יום ההילולא

עשרים באב

TWENTY AV

The wood, the two families,
and the two ways of giving oneself away

HILULA

כ"ק הרה"ג הרה"ח וכו'
מוהר"ר לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן ז"ל

נפטר כ' מנחם אב ה'תש"ד · בעיר גלותו — קאזאקסטאן

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson · 20 Av 5704

20 Av 5786

Monday, 3 August 2026 · the 82nd yahrzeit

משיחת כ' מנ"א תשי"א

FRONT MATTER

About this study guide

GENRE

Sicha — a talk, not a maamar. It argues; it does not chant. The reasoning is halachic-analytic in its first half and Chassidic-typological in its second, and it closes with a *hora'ah*, a directive for conduct.

SOURCE OF THIS TEXT

Kovetz Limud, pp. 71–74 — Hebrew rendering of the sicha of 20 Menachem Av 5711, with the printed footnote apparatus (notes 1–24). Transcribed from photographs of the printed pages.

OCCASION

20 Av — the hilula of Reb Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, niftar 5704 in his place of exile in Kazakhstan. The sicha is from 5711: the seventh yahrzeit, and the first Chof Av of the Rebbe's nesius.

HOW TO USE IT

Each ois carries the Hebrew as printed, a plain English rendering, a note on the analytic move it performs, and questions to sit with. Boxed sidebars marked *In Chassidus* open out the surrounding conceptual vocabulary and can be skipped on a first pass. A Shabbos-table telling and the full apparatus follow at the end.

Citation posture. Every Hebrew passage below is transcribed from the supplied page images and nothing else. No Hebrew has been reconstructed from memory. The sicha's own references are reproduced *as printed* in the Apparatus at the end and marked accordingly; internal locators have not been independently verified against the primary texts. The sidebars are editorial synthesis and introduce no new citations.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

The shape of the argument

The sicha begins from a bibliographic curiosity and ends in a directive about giving away what cannot be replaced. Between those two points it does five distinct things, and it is worth seeing the whole arc before entering any one part of it.

It opens with a search result: **Chof Av appears in Shas essentially once** — in the Mishnah's list of the days of the wood-offering. On that day a particular family brought the wood for the altar, and the day became their family festival. The Gemara then records two views about *which* family. That is the crack the sicha widens: two Tannaim cannot disagree about a fact, and if they could, the principle אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים would have nothing to attach to. So the dispute must be about something other than fact.

Having relocated the machlokes, the sicha must justify the Gemara's interest at all — why look for a special ancestral merit behind a wood donation? It answers by **escalating the value of the gift in four steps**, each one stripping more self-interest out of it, until what is left is a family that stranger's atonement, anonymously, and made a festival of it.

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Then the pivot: the two candidate ancestors, **David and Yoav**, are read as two modes of self-effacement — bittul that surfaces as Torah, and bittul that surfaces as engagement with the world. Neither is pure; each depends on the other. But their centers of gravity differ, and the machlokes is a dispute about which center of gravity generated the deed.

Finally the sicha **doubles the reading twice** — once through the names of the disputants themselves (Meir from *or*; Yosi at 86, the gematria of Elokim and of HaTeva), and once through a Bavli–Yerushalmi disagreement about whether a present burden is obligatory for the sake of a future benefit. That second doubling produces the sharpest result in the piece: on the Bavli's reckoning, Yoav was *not obligated* to go out — and it is exactly the unobligated act that carries the higher illui.

The hora'ah then writes itself, and the closing footnote — note 10, easy to skim past — quietly reveals that the entire structure has been a portrait of the man whose yahrzeit it is.

OIS	MOVE	TURNS ON
א	Chof Av in the Mishnah; two views on the family; the machlokes cannot be factual, so it is relocated to *which merit*.	Taanis; אלו ואלו; intermarriage of the two lines
ב	Why the Gemara cares: after 15 Av the sun weakens, wood can no longer be cut, and worm-eaten wood is disqualified. The Chof Av gift required advance cutting and advance selection.	Taanis 31a; disqualification of infested wood; *hachanah*
ג	Four escalations: the wood is not the korban; the korban is not theirs; some korbanos are chata'os for sinners; and they made the day a yom tov.	the *ma'aracha*; anonymity; simcha
ד	Sanhedrin 49a: David and Yoav are mutually constitutive. Two modes of bittul; hisklalus; but different centers. Then: Meir = *or*; Yosi = 86 = Elokim = HaTeva.	bittul; התכללות; gematria; כתנות אור

ה	Bavli vs. Yerushalmi on present burden for future gain. Yerushalmi: Yoav was obligated. Bavli: he was not — and therefore his act is the greater.	obligation vs. volunteering; במחשכים
ו	Hora'ah: give the irreplaceable thing to a Jew who stumbled, unnamed, and rejoice. Educate both the yoshev ohel and the baal esek into mesirus nefesh. Ahavas chinam undoes sinas chinam.	בניך אלו התלמידים; churban and geulah

WORKING VOCABULARY

Korban ha'etzim — the wood-offering; families who volunteered timber for the altar's *ma'aracha*, the arrangement of wood on which korbanos were burned. **Ma'aracha** — that arrangement; infrastructure for the offering rather than the offering itself. **Hisbatlus** — self-nullification. **Mesirus nefesh** — giving over of the self. **Hisklalus** — interinclusion; every element of kedusha containing all the others. **Avodas ha'birurim** — the labor of sifting, of extracting what is holy from what is not. **Nesinas ko'ach** — the "giving of strength": a transmitted capacity that makes a deed possible. **Hora'ah** — the practical directive extracted from the analysis.

א The one day in Shas, and a dispute that cannot be about facts

KOVETZ LIMUD P. 71 · NOTES 1–5*

TEXT — OIS א, FIRST PARAGRAPH

הפעם היחידה שמצאתי לעת עתה שיוזכר בש"ס יום עשרים באב היא במסכת תענית: המשנה מספרת שם, שיום כ' אב היה יום טוב במשפחה מסויימת, משום שביום זה השתמשו בעצים שלהם על גבי המזבח בבית המקדש. היה זמן שלא היו בלשכה עצים, ומשפחות מסויימות התנדבו להביא עצים למזבח. כשנגמרה נדבת העצים של משפחה אחת, התנדבה משפחה שניה, וכן הלאה. ויום זה היה יום טוב לאותה משפחה.

WHAT IT SAYS

The single place in Shas where 20 Av is mentioned — so far as the Rebbe has found — is in Maseches Taanis. The Mishnah reports that Chof Av was a family festival for a particular family, because on that day their wood was used on the altar in the Beis Hamikdash. There was a period when the chamber held no wood, and certain families volunteered to bring it. When one family's donation ran out, a second family volunteered, and so on. That day was a yom tov for that family.

THE MOVE

Notice the register of the opening: *"the one time I have found so far."* The sicha begins as a search, not as a homily — a report on what the corpus contains. Chof Av is not a day the Talmud marks. It is a day that appears once, in passing, inside a list of donation dates. Everything that follows is built on that single thin occurrence, which is itself a kind of argument about the day: it is significant precisely in the register of the unremarked.

