. 132ff.

2 Notation in the introduction to *Sefer HaMafteichos LeKamah Sifrei U'Maamarei Chassidus Chabad* (Kehot, 1966).

3 *Igros Kodesh*, *ibid.*

4 *Mishneh Torah, Shoftim, Hilchos Melachim*, 12:5, from *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

לזכות

צבי הירש

חנה אסתר

שרה דייכא

מנחם מענדל

שמואל אליהו

בתיה רבקה

שיחיו לאורך ימים ושנים טובות

להצלחה רבה ומופלגה בגשמיות וברוחניות

ולברכת הגפ"ן בהרחבה

מתוך שמחה וטוב לבב



The Basics of Chassidus

VOLUME 1:

CHABAD: Its Origins, Principles, and Purpose

Chassidus is the Torah wisdom which was first taught by the Baal Shem Tov and later developed into an encompassing philosophy and worldview by the seven Rebbeim of *Chabad*. Clarifying the nature of our relationship with G-d, the value of Torah and *mitzvos*, and the depths of Jewish identity, these teachings come together to form a cohesive set of ideals.

In this volume, you will find a comprehensive presentation of this wisdom, focusing on its origins, explaining its primary principles, and elucidating its mission.

This is the first of a multi-volume series titled, *The Basics of Chassidus - a Comprehensive Anthology of Chabad Thought*.



ISBN 978-1-9381-6318-0



COVER DESIGN: SPOTLIGHT