



WHAT IT MEANS TO THE REBBE

As Chassidim, we strive to connect to the Rebbe in all possible ways.

Chazal tell us that when the *possuk* says “ולדבקה בו”—that there’s a mitzvah to connect to Hashem—the way this can be accomplished is by connecting to *talmidei chachamim*.¹ The Alter Rebbe explains in *Tanya perek 2* that all *hashpa’os* to all the *neshamos* of each generation are given through the *Roshei Alfei Yisroel*, the “heads” of the generations.

As the Rebbe explained on numerous occasions, the way to connect to the *nasi hador* is by learning the Rebbe’s Torah, following the Rebbe’s *hora’os*, and so on.²

In addition to that, Chassidim understand that it is important to connect to the Rebbe in all ways possible, including developing a feeling of closeness and affection towards the Rebbe. As the Alter Rebbe writes in *Iggeres Hakodesh*: The spiritual sustenance provided by a *tzaddik* depends on the level of one’s closeness and love to him: “כל אחד כפי בחי' התקשרותו וקרבתו אליו בחייו ובמותו באהבה רבה כי המשכת כל רוחניות... אינה אלא ע"י אהבה רבה” (Each [one of his students receives] according to the level of his connection and closeness with love to him [the *tzaddik*], for the drawing down of all spiritual energy is only through love...) ³

So when we reach a day that means so much to the Rebbe, automatically it is a day of utmost significance for a Chossid as well.

Let us reflect for a moment on the day of Chof-Beis Shevat and how much it means to the Rebbe:

To all those present during the period of the Rebbetzin’s *histalkus*, the extent and depth of the Rebbe’s reaction was difficult to bear. This is evident even from merely watching the videos available from after the *shiva*,

CHOF-BEIS SHEVAT A CHOSSID'S APPROACH

“ALL THE CHASSIDIM ARE OUR CHILDREN!”

WITH THESE FAMOUS WORDS, THE REBBETZIN CHARACTERIZED HER RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL CHASSIDIM.

IF THE REBBETZIN SAW US ALL AS HER OWN CHILDREN, IT IS ONLY APPROPRIATE THAT WHEN HER *YAHRTZEIT* APPROACHES WE SHOULD TAKE THE TIME TO REFLECT ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAY AND HOW IT PERTAINS TO US. ESPECIALLY GIVEN THAT THIS YEAR MARKS THIRTY YEARS SINCE HER *HISTALKUS*.



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as well as the audio recordings of the *shiva* itself—the Rebbe’s davening at the *amud* and especially during the *nichum aveilim*.

One of the earlier Rebbeim whose Rebbetzin’s *histalkus* was during his lifetime was the Tzemach Tzedek. The story is told⁴ that after his Rebbetzin passed away, the Tzemach Tzedek refused to be comforted. Hearing the news

of her *histalkus*, he said “עולמי בעדי חשך בעדי—My world has been darkened...”⁵

Also evident is the extent to which the Rebbe changed his conduct after Chof-Beis Shevat, displaying how much the *histalkus* meant to the Rebbe. For the entire year of *aveilus*, the Rebbe remained at home. All the *tefillos*, *dollars*, and *sichos* (during the week) were all held at home.

The Rebbe also no longer held weekday *farbrengens*. Instead, the Rebbe began *farbrenging* every Shabbos, and also delivered *sichos* from his *shtender* more frequently after weekday davenings.

Additionally, there were many other changes in conduct in general.

THE ACTIVE ROLE OF OUR REBBETZINS

For some perspective on this issue we can perhaps turn to a fascinating *sicha* said by the Rebbe in Kislev 5749. The Rebbe explains that throughout the generations, our Rebbeim’s work in transforming this world was partnered with the work of their Rebbetzins. In order to reach the furthest realms of the universe and affect them as well, the Rebbetzins in each generation played an active role.⁶

Clearly then, in addition to all she sacrificed for Chassidim by giving the Rebbe over to the general public throughout all the years of his *nesius*, the Rebbetzin also takes part in the Rebbe’s *nesius* on a spiritual level, and in his connection to us as Chassidim.

It is thus no wonder that the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin has such profound meaning.

A PRIVATE AFFAIR?

On the surface it would seem that an occurrence like the *histalkus* of the Rebbetzin—and the marking of her *yahrtzeit*—is the Rebbe’s own private affair. Is it even appropriate for Chassidim to get involved in this?



6. SHEVAT 5750, LEVI FREIDIN VIA JEM 236655

But taking a closer look, there are two points to suggest that it is:

A) As mentioned above, as Chassidim we understand and feel that an issue that means so much to the Rebbe is automatically of importance and significance to a Chossid.

The Rebbe explains the reason the Frierdiker Rebbe didn't establish Gimmel Tammuz as a Yom Tov. After all, in a sense, the day calls for even greater celebration than the actual *chag hageulah* of Yud-Beis Tammuz. On Gimmel Tammuz the Frierdiker Rebbe was spared from a much harsher sentence.