TEXT — OIS א, SECOND PARAGRAPH

אודות המשפחה שנדבה עצים בעשרים באב, ישנן בגמרא שתי דעות: ר' מאיר אומר "הן הן בני דוד בן יהודא" ור' יוסי אומר "הן הן בני יואב בן צרויי". ולכאורה איך יתכן מחלוקת במציאות? יתרה מזו: הרי "אלו ואלו דברי אלוקים חיים", כיצד יתכן הדבר בענייננו?

ויש לומר, שהמחלוקת האמורה בין ר' מאיר ור' יוסי, אינה במציאות, אלא שכולם דנים בבני משפחה אחת שהיתה מצאצאי שניהם, של דוד ושל יואב (על ידי שהתחתנו ביניהם), והמחלוקת בין ר' מאיר ור' יוסי היא: מהו היתרון והחשיבות שבמשפחה, להביא לידי נדבת עצים למזבח בעשרים באב. ר' מאיר סובר, שזכותו של דוד המלך עוררה אצלם זאת, ור' יוסי סובר שזכותו של יואב בן צרויה עוררה זאת.

WHAT IT SAYS

On the identity of the family that donated wood on Chof Av there are two views in the Gemara. R′ Meir says: they are the descendants of David ben Yehuda. R′ Yosi says: they are the descendants of Yoav ben Tzeruya. On the face of it —

how can there be a dispute about a matter of fact? And more: since *elu v'elu divrei Elokim chayim*, both are the words of the living God — how can that hold here?

The answer: the dispute between R′ Meir and R′ Yosi is not about fact. Both are speaking about the members of a single family, descended from both David and Yoav (through intermarriage between the lines). The dispute is about something else: *what* the distinction and importance in that family was that produced a donation of wood for the altar on Chof Av. R′ Meir holds that David Hamelech's merit awakened it in them; R′ Yosi holds that Yoav ben Tzeruya's merit awakened it.

THE MOVE

This is the structural hinge of the whole sicha, and it is done in two sentences. The two Tannaim are not disagreeing about genealogy; they are disagreeing about *causation in the soul*. One family, two ancestral lines, and a question of which inheritance was load-bearing for this particular act.

Two things are gained. First, the machlokes becomes a real machlokes rather than a conflict of testimony — which is what allows *elu v'elu* to apply to it. Second, and more consequentially, the object of inquiry shifts from *who did it* to *what in a person makes such an act possible*. The rest of the sicha is an answer to that second question, and the answer will turn out to be a taxonomy of two whole avodos.

IN CHASSIDUS

אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים — what a machlokes is

In the Chassidic reading, a dispute between Torah authorities is not an epistemic accident in which one party happens to be mistaken. It is the appearance, in the language of halacha, of two genuinely distinct spiritual sources — two attributes, two roots, two ways the same divine intention can be configured. Both are *divrei Elokim chayim* because both are faithful renderings of something real; the practical ruling then selects which rendering governs conduct, without falsifying the other.

That is why the sicha treats the possibility of a factual machlokes as a problem rather than a curiosity. A factual dispute has a right answer and a wrong one; there is nothing in it for *elu v'elu* to be true of. So the principle functions here as a *constraint* — a pressure that forces the reinterpretation. The hermeneutic reads: if this is a legitimate machlokes, it cannot be about what it appears to be about. Find what it is about.

This is a general habit worth naming, because it recurs across the corpus: Chassidus frequently locates the substance of a Talmudic dispute one level beneath its surface, in the differing spiritual registers of the disputants. The names of the Tannaim then stop being labels and start being data — which is exactly what ois ד will exploit.

IN CHASSIDUS

נתינת הכח — inherited capacity and the reach of a deed

The sicha's operative phrase in ois ב is *nesinas hako'ach*: the special "giving of strength" and merit of the fathers within this family. The assumption behind it is that a deed of a certain magnitude is not generated by the doer alone. Something has to have been deposited in him.

This is not fatalism, and it is not a theory that ancestry determines behavior. It is closer to a claim about *enablement*: the act remains the person's own free act, but its *possibility* — the fact that this particular movement of self-abnegation was available to him at all — traces to a root he did not create. Which is why the Gemara's question is a real question. When you meet conduct that exceeds what the situation demands, the Chassidic instinct is to ask where the capacity came from, not merely to admire it.

Hold this together with the closing hora'ah, where the same logic runs forward instead of backward: what you do now becomes the *nesinas hako'ach* of children and students. The chain is not only something you inherit. It is something you deposit.

TO SIT WITH

1. The sicha's resolution requires that the two lines had intermarried. Note 5 points to Chazal's two readings of *bnos Putiel* as a precedent for a single person being named now from one descent, now from the other. What does it cost, and what does it gain, to make a derash depend on a genealogical fact?
2. If a machlokes can never be about fact, what happens to the many Talmudic disputes that plainly look factual? Is the sicha making a general claim, or a local one licensed by *elu v'elu* being invoked in this sugya?

ב Why this donation was different: the sun weakens, and the wood is already cut

KOVETZ LIMUD PP. 71–72 · NOTES 6–9

TEXT — OIS ב

במה התבטאה גודל המעלה של נדבת העצים בעשרים באב, שמשום זה מחפשים מהי נתינת הכח המיוחדת וזכות האבות שבמשפחה זו?

הגמרא אומרת: "מחמשה עשר באב ואילך תשש כחה של חמה ולא היו כורתין עצים למערכה לפי שאינן יבשין". הדין הוא שעצים מתולעים פסולים למזבח, ולכן כאשר "תשש כחה של חמה", חששו שמא העצים מתולעים.

נדבת העצים הראשונה לאחר חמשה עשר באב היתה בעשרים באב.

את העצים היו צריכים, כאמור, לכרות לפני זה, ובני המשפחה הביאום אל המזבח בעשרים באב, בזמן שכבר לא יכלו לכרות עצים חדשים. ועוד: זמן מסוים לפני שהצטרכו לעצים, הם כבר התכוננו וברורו אודות העצים וכו' כדי להכינם לאחר מכן. ולכן בנדבת עצים שביום זה, עשרים באב (וכן בנדבת המשפחה שהתנדבה לאחריהם – בעשרים באלול) ישנה חשיבות שאינה בנדבות המשפחות שהתנדבו לפניהם, שכן הללו הביאו עצים בזמן שאפשר לכרות עצים מחדש. ומאחר שהנדבות שלאחר חמשה עשר באב, היו חשובים במיוחד, לכן דנה הגמרא, מנין נובעת פעולה חשובה כזו במשפחות אלו.

WHAT IT SAYS

In what did the greatness of the Chof Av wood-donation consist, such that one looks for the special transmitted capacity and ancestral merit in this family?

The Gemara says: from 15 Av onward the strength of the sun wanes, and they would no longer cut wood for the *ma'aracha*, because it would not be dry. The law is that worm-eaten wood is disqualified for the altar; so once the sun's strength had waned, there was a concern that the wood might be infested.

The first wood-donation after 15 Av was on 20 Av.

The wood, as stated, had to be cut beforehand, and the family brought it to the altar on Chof Av — at a time when fresh wood could no longer be cut. And further: some time before the wood was needed, they had already prepared and made their inquiries about the wood, in order to ready it for later. Therefore the donation of this day, Chof Av (and likewise the donation of the family that followed them, on 20 Elul), carries an importance not present in the donations of the families that gave before them, since those brought wood at a time when new wood could still be cut. And since the donations after 15 Av were especially significant, the Gemara asks from where such an important act in these families derives.

