

# Pidyon Nefesh



*Regenerating the Connection*

לזכות

הילדה בצבאות ה' זעלדא רחל תחי'  
בת הרה"ת ר' שמואל וזוגתו ח' מושקא שיחיו גרינברג  
לרגל יום הולדתה ביום כ' אב ה'תשע"ה  
ע"י הרה"ת ר' צבי יוסף וזוגתו שפאלטר



”והנה מהענינים המסייעים בעבודה בכלל ובעבודת  
התקשרות ראש השנה עם שאר ימות השנה בפרט  
היא ההתקשרות עם ראש אלפי ישראל...”

*“One of the avenues that helps us in”  
our avoda in general, and especially in  
connecting Rosh Hashanah with the  
ensuing days of the year, is hiskashrus  
“...with the head of the Jewish people*

These words were written by the Rebbe as an introduction to  
the *Kuntres* published for Rosh Hashanah 5711, following  
a lengthy explanation on what the *avoda* of Rosh Hashanah  
entails (see *Ksav Yad Kodesh* and full transcript).<sup>1</sup>

## A TIME FOR HISKASHRUS

Indeed, Rosh Hashanah is a time when Chassidim focus on *hiskashrus* with our Rabbeim.

In the course of the *ma'amor* on Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe specifically mentioned each of the Rabbeim, and during the *farbrengen*, a *niggun* of each Rebbe was sung.

The Rebbe once explained<sup>5</sup> the reasoning behind this custom, based on a story told by the Frierdiker Rebbe how his father, the Rebbe Rashab was sure to mention something from each of the preceding Rabbeim on Rosh Hashanah.

Because mentioning the Rabbeim, an act of *hiskashrus*, assists us in our everyday *avoda* of Torah and *mitzvos*, especially in the *avoda* of Rosh Hashanah, as we shall soon explain.

## PANIM

Each year on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe stood at the door of his room and received *panim* from thousands of Chassidim and guests, blessing them each with a “*Ksiva vachasima tova, le’shana tova umesuka...*”

Even before the Rebbe officially accepted the *nesius* in 5711, he received *panim* from Chassidim on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

Leading up to Tishrei, 5739, after the Rebbe suffered a heart attack on Shemini Atzeres 5738, the Rebbe announced that he would begin receiving *panim* during the week before Rosh Hashanah, starting with the third day of *selichos*. In the *sicha* the Rebbe said about this at the *farbrengen* of Chai Elul, he added that on Erev Rosh Hashanah itself, only those who had just arrived then were to come by and give their *pan*.

In the years that followed, the Rebbe began receiving *panim* even earlier, on the *Motzoei Shabbos* after the first recital of *selichos*, or even during the week before that.

Clearly, the *pan* of Erev Rosh Hashanah was different than an ordinary letter



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written to the Rebbe throughout the year. This was the only time throughout the year that the Rebbe personally received the *pan* from each and every individual

**These *panim* were brought by the Rebbe later that day to the Ohel, and many of them would be carried into *shul* on Rosh Hashanah morning and placed on the *bima* when the Rebbe blew the *shofar***

with his holy hand.<sup>6</sup> These *panim* were brought by the Rebbe later that day to the Ohel, and many of them would be carried into *shul* on Rosh Hashanah morning and placed on the *bima* when the Rebbe blew the *shofar*.

From the Chassidim’s view as well, the *pan* of Erev Rosh Hashanah was held in a different, higher caliber. In fact, many Chassidim who refrained from writing to the Rebbe throughout the year (either so as not to take up of the Rebbe’s time or out of “*Yiras ha’roimimus*” – a spiritual fear of “getting to close” to the Rebbe, so-to-speak) would nevertheless write a *pan* on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

An interesting fact noted in a letter by the Frierdiker Rebbe’s *mazkir*, Reb Yechezkiel (Chatche) Feigin:

In the year 5693, the Frierdiker Rebbe resided in Riga (after having left the Soviet Union five years earlier). Reb Chatche writes of the many piles of letters arriving at the Frierdiker Rebbe’s address during the month of Tishrei, adding: “[The letters are] mainly from Russia; for throughout the year they are afraid [of the Soviet government and refrain from writing] but this month, they all send a *pan*”.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that Rosh Hashanah is a very special time for a Chossid to reconnect with the Rebbe, to the extent that even those behind the Iron Curtain refused to

forgo this opportunity and endangered themselves to send in a *pan*. But what is it about this time of year that stimulates renewed *hiskashrus*? How is the *pan* of Erev Rosh Hashanah different than *pidyonos* submitted throughout the year? What lies behind it all?

