



Likkutei Sichos

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A Home for Him, Here

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1.

THE THEME OF THE YARTZEIT

The point of the *yahrzeit*,¹ the *histalkus* of a *tzaddik* — when “all of his deeds, Torah study and *avodah*² throughout the entire life”³ ascends {Above} — is primarily (for us) to reflect over the deeds, Torah study, and *avodah* of the *baal hahilula*.⁴ In this manner, all who follow in his ways can learn a life-lesson for their daily activities, Torah study, and *avodah*.

Since every Jew engages in many different sorts of deeds, Torah study, and *avodah*, and even more so regarding a Rebbe,⁵ the primary element of the *baal hahilula's avodah* from which we should derive this life-lesson isn't always obvious. In this instance, however — the *yahrzeit* of the Previous Rebbe — we have a clear lesson from his Torah discourse (תורה is cognate to the word הוראה, life-lesson)⁶ entitled “*Basi Legani*,” which the Previous Rebbe personally submitted to be released on the day of his passing. From this discourse, we can know what component of the Previous Rebbe's “Torah” we should primarily contemplate, and what a person should focus on in his own practical *avodah*.

2.

THE THEME OF THE YARTZEIT

At the conclusion of the discourse, the Previous Rebbe addresses the importance and necessity for Torah and mitzvos to be performed with alacrity. This is because, “who knows when their time will come {to die},” and as the Midrash says,⁷ “a person can't say: ‘Wait for me until I sort out my affairs and instruct my family.’”

¹ {The anniversary of a person's day of passing.}

² {Divine service.}

³ *Tanya*, “*Iggeres HaKodesh*,” epistle 27 (47a, b).

⁴ {The *tzaddik* whose *yahrzeit* is being commemorated.}

⁵ {In the Hebrew original, בנשיא ישראל.}

⁶ *Zohar*, vol. 3, 53b.

⁷ *Devarim Rabbah*, ch. 9, par. 3.

This shows that alacrity in a person's *avodah* is not merely a detail of the general *avodah*, in accord with the simple understanding of our Sages teaching,⁸ “We must not let mitzvos to become ‘leavened’ {by delaying their performance}.” Rather, alacrity is important to the *avodah*, in general; without alacrity, one's whole *avodah* can be lost. The directive that “a person can't say...” applies to every moment, of every day, of his entire life on this earth, until 120 years.

The above is alluded to in the teaching of our Sages: “We must not let mitzvos to become ‘leavened’... an opportunity to perform a mitzvah should not be pushed off,” further implies that when a mitzvah is not performed immediately, the **mitzvah** becomes like *chametz* {leaven} — the opposite of a **mitzvah**.⁹

The beginning of the discourse addresses **which** *avodah* should be performed: The alacrity should be shown in creating a home for Hashem, in the lowest realms, as “Hashem desired for Himself to have a home in the lowest realms.”¹⁰

3.

THE THREE ELEMENTS

Every act of Torah study or mitzvah observance that a Jew performs, and similarly, “all you deeds should be for the sake of Heaven”¹¹ — “in all of your ways you shall know Him”¹² — creates a home for Hashem in the lowest realms, and realizes Hashem's “desire.”¹³

⁸ *Mechilta* and Rashi's commentary on *Shemos* 12:17.

⁹ See *Mechilta* and Rashi's commentary on *Shemos* 12:17: “**Just as** people do not allow the matzah to become leavened, **so** they should not allow a mitzvah to become ‘leavened.’ Instead, if {the opportunity to fulfill} a mitzvah presents itself to you, do it immediately.”

¹⁰ *Tanchuma*, “*Naso*,” 16.

¹¹ *Avos* 2:12.

¹² *Mishlei* 3:6.

¹³ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 36-37.

Nevertheless, understandably, the lesson from this *yahrzeit* pertains to a **special**¹⁴ directive on the theme that “Hashem desired for Himself to have a dwelling place in the lowest realms.” (The lesson is not merely a **general** stimulus concerning our general *avodah* of Torah and mitzvos). The directive emphasizes what the principal **focus** of a person’s *avodah* should be nowadays, to reflect the deeds, Torah study, and *avodah* of the Previous Rebbe.

