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Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach

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[The Telegram Sent by the Rebbe Shlita to Chassidim
Throughout the World in Honor of Yud-Tes Kislev,
5752](#) ▶

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Our Sages taught, "Whoever labors on Friday, will eat on Shabbos." Similarly, the spiritual influences of Friday affect the nature of the Shabbos. Thus, the present Shabbos benefits from the influence of Friday, the fifteenth of the month, the day on which the moon shines fully.

Similarly, the influence of Shabbos continues until Tuesday which in this coming week is also a unique day, Yud-Tes Kislev, the "holiday of holidays," the Rosh HaShanah of Chassidus. (Indeed, there is an intrinsic connection between Yud-Tes Kislev and Tuesday, for it was on this day of the week that the Alter Rebbe's redemption took place. This is reflected in his recitation of Psalm 55, part of the section of Tehillim recited in connection with Tuesday. When he recited the verse from that psalm, "He redeemed my soul in peace," he was informed about his liberation.) This also provides us with a lesson to be applied in our service of G-d.

The nature of that lesson can be understood by a comparison between Yud-Tes Kislev and other holidays. Pesach and Sukkos fall on the fifteenth of the month, the time when the moon shines fully. Shavuos falls in the first half of the month, the time when the moon waxes.^[360] In contrast, Yud-Tes Kislev falls in the second half of the month, the time when the moon is waning. Similarly, we find that the holiday of Chanukah is celebrated at the time of the waning of the moon. Indeed, in the midst of that holiday, the moon becomes totally obscured.

The above concepts relate to the service of the Jewish people who "resemble the moon" and "establish their calendar according to the moon." They can be resolved within the context of a more general question. Seemingly, since the moon wanes in the second half of the month, rather than continue counting the days in ascending order 15,16,17, it would be proper to count the days in descending order 15,14,13. This, however, is not the case. After the shining of the full moon on the fifteenth of the month, despite the fact that the moon begins to wane, the following day is counted as the sixteenth of the month. As the moon continues to wane, the numbers grow higher. Indeed, the greatest dates of the months (the 29th or 30th) are the nights on which the moon's light is obscured entirely.^[361]

The rationale for this is the principle "Always ascend higher in holy matters; never descend." Although on a revealed level, there is less light, inwardly, a process of ascent is taking place.

To explain: The sun and the moon are a classic example of a relationship between a mashpia (source of influence) and a mekabel (recipient). For the moon has no light of its own and receives its light from the sun. In the beginning, it receives only a small amount of light. Subsequently, this light grows until the moon shines fully. Even at this stage, however, it has not achieved true fullness, for it is still a mekabel. It is only in the Era of the Redemption, with the fulfillment of the prophecy, "And the light of the moon will resemble the light of the sun," that the moon will reach true fulfillment.

The waxing and the waning of the moon depends on the position of the moon in relation to the sun. In the first half of the month, as the moon waxes, it moves further and further from the sun. Indeed, at the time of a full moon, it is in furthest position from the sun. In contrast, in the second half of the month, as the moon wanes, it draws closer to the sun.

Allegorically, this can be explained as follows: When the mekabel is close to the mashpia, because of the bittul, self-nullification he feels toward him, he cannot reflect any light. On the contrary, his energies are focused on receiving the mashpia's influence. It is only when he removes himself from the mashpia, that he begins to shine forth light. In this context, it can be explained that the moon's light wanes in the second half of the month in order for it to be able to receive influence so that it will be able to shine again in the coming month.

There is, however, a deeper concept: The reduction in light reflects a connection to the essence which is hidden, above the concept of revelation. The revelation of light by definition indicates that one is separate from the essence. And through reducing this revelation, one draws closer to the essence.

Nevertheless, it can be explained that the association of the essence with hiddenness and light with revelation is only in relation to an entity separate from the essence. For an outsider cannot receive the essence as it is and can receive only a ray. Therefore, the essence is considered as darkness. In contrast, when considering the perspective of the essence, revelation is darkness, i.e., separation from the source and the essence itself is "light," i.e., true existence.

Thus, the necessity for a reduction of light in order to receive from the essence applies only when an entity is concerned with its independent identity. When, however, the mekabel unites with the mashpia on an equal basis, then the essence is in revelation. In this context, the moon's waning in the second half of the month is a diminution only in regard to revelation. In essence, however, even in the second half of the month, the moon -- and symbolically, the Jewish people -- are growing.

In particular, the above is relevant in regard to the month of Kislev. Kislev is the third winter month. Thus it parallels Sivan, the third summer month, the month associated with the giving of the Torah. Similarly, the month of Kislev is associated with the giving of P'nimiyus HaTorah as reflected in the teachings of Chassidus.