## THE HEAD OF THE YEAR

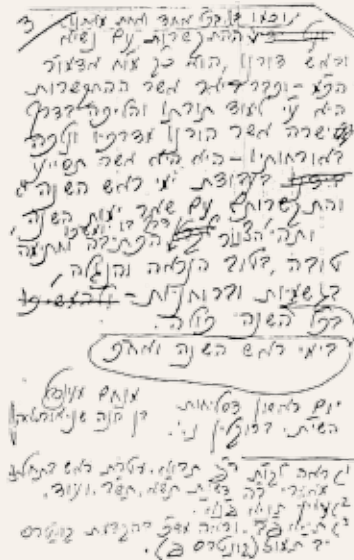
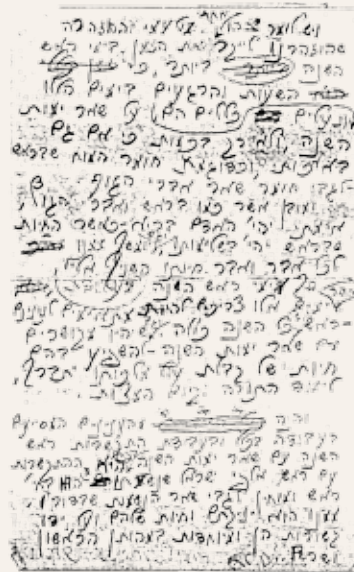
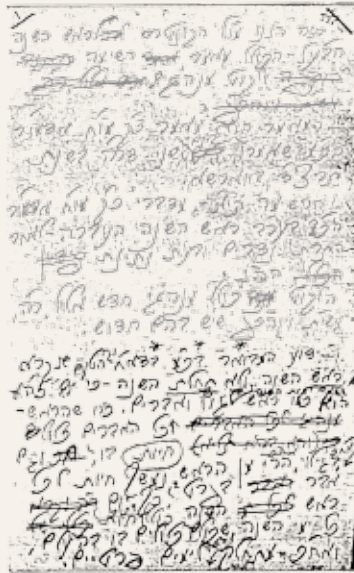
To understand this, we must first understand the inner significance of Rosh Hashanah.

In the above-quoted letter from the Rebbe, he brings the well-known explanation, mentioned many times in *Chassidus*<sup>8</sup>, why the name of the day is “ראש השנה” (the head of the year), not “תחילת השנה” (the beginning of the year).

Just as the life-force for each and every limb of the body is rooted in the brain in the head from where it controls and directs them on a daily basis, so too, does the “head” of the year contain in it the life-force of the entire year. The life for the entire year is incorporated in the forty-eight hours of Rosh Hashanah. Each and every specific day of the year is included in those precious moments of the *Yom Tov*.

This is why the *Rabbeim* instructed us to meticulously and properly utilize every single moment of Rosh Hashanah with reciting *Tehillim*, *davening*, going out on *mitzvot* and helping fellow *Yidden* with the *mitzvos* of the day, and so on. For each minute on Rosh Hashanah is not merely another, ordinary minute; in reality, each minute holds many thousands of minutes in it, and it is a crucial part of the entire upcoming year.

Surely, the head must be healthy in order to sustain a healthy body. In addition, it is imperative that the head maintain a good connection to the rest of the body, in order that the *chayus* drawn from it will do the job well. The same is true about Rosh Hashanah: It is of utmost importance that one has a “healthy” Rosh Hashanah that will offer each day of the entire year what it truly needs; namely – *Kabbolas ol Malchus Shomayim* and *Yiras*



ב”ה

...ידוע המבואר בכ”מ בדא”ח<sup>1</sup> הטעם שנקרא ראש השנה ולא תחלת השנה - כי יום זה לגבי שאר ימות השנה הוא כמו ראש לגבי גוף ואברים. כמו שהראש - חיות כל האברים כלול בו, וגם אח”כ בגילוי, הרי מן הראש נמשך חיות לכל אבר בפרט<sup>2</sup>, כך יום ראש השנה כולל בתוכו חיות כל ימי השנה, שכולם כלולים בו בהעלם, ואח”כ מתחלק בגילוי לימים פרטיים.

