



Likkutei Sichos

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Like Father, Like Son

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Considerable effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the translation while maintaining readability. As in all translations, however, the possibility of inadvertent errors exists.

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1.

SIMILAR APPEARANCE

On the verse,¹ “And these are the offspring of Yitzchak son of Avraham — Avraham fathered Yitzchak,” Rashi quotes the words of our Sages:²

Scoffers everywhere³ were saying, “Sarah became pregnant from Avimelech.” ... What did the Holy One do? He made Yitzchak’s facial appearance resemble Avraham’s, and everyone attested: “Avraham fathered Yitzchak.”

We need to clarify: Our Sages couch this explanation as a **question and answer** — “What did the Holy One do? He made” (and they weren’t content to convey this teaching concisely — “Scoffers everywhere were saying... the Holy One made Yitzchak’s facial appearance,” and **omit** the question, “What did the Holy One do?”). This question-and-answer format clearly indicates something especially **novel** by Hashem making Yitzchak’s facial appearance resemble his father’s. For this reason, Rashi phrases his remark as a question: “What did the Holy One do?” What special act did Hashem do to quash the defamation of the scoffers?

As such, the following is perplexing: What is so novel about Hashem making “Yitzchak’s facial appearance resemble Avraham’s”? After all, a son **naturally** resembles his father.⁴ (Indeed, only special circumstances prevent a son from resembling his father).

¹ {Bereishis 25:19.}

² Based on *Tanchuma*, “Toldos,” sec. 1; see *Bava Metzia* 87a.

³ {In the original Hebrew, “ליצני הדור”; lit., the scoffers of the generation.”}

⁴ See *Eduyos* 2:9; Rambam’s *Commentary on Mishnah*, loc. cit.

2.

WAS IT DIFFICULT TO SPLIT THE SEA?

We can clarify this matter by explaining an expression used by our Sages concerning various acts:⁵ (They are) “**difficult**... as the splitting of the Reed Sea”— suggesting that these acts are also “difficult” for Hashem to perform, so to speak.

There is a known explanation,⁶ predicated on the idea that the “difficulty” in splitting the Reed Sea was not (primarily) splitting the sea and subsequently making the water stand upright as a wall.⁷

[Especially since, as explained in *Tanya*,⁸ the Splitting of the Reed Sea was a much smaller “wonder” than the creation of heaven and earth. As such, it is certainly not apropos to say that the Splitting of the Reed Sea specifically was “difficult.”]

Rather, the difficulty arose because the Splitting of the Reed Sea combined two opposite phenomena⁹ — “Healing {the Children of} Israel and smiting Egypt.”¹⁰ (Had the Sea not been split, the Egyptians would not have entered it.) At that time, the Attribute of Strict Justice {*din*} claimed: “How are these {the Jews} different from those {the Egyptians}? These worship idols, and those worship idols.”¹¹ For this reason, Splitting the Reed Sea was “difficult” — because as a rule, the perspective of the Attribute of Strict Justice must be considered, and at the Splitting of the Reed Sea, it was not.¹²

⁵ *Pesachim* 118a; *Sotah* 2a; and sources listed there; and in the *Zohar* (vol. 1, 207b; vol. 2, 170a) it says, “difficult... before the **Holy One**.”

⁶ See *Shaar HaEmunah*, ch. 32 (in a slightly different version); *Maamar HaChodesh* 5654 (p. 133) — the difficulty was that to splitting the Reed Sea required Hashem to connect a level transcending the continuum of creation with the continuum of creation; see Alter Rebbe’s *Maamarim*: “5563,” p. 315; “5565,” p. 235.

⁷ *Shemos* 15:8.

⁸ *Tanya*, “*Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*,” ch. 2.

⁹ And the same applies to all the other acts that are described as “difficult... as the Splitting of the Reed Sea,” such as, “it is difficult to pair them {husband and wife} (*Sotah* 2a), which is the connection of two opposites, male and female; similarly, providing a person’s sustenance is difficult (*Pesachim* 118a), as sustenance comes from an efflux that transcends the continuum of creation, as explained in *Biurei HaZohar* (12b); et al.