We will clarify this by first explaining the nuances of the wording the Previous Rebbe quotes when citing this teaching: “Hashem desired for Himself, to have a permanent dwelling in the lowest realms.” This “desire” contains three elements: (a) for Himself; (b) a home; and; (c) in the lowest realms.

- a) “**For Himself**” — this abode is for Hashem’s Essence¹⁵ and not (merely) for the gradations of Hashem’s light and manifestations.
- b) “**A permanent dwelling**” — Hashem’s Essence is not found in this realm in a transient form but as a “home.”
- c) “**In the lowest realms**” — this home for Hashem’s Essence is specifically “**in the lowest realms**” and not in the higher ones.¹⁶

These three elements are interdependent: The levels of Divine revelation — even those that are lofty — are not autonomous entities.¹⁷ Particularly, since their {existence and} revelation depends on Hashem’s Will, the quality of a “home” — permanency, cannot be ascribed to them since their very existence is {an extension of Hashem’s will, and} not a “true,” **self-generated** existence.¹⁸

Additionally, since the nature of their existence is circumscribed¹⁹ {as a specific degree of Divine revelation}, it is understood that they can be revealed only when there is a feasible vessel to enable their expression. This precludes the

¹⁴ See *Tract on Prayer* {(Kehot, trans. R. Eliezer Danzinger), by the Rebbe Rashab} ch. 13; *Kuntres Haavodah*, ch. 6; et al.

¹⁵ *Or HaTorah*, “Balak,” p. 997; *Hemshech 5666*, p. 3; et al.

¹⁶ *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” ch. 36-37.

¹⁷ {In the original, “מצִיאוֹתָם מֵעֲצֻמוֹתָם.”}

¹⁸ See *Hemshech 5666*, p. 169 ff., p. 432 ff.; et al.

¹⁹ See *Hemshech 5666*, p. 168.

lowest realms, in which there are no suitable vessels for G-dliness; therefore, G-dliness cannot, so to speak, be revealed in these realms.

This is in contrast to Hashem's Essence, which is outside the parameters of concealment and revelation, and loftier than what is subject to change, since His Existence²⁰ derives from His Essence.²¹ Therefore, Hashem's is channeled (insofar as we can speak of Hashem's Essence being channeled)²² in a way resembling a "home," permanency.

Specifically, the lowest realms are His home. Because the higher realms consist of Divine revelations, and constitute a "descent from the luminance of His countenance,"²³ they are unfit to serve as a "receptacle" for Hashem's Essence. Only in the lowest realms, which are not attuned to Divine revelations, can there be a home for His Essence.

4.

THE THEME OF THE YARTZEIT

We can apply the above ideas to a person's *avodah* in creating "a home in the lowest realms" for Hashem. The performance of this *avodah* must mirror the home that is {to be} made for Hashem's Essence in the lowest realms.

- a) "For Himself" — the *avodah* must be performed only "for Himself" — to fulfill **His** will, the desire of Hashem's Essence, and not for any ulterior motive.²⁴ It is inappropriate to do so even for the sake of cleaving to Hashem or for {the self-aware} **servant** of Hashem to discharge his duty to fulfill Hashem's purpose. Instead, a person should perform his *avodah* simply to bring Hashem's desire to fruition.

²⁰ {Hashem is not a created being, and therefore, His existence cannot be defined in a particular way. Rather, His existence is from Himself, meaning, He wasn't created; He always was. Therefore, He is bound by no definition.}

²¹ *Tanya*, "Igeres HaKodesh," epistle 20.

²² See *Hemshech 5672*, vol 2, p. 1141.

²³ *Tanya*, "Likkutei Amarim," ch. 36.

²⁴ *Avos* 1:3. {"Do not be like those who serve their master in order to receive reward."}

- b) “A home” — a person’s *avodah* should have permanence. This means that a person must constantly perform this *avodah* with the same drive and consistency — always. If his drive fluctuates, clearly, his *avodah* is not “permanent” but “temporary.”

- c) “In the lowest realms” — the *avodah* must be (primarily) focused on down-to-earth matters, both concerning Torah study and mitzvah performance, and similarly, concerning one’s relationship with Jews (as will be explained below).