ויש לומר שזהו אחד מטעמי האזהרה שהזהירו לייקר את הזמן בימי ראש השנה ביותר, כי השעות והרגעים בימים האלו כלליים הם, ונעלים על שאר ימות השנה, ולא רק בכמות כי אם גם באיכות וכדוגמת חומר המוח שבראש - לגבי חומר שאר אברי הגוף.

ומובן אשר כמו בראש ואברי הגוף, אימתי יהי האדם בריא - כאשר החיות שבראש יהי בשלימותו, וגם יומשך ממנו לכל אבר ואבר חיותו השייך אליו,

כך הוא עבודת ימי ראש השנה, אשר ימים אלו צריכים להיות מתאימים לענינם - ראש של כל השנה כולה. וגם שיהיו מקושרים עם שאר ימות השנה - להשפיע בהם חיות של קבלת עול מלכותו יתברך, לימוד התורה וקיום המצוות.

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והנה מהענינים המסייעים בעבודה בכלל ובעבודת התקשרות ראש השנה עם שאר ימות השנה בפרט היא ההתקשרות עם ראש אלפי ישראל שנשמט<sup>3</sup> היא בחי’ ראש ומוחין לגבי שאר הנשמות שבדורו, ממנו הוא יניקתם וחיות שלהם ועל ידו קשורות הן ומיוחדות במהותן הראשון ושרשם.

וכמו כן בכל אחד ואחת מאתנו ההתקשרות עם נשיא וראש דורנו, הוא כ”ק מו”ח אדמו”ר הכ”מ - וכבר ביאר אשר ההתקשרות היא ע”י לימוד תורתו והליכה בדרך ישרה אשר הורנו מדרכיו ונלכה באורחותיו - היא היא אשר תסייע בעבודת ימי ראש השנה והתקשרותם עם שאר ימות השנה.

ותהי’ הצנור דרך בו יומשכו הכתיבה וחתימה טובה, בטוב הנראה והנגלה, בגשמיות וברוחניות - בימי ראש השנה ואח”כ בכל השנה כולה.

### מנחם מענדל בן חנה שניאורסאהן

יום ראשון דסליחות, השי”ת. ברוקלין, ג. י.

1. ראה לקו”ת ר”פ תבוא. עטרת ראש בתחלתו. מאמרי ר”ה דשנת תש”א, תש”ב, ועוד.
2. עיין תניא פנ”א.
3. תניא פ”ב. וראה מש”כ בהקדמת קונטרס יב תמוז (קונטרס פ).

*Shomayim*, to fulfill Hashem's will and carry out *Torah* and *mitzvos* properly.

## HEAD OF SHONAH AND HEAD OF NEFESH

Chassidus teaches<sup>9</sup> that the whole of *Seder Hishtalshelus* can be categorized into three dimensions: *Olam* (space) *Shanah* (time), and *Nefesh* (soul).<sup>10</sup>

Each of these three categories has its head: The head of *Olam* is the *Beis Hamikdash*; the head of *Shanah* is, of course, Rosh Hashanah, and the head of *Nefesh* is the *Nassi Hador*, the Rebbe. Each category derives its *chayus* from its head. In *Tanya* (*perek* Beis), the Alter Rebbe explains at length how the *chayus* of each *neshamah* must come through the "*Roshei alfei Yisroel*" the "*Neshamah klolis*" of the generation.

Furthermore: we are told that each of these heads of categories are connected with one-another. By strengthening our connection to the head of *Nefesh*, the Rebbe, we are in turn strengthening our head of the year as well, ensuring that

we have a healthy year, physically and spiritually.

**“The letters are mainly from Russia; for throughout the year they are afraid and refrain from writing but this month, they all send a pan...”**

## REVEALING THE ETZEM HANESHAMAH

In addition, Rosh Hashanah is a time when we renew our absolute commitment to Hashem; not only by doing his *mitzvos*, but by accepting Him as our King and giving our *very selves* over to Him. This is done by revealing the *Etzem Haneshamah* which is always

one with Hashem. The revelation of the *Etzem Haneshamah* is brought about by connecting to the *Nassi*, as explained in Chassidus at length, and particularly in the Rebbe's *sichos*<sup>11</sup>.