¹⁰ See *Yeshayahu* 19:22; *Zohar*, vol. 2, 36a.

¹¹ See *Zohar*, vol. 2, beg. of 170b; *Mechilta* on *Shemos* 14:28; *Yalkut Reuveni* on *Shemos* 14:27.

¹² As it says in *Zohar*, vol. 2, beg. of 170b, “It was difficult for Him to circumvent the way of justice.”

3.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN AVRAHAM AND YITZCHAK

Similarly, in our case, we can explain as follows:

As known, Avraham and Yitzchak personify different attributes:¹³ Avraham is referred to as “Avraham who loved Me”¹⁴ — a *merkavah*¹⁵ to the Attribute of Kindness {*chessed*}.¹⁶ Therefore, his *avodah*¹⁷ involved performing acts of kindness and hosting wayfarers. Regarding Yitzchak, Hashem is called “the Dread of Yitzchak.”¹⁸ Yitzchak is portrayed as a *merkavah* to the Attribute of Severity {*gevurah*}.¹⁹ Therefore, his *avodah* involved digging wells — excavating earth and stones covering a wellspring beneath them and revealing living waters that flow upwards, **from below to Above**.²⁰

[Therefore,²¹ there was also a difference in terms of “what emerged” from each of them (“the {spiritual} nurture of the forces of negativity”)²² — a difference between what emerged from Avraham (the modality of *chessed*), and what emerged from Yitzchak (the modality of *gevurah*): From Avraham, **Yishmael** emerged²³ — ***chessed*** of *kelipah*;²⁴ and from Yitzchak, **Eisav** emerged {about whom it says},²⁵ “by your sword, you shall live” — ***gevurah*** of *kelipah*.]

¹³ *Torah Or* and *Toras Chaim*, beg. of “*Toldos*.”

¹⁴ *Yeshayahu* 41:8; *Sotah* 31a (see there); *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Teshuvah*,” ch. 10, par. 2.

¹⁵ {Lit., “a chariot,” just as a chariot has no drive other than that of its rider, Avraham exemplified and perfectly conformed to the Attribute of Kindness.}

¹⁶ {Expressed as love.}

¹⁷ {Divine service.}

¹⁸ *Bereishis* 31:42.

¹⁹ {Lit., strength; also known as the attribute of strict justice; expressed as exactitude.}

²⁰ {*Gevurah* is compared to fire. Just as fire rises, *gevurah* seeks to detach from what is below and rise higher. In contrast to *chessed*, which represents revelation from Above, *gevurah* depicts the endeavor of terrestrial beings, below, to reveal the hidden G-dliness, thereby elevating physicality.}

²¹ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vaeschanan*,” 5a.

²² {In the original, “ניקח להיצנים”; lit., “nurture to the external forces.”}

²³ *Pesachim* 56a; *Vayikra Rabbah*, ch. 36, sec. 5; et al.; see *Sefer HaLikkutim* (index to the Tzemach Tzedek’s works), “*Yishmael*.”

²⁴ {*Kelipah* translates literally as “a shell” or “a peel.” The term refers to anything that conceals and thus opposes G-dliness, just as a shell or a peel conceals the fruit within. *Kelipah* is often used to refer to evil or impurity, and has a similar connotation to *the forces of negativity* used up to this point in the *sichah*.}

²⁵ *Bereishis* 27:40.