These three elements of a person’s *avodah* are also interdependent:

When a person’s *avodah* is self-centered — even for the lofty intention of desiring to cleave to Hashem (or even on a higher level: he wants to fulfill Hashem’s desire; however, his *avodah* is tainted by his feeling that **he** is fulfilling Hashem’s Will) — his *avodah* is subject to fluctuation, commensurate with the intensity of the love and connection that he feels at the moment. His *avodah* doesn’t possess permanency; it does not resemble a home. There can also be a difference in the nature of his *avodah* — whether he is engaged with loftier matters, or in lower matters in which he doesn’t feel (when performing **this** *avodah*) energized or gratified.

Only when his *avodah* is “**for Himself**” — when his focus is to fulfill Hashem’s Will — will he ascribe equal importance to anything that brings this goal closer to reality. Consequently, his *avodah* will have permanence and consistency — like a “home.” Since Hashem’s desire is “for Himself to have a home **in the lowest realms**,” a person’s *avodah* will be (primarily) in lowly matters.

5.

CONSISTENT SELF-SACRIFICE

We saw the three elements of the above described behavior openly in the conduct of the Previous Rebbe himself:

It is well known — as discussed numerous times²⁵ — that the activities of the Previous Rebbe in publicizing Torah and strengthening Judaism exemplified one continuous act of self-sacrifice. In the words of the Previous Rebbe at the conclusion of the above-mentioned discourse,²⁶ “beyond all reason.” The *avodah* of self-sacrifice shows that the person is doing this neither for a spiritual reward, nor for his own personal perfection, nor even for the purpose of cleaving to Hashem. Rather, his intent is “for Himself,” and the person engaged in self-sacrifice is totally irrelevant.²⁷ This is specifically reflected in the activities of the Previous Rebbe, “for he cast his own life to the side,”²⁸ literally, for the sake of publicizing Torah and strengthening Judaism.

The manner and potency of this self-sacrifice remained constant throughout the duration of his leadership, and expressed itself in all manner of self-sacrifice.

We have discussed at length²⁹ the differences between the three “ten year” phases of his leadership, in this world, and how during these three very distinct time-periods — each entailing a very different sort of *avodah* — the force of his self-sacrifice remained the **same**.

The *avodah* of self-sacrifice is inherently not transient, but permanent, without variations, because such *avodah* is a direct expression of the soul’s essence, which is beyond changes. In addition, this was evidenced by how the Previous Rebbe’s self-sacrifice was revealed in practice. Throughout all of his

²⁵ *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 302.

²⁶ *Maamar Basi LeGani* 5710, ch. 5.

²⁷ See *Tanya*, “*Likkutei Amarim*,” beg. of ch. 19.

²⁸ *Torah Or*, p. 99b.

²⁹ *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 18, p. 302.

various spiritual undertakings, the Previous Rebbe kept up the same intensity of self-sacrifice.

Although the work of publicizing Torah and strengthening Judaism and even spreading the wellsprings {of Chassidus} was exhibited in all areas, we see an extra focus and effort in three areas:

- a) Organizing groups and classes to study **practical halachah**³⁰ in order to create more Rabbis qualified to issue concrete, *halachic* rulings, and to dispatch them to various communities and towns, etc.
- b) Popularizing the observance of mitzvah-**deeds** among all types of Jews through practical programs (sending emissaries to build *mikvaos*, sending out *mohalim*, etc.)
- c) Providing uncompromising³¹ education opportunities for Jewish children by establishing schools, delegating teachers, etc.

These three areas are the “lowest domain” within Torah and mitzvos, as will be discussed.

6.

THE LOWEST REALMS OF TORAH STUDY

The explanation: There are many types of Torah study — the way Torah is studied On High, in the yeshiva of the Holy One and in the Heavenly yeshivah,³² to the way Torah is studied in this world. Even in this world, there are various grades, including: learning in order to receive reward; learning in order that “the

³⁰ {Jewish law.}

³¹ {In Hebrew original, “*chinuch al taaras hakodesh.*”}

³² *Bava Metzia* 86a; *Zohar*, vol. 3, p. 203b.