THE MOVE

This is a piece of quiet analytic craft. The Gemara's question — why look for ancestral merit here? — is answered not by asserting that the day was special but by finding a *calendrical* reason it had to be. After the solstice-side turn of mid-Av, the timber will not dry; undried timber is liable to be infested; infested timber is unfit for the altar. So the Chof Av family could not have improvised. Their gift had to have been cut earlier and vetted earlier. The generosity is dated backward from the day of the offering into months of unwitnessed preparation.

Note what this does to the notion of a gift. The families who gave before 15 Av gave wood; the Chof Av family gave wood *plus a season of foresight*. The day of the yom tov is the day of delivery, but the substance of the deed occurred long before, invisibly. Note 8 sharpens this against the bnei Sena'ah, who gave on 15 Av: theirs lacked the prior investigation and preparation.

IN CHASSIDUS

הכנה — preparation as substance, not preliminary

There is a standing theme in Chassidus that the *hachanah* — the preparation for an avodah — is not antechamber to the avodah but part of its body. The classic instances are liturgical: the hours before davening are not the corridor to davening, they are davening's first movement. Here the sicha gives that theme a material, almost forensic form. What made the Chof Av gift great is not observable on Chof Av. It is the dry wood, and dry wood is a record of a decision made in a season when nothing was being asked of anyone.

This is worth pressing, because it inverts how we normally evaluate generosity. We tend to weigh the moment of giving — its cost, its scale, its visibility. The sicha weighs instead the interval between the intention and the gift, and treats that interval as the place where the self-effacement actually happened. Anyone can be generous when asked. The question is what you were doing four months earlier.

IN CHASSIDUS

Volunteered and assigned: התנדבות against גורל

Note 9 does something the body text does not, and it prefigures the sicha's climax. Asked why the bnei Par'osh donation of 1 Teves lacks this quality, it gives two reasons. First, theirs was a *second* donation — they had already given earlier in Av — and a repetition is not comparable to a new avodah, "since all beginnings are hard." Second, and the note marks this as the essential one: theirs was not by volunteering but *by lot*.

Two Chassidic principles are sitting inside that. One: the difficulty of a beginning is not friction to be minimized, it is where the value is stored — which is why a first act and a repeated act are not the same act. Two: an assigned duty and a chosen one differ in kind, not only in feeling. What comes to you by lot has been arranged for you; what you volunteer, you originate.

Keep the second one in hand. In ois ה the whole machlokes will be re-derived from precisely this distinction — whether Yoav's going out to war was *obligatory* or *volunteered* — and the answer that yields the higher illui is the one where he was not obligated.

TO SIT WITH

1. The sicha builds the ma'alah of Chof Av out of a physical constraint — the sun. Is the constraint incidental to the meaning, or constitutive of it? Compare: would the day mean the same thing if wood could be cut year-round?
2. Note 8 argues that even on 15 Av itself cutting was still possible, since the Gemara says "from 15 Av *onward*." Why does the sicha need that point, and what would break without it?

ג Four escalations: not a korban, not theirs, for a sinner, and celebrated

KOVETZ LIMUD P. 72 · NOTES 10–13

TEXT — OIS ג

יתר על כן: העצים עצמם לא היו קרבן. הצטרכו להם עבור המערכה שעליה הקריבו קרבן. הקרבן עצמו – שהקריבוהו על העצים – לא היה דוקא של המשפחה, או מקרבן ציבור (שהיא חלק ממנו) – היו אלו קרבנות מכל בני ישראל. יתירה מזו: בין הקרבנות היו גם חטאות, אשמות וכדומה, שהביאום בעלי עבירות ככפרה על עוונות. ועם כל זה היו המשפחות מבררים זמן מה לפני זה וכו', כאמור, לא לטובת עצמם, כי אם בכדי לסייע ליהודי שנכשל בעבירה, שיוכל להקריב קרבן שיכפר עליו.

וגדולה מזו: נדבה זו של חפץ שלא ניתן להשיגו, כדי לסייע ליהודי חוטא, נעשתה בשמחה, ועד שקבעו יום זה, יום קרבן העצים, ליום טוב במשפחה.

ובזה נחלקו ר' מאיר ור' יהודה, האם הכח להתנהגות כזו נובעת מדוד המלך או מיואב בן צרויה.

WHAT IT SAYS

Further still: the wood itself was not a korban. It was needed for the *ma'aracha* upon which korbanos were offered. And the korban itself — the one offered on their wood — was not necessarily the family's own, nor a communal korban in which they held a share; these were korbanos of any and all of Israel. More than that: among those korbanos were chata'os, ashamos and the like, brought by people who had transgressed, as atonement for sins. And with all of this, the families were making their inquiries some time in advance — not for their own benefit, but in order to help a Jew who had stumbled in transgression, that he might bring a korban to atone for him.

And greater than this: this donation of an item that could not be obtained, made in order to help a sinning Jew, was done *with joy* — to the point that they established that day, the day of their wood-offering, as a family festival.

And this is what R' Meir and R' Yehuda dispute: whether the strength for such conduct derives from David Hamelech or from Yoav ben Tzeruya.

Transcription note. The printed text reads ר' יהודה here, though the machlokes under discussion throughout the sicha is between R' Meir and R' Yosi. Transcribed as printed; worth checking against another printing. Note 18 does separately discuss a plugta of R' Yehuda and R' Yosi, so the slip may be downstream of that.

THE MOVE

This is the emotional and argumentative center of the first half, and it works by strict escalation. Each step removes one more possible motive from the donor.

- **First** — the wood is not the offering. It is the arrangement *under* the offering. Whatever ascends, it is not their gift; their gift is the condition of its ascending. They gave infrastructure.

- **Second** — the korban burned on their wood was not theirs and not even a public korban in which they held a share. So there is no route, however indirect, by which the merit returns to them.
- **Third** — among those korbanos were sin-offerings and guilt-offerings, brought by people who had transgressed. The beneficiary is not simply a stranger; he is a stranger who failed.
- **Fourth** — and this is the one that changes the character of the whole: they did it *with joy*, and made the day a festival.

Read the sequence as a progressive subtraction of self. What remains after all four subtractions is a family that spent a season securing a material that could not be gotten, so that someone they would never meet, who had sinned, could be forgiven — and that treated this as the best day of its year.

The fourth step deserves its own attention, because it is not a further sacrifice. It is a report on interiority. A deed can be performed correctly and grimly. Joy is the tell that it came from somewhere deeper than obligation.

IN CHASSIDUS

שמחה — joy as diagnostic, not decoration

In Chassidus simcha is treated less as an emotional reward for avodah than as evidence about its source. An act driven from the outer layers of the self — duty, reputation, fear of consequence — is performed against resistance, and resistance shows. An act that issues from the essence meets no internal opposition, and what that absence of friction feels like from inside is joy.

So when the sicha says the donation "was done with joy, to the point that they established the day as a festival," it is not adding a pleasant detail. It is closing the argument. The escalation had removed every extrinsic motive; the simcha establishes that nothing extrinsic was doing the work in the first place. This is why the celebration is the strongest evidence in the sequence, stronger than the anonymity and stronger than the cost.

The inverse is worth naming too: joylessness in a mitzvah is diagnostic in the other direction. Not a failure of temperament, but a report that the act is being driven from the outside.