This is one of the reasons why the Torah needs to emphasize, specifically here, that “Avraham fathered Yitzchak,” for otherwise, the following is unclear:

- a) The Torah needed to write, “Avraham fathered Yitzchak” based on what was written earlier in this verse: “Yitzchak son of Avraham.” As Rashi explains,²⁶ “**Since** Scripture wrote ‘Yitzchak son of Avraham,’ **it had to say....**” Concerning this, we can raise the following question: The words “son of Avraham” themselves are seemingly unnecessary (for this fact is known from the previous *parshiyos*). Consequently, the Torah didn’t need to clarify that “Avraham fathered Yitzchak.” Instead, the Torah should have immediately begun to chronicle Yitzchak’s offspring:²⁷ “Yitzchak was forty years old....”
- b) Why does the Torah allude to the retort to the allegations of the scoffers here, in *parshas Toldos*, which (primarily) deals with the **toldos, offspring** of Yitzchak — Yaakov and Eisav²⁸ (and with the *toldos*, annals²⁹ of Yitzchak’s life)³⁰ — when the phrase “Yitzchak son of Avraham” is only mentioned here parenthetically? This point {the rebuttal} should have been recorded in the (previous) *parshah* that discusses Yitzchak’s **birth**.³¹

The explanation: From the wording of the verse, “**And** these {וְאֵלֶּה} are the offspring of Yitzchak...” — employing the conjunctive *vav* {“and”} — it is clear that this *parshah* continues the previous narrative discussing Yishmael. Since Yishmael was also the “son of Avraham,” and, **on the contrary**,³² for all appearances, Yishmael was seemingly closer to Avraham than Yitzchak because

²⁶ Rashi on *Bereishis* 25:19.

²⁷ {*Bereishis* 25:20.}

²⁸ Rashi on *Bereishis* 25:19.

²⁹ {“Annals” is a second meaning of the word “*toldos*.”}

³⁰ *Seforno* on *Bereishis* 25:19; see also *Radak*, loc. cit.; see at length *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 5, pp. 112 ff.

³¹ Especially since Hashem made Yitzchak’s facial appearance when he was formed {in his mother’s womb} or on the day he was weaned (see commentaries on Rashi, loc. cit.; Maharsha’s *Chiddushei Aggados* on *Bava Metzia* 87a); and in **Rashi** on *Vayera* (*Bereishis* 21:2), “the visage of his {Yitzchak’s} face resembled him {Avraham} (however, in our editions, it is printed in parentheses).

³² In addition to Yishmael being born first to Avraham, and for more than thirteen years, to Avraham {and not just to Hagar}, Yishmael was “your son, your only son, whom you loved” (see Rashi on *Bereishis* 22b), both Avraham and Yishmael were circumcised consensually, on the same day.

Yishmael's character exhibited the modality of *chessed* (like Avraham,³³ albeit Yishmael's *chessed* was the *chessed* of *kelipah*, which derived from Avraham in that it “**emerged** from him,” it came *out* from him),³⁴ whereas Yitzchak's character exhibited the modality of *gevurah* — the opposite of the modality of *chessed*.

For this reason, the Torah must also say that Yitzchak is Avraham's son and even add, “Avraham fathered Yitzchak.” Because — on the contrary — the relationship between Yitzchak was unique: Not only was Yitzchak the **son** of Avraham, but Avraham **fathered** Yitzchak:³⁵ Yitzchak was Avraham's primary offspring, as it says,³⁶ “since through Yitzchak will offspring be considered yours.”

And for this reason, the Torah makes this clear only at the beginning of *parshas Toldos*: When we learn that Yitzchak's offspring was **Eisav**, who personified *gevurah* of *kelipah* (as discussed above), and Yitzchak's primary *avodah* (activity) was digging wells (the opposite of Avraham's *avodah*), the scoffers' slander — that Yitzchak was not Avraham's child — was **corroborated**. Consequently, their allegation needed to be disproven.

4.

SO HE LOOKED LIKE HIS FATHER... WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

This is why it was “difficult” (for Hashem, so to speak) to “make Yitzchak's facial appearance resemble Avraham's”:

³³ Especially in light of the explanation in *Toras Chaim*, “*Toldos*” (4b ff.), et al., that Yishmael's *chessed* was not like that of the other nations, and “he had an aspect to him that was bound in actuality to the inwardness of the intellectual faculties” of Avraham; see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 15, p. 194.