Torah be made great and glorious”;³³ and learning in order “to draw halachic conclusions.”³⁴

This is generally the distinction between Torah study in the supernal realm and Torah study “in this world”: When a person focuses his energy on learning Torah so that “the Torah [will] be made great and glorious” (in any case, when he is not focused on deriving the practical ruling), he is focused primarily on the analysis itself. Then, his delight and energy is concentrated on the comprehension of Torah. In contrast, when he learns Torah in order “to draw halachic conclusions,” he is focused primarily (not on the intellectual analysis of the Torah passage, but) on uncovering a practical directive.

Similar distinction can be seen concerning **practical** mitzvos: True, this facet of mitzvos resembles “the lowest realms” compared with Torah study as a whole. Yet, there are additional facets to mitzvos. There is a facet of mitzvos within Torah. This is reflected in the principle that “whoever learns the laws of the *olah*³⁵ sacrifice is considered as if he has offered an *olah*.”³⁶ There are many instances when a person cannot fulfill an actual mitzvah, so he learns the Torah laws of that particular mitzvah instead. Nevertheless, the Gemara only considers it “**as if**” he has performed the mitzvah itself. There are also the spiritual meditations that accompany the performance each mitzvah, etc.

In contrast (when the Temple stood), a Jew who had no awareness of the laws of sacrifices and only relied on a *Kohen* — who offered the sacrifice on his behalf (while the “*Levi* {provided musical accompaniment} on his platform” and the “*Yisrael* stood {and observed}”)³⁷ — fulfilled the mitzvah and his personal obligation to offer this sacrifice.

More specifically, fulfilling the actual mitzvah in practice is considered to be the “lowest realms” when compared with the speech element of the mitzvah

³³ *Yeshayahu* 42:21; *Chullin* 66b.

³⁴ *Yoma* 26a.

³⁵ {Commonly translated as “an elevation offering,” it was consumed completely on the altar.}

³⁶ *Menachos* 110a.

³⁷ Even without specific intention (*Zevachim* 46b).

{in the course of Torah study}, and more so when compared with the intention of the mitzvah in a person's mind and heart.

This same distinction can be made concerning Jews whom we teach Torah: Teaching children, especially their early curriculum — studying *aleph-beis*, etc. — is the “lowest realms” compared with other classes of pupils whom a person teaches.

7.

THE FOCUS OF ONE'S AVODAH

In light of this explanation, we understand how, specifically when a person's *avodah* is not focused on his personal benefit or perfection, but rather, “for Himself,” he can involve himself in the three above “lowest realms.”

When a person perceives himself as a self-contained being, his primary passion and energy will be focused on the “higher realms” of Torah — intellect — and moreover, in the Divine illumination {i.e., revelation} that shines within Torah. Consequently, he is only prepared to teach those Jews who can relate to this level of study in the revealed parts of Torah, and how much more so, in the deeper, esoteric parts of Torah, since only through this type of study does a person discern how G-dliness extends and is revealed in the world.

In contrast, he will have no drive to learn Torah for its practical application, nor any enthusiasm to study *Aleph Beis* with children, because he does not recognize the richness of this study or how Hashem's name is revealed through it.

The same applies regarding fulfilling the mitzvos. His primary drive will be focused on the intention of the mitzvos, including those meditations that enable him to cleave to Hashem and not on the actual mitzvah and fulfillment of Hashem's Divine Will.

Only when a person's *avodah* is for the sake of Hashem "Himself" — when he focuses on fulfilling Hashem's purpose of Creation, and he recognizes he is not an independent being — then his *avodah* will primarily focus on the "lowest realms." This is because specifically this way, he will bring Hashem's desire — "...to have a permanent dwelling in the **lowest realms**" — into fruition.

8.

THE THEME OF THE YARTZEIT

Nowadays, everything must be spelled out in simple words: Among the many above directives, there are two areas in which many people are lax:

The first area is the study of **practical halachah**. It is clear that with Hashem's help, Torah study (generally) is increasing, both quantitatively and qualitatively. However, the study of Torah to derive rulings of practical halachic application — producing rabbis who can issue halachic rulings in all four sections of *Shulchan Aruch*³⁸ (and specifically, the section entitled "*Orach Chaim*")³⁹ — has been diminishing continually from generation to generation, from year to year, and from month to month. May Heaven spare us.

