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גדפס ע"י ולזכות
הרה"ת ארי' יצחק הכהן
וזוגתו מרת ראשא רוזא
ומשפחתם שיחיו
וונישטיין

Step Inside

Farbrenge with the Rebbe
— A Companion

A guide to the farbrenge of
Yud Shevat 5732



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Sources

This guide is designed to assist in experiencing the farbrenge on video or audio. Timestamps correspond to the video, linked above.



On the Frierdiker Rebbe's *yom hilula*, the Rebbe points us to the *maamar* he published to be studied on Yud Shevat. Examining just the first 2 words of the *dibur hamaschil*, the Rebbe shows us the proper perspective for uncovering the hidden truth of the world—that it is a beautiful garden, Hashem's home.

Sicha 1: “...To My Garden”

The opening of the *maamar* *Basi L'gani* helps us see the world's hidden goodness.

Where to Begin?

[7:15]

Where do we look for the purpose and lessons of today's *farbrengen*?

To whom do we look for guidance?

- The *farbrengen* is connected to the Frierdiker Rebbe.
- The goal of every *farbrengen* is to influence behavior on a specific theme.
- Today, we **examine his life** to understand how to commemorate his *hilula*.

Which part of his life?

- For a Jew whose very *life* is his Torah —
 - Especially someone who had *mesirus nefesh* for Torah,
 - not just once, but for years on end.
- — **We examine his teachings** to understand his *life*.

Which part of his Torah?

- When life is Torah, the specific *part* of Torah connected to life changes with life's changes.
- So specifically, we look at **the Torah connected to his *histalkus***:
- The *maamar* he published for Yud Shevat, providentially the day of his *histalkus*.
 - Everything is *hashgacha pratis*, especially when it comes to Torah and the Rebbe.
 - Just as Hashem is found in His Torah, so are *tzaddikim*.³

Which part of the *maamar*?

- Torah is precise, including its order.

FIRE VS. LASHES

Chananya, Mishael, and Azarya were thrown into a furnace by Nevuchadnetzar, ready to be *moser nefesh* rather than bow to *avoda zara*. Miraculously, they were spared.¹

The Gemara² relates that had they been given lashes—long, drawn-out pain—they might not have withstood the test. Jumping into fire is a one-time act of *mesirus nefesh*. But continuous lashes bring prolonged suffering, and they might have given in.

(Of course, they would not have actually bowed to *avoda zara*. The *mefarshim* explain that it was not a real idol, but a matter of *kiddush Hashem* for those who thought it was.)

Those who withstood years or decades of suffering and still remained strong in their *Yiddishkeit*—such as the Frierdiker Rebbe and Russian Jews in general—showed stronger fortitude than the three *tzaddikim*. They endured “lashes,” prolonged pain, and yet remained steadfast.



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- The opening part of any Torah is the “head,” setting the direction for all that follows.
 - Torah is compared to a person—*zos hatorah adam*.
- So we will analyze specifically the **opening** of the *maamar*: the words *basi l’gani*.
- [There are many *pirushim* here —
 - Seventy *pirushim* on Torah.
 - The Arizal says that because Torah

- was given to every individual,
 - which is why the *Aseres Hadibros* begin in the singular (*Elokecha* rather than *Elokeichem*),
- There are 600,000 *pirushim*, corresponding to 600,000 souls, for each level of *pshat, remez, derush, and sod*.⁴
- — We will focus on the Frieddiker Rebbe’s explanation.]

The Truth You May Not See

[14:54]

The maamar teaches us the truth about the world: it is Hashem’s beautiful home.

I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride...	שיר השירים: באתי לגני אחתי כלה גו'.
It does not say “I came to a garden,” but rather “to My garden” – to My wedding canopy, to the place that I was originally. Was not the <i>Shechina</i> originally in the lower realm?	מדרש רבה: באתי לגני, אמר רבי מנחם חתניה דרבי אלעזר בר אבוה בשם רבי שמעון ברבי יסנה, באתי לגן אין כתיב כאן, אלא לגני, לגנוני, למקום שהיה עקרי מתחלה, ועקר שכינה לא בתחתונים היתה?
The main purpose behind the creation and formation of the worlds is that the Holy One, blessed be He, desired a dwelling in the lower world, so that His presence could be revealed here through human action...	מאמר באתי לגני ה'ש"ת: והענין הוא, דהנה תכלית הכוונה בבריאת והתהוות העולמות, דנתאוה הקדוש ברוך הוא להיות לו יתברך דירה בתחתונים, שיהי גילוי אלקות למטה ע"י עבודת האדם...

The opening of the *maamar*:

- **The Frieddiker Rebbe cites the *midrash*:** the *pasuk* specifies *gani*—my garden, the special garden where the *Shechina* resides.
- **He explains:** *gani* refers to this world.