³⁴ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vaeschanan*,” 5a; “*Shir HaShirim*,” 9d.

³⁵ *Seforno* on *Bereishis* 25:19; see also *Kli Yakar* on this verse (and *Or HaTorah*, vol. 1, on this verse).

³⁶ *Bereishis* 21:12.

A son resembles his father because the son is a product of his father's body and soul. Their bodies and personalities are similar.³⁷

However, Avraham and Yitzchak had opposite personalities: Avraham's dominant trait was *chessed*, whereas Yitzchak's was *gevurah*. Consequently, their minds also differed. (As is known,³⁸ the intellectual bent of Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel differed owing to the difference in the root of their souls: Beis Shammai leaned toward a more stringent approach, and Beis Hillel leaned toward a more lenient one.) Naturally, each had to be different from the other, and even the **opposite** of the other, in their facial appearance in particular, because a person's facial appearance reflects his personality:³⁹ A person of *chessed* has a pleasant countenance, whereas a person of *gevurah* has a stern one,⁴⁰ etc.

In light of this, we now understand the question, "What did the Holy One do?" It expresses the wonder, *What possible solution was there to refute the slander of the scoffers?* After all, according to the natural order, the appearance of Avraham's and Yitzchak's faces should have been different to mirror their two contrary modes of conduct — *chessed* and *gevurah*!

However, since the scoffers alleged that "Sarah became pregnant from Avimelech," **the Holy One** did something novel, counter to the natural order — He alone "made Yitzchak's facial appearance resemble Avraham's."

5.

THE UNION OF *CHESSED* AND *GEVURAH*

³⁷ See Rambam's *Commentary on Mishnah*, on *Eduyos* 2:9: "**Because** when he is close to him in temperament..."

³⁸ *Tanya*, "Iggeres HaKodesh," epistle 13; *Likkutei Torah*, "Shir HaShirim," 48c; see *Zohar*, vol. 3, 245a.

³⁹ This is implied by the verse (*Koheles* 8:1), "A person's wisdom lights up his face"; further analysis is needed, in light of the teaching of our Sages (*Sanhedrin* 38a) that distinguishes appearance and knowledge.

⁴⁰ This is especially relevant to our patriarchs, who were a *Merkavah* (*Bereishis Rabbah*, ch. 47, sec. 6; ch. 82, sec. 6) — certainly their bodies (including their facial appearance) corresponded to the makeup of their souls.

It is also readily understood that when it says that Hashem “made Yitzchak’s facial appearance resemble Avraham’s,” it doesn’t only refer to their **physical** appearance. **On the contrary**, they resembled each other in their external appearance because their **spiritual** personas resembled each other.

This is based on an idea explained in several places:

Although *chessed* and *gevurah* are opposites, nonetheless, the *gevuros*⁴¹ of Yitzchak were an extension and a product of Avraham’s *chassadim*,⁴² as our verse says, “Avraham fathered Yitzchak.”

This relationship was not only because the cause of *gevurah* is *chessed*: The attribute of *chessed* is “interested” in the Divine efflux being received. However, an overabundance of goodness cannot be contained.⁴³ Therefore, it is necessary to accomplish the transference specifically by employing *gevurah* (which restricts the efflux).⁴⁴ Moreover, Yitzchak’s *gevuros* were a sort of **revealed chessed**. Specifically through *gevuros* can there be a **profusion** of, and **increase** in, the efflux⁴⁵ (as is known regarding the meaning of the idiom “*gevuros* of rain”).⁴⁶ For this reason, it says regarding Yitzchak,⁴⁷ “I **multiplied** his seed, and I gave him Yitzchak.”

This combination of (Avraham’s) *chessed* and (Yitzchak’s) *gevurah* comes from a place that transcends the continuum of creation;⁴⁸ as such, the joining of opposites is made possible.