IN CHASSIDUS

A gift with no name on it

The sicha will make the anonymity explicit in ois ו — *even if the deed will not be called by his name* — but the structure is already complete here. The wood is consumed. Nothing survives the fire bearing the donor's mark. The korban that ascends belongs to someone else, and if that someone else is a sinner bringing a chatas, he is unlikely to be thinking about who supplied the timber.

What is striking is the pairing of this total anonymity with a *named family festival*. The family does not go unnamed; the day is theirs and their descendants keep it. So the sicha is not praising self-erasure as such. It is describing a specific configuration: erasure in the act, acknowledgment in the identity. You disappear from the deed and reappear as the kind of family that does such deeds. That is a different thing from humility, and arguably harder.

THE PERSONAL REGISTER — NOTE 10

Why this structure, and why on this day

Attached to the sentence about joy is a footnote that reframes everything above it. It is easy to read past. It should not be read past.

וזה מתאים לעבודתו של אאמו"ר בעל ההילולא, שבלי הבט על גדלותו בגליא דתורה ובפנימיות התורה וכו', מסר עצמו להרבצת התורה ולהחזקת היהדות גם בין אנשים פשוטים, אף שסבל עבור עבודתו זו עינויים קשים וכו' ועד לגלות לפינה נדחת במחוז רחוק – קאזאקסטאן, ובכל זה, עשה עבודתו זו בשמחה.

"And this corresponds to the avodah of my father, the master of this hilula: that without regard to his greatness in the revealed Torah and in the inner Torah, he gave himself over to the spreading of Torah and the strengthening of Yiddishkeit even among simple people — although he suffered for this avodah severe torments, and to the point of exile to a forsaken corner in a distant province, Kazakhstan — and with all of this, he did this avodah with joy."

Now re-read ois ג as a portrait. A man of the first rank in both nigleh and pnimiyus haTorah — who was not the korban but the wood beneath it. Whose work was not for his own account. Whose beneficiaries were ordinary people, including those who had failed. Whose gift was consumed and left no monument in the place it was given. Who was, in the most literal sense available, cut and dried in advance and carried far away to be burned for someone else's atonement. And who did it with joy.

The sicha never states this as its thesis. It builds the shape in halachic material and then, in a footnote, sets the shape beside a life and lets the reader see that they are the same shape. That is the compositional fact worth noticing on Chof Av: the entire analytic apparatus of the piece is a hesped that never announces itself as one.

TO SIT WITH

1. Of the four escalations, which is genuinely the hardest? The sicha ranks joy highest. Would you?
2. The family gave *infrastructure* — the condition for someone else's offering. Where in your own avodah is the wood, and where is the korban? Which do you find easier to be?

ד David and Yoav: two grammars of bittul — and the names of the disputants

KOVETZ LIMUD PP. 72–73 · NOTES 11–20

TEXT — OIS ד, OPENING

הגמרא אומרת: "אילמלא דוד לא עשה יואב מלחמה ואילמלא יואב לא עסק דוד בתורה" – הצלחותיו של יואב במלחמותיו, היו בזכות דוד שהיה עוסק בתורה ודוד יכל ללמוד תורה ללא טרדות, מכך שיואב הלך להלחם עבורו.

(מאחר ששני ענינים אלו נדרשים מפסוק אחד, הרי זה ראיה שיש שייכות ביניהם. ולכן יש לומר, שהצלחתו של יואב שבאה מחמת עסק התורה של דוד, אין זה רק בגלל זכותו של דוד, כי אם מחמת זה שליואב היה חלק בתורת דוד, שכן "אילמלא יואב לא עסק דוד בתורה", לכן עמדה לו תורתו של דוד).

WHAT IT SAYS

The Gemara says: had it not been for David, Yoav would not have made war; and had it not been for Yoav, David would not have engaged in Torah. Yoav's successes in his wars were in the merit of David, who was engaged in Torah — and David was able to learn Torah without distractions because Yoav went out to fight on his behalf.

(Since these two matters are derived from a single verse, that is proof there is a connection between them. And therefore one may say: Yoav's success, which came by virtue of David's engagement in Torah, is not merely on account of David's merit, but because *Yoav had a share in David's Torah* — since "had it not been for Yoav, David would not have engaged in Torah." That is why David's Torah stood for him.)

THE MOVE

The parenthesis is the sharpest technical step in the sicha, and it turns on a formal observation: both halves of the statement are derived from one verse. From that formal fact — one derivation, two conclusions — the sicha infers a substantive connection, and then upgrades the relationship between the two men from patronage to *partnership in a single asset*.

The difference matters. If Yoav merely benefited from David's merit, then Yoav is a dependent, drawing on someone else's account. But if Yoav *had a share in David's Torah* — because that Torah would not have existed without him — then Yoav's battlefield success is not a subsidy. It is a dividend on something he part-owns. The Torah that protects him is partly his own product.

TEXT — OIS ד, TWO MODES OF BITTUL

ההבדל בין העבודה האמורה של דוד לבין זו של יואב, הוא: אצל שניהם היה התבטלות ומסירות נפש. אלא שההתבטלות של דוד בעבודה זו התבטאה בפועל בלימוד התורה (שהרי זה העילוי בתורתו של דוד: לימודו היה מתוך התבטלות, ולכן "דהוי עמו שהלכה כמותו"), וההתבטלות ומסירות הנפש של יואב התבטאה בעבודה של התעסקות עם העולם, עד – עם אומות העולם שהיו מנגדים, להלחם עמם, ולעשות שם דירה לו יתברך.

מחמת ענין ההתכללות שבקדושה, כל אחד מהם סייע לשני: מלחמת יואב סייעה לדוד ללמוד, ולימוד תורתו של דוד סייעה ליואב להצליח במלחמה. אבל בכל זאת קיים הבדל ביניהם: עיקר ענינו של דוד היה אז – תורה והוא התנזר מן העולם, ועיקר ענינו של יואב היה – מלחמה ועשיה בתוך העולם.

WHAT IT SAYS

The difference between David's avodah and Yoav's is this: in both of them there was hisbatlus and mesirus nefesh. But David's hisbatlus in this avodah expressed itself in practice through the study of Torah — for this is the superiority in David's Torah, that his learning came out of hisbatlus, and therefore it was "with him, that the halacha was like him." Yoav's hisbatlus and mesirus nefesh expressed itself in an avodah of engagement with the world — to the point of engaging with the opposing nations, warring with them, and making there a dwelling for Him, blessed be He.

Because of the matter of *hisklalus* within holiness, each of them assisted the other: Yoav's war enabled David to learn, and David's Torah study enabled Yoav to succeed in war. But a difference nevertheless remains: David's principal matter then was Torah, and he withdrew from the world; Yoav's principal matter was war and action *within* the world.

THE MOVE

The sicha establishes an identity and then refuses to let it collapse the distinction. Both men have the same interior: hisbatlus, mesirus nefesh. They differ only in the *medium of expression* — one in text, one in territory. That single sentence dissolves the usual hierarchy in which the scholar is spiritual and the man of action is merely useful.