Herein, we see a connection to the concepts mentioned above, for the giving of the Torah represents the marriage (union) between G-d and the Jewish people. On one level, G-d is the mashpia and the Jews, the mekabel, but on a deeper level, the ultimate intent is that the union should be complete and total oneness achieved.^[362]

Thus the full moon of the third month represents the ultimate expression of the marriage bond between G-d and the Jewish people. In particular, this is expressed more completely in Kislev, the third of the winter months than in Sivan, the third of the summer months.

To explain: The summer is associated with revelation from Above, as reflected in the sun's powerful shining. In contrast, the winter months are associated with the service of ascent, the service of the Jewish people. Therefore, in regard to the giving of the Torah in the summer months, the union between G-d and the Jewish people, is not complete, for it is dependent on the revelation from Above and not on the service of the Jews themselves. In contrast, the giving of the Torah in the winter months reflects the ultimate union between G-d and the Jewish people.

This concept is also reflected in the name of the month, Kislev (àæï). The name Kislev represents a fusion of opposites. Kis (æï) refers to hiddenness. Lo (âî), in contrast, reflects the ultimate in revelation for it is numerically equivalent to 36. 36 is six times six, i.e., the ultimate fulfillment of our potential for revelation, our six emotional powers. Thus the name Kislev reflects a fusion of revelation and hiddenness.

This can be interpreted as referring to the revelation of the essence which was previously concealed from the recipients. At this point, there is no longer a mashpia-mekabel relationship. Instead, a complete unity is established.

Based on the above, we can explain the question asked originally: Why is Yud-Tes Kislev -- in contrast to other holidays -- celebrated during the time when the moon wanes? Yud-Tes Kislev -- the Rosh HaShanah of the Chassidus -- is associated with the coming of Mashiach, for it is through the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus outward that Mashiach will come. With Mashiach's coming, there will be the revelation of "the [new dimensions of the] Torah which will emerge from Me," the revelation of the mystic secrets of the Torah.^[363]

As mentioned above, the giving of the Torah is considered the wedding between G-d and the Jewish people. More particularly, however, the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai is considered as merely the betrothal, the first stage of the marriage bond, and the consummation of the union will not be until the Era of the Redemption. For then, total oneness will be established between G-d and the Jewish people.^[364]

(This is reflected in the relationship between the sun and the moon, for their mashpia-mekabel relationship parallels that shared by G-d and the Jews. It is in the Era of the Redemption, when we will see the fulfillment of the prophecy "the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun.)

To emphasize the unity associated with (the end-product of) the revelation of Chassidus, Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rosh HaShanah of Chassidus is celebrated in the second half of the month, the portion of the month in which the moon draws close to the sun in preparation for their union.^[365]

The positive nature of this time is further emphasized by Chanukah, a holiday which emphasizes the concept of increasing light. Although the light of the moon is waning, on each night of Chanukah, we add light showing that the reduction in light is only on an external level and in essence, we are constantly adding light.

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The above can be connected to this week's Torah reading, Parshas Vayishlach and also to the Torah reading which we begin in the Minchah service, Parshas Vayeishev. The difference between Ya'akov's activities in these two parshiyos when compared to his activities described in the parshiyos, Toldos and Vayeitze is that the parshiyos Vayishlach and Vayeishev describe Yaakov after he reached a state in which he was prepared for the Redemption.

This is the message which Yaakov gave to the messengers he sent to Esav. As explained in Torah Or, he told them that he had completed all the service dependent on him and was expecting Esav to have completed the service depending on him so that they could proceed to the Redemption together. Similarly, Parshas Vayeishev is identified with "Ya'akov's desire to live in prosperity" and the only true sense of prosperity will be in the Era of the Redemption.^[366]

The contrast between these two pairs of parshiyos relates to the concepts described above, for the moon is used as an analogy for Yaakov. Just as the moon is described as "the small luminary" and in regard to Yaakov, it is written, "How shall Yaakov stand, for he is small?" And our Sages say, "the smaller one (the Jews who descend from Yaakov) establish their calendar according to the small luminary."

Thus the difference between Yaakov as he is involved in the service of refinement and Yaakov as he is prepared for the Redemption, parallels the difference between the moon as it receives light from the sun and as it will be in the Era of the Redemption, when it will be equal to the sun.

Ya'akov's task of refinement is also associated with the diminution of the moon. This can be explained as follows: The task of refinement involves the elevation of the sparks of G-dliness that fell when the vessels of the realm of Tohu^[367] shattered. The shattering of the vessels of Tohu, in turn, was caused by the diminution of the moon. Thus it is understood that the moon's diminution was for a purpose, the elevation of the world to be achieved through the service of refinement. When, however, that service is completed, the moon will no longer need to be small and will be elevated to the state that it also will be a "great light."

When Yaakov confronted Esav, although Yaakov was prepared for the Redemption Esav was not, and the task of refining Esav and the material worlds associated with him had to continue for centuries. In the present age, however, to borrow an expression from the Previous Rebbe, "We have already polished the buttons." The task of refinement which was entrusted to the Jews has been completed. This is particularly true because of the influence of Yud-Tes Kislev which is associated with the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus outward. In each subsequent generation and particularly due to the influence of the Previous Rebbe, the teachings of Chassidus have spread further and have now permeated every different element of existence.

