

LESSON TWELVE
THE GREAT REVIVALIST MOVEMENT: CHASIDISM, PART
TWO, THE ROLE OF PRAYER and THE BA'AL SHEM TOV'S
SUCCESSORS

TEXT ONE --- Jacob Isaac Horowitz, Zikaron Zot, p. 71

“If there is no bread, there is no Torah.” (**Pirkei Avot** 3:17) It is incumbent upon the tzaddik to be occupied with Torah, precisely in order to draw down bread (sustenance). For it is known that the light and holiness of the Blessed God is garbed in the letters of the Torah...he must be able to draw down from above (to meet) the needs of people on earth, provide ample sustenance before anything else...his first goal should be (to see) that they have their needs, before (causing) the world to return in repentance...

TEXT TWO --- Jacob Isaac Horowitz, Zikhron Devarim, p. 149

I do not pray for anything unless I see in advance whether it is the Divine will to pray for it.

TEXT THREE --- Jacob Isaac Horowitz, Nifla'ot ha-Rebbe, p. 27b

I love the evil person who knows he is evil more than the tzaddik who says he's righteous. Why? Because the evil person who knows he is evil speaks the truth. But the tzaddik who says he's righteous lies. As it is written: *There is no one in the world who does not sin* (I Kings 8:46). Hence the righteous man who claims he's righteous is false, and God hates falsehood and deception.

TEXT FOUR --- Jacob Isaac Horowitz, Divrei Emet, Hanhagot, pp. 7-8

I have made up my mind not to think any longer of what people think of me. If the thought happens to enter my mind, I must remember that it makes no difference.

Similarly, I must not be concerned about whether I tell them any new ideas I have in a sweet manner or in an ordinary manner. As long as they are for God, what difference does it make? Whenever these things are said I must always remember

that it makes no difference whether it is this way or the other.

I must be careful never to think about money.

I must never want anything from this world, only for the Lord, blessed be He, alone.

I must remember never to forget God.

And never to be wild.

And to prevail over the **yetzer ha-ra** for the sake of the glory of Heaven.

And to be very careful not to reveal that which resembles prophecy and, if it becomes necessary, to do it with great circumspection with the help of God.

TEXT FIVE --- Jacob Isaac Horowitz, Nifla'ot ha-Rebbe, p. 55, #130

If a man forgets to cleave to God for one second of the 3,600 seconds in an hour, it would be better if he remained like a body without a soul, and be called dead.

TEXT SIX --- Jacob Isaac, the **Yehudi**, Siach Sarfei Kodesh 4:17:67

What mastery is there in being a wonder-worker? Any man of a certain achievement (in God's service) has in his power to turn heaven and earth topsy-turvy, but to be a Jew--that is really hard!

TEXT SEVEN --- Jacob Isaac, the **Yehudi**, Tiferet ha-Yehudi, p. 21b

All the rules a person makes for himself to worship God are not rules, and this rule is not a rule either.

TEXT EIGHT --- Jacob Isaac, the **Yehudi**, Tiferet ha-Yehudi, p. 45, #101

There are three levels in the service of God. The first is one who is occupied with **mitzvot** and good deeds the entire day and yet believes he has still accomplished nothing; he is at the highest level. The second who has so far done nothing worthwhile, but he knows that he has not yet corrected anything in this world; this too is good, for there is hope that he will take it upon himself to do **teshuvah**. But one who is a **tzaddik** and knows he is a **tzaddik**, deceives himself all his days, and his devotion to the Torah and the **mitzvot** go for naught.

TEXT NINE --- Jacob Isaac, the **Yehudi**, **Nifla'ot ha-Yehudi**, p. 38

Justice, justice, you shall pursue (Deut. 16:20). The **Yehudi** said to me concerning this verse: this is the essence...a man is given life in order to correct what he needs to correct, right up until his life is completed. This is why it says “justice” (twice); even if one has corrected his actions, he must go for additional “justice,” further correct his deeds in greater holiness.

TEXT TEN --- Simcha Bunim, **Kol Simcha**, **Masei**, p. 103

I clothed myself in righteousness and it fit me (Job 29:14). (NJV: *and it robed me.*) Also with regard to commandments, Divine service and perfection, a person should clothe himself in something designated for him. That is the meaning of *and it fit me*.

TEXT ELEVEN --- Simcha Bunim, **Torat Simcha**, #51

If keeping **Shabbat** is just a remembrance, something one remembers that he saw his father do, he may be called **Shabbat**-observant, but he is not doing God's will, for he is not thinking about that at all.

TEXT TWELVE --- Simcha Bunim, **Siach Sarfei Kodesh**, 1:50, #233

A person should have two pieces of paper, one in each pocket, to be used as necessary. On one of them (should be written) “The world was created for my sake” (T.B. **Sanhedrin** 37a), and on the other, “*I am dust and ashes*” (Gen. 18:27).

TEXT THIRTEEN --- Simcha Bunim, **Siach Sarfei Kodesh**, 4:38, #2

When a young man wraps himself in a **tallit** he thinks and imagines that he (is complete). But isn't his wife also standing with him beneath the **tallit**?

TEXT FOURTEEN --- Simcha Bunim, Kol Simcha, Masei, p. 103

It is well known that God created the world with the Torah. The Blessed Holy One looked into the Torah and organized all existence. It follows that the Torah is the norm (**sefer**) of all existence, and the norm of Torah is that the world should function according to nature. Therefore, all miracles and wonders which are above nature are an exception to the norm of Torah, and (by performing them) it is as if a person has transgressed.

