

VOLUME III NUMBER 18

pardes
PROJECT

you are here >



“One generation passes away and another generation comes, but the earth abides forever. ...That which has been is that which shall be, and that which has been done is that which shall be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which can be said, See, this is new; but it has already been in the ages before us. There is no memory of former things, nor will there be any memory of things that are to come among those who shall come after.”

Ecclesiastes 1:4, 10-11

A father and son set out on the road, heading for a distant town where the son was to be wed. After they had been on the road for a short time, the son asked, “Father, will it be much longer until we get there?” The father replied, “My son, you know that the wedding will take place in a distant city. We’ve only just now left home, and you want to know when we will arrive? Have patience, we have a long way to go.”

After they had traveled a long time, and were close to the city limits, the father asked the wagon-driver, “How much time do we have left until we reach our destination?” On hearing this, the son asked, “But father, previously, you told me not to ask the time of our arrival. You told me to forget the question.”

The father answered, “My son, that was before, when we were very far from our destination, and it would have wearied us to think about it. But now that we are almost there, it’s time to get ready. We have to don our wedding garb and prepare ourselves for the occasion.”

**MANY OF THE TOPICS INCLUDED
IN THE PARDES CURRICULUM
ARE FAR-REACHING AND HAVE
BROAD RAMIFICATIONS.**

**THE INTENT OF PARDES IS TO
PROMOTE SENSITIVITY AND
SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH
EXPOSURE TO A VARIETY OF
TORAH SOURCES.**

**IT IS NOT WITHIN THE PURVIEW
OF PARDES TO ARRIVE AT
CONCLUSIONS RELEVANT TO
DECISIONS OF HALACHA.**

**PLEASE CONSULT YOUR RABBI
FOR PERSONAL DECISIONS.**

Introduction

The Jewish timeline has a beginning and an end. Generation after generation we walk this line not to create a future, but rather to explore and discover that which already lies before us. The sages of the Talmud have taught us that the world in which we live will last 6,000 years. (We are now in the year 5760.) During this 6,000 years, the world will develop. The first 2,000 will see the development of civilization itself. During those two millenia we traveled from Adam and Eve to 70 nations with different languages, cultures and geographical locations. The second 2,000 years are the years of Torah, illumination and enlightenment. In fact in the year 2,000 Abraham began his campaign to teach the pagan nations of the world about G-d. Those 2,000 years ended with the redaction of the Mishna by Rabbi Judah the Prince. Thus a new era began. The last 2,000 years are referred to by our sages as the days of redemption.

From the moment the final trimester began, false Messiahs appeared in all corners of the world, each claiming that he was to deliver the redemption the Prophets spoke about. While many have proclaimed, bemoaned and even celebrated the "end of days," we Jews patiently waited. It took 2,000 years for civilization to mature and a second 2,000 years of analysis, debate and struggle to evolve from the teachings of Abraham to the extremely sophisticated interpretations of the Talmud. The period of redemption is a 2,000-year period. Today, we are nearing the end of that period. It's completion will bring G-d's 6,000-year project to fulfillment. If we perfect it a bit sooner, say the prophets, we may not even need to wait the full 2,000 years.

Where do we stand on the timeline of history? Do we create history, or is history just something that happens to us? If the road, the distance and the destination are all laid out, what is our part in shap-

ing the future? The sources quoted in this Pardes discuss the past, present and future. Nobody knows what will happen when we reach the end of time. If, as Jews have always believed, the end of days is pre-destined, then how do we give meaning to our choices?

Rabbi Yaacov Haber

How would you respond?

1 Picture yourself in 1919. Pundits are asserting that, in 20 years, a dictator will rise to power in Eastern Europe and orchestrate the murder of more than six million Jews. How would you respond?

The year is 1940. Middle East experts say that in just over 25 years there will be a State of Israel that will wage its most dramatic war - fending off millions of Arab troops, resulting in the largest territorial gains of any war previously fought — in only six days. How would you respond?

It's the summer of '49. Scientists declare that a man will walk on the moon in exactly 20 years. How would you respond?

It is 1960. A wall street analyst predicts that within 35 years, almost every home will have a personal computer and people will be able to send instant electronic letters to anyone in the world — with just a push of a button. How would you respond?