Then it does something subtler. Having equalized them at the root, and having shown through *hisklalus* that each contains the other, it insists on the residual difference: *ikar inyano*, the principal matter. Not a difference of quality but of center of gravity. David withdrew from the world; Yoav acted within it. The machlokes of R′ Meir and R′ Yosi is therefore not a contest between a higher and a lower avodah. It is a question about which *center* is generative of the kind of deed the Chof Av family performed.

IN CHASSIDUS

התכללות — why no avodah is pure

Hisklalus — interinclusion — is the principle that within kedusha every element contains all the others. Applied to the sefiros it means chesed contains gevurah and gevurah contains chesed; applied to avodah it means there is no such thing as an unmixed path. The scholar's learning contains an element of world-engagement; the soldier's war contains an element of Torah.

Note 20 makes this genealogically concrete: both David and Yoav descend from Yehuda and from Rus — and Rus, the Moabite convert, is the register of *birurim*, souls extracted and elevated. So David too had birurim in him and Yoav too had Torah in him, which is exactly why they could assist each other. Aid between two avodos is only possible because each already contains a seed of the other; otherwise there would be nothing in one for the other to reach.

The practical yield: hisklalus prevents the taxonomy from hardening into castes. It is not that some people are Torah-people and others are world-people. It is that everyone has both, in some proportion, and the question is which is *ikar* — principal — for this person, in this period of his life.

IN CHASSIDUS

דירה בתחתונים — the phrase that reverses the ranking

The sicha describes Yoav's avodah as warring with the opposing nations "and making there a dwelling for Him, blessed be He." That phrase carries the weight of the entire Chassidic account of purpose: the tachlis is not ascent out of the world but a dwelling made *below* — the doctrine treated at length in Tanya, ch. 36.

Once that phrase is in play, the intuitive hierarchy is under pressure. If the goal were transcendence, David's withdrawal would be plainly higher and Yoav's engagement plainly instrumental. But if the goal is a dwelling in the lowest place, then the one who is *in* that place, contending with what opposes, is not the support staff of the project. He is where the project is happening.

The sicha does not say this outright — it maintains the machlokes rather than resolving it. But the vocabulary tilts, and by ois ה the tilt becomes an argument: it is Yoav's act, the unobligated one, that carries the higher illui.

TEXT — OIS ד, CLOSE: THE NAMES OF THE DISPUTANTS

בזה מתבטאת המחלוקת בין ר' מאיר ור' יוסי, מי היה נעלה יותר: ר' מאיר הוא מלשון אור, למעלה מ(העלם ה)עולם, לכן התעסק בלהט בענין הביטול שבתורה אור – דוד, ור' יוסי הוא בגימטריא אלקים בגימטריא הטבע, לכן התעסק בלהט במעלת המלחמה ועבודת הבירורים – יואב.

WHAT IT SAYS

In this the machlokes between R′ Meir and R′ Yosi is expressed — which of them was higher. R′ Meir is from the root *or*, light: above the (concealment of the) world; therefore he was drawn with fervor to the matter of the bittul that is in *Torah Or* — David. And R′ Yosi is, in gematria, *Elokim*, which is in gematria *hateva*, nature; therefore he was drawn with fervor to the superiority of war and the avodah of *birurim* — Yoav.

THE MOVE

The names of the disputants become evidence. R′ Meir is built from *or* — and note 17 pushes this hard: in R′ Meir's own Torah scroll they found כתנות אור written with an aleph, garments of *light* rather than of skin, which he did not conceal — the condition of before the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. A sage whose text is written in the register of pre-lapsarian light is a sage positioned above the world's concealment, and such a sage is drawn to David: bittul enacted as Torah.

R′ Yosi is placed by arithmetic. יוסי is 86; so is אלקים; so is הטבע. A sage whose name is numerically the divine name that operates as nature is a sage positioned *inside* the world's concealment, and such a sage is drawn to Yoav: bittul enacted as birurim.

Both statements are of the same form: the disputant's own position in the order of concealment determines which avodah he can see as higher. This is the payoff of the sidebar in ois **א** — once the machlokes has been relocated from fact to spiritual source, the names of the disputants stop being labels and become the data that resolve it.

IN CHASSIDUS

86 = הטבע = אלקים — the name that conceals

The equation of *Elokim* with *hateva* is among the most load-bearing gematrias in Chassidus, because it names the mechanism of concealment rather than merely noting a coincidence of number. The divine name that appears in the account of creation is the name under which infinite light is contracted into a lawful, self-standing, apparently autonomous nature. Nature is not the absence of God; it is a name of God operating as concealment. That is precisely why nature *looks* like it runs itself.

This is the register in which *birurim* becomes intelligible as avodah rather than as mere cleanup. If the world were simply other than God, sifting it would be housekeeping. Because the world is a divine name in contracted form, sifting it is disclosure — the recovery of what the name is concealing, from inside the concealment.

And it explains why R′ Yosi, at 86, can hold that Yoav is higher. He is not underrating Torah. He is standing where the concealment is, and from there the greater feat is not the light that was never dimmed but the light retrieved from within the dimming.

TO SIT WITH

1. The parenthesis argues from "both derived from one verse" to "there is a connection between them." How strong is that inference, and what does the sicha need it for?
2. Note 20 finds both avodos hinted in the Mishnah's own donor list — *bnei Pachas Moav ben Yehuda*: Pachas Moav as birurim, Yehuda as the register of light. Is that a discovery or a confirmation? What is the difference, methodologically?

ה Bavli and Yerushalmi: present burden, future benefit — and the act no one owed

KOVETZ LIMUD PP. 73–74 · NOTE 21

TEXT — OIS ה, THE DISAGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE

הסבר נוסף לכך: אנו מוצאים במספר מקומות מחלוקת בין התלמוד הבבלי לירושלמי, האם יש חובה להכביד במדה קלה בהוה, כדי שכתוצאה מכך תגיע תועלת גדולה בעתיד. שיטת הירושלמי היא, מאחר והתועלת היא נעלית באין-ערוך מההכבדה, הרי למרות שהתועלת היא רק לאחר זמן חייבים לעשותה כבר עתה. ואילו שיטת הבבלי היא כי יש להתחשב עם המצב בהוה, ומכיון וההכבדה היא מיידית ואילו התועלת תגיע רק לאחר זמן, מכרעת ההכבדה שבהוה על התועלת העתידית, למרות היותה גדולה יותר.

WHAT IT SAYS

A further explanation for this. We find in a number of places a machlokes between the Talmud Bavli and the Yerushalmi as to whether there is an obligation to bear a slight burden in the present, so that a great benefit should result in the future.

The Yerushalmi's position: since the benefit is incomparably greater than the burden, then although the benefit comes only later, one is obligated to act already now.

The Bavli's position: one must take account of the situation in the present; and since the burden is immediate while the benefit arrives only later, the present burden outweighs the future benefit, despite the latter being greater.

THE MOVE

This is a genuine jurisprudential disagreement about how to discount the future, and the sicha states it cleanly. The Yerushalmi reasons from magnitude: an incommensurably greater good makes the present cost irrelevant, so the act is *obligatory*. The Bavli reasons from position: obligation is assessed from where you actually stand, and from here the cost is real and present while the good is speculative and later — so the act is *not obligatory*.

Note what is *not* in dispute: that the future benefit is greater. Both agree on the valuation. They disagree about whether a greater good located in the future can generate a present duty.