TEXT FIFTEEN --- The Kotzker Rebbe, Amud ha-Emet, Shemot, pp. 17-18

*And the anger of the Lord was kindled **b'Moshe** (Ex. 4:14). (The b' in **b'Moshe** is generally translated "against," but literally can mean "in," within Moshe.)*

At first Moses refused to go to Pharaoh. But when the anger of the Blessed Holy One at Israel's sufferings in Egypt began to be kindled in Moses himself, he went to redeem them. And so it should be so far as every **tzaddik** is concerned. Whatever he does on behalf of the community of Israel, he should do because the anger of the Holy One, Blessed be He, burns within him.

TEXT SIXTEEN --- various sources

If I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you. But if I am I because you are you, and you are you because I am I, then I am not I, and you are not you.

TEXT SEVENTEEN --- Emet ve-Emunah, #901, p. 562.

It is possible to bring the dead back to life. Still better is to bring the living back to life.

TEXT EIGHTEEN --- Emet ve-Emunah, #157, pp. 111-112.

They shall make for Me a sanctuary, and I shall dwell among them (Ex. 25:8). This teaches that each person must make a sanctuary inside himself, so the Divine Presence can dwell there.

TEXT NINETEEN --- various sources

There was once a Jew who had a snuffbox made of goat horn. He lost the snuffbox and went around bemoaning his loss. "Woe is me. Not only do we live in the darkness of exile, but such a fate had to befall me, to lose my wonderful snuffbox." The holy goat came to him. This holy goat wanders the earth and has horns which reach the heavens and kiss the stars. The goat, seeing the Jew crying, bent down and said to him: "Cut off a piece of my horn and make yourself a new snuffbox."

The Jew cut off a piece of horn, made a new box, and put his snuff into it. Consoled, he went to the **beit midrash** (study house) and offered the worshipers more snuff. Jews took some snuff and were full of awe. Such snuff! A taste of paradise! Such a thing has never before existed! And the box is beautiful. Where did you get the snuffbox?

The Jew told the story of the snuffbox and the holy goat. The whole crowd dashed out of the **beit midrash** in search of the holy goat. The goat, as was its custom, wandered around the world with its long horns touching the skies and kissing the sun, the moon, and the stars. The crowd caught it and bound it with ropes. The holy goat was good-natured and let everyone take a piece of horn. Everyone took a piece and made a snuffbox. Among the Jews there was joy and gladness. But the holy goat wanders the world without horns.

TEXT TWENTY --- Mordecai Joseph Leiner, Mei ha-Shiloach, **Emor**, 1:122

*The Lord said to Moses, speak to the **kohanim** (priests), the sons of Aaron, and say to them: None shall defile himself for any (dead) person among his kin (Lev. 21:1).*

None of the deeds performed in the world are by chance, but come through God's providential action. Know that the will of God is to do what is good for His creatures. Man might be resentful when he perceives some act of God's judgment; in more limited judgment it seems that the world behaves randomly, but man should know that everything is in the hands of heaven and it is well possible to be bitter over this.

Here God warns the **kohanim**, who perform God's service. *None shall defile himself* for someone, i.e., they should have no bitterness over God's judgments, for this is a defilement of the soul. Bitterness comes into the world as a result of such judgments, the deprivations and losses found in the world...Therefore, God commanded to tell the **kohanim**...to have no such bitterness over these judgments, for they are always God's intentions and they are (intended) for good. Even though they function as if they were judgments/punishments, they are ultimately (intended) for good.

TEXT TWENTY-ONE --- Mordecai Joseph Leiner, Mei ha-Shiloach, **Vayechi**, 1:59

(Jacob) *blessed Joseph, saying: The God in whose ways my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd from my birth to this day...* (Gen. 48:15)

Jacob humbles himself before his ancestors Abraham and Isaac, saying that they possessed a high degree of wisdom (**chokhmah**) and understanding (**binah**), so they were able to extend (their knowledge of) the will of God from their own resources. Even if the blessed God opened a very small opening for them, they widened and extended it through their own wisdom, in order to carry out the will of God. Thus they were also able to understand matters about which God had granted them no explicit illumination. (When the Torah says they) *walked*, it means they were able to go forward on their own. But as for me, *the God who has been my shepherd from my birth to this day* implies that in even the smallest action I might take, I need God to enlighten my eyes so as to know His will. I need illumination to know whether it still conforms to His will, or whether He wants me to change it...In this respect, Jacob was the greatest of the patriarchs, for it is an exceptionally exalted situation for God to direct a person continually.

TEXT TWENTY-TWO --- Mei ha-Shiloach, **Beha'alotekha**, 2:93

On a sign from the Lord they made camp and on a sign from the Lord they broke camp; they observed the Lord's mandate at the Lord's bidding through Moses (Numb. 9:23).

The removal of the cloud and God's dwelling was only observed by Moses.

Similarly, in every generation, the **tzaddik** of the generation sees the will of God, as it is written: *The lips of the tzaddik know (God's) will* (Prov. 10:32; NJV: *The lips of the righteous know what is pleasing.*) The holy **Yehudi** saw that God's will in his generation was to delay the time of prayer...so it would not be (overly) fixed, lifeless.

TEXT TWENTY-THREE --- Samuel Dresner, Heschel, Hasidism, and Halakha, p. 36

Chasidism has been described as a revival movement, and revival movements do not as a rule endure. Not so Chasidism. Emerging in eighteenth-century Eastern Europe, it has continued down to our very day even in the most unexpected of places, despite repeated warnings as to its decay and imminent collapse. Fuel was somehow found to stoke the fires from time to time, so that the waves that broke upon the Chasidim could not extinguish the light. Neither the challenge of modern science and thought of the nineteenth century, nor the Communist suppression of the twentieth--not even the Nazi onslaught with its unparalleled destruction of their communities, their leaders, and their followers--sealed their doom.