



A TZADDIK'S HILULA

פועל ישועות בקרב הארץ

The Alter Rebbe, whose yahrtzeit is Chof Daled Teves, writes in Iggeres Hakodesh 28 that, “at the time of [a tzadik’s] passing, the chesed of Hashem radiates from world to world, over those who fear Him and affects salvations in the midst of the earth¹ to atone for the sin of the generation, even for the deliberate sins which are of the three impure kelipos.”

This is the great accomplishment of the anniversary of a tzadik’s passing. Although we find ourselves in the final moments of golus—when, like the moments before daybreak, the night is especially dark—when the yahrtzeit of the Alter Rebbe comes around, “Hashem radiates from world to world, over those who fear Him, and affects salvations in the midst of the earth.” True, golus is a tragedy, in fact it is the worst golus ever—as is written in Daniel², “And it will be a time of distress that never was since a nation existed until that time”—nevertheless, “It is a time of distress for Yaakov, and from it he shall be saved³.” On the day of a tzadik’s passing, this very hardship is transformed into salvation.

From this we derive the following lesson in avodas Hashem:

There are times in a person’s life that he lives in “the world of intellect,” i.e. while involved in the study of Torah (or other studies, *lehavdil*); his mind, and by extension his person, is encompassed by ‘ideas.’

In that mode, it is simple for him to appreciate that Hashem performs miracles, and that He “affects salvations in the midst of the earth.”

Even when a person is in the “world of emotions,” in middle of prayer—which the sages⁴ call “a service of the heart”—he can easily be lead to recognize Hashem’s presence in the universe. Although emotions are less spiritual than intellect, when praying the person is still not involved with the physicality, and definitely not the coarseness, of the world.

But the true power of the “salvation He affects” is discovered when one is involved in mundane matters; when he leaves the study hall after



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he has davened and learned, and goes to work. The novelty is that even then a revelation of Hashem's deliverance is drawn down upon him.

And more so; even if he acts without thinking first—as a human being ought to—like he is asleep, the revealed “salvation in the midst of the earth” still affects him.

To explain: We are known as “believers, the sons of believers,” as the *possuk* says in *parshas Shemos*⁵ (which is read on the Shabbos before 24 Teves) “the nation believed.” Meaning, we are also believers, not just our parents. Therefore, when a Jew behaves properly, even while he is involved in “the way of the land,” he doesn't lose his G-dly image, which gives him the title *adam*—person (named so because he is *adame l'elyon*, similar to G-d). All his dealings are clearly intelligent and compassionate. He acts honestly in business and refrains from even the slightest infringement to someone else's livelihood.

Unfortunately, however, there are times when one's actions don't reflect his *adame l'elyon* humanity. His business affairs are defined by extreme involvement in materialism

to the point of greed; when “he has one hundred, he wants two.” At this point it is no longer evident that these actions are being taken by an intelligent and morally upstanding human being, because his defining human feature, his comparability to Hashem, has been consumed by the animal inside him.

And sometimes it's worse than that. Sometimes his actions don't even reflect those of a normal animal. A healthy animal isn't suicidal. Case in point: If one sees a beast jump into a fire, it is a sure sign that the animal is not normal. Here too, one's animal soul in normal circumstances should recognize that acting honestly and in a G-dly fashion is crucial to success. The Torah says⁶, “If you follow My statutes and observe My commandments and perform them, I will give your rains in their time,” and “I will grant peace in the Land⁷.” So following Torah is the vessel for all blessings, and if someone doesn't behave this way, not only is his human status not evident, his behavior is in certain ways worse than an animal's!

This is the real novelty of the “salvation that is affected in

the midst of the earth,” on the anniversary of a *tzadik*'s passing. Hashem's deliverance reaches even people whose actions indicate at non-intelligence or beastliness; notwithstanding their behavior.

In Egypt, Hashem performed miracles so that the *Yidden* would come to know him; that even Egypt, the most deprived of lands, can become an arena for Hashem's revealed presence.

This applies in every generation. Hashem, “the guardian of Israel⁸,” protects every Jew—regardless of his situation—from the “seventy wolves,” the world's nations, and from the “old and foolish king,” our evil inclination.

Until Hashem transforms the darkness to light, and redemption is brought about, which has the “advantage of light that comes from within darkness.” **T**

(Based on a *sicha* delivered 24 Teves 5742, *Toras Menachem Hisvaaduyos* 5742, volume 2, pgs. 685-687)

1. Tehillim 74:12
2. 12:2
3. Yirmiyahu 30:7
4. Taanis 2a
5. 4:31
6. Vayikra 26:3
7. *ibid.* 6
8. Tehillim 121:4