That we are not well-versed in the laws of *Choshen Mishpat*,⁴⁰ we hope, will not cause major damage because of the laws and attitude of the government. But concerning *Even HaEzer*,⁴¹ *Yoreh Deah*,⁴² and even more so, *Orach Chaim* (which are the laws that are actually relevant to our daily lives and not just relevant at fixed times, but daily, as intimated by its very name {translated as}, "The Way of Life"), almost no one who can answer halachic questions in these areas.

When you approach a person who dedicates his entire life to study and you ask him a halachic question, he responds: "I am busy studying Torah in the

³⁸ {Known in English as *The Code of Jewish Law*.}

³⁹ {The section of *Shulchan Aruch* discussing daily laws and the laws of Shabbos and Yom Tov.}

⁴⁰ {The section of *Shulchan Aruch* discussing monetary and civil law between man and his neighbor.}

⁴¹ {The section of *Shulchan Aruch* discussing the laws of Jewish marriage and divorce.}

⁴² {The section of *Shulchan Aruch* discussing the laws of *kashrus* and other aspects of ritual law.}

manner that “the Torah [will] be made great and glorious.” He claims he is progressively enlightening the world⁴³ through his Torah study. However, when it comes to issuing halachic rulings concerning blessings over food, the laws of prayer, or the laws of reciting the *Shema* — **these** laws, he has not learned!

Regarding the laws in the section of *Orach Chaim*, there is a second issue: Besides the fact that we lack Rabbis who can render halachic rulings, there is another danger in that each individual becomes their own halachic decision-maker:

A lay person or a businessperson who is not a Rabbi (assuming he has a fear of Heaven) would not delude himself into thinking that he can issue a ruling on a question on the “Laws of Divorce” or even a question on *Yoreh Deah*. If such an issue arises, he will seek the advice of a qualified rabbi who specializes in issuing halachic rulings. In contrast, should a question in the laws of *Orach Chaim* arise, a person can convince himself that he can issue a ruling if he takes a quick peak in *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (in Hebrew, and if he doesn’t know Hebrew, he can look into an English or French version, etc.) and conduct himself according to how **he** understands *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*!

Since regarding the {unabridged} *Shulchan Aruch*, composed by the author of the *Bais Yosef* {commentary on the *Tur*}⁴⁴ much deliberation arose how one is permitted to issue a practical ruling from it without a knowledge of the sources and reasons, etc.,⁴⁵ we can imagine the results if we hand over the Torah over to every individual so that he should decide for himself the halachah based on *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*!

Concerning this, we must fulfill the directive for “the living should take it to heart”⁴⁶ concerning the *avodah* of the Previous Rebbe. Even when his life was

⁴³ {In the succinct Hebrew, “הולך ומוסיף ואור.”}

⁴⁴ {Like the *Shulchan Aruch*, the *Bais Yosef* commentary was authored by Rabbi Yosef Karo. In this comprehensive commentary, the author displays a phenomenal, encyclopedic grasp of the primary and secondary sources and reasons. Even so, much debate arose initially as to the propriety of the *Shulchan Aruch* since a person might derive an actual ruling from it, without knowing all the sources and reasons.}

⁴⁵ See *Yad Malachi*, “*Klalei HaShulchan Aruch*,” sec. 1.

⁴⁶ *Koheles* 7:2.

Regarding this situation, we must learn a lesson from the Previous Rebbe who actually endangered his life — and even instructed others to put their own lives in peril — to establish schools for Jewish children with a curriculum that was **pure and holy**, rather than alter the pedagogical methods, G-d forbid, used to educate Jewish children throughout the generations.

Even more so in our times, and in this country and others similar to it, where there is no physical danger,⁵¹ G-d forbid, we must make tremendous efforts to ensure that our children's education is pure and holy. We must not mix secular studies into the curriculum any more than is mandated by law and is compulsory — and then, only the minimum amount required.

10.