In light of this, we can also detect a hint embedded in the wording of our Sages:⁴⁹ “Everyone attested, ‘Avraham fathered Yitzchak.’” It doesn’t say,

⁴¹ {Pl. of *gevurah*.}

⁴² {Pl. of *chessed*.}

⁴³ Based on *Taanis* 23a.

⁴⁴ *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vaeschanan*,” 13c; et al.

⁴⁵ *Biurei Zohar* 12b; *Siddur im Dach*, end of “*Shaar HaTekios*” (where it says: “Thus, the core and source of all blessings to the world were drawn {from Above} by Yitzchak specifically); see the sources in the next footnote.

⁴⁶ *Taanis* 1:1; *Likkutei Torah*, “*Vaeschanan*,” 13c; *Torah Or* 107b; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5562, pp. 32 ff; et al.

⁴⁷ *Yehoshua* 24:3.

⁴⁸ {*Seder Hishtalshelus* in the original; this term refers to the chain-like descent of spiritual worlds until this world. Each spiritual world denotes a complete realm of existence, resulting from its general proximity to or distance from Divine revelation.}

⁴⁹ Wording of Rashi on *Bereishis* 25:19; similarly, *Tanchuma*, “*Toldos*,” sec. 1: “so that they would testify.”

“knew,” or the like, but “**attested**,” and Rashi repeats this expression: “For there is *testimony* that Avraham fathered Yitzchak.” Why is such emphasis placed upon this being **testimony**?

We can posit the following:

Testimony is given specifically about something unknown. There is no need to testify about something obvious, or even something that will **become** known.⁵⁰ Meaning, testimony discloses something that was inherently beyond revelation — something that would otherwise not become revealed. In spiritual terms, this refers to eliciting from a plane lying beyond the continuum of creation.⁵¹

In the context of the above teaching, this is the meaning of *testimony*: “Avraham fathered Yitzchak” — the combination of *chessed* and *gevurah* — resulted from a downflow from a plane that transcends the created order. Within the realm of nature and the purview of logic, such a combination is inconceivable. However, “there is testimony” — this is similar to the testimony given by witnesses about something they saw; their testimony must be believed.

6.

THE UNION OF *CHESED* AND *GEVURAH* IN OUR *AVODAH*

From the above analysis, we are meant to learn the following lesson concerning our *avodah*:

As known,⁵² Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov are called *Avos*, Patriarchs, because they are the root and source of **every single** Jewish soul. The attributes exemplified by each Patriarch are bequeathed as an inheritance to their offspring

⁵⁰ See *Rosh Hashanah* 22b.

⁵¹ See *Likkutei Torah*, “*Eileh Pekudei*,” sec. 4; *Maamar VaYakem Eidus* 5700; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19, pp. 190-1.

⁵² Only Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov are called our *Avos* (*Berachos* 16b) because not all Jews have the traits of the Tribes. In contrast, every Jew has the traits of each of the *Avos*. (*Torah Or*, “*VaEra*” 55a; see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1068 in a fn.)

in every generation. Therefore, **every** Jew must engage in the modes of *avodah* of the three *Avos*.

On this basis, it is understood that every Jew can (and must) combine *chessed* and *gevurah* — expressed by the statement that Hashem “made Yitzchak’s facial appearance....” An example of this synergy between *chessed* and *gevurah* is found in *Tanya*:⁵³ “Weeping is lodged in one side of my heart, and joy is lodged in the other.”⁵⁴

This combination transcends the limitations of nature and the entire continuum of creation. As discussed, within the continuum of creation, *chessed* and *gevurah* are two mutually exclusive modalities that cannot be consolidated. As it says in *Sifri*,⁵⁵ it is only in the purview of Hashem for love and fear to coexist (only within the realm of *avodas* Hashem but not in worldly matters).

(However, when it comes to the above example, “weeping is lodged....,” there are two levels.⁵⁶ (a) bitterness⁵⁷ on Thursday night, and joy on Shabbos; and (b) a more challenging approach — bitterness and joy in unison. Since all Jews are heirs of the *Avos*, and an heir inherits everything, every Jew is able [at least occasionally] to achieve **this** {second, higher} level.)