Thus we are now living in a new era with a new service. Instead of concentrating on the refinement of the world, our efforts must focus on revealing the Redemption. The Era of Redemption which is described with the analogy of a feast,^[368] is a present reality, all that is necessary is for us to open our eyes and see.

The above is enhanced by the influence of the present year, "a year imbued with wonders." Furthermore, this year is a leap year which is referred to by our Sages as a "perfect year."^[369] Furthermore, it contains the most days possible in a year for both the months of MarCheshvan and Kislev are full, each containing 30 days.

Our Sages taught, "Deed is most essential." We must use the unique influence of the present year and express it through the efforts to organize Chassidic farbrengens to commemorate the holidays of redemption, Yud-Tes Kislev and Chof Kislev. Farbrengens should be held in every Jewish community. Instead of holding a single large farbrengen, it is preferable to hold farbrengens in many different places, causing these farbrengens to be "great" in a spiritual sense.

Furthermore, every person should participate in many such farbrengens (preferably, at least three, for three is connected with a chazakah, a sequence associated with strength and continuity). These farbrengens should begin with oneself (i.e., collecting one's ten powers), spread to one's families, and be extended to one's circle of friends and acquaintances. In this way, each person will serve as both a mashpia and a mekabel.

In these gatherings, those attending should inspire each other to increase their observance of the three pillars of service -- Torah, prayer, and deeds of kindness -- alluded to in the verse, "He redeemed my soul in peace." And this will lead to the era when "I (G-d) and My children will be redeemed from among the nations," for the ultimate Redemption will be manifest. Ya'akov's wish to dwell in prosperity will be fulfilled in a complete manner and as the Haftorah from this week's Torah reading concludes "Saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esav and sovereignty will be the L-rd's."



Notes:

360. ([Back to text](#)) Furthermore, according to the Torah, there is no connection between Shavuot and the days of the month. The day on which the holiday is celebrated is determined through the Counting of the Omer.
361. ([Back to text](#)) Moreover, the words associated with the numerical equivalents of the second half of the month have powerful positive significance, e.g., 17 is numerically equivalent to the word tov (טוֹב) meaning "good." 18 is numerically equivalent to the word chai (חַי) meaning life. Similarly, a positive connection can be found with all the subsequent numbers.
362. ([Back to text](#)) This is also reflected in the connection to the third month, for the number three is associated with the union of opposites. I.e., one refers to the existence of the higher source, two, to the existence of the lower recipient, and three to their union.
363. ([Back to text](#)) This revelation will be so great that our Sages said, "The Torah of the present era is merely air when compared to the Torah of Mashiach."

364. ([Back to text](#)) Herein, a connection can be seen to the collection of the Previous Rebbe's maamarim concerning weddings that has recently been reprinted. [Translator's note: These maamarim were recited at the Rebbe Shlita's wedding, 5689.]
365. ([Back to text](#)) In particular, this is reflected in the fact that this year Yud-Tes Kislev falls on a Tuesday, a day associated with "good to the heavens" and "good to the created beings." This also alludes to the unity between the mashpia and the mekabel. The celebrations of Yud-Tes Kislev continue until Chof Kislev which this year, falls on a Wednesday. In the week of creation, Wednesday was the day on which G-d created the "two great luminaries," alluding to the fact that at the beginning of creation and similarly, ultimately, in the Era of the Redemption, the moon will, like the sun, be a great luminary.
366. ([Back to text](#)) Herein, we also see a connection to Yud-Tes Kislev which is associated with the verse, "He redeemed my soul in peace." The ultimate conception of peaceful redemption will be in the Era of the Mashiach.
367. ([Back to text](#)) The realm of Tohu is a higher level than the realm of Tikkun, the order according to which our world is structured. Nevertheless, Tikkun possesses an advantage in that it is characterized by balance and stability. The ultimate purpose is a fusion of the two, that the powerful lights of Tohu should shine within the stable vessels of Tikkun.
- This is also reflected in the meeting between Yaakov (Tikkun) and Esav (Tohu). Yaakov sent messengers to Esav, because Esav was -- potentially -- on a higher level, and it was necessary to draw light from his level to that of Yaakov.
368. ([Back to text](#)) Trans. Note: As obvious from the comments of the Ramban (Shaar HaGmul) and Raavad on the Rambam's statements, Hilchos Teshuvah 8:4, the intent is that it will be an actual feast at which will be served the Leviathan, the Wild Ox, and aged wine.
369. ([Back to text](#)) There is a connection between the concept of unity between the sun and the moon and a leap year, for the purpose of a leap year is to balance the differences in the solar and the lunar calendars.

* Yechezkel 11:16.

** Megillah 29a.

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