

ויהי בשלושים שנה

# The Significance and Message of 30 Years According to the teachings of Chassidus

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This year marks 30 years since Gimmel Tammuz 5754. As Chassidim, every anniversary of Gimmel Tammuz is a day of reflection and Hiskashrus and a day to rededicate and strengthen ourselves in actualising the Rebbe's vision of bringing Moshiach and the Final Geulah. But then there are years that carry extra significance and require a completely different level of Avodah.

## The Mystical Significance of the Number 30

The significance of 30 years is already highlighted by our sages in Pirkei Avos<sup>1</sup>, who teach בן שלושים לכח, at the age of 30 one attains כח – strength.

In the year 5692 (1932), the Rebbe's father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, sent a letter to his son – the Rebbe. That year, the Rebbe was turning 30 and in his letter, Reb Levik explained the mystical significance of reaching this milestone age and the כח that is attained.

At the age of 30, the lower three levels of the soul, Nefesh, Ruach and Neshama reach their fullness. These correspond to the lower Partzufim of the Sefiros; Binah, Zeir Anpin and Malchus. After their full development, at the age of 30 one comes לכח. כח is a Roshei Teivos for Chochma and Kesser. These represent the deeper, loftier levels of the soul that are the source of our essential Emunah, our essential desire and connection to Hashem and a service that completely transcends the intellect.

Kabbalah teaches that there are 5 levels of the soul. Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama, Chaya and Yechida<sup>2</sup>. Nefesh is the level of the soul that vivifies and animates the body. In general, it is associated with our behaviours in thought, speech and action – the Sefira of Malchus.

Ruach is the emotional dimension of the soul, through which we experience emotional connection to Hashem – the emotions of Zeir Anpin. Neshama is the intellectual aspect of the soul, our ability to meditate and contemplate on the greatness of Hashem and connect to Him through our minds – the Sefira of Binah.

The lower levels of the soul; Nefesh, Ruach, Neshama – corresponding to Malchus, Zeir Anpin and Binah - are the conscious levels of the soul. They represent a service of Hashem that is limited by the extent of our conscious understanding.

The higher two levels of the soul, Chaya and Yechida, are the supra-conscious levels of the soul. The service that come from these levels of the soul is in a manner of Mesiras Nefesh, a service that is beyond logic and understanding. Chaya being the essential desire of the soul for Hashem alone and surrender to Him beyond

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<sup>1</sup> 5:21

<sup>2</sup> These are the five names by which the Neshama is called. Chassidus teaches that they are not simply different names for the soul. Rather, each name reflects a different level within the soul

understanding and Yechida being the essence of the soul – the spark of the Creator within the spark of the created. Chaya corresponds to the Sefira of Chochma and Yechida to the Sefira of Kesser.

These two levels are generally grouped together as one and, relative to Nefesh, Ruach and Neshama, are counted as the “fourth level”, as taught by the Alter Rebbe in Likutei Torah Parshas Balak<sup>3</sup> on the Pasuk מי רובע ישראל מנה עפר יעקב ומספר את רובע ישראל. The Alter Rebbe explains that the word רובע can mean the number four, or a quarter and it refers to the Yechida of the Neshama that is beyond the lower three levels of the soul.

At the beginning of Tanya chapter 3, the Alter Rebbe teaches that each level of Nefesh, Ruach and Neshama is comprised of 10 levels, corresponding to and evolving from the 10 Sefiros. The Tzemach Tzedek<sup>4</sup> notes that this is the number 30 that represents the totality of the consciousness of the soul.

Man is called “a micro world” and the world is called a “macro man” so that whatever exists within the soul is paralleled in the worlds. Chassidus discusses the progressive chain of descent that brings about the creation of the finite world from the infinite light of Hashem. This order of limited light is referred to as Seder Hishtalshelus.

The lowest 3 worlds are Beriah, Yetzira and Asiya. These worlds exist with a sense of separateness from Hashem, which becomes more and more pronounced the further down the “chain” they exist and the G-dly light becomes more and more concealed.

Beriah, the world in which the Sefira of Binah is manifest, corresponds to the Neshama level of the soul. Yetzira, where the Divine emotions (Zeir Anpin) are manifest, corresponds to Ruach. The lowest world, Asiya, in which the Sefira of Malchus is manifest, corresponds to the soul-level of Nefesh.

Like the levels of Nefesh, Ruach and Neshama, there are 10 Sefiros in each of these worlds, again totalling 30.

The Tzemach Tzedek<sup>5</sup> takes this idea a step further, teaching that the number 30 reflects not just the fulness of the lower three worlds, but of the totality of the spiritual order of the Divine light and Sefiros.