The lesson:

- Many observe the world around them and—mistakenly—assess it: the situation appears to be in decline.
 - Our physical eyes see only the physical.
- Goodness and *kedusha* do not appear on the rise.
- Especially for Yidden—a minority among the nations.

- The world seems to resemble a *jungle*, not a fruit-bearing *garden*, which is even more pleasant than a *field* [that grows essential grain].

[Torah teaches the difference:

- Growing a field takes less energy and time than cultivating a garden.
- Depending on the quality of the produce, the length of time to grow it varies.^{6]}

Yet the *maamar* compares the world to a garden—no less!

- The Rebbe himself experienced much hardship.
 - All four danger categories in Torah!
- Even in this country, he faced spiritual and physical hardships.
- Yet he teaches us not to be discouraged about the world's situation.
 - And not to act with *kabalas ol* only—knowing the world is a jungle yet doing our *avoda* anyway,
 - because that will prevent doing our *avoda* with joy.
- He teaches us that this very world is a garden!
- Whose garden? *Gani*—Hashem's garden (the garden owner affects the produce within it), and His primary place, *genuni*.
 - [This applies even if we don't

BETTER TIMES AHEAD?

The concept of *yeridas hadoros*—the spiritual decline of the generations—appears in a question in the Gemara. While discussing the mitzvah of *yibum* versus *chalitza*, the Gemara seems to imply that the later generation was more virtuous than the earlier one. This leads to the incredulous question: “*Achshar dara?*—Has the generation improved?!⁵”

The Gemara then reinterprets its reasoning, since we do not assume that later generations are on a higher spiritual level. On the contrary, each generation is generally considered less pious than the one before.

fully understand.

- The word *basi* is also a lesson—to be explained in *sicha* 2.]
- There are varying levels of Hashem's presence in the world —
 - The *mishna* lists ten levels.⁷
- — but even the lowest level is Hashem's *genuni*.

Uncovering the Fruit

[23:23]

Uncovering the truth of the world and acting accordingly.

- Knowing this truth changes our perception,
- and we begin to seek the good hidden beneath the surface.
- We know we will find—for Torah assures us—
- the fruits of the garden Hashem calls His own.
- This, then, is the lesson:
- We live in a precious world!
- The *yetzer hara* tries to conceal the truth so that we should give up.
- We remind ourselves that its entire purpose is to cover the truth.
- We know Hashem's path, revealed by the Rebbe,
- and we are certain to uncover the truth.
- May it go smoothly, as befits Jews — kings,
- and merit the ultimate good of Moshiach's times.



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Sicha 2: “I Have Come...”

A reality check: what about the hardships we face, especially as Jews?

A convert who comes to convert at the present time is told: What did you see that made you come to convert? Don't you know that the Jewish people at this time are anguished, suppressed, despised, and harassed, and hardships constantly come upon them?

יבמות מזא: גר שבא להתגייר בזמן הזה, אומרים לו: מה ראית שבאת להתגייר? אי אתה יודע שישראל בזמן הזה דוויים, דחופים, סחופים ומטורפים, ויסורין באין עליהם?

Many mistakenly think...that the evils in the world are more numerous than the good... that it is a wonder if any good is found...

But true contemplation shows... that man's very existence is a great good for him and a kindness from G-d...

Thus, the absolute nature of kindness and goodness, and the abundance of good, is made clear.

מורה נבוכים: רבות עולה בדמיון... שהרעות בעולם רבות מן הטובות... ואומרים שלפלא הוא אם ימצא טוב...
אך ההתבוננות האמיתית היא... שהוא (=האדם) מציאותו היא טוב גדול לו וחסד מה'...
הנה התבררה מוחלטות החסד והטובה ושפע הטוב.

Despised—or Divine?

[34:30]

The Rebbe begins by questioning something we established in the last sicha:

- The Gemara says that potential converts are warned of the hardships Jews face.
- So, which is it? Is the world a beautiful garden, or a place of hardship for a Jew (as Torah itself says)?

The same question applies to the Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim*:

[But first, regarding apparent differences in the Rambam's writings:

- He authored both the *Yad Hachazaka* and *Moreh Nevuchim*—obviously, they can be reconciled.
- *Yad Hachazaka* is *halachos*, which must be unambiguous.
- *Moreh Nevuchim* has differing interpretations, corresponding to the particular *navuch* returning to clarity.]

- He discusses two viewpoints of the world:

- A place of overpowering *kelipa*,
- or Hashem's garden.

- Now, from the Rambam's letters,⁸ we know of his difficult life; dealing with the Sultan, pain, weakness, etc.
 - A man of his stature would prefer dealing with matters of *chochma* all day,
 - which he says in *Moreh Nevuchim* is a person's true purpose,
 - yet most of his day was dedicated to other pursuits.
- Still, his *maskana* is that the world must be viewed as good.