7.

CHOOSE *CHESED*

An additional lesson that is learned from all the preceding:

For everyone to attest that “Avraham fathered Yitzchak,” Hashem, at the outset, could have made Avraham’s face resemble Yitzchak’s.⁵⁸ But by flaunting

⁵³ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” end of ch. 34.

⁵⁴ {*Zohar*, vol. 2, 255a; vol. 3, 75a.}

⁵⁵ *Sifri* on *Devarim* 6:5.

⁵⁶ See *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaTeshuvah*,” ch. 10 and beg. of ch. 11.

⁵⁷ {In the original, “*merirus*”; connoting bitter remorse over one’s spiritual failings.}

⁵⁸ Because they had to attest to the **similarity** between Yitzchak and Avraham (for that is what their claim concerned).

reason and nature, doing so would have been even more daunting⁵⁹ than what Hashem actually did: “He made Yitzchak’s facial appearance resemble Avraham’s.”

The lesson to be learned from this course of events that is relevant to each of us:

When a person has the option of accomplishing something in one of two ways — utilizing *chessed* or *gevurah* — and he is unsure which to choose, he should favor *chessed*.⁶⁰

Similarly, in *Tanya*,⁶¹ it says that when a person attempts to draw another Jew closer to Torah observance {instead of severely chastising him}, not only has the person “not forfeited the merit of the mitzvah of neighborly love,” but “perhaps, thereby, the person will be able, in the end, to draw the other one close to the Torah and to *avodas Hashem*.”

8.

SPREADING THE WELLSPRINGS

This idea — that because of the claims of the scoffers, Hashem changed nature and the continuum of creation to alter Yitzchak’s facial appearance to resemble Avraham’s — can be connected to “spreading the wellsprings to the outside,”⁶² an activity that was initiated primarily on Yud Tes⁶³ Kislev.⁶⁴ (It is noteworthy that *parshas Toldos* is always read in the month of Kislev [or on

⁵⁹ For then, Avraham’s facial appearance would have had to have been **antithetical** to his personality, even before Yitzchak was born — a miracle that would have served no purpose.

⁶⁰ {Hashem made Yitzchak, *gevurah*, have the appearance of Avraham, *chessed*, and not the reverse.}

⁶¹ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 32; see *Kuntres Ahavas Yisrael* (Kehot publ., Brooklyn, 1976) at length; and see the sources listed there.

⁶² The response of Moshiach to the Baal Shem Tov when asked when Moshiach will come; this is explained in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 119; et al.

⁶³ {The day the Alter Rebbe was freed from incarceration, from which time he began to spread the teachings of Chassidus in much greater abundance.}

⁶⁴ *Toras Shalom*, p. 112.

Shabbos Mevarchim HaChodesh⁶⁵ Kislev] — the month of redemption during which the idea of “spreading the wellsprings” was brought to the fore.)

The *Zohar* says⁶⁶ that the Torah comprises a “body” — the revealed part of the Torah; and a “soul” — the secrets of the Torah.

Within the continuum of creation, these two parts of Torah are, seemingly, different from each other, each part following its own approach: The body of Torah is revealed, whereas the soul of Torah is concealed. (This is also understood from the moniker “secrets” — when something is revealed, it is no longer a secret.)

Along comes Yud Tes Kislev and “declares” that “your wellsprings shall spread to the outside.” The wellsprings of the inner dimension of Torah shall be revealed, publicized, and spread, even to the “outside.”

Put differently, Chabad Chassidus elucidated the inner dimension of Torah in a way that could be understood and comprehended — wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.⁶⁷ (**Before** the Alter Rebbe’s times, and even during his lifetime but **before** “Peterburg,”⁶⁸ these teachings were not so vested in intellectual understanding.)⁶⁹ In fact, Chabad Chassidus demands this, as the Previous Rebbe writes,⁷⁰ Chassidim should study Chassidus with understanding the same way they study a topic in the revealed part of Torah — the “outside” of the learner himself.