Each Sefira comprises a “vessel” through which the Divine light is directed, in order to manifest in particular way, such as Chesed (kindness) or Gevurah (severity). There are 10 “vessels” and 10 “inner lights” (אורות פנימיים), that are encloded within the “vessels”. But there is also the transcendent G-dly light that is too lofty to be grasped and encloded within the vessels of Sefiros. These are known as אורות מקיפים, literally encompassing lights, of which there are also 10.

The 10 “vessels”, 10 “inner lights” and ten “transcendent lights”, also totalling 30, encapsulate the entirety of G-dliness as it relates to the worlds.

### **The Fourth Dimension**

Beyond the lower worlds of Beriah, Yetzira and Asiya, is the world of Atzilus. Unlike the lower worlds, Atzilus is a world of oneness that is completely united with Hashem. This corresponds to the level of Chaya

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<sup>3</sup> ד"ה מי מנה עפר יעקב

<sup>4</sup> Haaros Tanya

<sup>5</sup> Haaros Tanya and Ohr Hatorah

or the Sefira of Chochma – which resides within the world of Atzilus. Beyond Atzilus are the worlds of the Ein Sof, corresponding to the Sefira of Kesser and in the soul, to the Yechida.

In the paradigm of the 10 “vessels”, 10 “inner lights” and ten “transcendent lights”, they are also limited, being merely light – revelations that emanate from Hashem and reveal His presence. But every light has a source. In relation to and beyond the G-dly lights, Hashem Himself is referred to as the Maor, the source of light.

### 40 Years After Yud Shevat 5710

The year 5740 (1980), marked 30 years since the passing of the Friedike Rebbe. Frequently throughout that year and specifically around the time of Yud Shevat, the Rebbe spoke about the significance of the passing of 30 years<sup>6</sup>. The Rebbe explained that “after 30 years, there a fundamental change and elevation in a wondrous way<sup>7</sup>” as we begin a radically “new Tekufah – stage<sup>8</sup>” beyond anything we may previously have experienced.

Every anniversary of the passing of a Tzaddik, there is an Aliya – an elevation for the soul of the Tzaddik and for those who are connected to him and go in his ways. But the elevation after 30 years is באין ערוך, infinitely beyond. This gives us a special כח נתינת to be able to upgrade our Avodah in a corresponding, infinite measure.

Based on the above explanation, we can understand why the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary is so significant and represents a quantum leap beyond everything that occurred before. The first 30 years represents the fullness and completion of the lower conscious levels of the soul and of spiritual existence, and the limited service that we can accomplish through them.

But as we move beyond the 30 years we reach כח, accessing the deepest levels of our soul, the Yechida<sup>9</sup>. We now have the ability and strength to continue our Avodah in an infinitely greater and unlimited way, far beyond anything we could previously accomplish.

### And it was in the Thirtieth Year

The Rebbe connected the 30<sup>th</sup> year since the passing of the Friedike Rebbe, to the opening Pasuk in the Book of Yechezkel, which starts וַיְהִי בְּשָׁלְשִׁים שָׁנָה, “and it was in the thirtieth year”.

וַיְהִי בְּשָׁלְשִׁים שָׁנָה בְּרַבִּיעֵי בְּחַמְשָׁה לַחֹדֶשׁ וַאֲנִי בְּתוֹךְ-הַגּוּלָה עַל-נְהַר כְּבַר נִפְתְּחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וַאֲרָאָה מַרְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים

*“And it was in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth of the month, when I was amongst the exiles on the river Kevar, the heavens opened and I saw visions of G-d”.*

The first chapter of Yechezkel describes the Merkava – the vision of the “chariot” of Hashem, where Yechezkel saw the Throne of Hashem and the hosts of angels surrounding Him. This vision is read as the Haftarah of the first day of Shavuot because at Matan Torah, the Jewish people experienced a similar G-dly revelation to that of Yechezkel.

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<sup>6</sup> In an earlier year, the Rebbe spoke about the significance of 30 years since the liberation of the Friedike Rebbe (5717)

<sup>7</sup> Yud Shevat 5740

<sup>8</sup> Sicha Parshas Yisro 5740

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly the Yechida is also called איתן which also means strength

This vision is considered so lofty that some of the sage felt that it should not be read publicly<sup>10</sup>. Our custom is to read the Haftarah and many have the practise to stand as it is read in respect of its holiness<sup>11</sup>.

Whilst the Merkava refers to the specific vision of the prophets, the Gemara and the Rambam<sup>12</sup> defines the field of Maaseh Merkava in a much broader sense. It refers to the study of the deepest dimensions of the Torah. Much of the teachings of Kabbalah and Chassidus focus on explaining various aspects of the Maaseh Merkava. These are a foretaste of the Torah of Moshiach.

This prophesy was said by Yechezkel after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, while in exile in Babylon in the year 3332. The year is simply identified as being “in the thirtieth year”, without specifying what it is the thirtieth year of or from.