TEXT — OIS ה, APPLIED TO DAVID AND YOAV

אמנם, התועלת שהספיק דוד מכך שיכל ללמוד תורה בלב פנוי (באין מפריע) היא גדולה יותר מהקשיים שהיו ליואב בצאתו לקרב, אולם תועלת זו באה לדוד לאחר יציאת יואב לקרב. ואם כך – לשיטת הירושלמי, יציאת יואב לקרב היה מעשה שהוא היה חייב לעשותו, ואילו לשיטת הבבלי המעשה של יואב (יצאתו לקרב) לא היה מחויב העשיה. ולכן – ר' מאיר (מלשון אור [ישר], הרומז לתלמוד ירושלמי) סובר שעיקר העילוי נובע מכוחו של דוד שהרי יואב היה חייב להלחם, ור' יוסי (שעניינו בירור הטבע, "במחשכים", הרומז לתלמוד בבלי) סבור, שעיקר העילוי נובע מכוחו של יואב שעשה מעשה למרות שלא היה מחויב לעשותו.

WHAT IT SAYS

Now: the benefit David obtained from being able to learn Torah with a clear heart, undisturbed, is greater than the hardships Yoav bore in going out to battle. But that benefit came to David only *after* Yoav went out. If so — on the Yerushalmi's view, Yoav's going out to battle was an act he was *obligated* to perform; whereas on the Bavli's view, Yoav's act (his going out to battle) was *not* obligatory.

Therefore: R′ Meir — from the root *or* [*yashar*], alluding to the Talmud Yerushalmi — holds that the principal illui derives from David's power, since Yoav was obligated to fight. And R′ Yosi — whose matter is the refinement of nature, "in dark places," alluding to the Talmud Bavli — holds that the principal illui derives from Yoav's power, who performed an act although he was not obligated to perform it.

THE MOVE

This is the finest turn in the sicha, and it is worth slowing down for.

The sicha has already established that Yoav's going out produced a benefit greater than its cost. On the Yerushalmi's reckoning, that settles it: the act was *obligatory*. But an obligatory act, on this logic, is not where the credit lodges — Yoav was doing what he owed. So the illui traces back to David, the one for whose Torah the obligation existed. On the Bavli's reckoning the same facts yield the opposite: since the burden was present and the benefit deferred, Yoav owed nothing. He went out anyway. And the illui therefore lodges precisely there — in an act performed without obligation.

Read that twice. The Yerushalmi's *higher* valuation of the future benefit ends up *diminishing* Yoav, by converting his sacrifice into a duty. The Bavli's more conservative, present-weighted reckoning ends up *elevating* him, by leaving the act uncompelled. Generosity requires that nothing demanded it.

And now the whole sicha closes into itself. Note 9, back in ois ב, had already said the operative thing: what disqualified the bnei Par′osh donation was that it came *by lot* rather than by volunteering. The Chof Av family is great because nothing required them to spend a season securing undried timber for a stranger's sin-offering. Yoav is great, on the Bavli, for the identical reason. The two halves of the sicha are one argument.

IN CHASSIDUS

אור ישר and the light that returns

The sicha's own bracket does the pairing: R' Meir is *or* — and the text supplies *[yashar]*, direct light — which is what makes him allude to the Yerushalmi. Against that, R' Yosi is placed with במחשכים, "in dark places," the standing epithet for the Bavli.

Read structurally rather than as wordplay, this is the circuit of *or yashar* and *or chozer*: light descending straight from its source, and light returning from below. The Yerushalmi reasons in the direction of descent — from the goal downward, so that the greater future good simply obligates the present. The Bavli reasons in the direction of return — from the darkened present upward, so that what is owed is calculated from inside the concealment.

Which is why the two Talmuds land where they do on Yoav. Measured from the goal, his act was owed. Measured from within the dark, it was not — and unowed acts performed inside concealment are the whole content of *avodas ha'birurim*. The Bavli, the Talmud of exile, is structurally the register in which the volunteered act is visible as such.

IN CHASSIDUS

Why the unobligated act ranks higher

There is a recurring asymmetry in Chassidus between what is commanded and what is offered. Commandedness confers weight — the commanded act draws on an authority the volunteer cannot supply for himself. But it also confers a ceiling: an act performed because it was required expresses the requirement, and reaches as far as the requirement reaches. An act performed with no requirement behind it can only be expressing the person who performed it.

The wood-offering is a good place to see this, because it sits at the seam. It is not a korban and no one is obligated to supply it; the families *volunteered*. Which is why the Gemara has to ask where the strength came from. Where an obligation exists, the question does not arise — the obligation is the explanation. It is the unobligated act that requires a root.

Hold this against the hora'ah in ois ו, which asks for exactly this and nothing less: give away the irreplaceable thing, to someone who has no claim on you, with your name nowhere on it. There is no version of that act that anyone owes.

TO SIT WITH

1. The sicha aligns R' Meir with the Yerushalmi and R' Yosi with the Bavli. But the machlokes of Meir and Yosi *is* in the Bavli. What is the status of such an alignment — typological, or something stronger?
2. Is it strange that the more expansive position (Yerushalmi: act now, the future good is incommensurable) ends up crediting the scholar, while the more cautious position credits the soldier? What does that reversal suggest about how obligation and merit interact?

ו The hora'ah: the irreplaceable thing, the stranger who failed, and the festival

KOVETZ LIMUD P. 74 · NOTES 22–24

TEXT — OIS ו

ההוראה הלמדת מכך: אם יש לאדם חפץ שאין כדוגמתו בכל העולם. עליו להיות מוכן לתת אותו ליהודי שני, כדי שזה יהיה לו לעזור, גם אם הלה נכשל בחטא, ואפילו אם מעשה זה לא ייקרא על שמו. יתרה מזו: עליו לדעת כי נפלה בחלקו זכות לעזור ליהודי שני, ומשום כך עליו לשמוח בשמחה אמיתית, ולקבוע בגין כך חג משפחתי.

כדי להקנות תחושה זו אצל הבנים ("הן הן בני דוד כו' הן הן בני יואב כו'") – כפשוטם או אצל "בניך אלו התלמידים", צריכה הנהגה זו להיות חדורה בתנועה של מסירת נפש. הן מי שהוא "יושב אוהל" ועיקר ענינו הוא תורה, והן מי שהוא "בעל עסק" ועיקר ענינו מלחמת ועבודת "הבירורים" – צריכה עבודתו להיות בהתבטלות ומסירת נפש.

ואז מחנכים דור שמוכן למסור למען הזולת, את מה שיש לו ומתוך שמחה. וגדולה מעלת אהבת ישראל, אהבת חינם, (היפך שנאת חנם שהביאה את החורבן), שתביא את הגאולה האמיתית והשלימה, בקרוב ממש.

(משיחת כ' מנ"א תשי"א)

WHAT IT SAYS

The directive learned from this: if a person has an object of which there is nothing like it in all the world — he must be prepared to give it to another Jew, so that it should be of help to him. Even if that other has stumbled in sin. And even if the deed will not be called by his name.

More than that: he must know that a merit has fallen to his portion, to help another Jew — and therefore he must rejoice with a true joy, and establish a family festival on account of it.