{The aforementioned efforts, however, do not suffice.} Additionally, it is demanded that Chassidim spread the wellsprings to the outside — understood simply — to a person who finds himself “outside.” —

⁶⁵ {Shabbos encompasses the days of the following week. Therefore,} Shabbos Mevarchim includes all the days of the upcoming month, by encompassing Rosh Chodesh, within which the entirety of the month is encompassed.

⁶⁶ *Zohar*, vol. 3, 152a.

⁶⁷ {In the original, *chochmah, binah, veda’as* — words that form the acronym “Chabad.”}

⁶⁸ {The place where the Alter Rebbe was incarcerated; this term refers to the time of his incarceration.}

⁶⁹ *Toras Shalom*, p. 114 (and see *Likkutei Dibburim*, vol. 1, 22a ff.

⁷⁰ See *Kuntres Toras HaChassidus*; *Kuntres Limmud HaChassidus*; et al.

Moreover, this “outside” has no limitations. Chassidim should spread the wellsprings even to the lowest “outside.”

9.

SO FAR AND WIDE?

Seemingly, this is most baffling: Even the learning of the Torah’s revealed dimension has limitations, as it says,⁷¹ “But to the wicked, Hashem said, ‘How dare you recite my laws?’” So how can we say, “Your wellsprings shall spread to the outside”?

Concerning this objection, we have been taught that when something touches the essence of a Jew — which is rooted in Hashem’s Essence — we mustn’t consider the limitations of the natural order. Hashem “made Yitzchak’s facial appearance” resemble Avraham’s so that the inner dimension of Torah — which, on account of the chain-like devolution of creation, is concealed (*gevurah*, Yitzchak) — shall become revealed (*chessed*, Avraham).

The Alter Rebbe says⁷² that this is the intent behind the parable about the gravely sick prince. He was so ill that there was no recourse but to crush a rare gem affixed to the king’s crown. The beauty of the “diadem — the crown to coronate the king”⁷³ depended on this gem, which needed to be given to the prince to drink. The king declared that regardless of the preciousness of the royal crown, it was utterly worthless in comparison with the life of his son.

According to the law,⁷⁴ it is absolutely forbidden {for anyone other than the king} even to use the king’s crown. In this case, the most significant part of the crown was destroyed for the sake of the prince (although he was a prince and not

⁷¹ *Tehillim* 50:16.

⁷² *HaTomim*, vol. 2, p. 59 [72a].

⁷³ {See *Divrei Hayamim II* 23:11, and Rashi, ad loc.}

⁷⁴ *Sanhedrin* 22a (and in *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” beg. of ch. 2: “and not his crown”) “and primarily his crown” (see commentaries on *Esther* 6:9).

the king).⁷⁵ But when the prince's life hung in the balance — a life that personified the king's very being — all considerations were nullified.

To this parable, the Alter Rebbe adds a wondrous detail: Even when the condition of the prince became so grave that it was **doubtful** whether he would be able to swallow even one drop of this remedy, nonetheless, it was worth an attempt. The precious gem was crushed, even though most of the remedy would be wasted, for **possibly** a **single** drop would be swallowed.

By “spreading the wellsprings to the outside,” we can bring about “the coming of the Master”⁷⁶ — the arrival of King Mashiach.⁷⁷ May this come about speedily in our days, in actuality.

— From a talk delivered on Shabbos *parshas Toldos*, 5725 (1964)

⁷⁵ Similar to what is said in *Sanhedrin* 22a: “Forbidden to Adoniyah.”

⁷⁶ {Cf. *Sanhedrin* 98a.}

⁷⁷ {When the Baal Shem Tov asked Moshiach when “he will come,” Mashiach replied, “When your wellsprings shall spread to the outside.”}