Just as the Gemara seems to be in contradiction to the maamar's assertion that the world is a garden, the Rambam's life itself seems to have the same contradiction.



The same can be asked regarding each Jew:

- Being “despised and anguished” on the one hand,
- and having to “serve Hashem with joy” on the other.
 - Serving Hashem, and the joy

it requires, is constant.

- Joy is not secondary to *avoda*,
- and must be attainable, if Torah demands it.

Is it really possible to view the world as “gani”—Hashem’s garden? Torah itself seems to imply otherwise.

He Was Here First

[42:22]

The answer begins with a change in perspective:

- The answer lies in the word *basi*—“I [Hashem] have come.”
- Hashem is already in the world, in a “*dira*,” a permanent way.
- [In His presence, what are hardships in comparison?]

Example #1:

- An insect’s bite doesn’t bother someone in the midst of experiencing great joy.
- Not that the “bite”—the hardship—does not exist,
- but it does not disturb you when you recognize that you’re in Hashem’s presence, *basi*,
- and you are “inviting Him inside” by making it into *gani*—His home,
 - as explained in Tanya, each mitzvah makes the world a home for Hashem.⁹

What, then, does Torah mean when it calls Jews “despised and anguished”?

- A non-Jew, who has not yet converted, must be told the truth from *his* standpoint.

- To him, Jews are “despised and anguished” because he is not yet together with Hashem in the world.
- Hashem is close to every Jew, [not yet to the potential covert].
 - Being close to Him requires work, but that *He* is close to *us* is the *reality*.¹⁰

Example #2:

- Tell a businessman, “You earned hundreds of thousands of gold coins—and lost a penny.”
- Obviously he will not be bothered by the loss of a penny.
- **But**, he has to first **understand the value** of the gold.
- One who only recognizes the worth of the penny *will* mourn its loss.

(The Rebbe later elaborates more on the nimshal to this.)

Knowing Hashem is in the world with us is a perspective that helps us ignore the hardship. But only a Jew can appreciate that, not the potential convert.

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Understanding the Worth of Gold

[46:28]

- Hashem was indeed here first—*basi*,
- but He wants our *avoda* to make the world once again His home—*gani*.
 - When we draw His presence here, it is permanent.
 - “*Yishkenu la’ad aleha*”—Hashem’s presence is forever.
 - The *mitzvah*’s effect is eternal, even if we later turn to do the opposite.¹¹
- Our *avoda* reveals *Elokus*; even if the world doesn’t see it yet, we can—because our actions brought it about.
- To reiterate: when we observe the world and hear negative occurrences, etc., we can become discouraged about our mission to repair the world.
- Torah says: No! You are only seeing with your physical eyes!
- Lift your gaze and remember Who created the world—this is Hashem’s beautiful orchard.

- Hashem’s presence is constant; as the Baal Shem Tov explains, He is constantly “coming to the garden” again.
- From a non-Jew’s perspective, life’s hardships are truly “despised and anguished.”
- In the example above, losing a coin is **still relative** to earning hundreds of thousands—they are both **quantitatively**, in *kamus*, measurable currency.
- But for a Jew, being in the same home as Hashem is a **qualitatively** better good, in *eichus*. Physical hardships are **not at all relative** to that.
- Even less than the relation between one coin and hundreds of thousands is the relevance of suffering beside being in Hashem’s presence.

A Jew can appreciate the value of being in Hashem’s world. Relative to that, oppression is not suffering at all. But the potential convert, a non-Jew, does not yet have the capacity to recognize the “worth of the gold.” For him, being “despised and anguished” is indeed the reality.

The Literal Good

[51:40]

We also want the literal, revealed good—not only the *perspective* of good.

- When we internalize this awareness—that we are with Hashem and thus not disturbed by hardship,
- we merit to receive Hashem’s ultimate blessings and treasures.

- This means in the physical sense, that the *nefesh habahamis* understands too.
- Physical good, and the ability to make a *dira b’tachtonim* with abundance.
- When Moshiach comes, we will not desire the physical pleasures because they will be plentiful as the dust of the earth.

1. Daniel *perek* 3.
2. Kesubos 33b, sourcesheet source 1.
3. Sourcesheet sources 2–3.
4. Sourcesheet sources 4–5.
5. Yevamos 39b. See sourcesheet source 6.
6. Bechoros 8a. Sourcesheet source 7.
7. Keilim 1:7.
8. Teshuvos HaRambam (Pe’er Hador) ch. 143. Sourcesheet source 8.

9. Tanya ch. 34. See sourcesheet sources 9–10.
10. Devarim Rabbah 2:14. Sourcesheet source 11.
11. Tanya ch. 25. Sourcesheet source 12.