In order to instill this feeling in the children — *"they are the descendants of David... they are the descendants of Yoav..."* — whether literally, or in "your children: these are the students" — this conduct must be permeated with a movement of mesirus nefesh. Both the one who is a *yoshev ohel*, whose principal matter is Torah, and the one who is a *baal esek*, whose principal matter is the war and avodah of *birurim* — his avodah must be in hisbatlus and mesirus nefesh.

And then one educates a generation prepared to give over for another's sake what it has, and out of joy. And great is the quality of ahavas Yisroel, ahavas chinam — the inverse of the causeless hatred that brought the destruction — which will bring the true and complete redemption, immediately.

THE MOVE

The hora'ah is constructed by translating each of ois ג's escalations into a demand. The unobtainable timber becomes *an object of which there is nothing like it in all the world*. The stranger's chatas becomes *even if he has stumbled in sin*. The consumed wood becomes *even if the deed will not be called by his name*. And the family yom tov becomes the requirement to rejoice — which is stated not as permission but as obligation.

Then the sicha widens once, deliberately. Both David's line and Yoav's line are invoked as the children to be raised — and the quotation of בניך אלו התלמידים extends "children" to students. So the transmission is not only biological. Anyone who teaches is in the chain.

And the closing insistence is the one that would have been easiest to omit. The *baal esek* does not get a lighter standard. He is not the layman who supports the scholar's higher avodah; his war and his birurim are themselves an avodah, and they are required to be conducted in hisbatlus and mesirus nefesh — the same interior demanded of the yoshev ohel. Given ois ה, this is not a consolation offered to the businessman. It is the higher assignment.

IN CHASSIDUS

יושב אוהל and בעל עסק

The pairing is old — the tent-dweller and the man of affairs, Yissachar and Zevulun — and it is usually deployed as a division of labor in which one party does the sacred work and the other funds it. Chassidus generally resists that reading, and this sicha refuses it outright.

The refusal has a specific shape. Rather than elevating the baal esek by association with the scholar, the sicha requires of him the *same interior*: hisbatlus, mesirus nefesh. His marketplace is not a lesser venue in which a lesser standard applies. It is the venue of birurim, and birurim, after ois ה, is where the unobligated act lives.

What is being ruled out, then, is not the businessman's inferiority. It is his exemption. He may not purchase his way out of interiority by supporting someone else's, and he may not treat his own domain as merely secular. If the tachlis is a dwelling below, the man who spends his day below is not adjacent to the work.

IN CHASSIDUS

אהבת חנם — the symmetry of the repair

The final move sets *ahavas chinam* against *sinas chinam*, and the symmetry is exact in a way that is easy to lose in translation. *Chinam* means gratuitous, unearned, for nothing. The hatred that destroyed the Beis Hamikdash was not hatred provoked by wrongdoing; it was hatred without cause. Therefore the repair cannot be love that has been earned — that would be a different quantity, not the inverse one. It has to be love with no cause either.

Which is exactly what the whole sicha has been describing. Wood given to a beneficiary who is not merely unrelated but has *failed* — who supplies, if anything, a cause for the opposite response. Given anonymously, so that no reciprocity can be generated. Given in advance, so that no request prompted it. This is love that is structurally causeless, and that is why the sicha can put it forward as the precise inverse of what caused the churban.

Note also what the closing does to the family festival. A day fixed by one family to mark its own anonymous gift becomes the model for educating a generation — and the geulah is described as what that generation brings. The private festival is not sentiment. It is a transmission mechanism.

TO SIT WITH

1. The hora'ah requires joy at having been able to help — and requires establishing a festival for it. Can joy be commanded? What does the sicha think joy is, such that it can be?
2. "Even if the deed will not be called by his name." Yet the family's name *is* attached to the day. How do those two coexist without contradiction?

One argument, twice told

The sicha is built so that its two halves say the same thing in two vocabularies, and it never points this out.

The first half is halachic. It asks what made the Chof Av wood-donation great and answers with a sequence of subtractions: the wood is not the offering; the offering is not theirs; the beneficiary has sinned; the timber could not be obtained; the preparation happened unwitnessed, months earlier; and the whole thing was celebrated. Note 9 supplies the criterion that makes the sequence coherent — the deed counts because it came *by volunteering and not by lot*. Nothing required it.

The second half is typological. It asks whose merit generated such a deed, sorts David and Yoav into two modes of bittul, declines to rank them, and then arrives — through the Bavli's reckoning of present burden against future benefit — at the conclusion that Yoav's illui is the greater *because he was not obligated*. Nothing required it.

Same criterion, twice. Once about a family and once about a general. And that is why the hora'ah can be stated in a single breath and land with the weight it does: give the irreplaceable thing, to someone with no claim on you, with no name on it, and be glad. There is no obligation anywhere in that sentence, which is the point.

What the day is

Chof Av appears once in Shas, inside a list, as the day a family delivered wood. It is not a festival of the calendar. It is a festival that a family made for itself, to mark an anonymous gift, on a date determined by the fact that after mid-Av the sun no longer dries timber.

The sicha never says that this is a description of Reb Levik. It says it in note 10, in the smallest available typeface, attached to the word *joy*: a man great in both the revealed and the inner Torah who gave himself to spreading Torah among simple people, suffered severely for it, was exiled to a forsaken corner in a distant province, and did it with joy. Then it returns to the sugya.

It is worth registering how the piece is made. There is no eulogy in it. There is a Mishnah, a disqualification of infested wood, a machlokes about ancestry, a gematria, and a disagreement between the two Talmuds about discounting the future. The portrait is assembled out of halachic parts and never declared. The reader who reads only the body text learns a sugya. The reader who reads the footnote learns what the sugya was for.

The Wood Nobody Signed

Chof Av passed on Monday. It is, so far as the Rebbe reported having found, the only day in all of Shas that is mentioned exactly once — and even then only inside a list. The Mishnah in Taanis records that on the twentieth of Av a certain family brought wood for the altar, and that the family kept the day afterward as its own private festival.

Why that family, and why that day? The Gemara has two opinions about who they were, and the Rebbe's sicha of Chof Av 5711 shows that the two opinions are not really about who. They are about what a person has to have inside him to do such a thing.

Because look at what they actually did. From the middle of Av the sun weakens, and wood cut after that will not dry. Wood that does not dry may be worm-eaten, and worm-eaten wood is unfit for the altar. So the family that gave on the twentieth could not have decided on the twentieth. Their wood had to have been cut months earlier, and vetted months earlier, in a season when nobody was asking them for anything.

And the wood was not a korban. It was the arrangement of logs underneath the korban — the condition for someone else's offering. The offering itself wasn't theirs. It wasn't even a communal one they had a share in. It was whatever any Jew happened to bring that day. Which means that some of what burned on their wood were sin-offerings and guilt-offerings — brought by people who had done something wrong and needed forgiveness.

So here is the whole picture. Months of quiet foresight, to secure a material that could not be obtained once the season turned, so that a stranger who had failed could be forgiven — and when the fire went out there was nothing left with their name on it.

And the family made it a yom tov.

That last detail is the one the sicha treats as decisive. Not the cost, and not the anonymity. The joy. A thing done out of duty gets done; it does not get celebrated. You only throw a party for what came from the deepest part of you.

Attached to the word "joy" is a footnote, and in the footnote the Rebbe says — in his first year as Rebbe, on the seventh yahrzeit of his father — that this is his father's avodah. A man of the first rank in both the revealed and the hidden Torah, who gave himself to teaching Torah to ordinary

Jews, who suffered terribly for it, who was exiled to a forgotten corner of Kazakhstan and died there. And who did it with joy.