This is why Chassidim throughout the generations have made extra effort to be in the Rebbe's presence during Rosh Hashanah, where our connection to the *Nassi* is tangible and felt in a greater and more real manner than in any other time. True, there are many auspicious times throughout the year to be with the Rebbe, and it's beneficial to be with the Rebbe whenever possible, but Rosh Hashanah will always claim prime significance in that regard.

## PIDYON NEFESH

Perhaps this is why the *panim* written to the Rebbe before Rosh Hashanah is of a different caliber than those of the rest of the year. With this *pan*, the Chossid regenerates his *hiskashrus* with the *Rosh B'nei Yisroel*, in preparation for the *Rosh* of the *Shanah*.



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CHASSIDIM STAND ON LINE FOR PANI" M EREV ROSH HASHANAH 5749 AS 770 IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION.



“*tekios*” – the preparation for, and blowing of, the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah – was an awe-inspiring moment for the *Chassidim* present. They often watched as the Rebbe cried audibly from under his *tallis*, as it sheltered the bags of *panim* underneath. Also the method with which the Rebbe arranged the *shofros* was clearly mystical and appeared to be an orchestration of heavenly affairs. The *Chassidim* could only observe that all that is written in *Chassidus* regarding “*Binyan Hamalchus*” etc. is all undoubtedly being performed with the Rebbe’s actions. We, simple people, can only hope to have the privilege of being present at the time...

In conclusion, let us quote the words of the Rebbe Rashab in a *sicha*:

”ווי איז דאס ניט א איד ראש השנה אין ליובאוויטש; וואו דען זשע אנדערש?!“<sup>13</sup>

(Roughly translated: “How can it be that a Yid is not in Lubavitch for Rosh Hashanah; where else then?!”)<sup>13</sup> **D**

JEM/THE LIVING ARCHIVE / 114506

1. This introduction also appears in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 3 p. 468
2. מאמרי ר"ה דשנת תש"א, תש"ב, ועוד עטרת ראש בתחלתו.
3. עיין תניא פנ"א
4. תניא פ"ב. וראה מש"כ בהקדמת קונטרס יב תמוז (קונטרס פ)
5. *Sichas Rosh Hashanah*, 5746; *Hisvaaduyos* 5746 vol. 1 p. 28
6. It should be noted that during *yechidus* as well, *Chassidim* personally handed *panim* to the Rebbe. Nevertheless, it could be said that the only time the Rebbe received *panim* with no other “framework” attached to it was on Erev Rosh Hashanah
7. *Otzar Minhagei Chabad Elul-Tishrei* p. 42
8. לקוטי תורה ר"פ תבא; עטרת ראש בתחילתו; ועוד
9. The following explanation was heard from the Rebbe’s *choizer*, the *maspia* Reb Yoel Kahn
10. Their *roshei teivos* are hinted to in the *possuk* “והר סיני עשן כולו” – *Shmos* 19:18
11. ראה בארוכה בשיחת ש"פ בשלח תשמ"ח (סה"ש תשמ"ח ח"א עמ' 230), ובכ"מ
12. *Shabbos Chol Hamoed Sukkos*, 5711; *Toras Menachem* vol. 2 p. 31
13. *Sefer Hasichos Toras Shalom* p. 188

## PRAYERS OF THE HEAD

Another important point to remember about the *pan* of Erev Rosh Hashanah:

The Rebbe once explained<sup>12</sup> the reason why *Chassidim* give a *pan* to the Rebbe requesting their own needs, rather than davening to Hashem on their own, based on an idea found in the writings of the *Chassam Sofer*.

He writes: It is permissible to ask another Yid to daven on your behalf, for all Yidden comprise one, large body. Hence, when one Yid davens for another, it is not as if he is sending his prayers to Hashem through an intermediary, for in essence, they are both one.

All the more so, adds the Rebbe, when you are sending your requests through

the “head” of this large body – the *Rosh B’nei Yisroel*. The head feels the pain of each and every limb of the body, and his prayers are superior and more effective in bringing about the desired result.

This is another reason for sending a *pan* to the Rebbe ahead of Rosh Hashanah. At the time when Hashem judges each and every one of us, inscribing our fate for the forthcoming year, there is no better time to connect with the head of the Jewish people, asking him to employ his davening on our behalf.

**A**s mentioned, these *panim* were brought with the Rebbe into the shul and held near him during “*tekios*” on Rosh Hashanah morning. The Rebbe’s