The reason is, says the Rebbe, that the Frierdiker Rebbe, being a *neshama klolis*, only concerned himself with the needs of his Chassidim.

Focusing on a date that only involves himself on a personal level would be uncharacteristic of his role as a Rebbe. Since it was on Yud-Beis Tammuz that the Frierdiker Rebbe was able to completely leave prison and be with his Chassidim again, it was *that* day that he chose to establish as a Yom Tov.

But a Chossid, with true *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, also thinks about the Rebbe on a personal level. Recognizing what the day of Gimmel Tammuz meant for the Frierdiker Rebbe himself—the day that his very life was saved—should bring about the greatest *simcha* for a Chossid! Especially considering the fact that a Rebbe is a *neshama klolis* and therefore everything in the life of a Rebbe, even so-called private affairs, is essentially a general matter that pertains to all of *klal Yisroel*. (See full transcript of the *sicha* for more details.)⁷

B) In truth, the Rebbe made no indication of this *yahrtzeit* being a private matter. On the contrary, the Rebbe shared this date with Chassidim in an unprecedented manner.

Throughout the entire year following the *histalkus*, the Rebbe

spoke non-stop about the Rebbetzin and the lessons everyone should learn from her, highlighting the *pasuk* “*V'hachai yiten el libo*,” as well as each year on the *yahrtzeit*.

In 5752, the Rebbe stood for hours and personally handed out a unique *kuntres*, Kovetz Chof-Beis Shevat, to all—men, women, and children. Everyone received a *kuntres*, a five-dollar bill, and a piece of *lekach*. The Rebbe clearly invited all of the Chassidim to join in marking the day of Chof-Beis Shevat.

Perusing these *sichos* and examining the Rebbe's words, one is fascinated by the expressions the Rebbe used to describe this day; words not found even regarding the *hilulos* of the Rebbeim!

As one example: In the *kuntres B'cha Yevarech Yisroel*—comprised of several *sichos* the Rebbe dedicated to Chof-Beis Shevat 5752 (Sefer Hasichos 5752 vol. 2, p. 344)—the Rebbe notes that being that the Rebbetzin was the daughter of a Rebbe, her *histalkus* accomplishes an elevation for all Yidden!

In the *sicha* the Rebbe said at the conclusion of the *shiva*, there were unbelievable expressions about the Rebbetzin—the special connection she has with her father, the Frierdiker Rebbe, and the qualities (*zechuyos*) she obtained in her own right, which serve as a source of blessing to all who offered comfort after her passing. And more so: as a daughter of a Rebbe, she shared a connection with her father even more than a son would have. As *Chazal* say, “איש מזריע תחילה יולדת נקבה” (when the man seeds first, the child is born female). The Rebbe also added that being that about *tzaddikim* it is said, “גופא דילהון קדישא” (their very body is holy), we can be certain that the *brachos* we receive in the merit of the Rebbetzin pertain not only to spiritual matters, but to material matters as well.⁸

THE REBBE'S CHILDREN

As noted at the beginning of this article, we as Chassidim, are the Rebbe's children, and therefore it is only befitting that we should act on the *yahrtzeit* of the Rebbetzin as we would for our own mother.

The day should be utilized with the appropriate conduct of a *yahrtzeit*, studying Mishnayos, learning extra Torah from the *sichos* and *maamarim* said and prepared by the Rebbe in connection with this day, increasing in *tzedaka*,⁹ and *farbrenging* with the goal of strengthening our *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.

And as the Rebbe said on the Rebbetzin's first *yahrtzeit*, Chof-Beis Shevat 5749:

“Being that the activities that we do in her memory are done with the intention of having an effect down here in this physical world, they are obviously of doubled benefit:

“Not only for her *neshama*, making her more alive because her children are alive – מה זרעה בחיים אף היא בחיים.

“But the benefit is also for for us Yidden down here on earth. For when we do our part in *היא בחיים*, she in turn will daven and make requests for us on high, blessing us *bgashmiyus* and *bruchniyus*, with long life, good health, *בבני חיי ומזוני רויחי*.”¹

1. Kesubos 111b

2. See Hayom Yom 24 Sivan, et. al.

3. Biur on Iggeres HaKodesh 27

4. See Igros Kodesh vol. 5, p. 266; vol. 7, p. 55; vol. 22, p. 279.

5. Sefer Hasichos, Kayitz Tof Shin, p. 95.

6. Sefer Hasichos 5749 vol. 1, p. 84 ff.

7. Toras Menachem vol. 23, p. 105 ff.

8. See full transcript – Sefer Hasichos 5748 vol. 1, p. 271 ff.

9. See Sichas Chof Beis Shevat 5750, where the Rebbe instructs to give *tzedaka* in amounts of 470 (עת), the *gematriya* of the Rebbetzin's name. (Sefer Hasichos 5750 vol. 1, p. 298.)