Yechezkel describes himself as being בתוך הגולה, in the midst of Exile outside of the land of Israel<sup>13</sup>. The Beis Hamikdash, the place where Hashem’s presence was openly revealed, had been destroyed. Golus is a time where the presence of Hashem is completely hidden, אותותינו לא ראינו. But it was specifically then and there, that Yechezkel saw “visions of G-d”.

The Pasuk identifies that Yechezkel was standing by נהר כבר, the River Kevar, a tributary of the Euphrates.

On a number of occasions, the Rebbe quoted a Vort, a play on words<sup>14</sup>. The word כבר means “already”, reflecting something from the past or something that has already taken place.

A river represents a flow of השפעה, revelation or teaching. The River Kvar is a symbol of a person who hears a wonderous teaching, but blow it off with indifference because they have already heard it before. This attitude comes from the Yetzer Hara that tries to “cool us off”, by saying כבר שמעתי, “I’ve heard this already”.

### **Our Yechezkel Moment**

We stand at the juncture of Gimmel Tammuz שלושים שנה – 30 years. Like Yechezkel, we find ourselves בתוך הגולה, in the midst and depths of a dark Golus, גלות כפול ומכופל. Not only are we exiled from our land without a Beis Hamikdash, for the last 30 years the Golus has become that much deeper as we cannot see the Nosi Hador.

Who would have imagined that 30 years later, after the Rebbe stressed and promised us of the immanency of the Geulah... עדיין לא בא, Moshiach has not yet come.

We may find ourselves on the proverbial banks of נהר כבר, with our Yetzer Hora plaguing us with questions and doubts that perhaps ח"ו, the river of revelation that we experienced prior to Gimmel Tammuz 5754 as we marched to the Geulah, is כבר – something of the past ר"ל.

(In contrast to the כבר of the Yetzer Hora, the Rebbe explains a positive כבר, in which we are not satisfied with merely attaining the same revelation that we had in the past in the first and second Beis Hamikdash.

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<sup>10</sup> Megillah 4:10

<sup>11</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav Orach Chaim 594

<sup>12</sup> Hilchos Yesodei Hatorah 2:

<sup>13</sup> Rashi

<sup>14</sup> Erev Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5751

This **כבר** is an anticipation and desire for the new, unprecedented revelation that will be revealed in the Third Beis Hamikdash).

After 30 years, we can no longer satisfy ourselves with a limited Avodah. We cannot complete our mission of bringing the Geulah with just the lower conscious levels of our souls. Now we have to, and have the power to reveal the of our souls and our , the Kesser and Chochma, the Yechida, the essence<sup>15</sup> חכמה Hiskashrus.

From this Gimmel Tammuz we must advance with the supra-rational dedication and Mesiras Nefesh, to complete the last remaining Shlichus, the mission statement of our generation, to bring Moshiach and for the Shechina to be revealed in the world. Part of this Avodah is to not be נתפעל by the doubts of the Yetzer Hora and not to be disheartened or daunted by the darkness of Golus that we see before us.

Like Yechezkel, from the midst of our Golus, as we face the Yetzer Hora of the River Kevar, we will bring about the realisation of the continuation of the Pasuk that the heavens will open and we will see visions of G-d". Not the limited G-dly light of Beriah, Yetzira and Asiya; not even the 10 "vessels", the 10 "inner lights" and 10 "encompassing lights", but the revelation of the very essence of Hashem within the world that will take place with the coming of Moshiach.

The "vision of G-d" also include being able to see the Nosi Hador בשר בעיני בשר once more, as the Zohar<sup>16</sup> teaches יוחאי בן שמעון בן יוחאי "who is the face of the Master Hashem? It is Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai". The Rebbe teaches that this applies to each Nosi Hador, that they too are the revelation of Hashem's essence within the world.

We will then have the full revelation of the teachings of Maaseh Hamerkava, with the תורה חדשה מאיתי תצא, the Yechida within Torah.

The Tzemach Tzedek connects the number 30 to the teaching in Pirkei Avos that "kingship is acquired through 30 Maalos". The quintessential paradigm of kingship is the kingship of Melech HaMoshiach. Having passed through thirty Maalos in our efforts since Gimmel Tammuz 5754, we are ready to acquire the ultimate kingship of Melech Hamoshiach, the Yechida of Klal Yisrael and to be reunited with our Rebbe as he leads us out of Golus to the השלימה והאמיתית Now!

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<sup>15</sup> The Rebbe notes that the name יחזקאל also means strength of G-d, containing the words חזק (strength) and the Name א-ל. This too refers to the strength of the Yechida, the spark Hashem within us. Perhaps we could explain the י at the beginning of the name as Chassidus does in connection to the name ישראל and the Name י-ה-ו-ה, that it means something that is ever present, ongoing and constant.

<sup>16</sup> Volume 2 p38a