THE THEME OF THE *YARTZEIT*

Even for those who cannot withstand this test, the truth is that {in order to comply with governmental educational standards} in many instances, we can fulfill the obligation with just minor details on a very small scale. There is definitely no need for the quantity and quality of secular studies as currently implemented in the schools that are administered by G-d fearing men (or women).

We need only to encourage and inspire the administrators not to exert themselves to be so particular to fulfill governmental standards. Instead, they should fulfill the mitzvos and laws, *lehavdil*,⁵² of Hashem. After all, we have “already sworn to fulfill them when we stood at Mount Sinai,”⁵³ before this country had any laws.

True, “the law of the kingdom is the law.”⁵⁴ Nevertheless, (in addition to the fact that regarding matters that affect Judaism, “we Jews have no one

⁵¹ {I.e., persecution for transmitting our traditions to our children.}

⁵² {Lit., “to make a distinction,” a term used when comparing the mundane with the holy.}

⁵³ *Shavuos* 21b.

⁵⁴ {Meaning, Jews must obey the law of the land.} *Gittin* 10b.

entitled to force their opinion on us,”⁵⁵ even those who cannot withstand the challenge to teach only Jewish studies should) within the parameters set by government standards, we must ensure that more of the students’ time, and, how much more so, more of their focus, should be placed on Jewish studies. Only what is mandatory, according to all {legal} opinions, should be relinquished to secular studies.

(This is aside from ensuring that secular studies are not scheduled for the beginning of the day, a time that is considered “the first of your kneading.”⁵⁶

It does not at all contravene the law to devote the best hours of the day to “raise a portion for Hashem”⁵⁷ — we should raise the child towards Hashem by studying Hashem’s Torah. Only afterwards, when the child is already tired and we have no alternative, we may allocate minimal time for secular studies.)

Since “I only ask according to your ability,”⁵⁸ you can be assured that with minimal effort and the proper focus, we can immediately minimize the time that Jewish children spend learning secular subjects. We can readily restructure matters so that incomparably more time, quantitatively and qualitatively, is devoted to Torah study. We need only to make a resolve with the understanding that this matter is essential, since this is the ruling in *Hilchos Talmud Torah*.⁵⁹ This way, we can be sure that this goal will be accomplished.

Just as we witnessed with the Previous Rebbe that notwithstanding that he saw no way that his efforts to ensure a pure holy Jewish education for children in that country {Russia} would succeed in his lifetime, we can now see empirically the results of his efforts:

You can go out into the streets of the major cities in the United States, or elsewhere, and encounter grandchildren of individuals who lived in that country

⁵⁵ *Sefer HaMaamrim Kuntresim*, ch. 1, p. 350.

⁵⁶ *Bamidbar* 15:20 {referring to the obligation of *challah*, gifting the first piece of the dough to a *Kohen*. In this context, this phrase alludes to the best hours of a person’s day}.

⁵⁷ {*Bamidbar* 15:19. In this context, this phrase alludes to Torah study, which should be scheduled at the beginning of the school day}.

⁵⁸ *Bamidbar Rabbah*, ch. 13, par. 2.

⁵⁹ Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, ch 3, par. 7.

{Russia} twenty or forty years ago. And we behold this grandchild conducting himself according to the ways of Torah and mitzvos. We wonder: **How** could he have remained connected with Judaism?!

If you investigate earnestly, you learn that his father, counselor, his grandfather had a relationship with an emissary of the Previous Rebbe who inspired them about Jewish matters. The emissary studied with them, and hid with them in an attic or a cellar to teach Torah, etc. And therefore, they remained faithful to Judaism.

The same applies to all of those who walk “in his ways forevermore.”⁶⁰ Through their efforts in the above *avodah* of strengthening pure Jewish education, they will surely succeed and establish “Hashem’s Army.”⁶¹ This Army of Hashem will imminently leave this final exile with the ultimate redemption through our righteous Moshiach in our time.

— from a talk delivered on the 10th of Shevat, 5737 (1977)

⁶⁰ *Tanya*, “*Iggeres Hakodesh*,” epistle 27 (146a).

⁶¹ See *Torah Or*, 60c; *Hemshech Maamarei HaHilula*, ch. 10 ff.