He was the wood. Cut in advance, carried far away, burned for someone else's atonement, with nothing left bearing his name.

And the day is a festival.

Which leaves the question the sicha ends on, and it is not a comfortable one. If you had one thing there was nothing like in all the world — would you give it to a Jew who had already stumbled, knowing your name would never be attached to it? And could you be happy about it?

APPARATUS

The sicha's own references, as printed

Reproduced from the printed footnote apparatus of *Kovetz Limud* pp. 71–74, transcribed from the page photographs. **None of these internal locators has been independently verified against the primary texts.** Status column: *as cited* means the reference is faithfully transcribed from the printed page and nothing more is being claimed for it. Where the abbreviation or locator was hard to read from the photograph, that is marked.

№	AS PRINTED	BEARS ON	STATUS
*	הוא יום ההילולא … מוהר"ר לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן ז"ל … נפטר בשנת תש"ד בעיר גלותו במחוז קאזאקסטאן … נדפסו בקובץ ליובאוויטש חוברת 4	Identifies the day; biographical sketch pointer	AS CITED
1	כו, א — ועשרים באב הוא ארבעים יום קודם ר"ה … "מנהגי הק"ק בית א-ל" (בס' דברי שלום) … לקו"ת דרושי ר"ה נ"ח, א	Mishnah locus; Chof Av as 40 days before R"H	AS CITED
2	ראה בכ"ז שם כח, א. ובפירש"י (ד"ה שיו"ט) שם יב, א	The family festival	AS CITED
3	שם כח, א	The two opinions on the family	AS CITED
4	עירובין יג, ב. וראה זח"ג ו, ב	אלו ואלו דברי אלקים חיים	AS CITED
5	וע"ד מרז"ל (סוטה מג, א) בענין ב' הפירושים שבבנות פוטיאל	Precedent for dual descent in derash	AS CITED
5*	וראה גם לקו"ש ח"ט ע' 68 ואילך ובהערות שם	Cross-reference	AS CITED
6	תענית לא, א	תשש כחה של חמה	AS CITED
7	מדות פ"ב, מ"ה. רמב"ם הל' איסורי מזבח פ"ז, ה"ב	Worm-eaten wood disqualified	AS CITED
8	בזה חשובה נדבתם מנדבת בני סנאה … וכלשון הרשב"ם (ד"ה מניסן, ב"ב קכא, ב): שבאותו יום היו משלימין מצוה גדולה	Chof Av vs. 15 Av; cutting still possible on 15 Av	AS CITED
9	… בני עדין שהביאו בכ' באלול … בני פרעוש שנדבו באחד בטבת … שכל התחלות קשות … שזה הי' לא בהתנדבות כ"א עפ"י הגורל (תיו"ט תענית פ"ד, מ"ה)	Volunteering vs. lot; the criterion of the whole sicha	AS CITED
10	וזה מתאים לעבודתו של אאמו"ר בעל ההילולא …	The personal register; Reb Levik	AS CITED
11	סנהדרין מט, א	אילמלא דוד … אילמלא יואב	AS CITED
12	חדא"ג מהרש"א שם	David learning without distraction	AS CITED
13	ראה לקו"ש ח"ג [המתורגם] ע' 35 סעיף ב'	One verse ⇒ connection between two matters	AS CITED

14	סנהדרין צג, ב. וראה ד"ה וידבר וד"ה ביום השני תרכ"ז	דהוי עמו שהלכה כמותו	AS CITED · MAAMAR TITLES READ FROM PHOTO
15	… עדינו העצני (פירש"י ד"ה בני עדין) … כדאיתא במו"ק טז, ב והובא בפירש"י שם	One name, both avodos	AS CITED
16	ראה עירובין יג, ב	R′ Meir from אור	AS CITED
17	… כתנות אור (בא"לף – ב"ר פ"כ, יב) … (דרמ"צ ח, א) … (ראה תו"א ה, ב) … (לקו"ת תזריע כד, ד)	R′ Meir's scroll; pre-sin register	AS CITED
18	זח"ג רכג, א (וראה סנה' נו, א) ד"ה וכה תרל"ז … הפלוגתא דר' יהודא ור' יוסי … (תו"א מד, א) … (וראה תו"א מה, ד)	אלקים = יוסי; R′ Yehuda's position	AS CITED · LOCATORS PARTLY ILLEGIBLE IN PHOTO
19	פרדס שער י"ב פ"ב. ובשל"ה שער האותיות אות קדושה בהגה"ה … (פט, א)	הטבע = אלקים	AS CITED · EDITION-SENSITIVE
20	… בני פחת מואב בן יהודה … פחת מואב (רות המואבי' – רש"י ותוס' שם) – בירורים … ושניהם – דוד ויואב – באו מיהודא ומרות …	Both avodos in the Mishnah's donor list	AS CITED
21	ראה שיחת חמשה עשר באב, נדפסה לקמן ע' 320	Bavli/Yerushalmi machlokes — **the open thread**	AS CITED · NOT RETRIEVED
22	ספרי ואתחנן ו, ז	בניך אלו התלמידים	AS CITED
23	ראה גם לקו"ש ח"ב [המתורגם] ע' 277 ובהנסמן שם	Ahavas chinam	AS CITED
24	יומא ט, ב	Sinas chinam and the churban	AS CITED

Open threads

- **Note 21 is the one to pull.** The Bavli/Yerushalmi machlokes about present burden versus future benefit is not sourced to a sugya here — it is referred to the sicha of Chof Av's companion, 15 Av, printed later in the same volume (p. 320 as cited). Ois ה rests on it entirely. *Verbatim pull owed.*
- **Note 14's maamar titles** (ד"ה ביום השני תרכ"ז, ד"ה וידבר) were read from the photograph and should be confirmed against a clean copy before being carried into any published text.
- **Note 18's locator** after ד"ה וכה תרל"ז is not legible with confidence in the photograph. *Verbatim pull owed.*
- **Note 19 is edition-sensitive** by construction — a bare *Sha'ar* and *perek* in the Pardes, plus a Shelah hagah reference. Name the edition before citing.
- **Ois ג's ר' יהודה** — check against another printing; the surrounding argument requires R′ Yosi.
- **Two readings taken from the photograph** and used above: בלהט (twice, in the names passage) and שהספיק דוד (ois ה). Both are legible but not certain.

Colophon. Ois-by-ois study guide to the sicha of 20 Menachem Av 5711 as printed in *Kovetz Limud*, pp. 71–74. Hebrew text transcribed from photographs of the printed pages supplied with this request; no Hebrew has been reconstructed from memory or from any other source. English renderings are working translations for study, not a published translation, and should not be quoted as one.

The sicha's footnote apparatus is reproduced *as cited*: faithfully transcribed, with no independent verification of internal locators against the primary texts. Items requiring a verbatim pull are listed under Open threads above and remain open. The sidebars marked *In Chassidus* are editorial synthesis intended to orient a learner in the surrounding conceptual vocabulary; they introduce no new citations, with the single exception of the reference to *Tanya*, ch. 36, for *dirah batachtonim*.

20 Av 5786 · 3 August 2026 — the 82nd yahrzeit of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson.

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