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A Certain Path

*This year on **Chof Daled Teves**, yeshivos around the world will join to watch and experience the Rebbe's farbrengen of **Chof Daled Teves 5741**.*

During the second sicha, the Rebbe speaks of the famous story told about the Mittlerer Rebbe's dream, where he observed the Alter Rebbe and another individual crossing a river, and the interpretation given later by the Alter Rebbe.

In this spirit, we bring the following excerpt of a sicha from 5718, where the Rebbe tells this story with additional details and explanation, complementing the sicha of 5741.

We hope that this will inspire and encourage everyone to join in these viewings, to learn and internalize Torah directly from the Rebbe.

In 5667 the Rebbe Rashab farbrenged on the *Motzoei Shabbos* before Chof Daled Teves. He spoke again on the night of Chof Daled Teves itself and told the story of the Mittlerer Rebbe's dream.

I will not repeat the story in all its details, as it had already been published, but the following is the basic idea:

The Mittlerer Rebbe dreamed of a wooden board spanning the width of a river. When the Mezritcher Maggid crossed the river on top of the board, the current shook it violently. But when his father, the Alter Rebbe, crossed over afterwards, although the waters raged as before, the board stood still.

When the Mittlerer Rebbe related the dream to his father, the Alter Rebbe

responded: "Why are you so surprised? The Rebbe [the Mezritcher Maggid] created *tzadikim*, but I, *boruch Hashem*, have succeeded in creating many *ba'alei teshuvah* as well."

[The reasoning behind the Alter Rebbe's interpretation is not readily apparent, but] perhaps we can explain it as follows:

Chazal tell us, "When davening, one should turn his eyes earthward, but direct his heart towards Heaven."

Even while davening, one needs to maintain awareness of the physical world as well; one needs to work on uniting the physical world with *Elokus*.

If someone were not to do so, he would run the very real danger of becoming

overwhelmed by the world's lowliness and coarseness, and he would end up losing whatever heights he managed to achieve through davening. But maintaining awareness of *gashmius*, even while davening, allows one to bring the impact of davening to affect the rest of the world.

The difference between *tzaddikim* and *ba'alei teshuvah* can be explained in somewhat similar terms.

A *tzadik*, by definition, is someone who never has done evil; he has never been tempted to do evil, and has no relationship with anything evil. The downside of this is that if the *tzadik* encounters evil, there's no telling how he will react; he may very well be

overwhelmed by its vastness, for which he is unprepared.

On the other hand, a *ba'al teshuva* has nothing to fear of evil, no matter the circumstances. He has already dealt with evil in the past and he has overcome it; he possesses the strength of unlimited scope and nature--“*lima'ala meihishtalshelus*”.

When the Alter Rebbe crossed on the board, it remained calm no matter the strength of the raging water, since he possessed the [merit and spiritual] quality of a *ba'al teshuva*; never fazed by any obstacle.



This *Shabbos* we bless the new month of *Shevat*. We've mentioned many times

in the past that *Shabbos Mevorchim* contains within itself the [qualities of] entire upcoming month. For us, the highlight of the upcoming month is the Tenth of *Shevat*--*yom hilula* of the Rebbe, *nessi doreinu*.

Just as the Alter Rebbe before him, the [Friediker] Rebbe's lifework centered on creating *ba'alei teshuva*.

Although he was involved in many different causes, the central focus of his *avoda*--what the *Gemora* refers to as “*zahir t'fei*”--was creating *ba'alei teshuva*. This was true both in the deeper sense of *teshuva*, similar to how *Moshiach* will cause *tzadikim* to do *teshuva* as well, and also on a simpler, more basic level. He

dedicated himself to this idea in Russia and in Poland, and continued with it when he arrived in the United States.

On the *yom hilula* of a *tzadik* all of his Torah and accomplishments are elevated on High, and it also elevates anyone that is connected to the *tzadik*. Therefore, we must remember that we are to follow in his ways and continue on the path he has shown us, and that nothing will disturb us, not even “turbulent waters.”

Even walking blindly, unsure of where we are headed, doesn't change a thing, since we are on the Rebbe's “board” and following the path that he mapped out. We can move forward confidently! **D**

(Based on *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vaera*, 5718)