Fast forward to today. Media hype for the Year 2000 has reached a fevered pitch. Meanwhile, rabbis are talking about the "End of Days." They cite biblical, rabbinic and kabbalistic sources that indicate that all of the "historical" events of the last 5,000-plus years foretell the imminent arrival of the messiah — possibly within your children's lifetime — or even your own. *How do you respond?*

2 You've been to Israel before but this time it was different. Your tour guide walked you through the country with her Bible in hand and let you touch and feel what you thought was ancient history. Our ancestry, the wars, the Talmud, the prophecies — it all came alive. It was real. You realize that the Modern State of Israel is not just a new safe haven for Jews but a major advent in a historical process that began almost 6,000 years ago. Your guide looks at you and charges: "Don't be a spectator, you are history!" She challenges you to become part of this process. In your heart you feel that Israel is the place for the Jew to be. As you walk the streets of Jerusalem inspired by its echoes you are deep in thought — your job, your children's education, your friends, your community, your elderly parents...

It is customary to recite the following prayer before entering into a Torah discussion.

Shulchan Aruch O.H. 110

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי ואלקי אבותי שלא יארע דבר תקלה על ידי ולא אכשל בדבר הלכה וישמחו בי חברי ולא אומר על טמא טהור ולא על טהור טמא ולא על מותר אסור ולא על אסור מותר ולא יכשלו חברי בדבר הלכה ואשמח בהם. כי ה' יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה. גל עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך.

May it be Your will, Hashem my G-d and G-d of my fathers, that You illuminate my eyes with the light of your Torah and that You save me from all stumbling blocks and errors, whether it be in discussions of what is prohibited and what is permitted or in monetary matters, whether it be in any other Halachic decisions or just in theoretical study. I pray that I do not make any mistakes, and if I do, my study partners should not take delight in them. I pray that I should not proclaim the impure pure or the pure impure, the permitted forbidden or the forbidden permitted. I pray that I should not derive joy from the errors of my study partner. Open my eyes and allow me to see the wonders of Your Torah because it is from G-d that all wisdom comes forth, it is from His mouth that I will acquire wisdom and understanding. Amen.

Discussion Points

"And Yaakov called to his sons, and said: Gather together, and I will tell you what will happen in the end of days."

Genesis 49:10 Source, p. 21

1 Prior to the days of the Messiah, a certain constellation will begin to shine. Wild beasts will rule the world, and one scourge will follow another. Israel will suffer greatly. But just as the people are about to be lost in the darkness of exile, G-d will shine upon them the light of day. The holy people will rule, and abolish the power of the idolatrous nations.

Zohar, Terumah Biography, p. 15

2 At that time, there will be a great upheaval in the world, nations will mix together, and those unfit to rule will take command, joined by strangers and foreigners who know neither law nor judgment. They will consider starting many wars. With soft and conniving words, they will take control, thinking always of evil. Harsh decrees will be issued on the Jewish people, who will be pursued by suffering. At that very time, G-d will rise and desire His beloved, appeasing her, encouraging her and lifting her from the dust.

Zohar Chadash, Balak

3 In the 600th year of the fifth millennium (1840 C.E.) the gates of supernal wisdom and the fountain of lower wisdom will open, and the world will prepare itself for entering the 7,000th year, like a person who prepares himself Friday afternoon for the Sabbath. This is alluded to in the verse: "And in the sixth hundredth year of Noah's life, the fountains of the great deep were sundered, and the windows of heaven were opened." (1840 C.E. was the beginning of the Industrial Revolution.)

Genesis 17:11 Zohar, Vayera

Source, p. 21

4 No man knows how these things [concerning the End of Days] will transpire until they actually happen. The matter was concealed to the prophets, and even the sages had no tradition other than what they could deduce from the verses. Therefore, they disagreed upon this issue.

Maimonides, Laws of Kings 12:2

Source, p. 22 Biography, p. 15

5 We do not know where we stand in the process of redemption, for only a prophet would be able to tell us that. Great Jewish leaders of the past have predicted possible dates for the end — in their longing for the redemption — but they never claimed to know where the present moment stands in relationship to it ... Let us not pretend to be wise, as though we know G-d's plan. We cannot attribute to any historical event its true position in relation to the final redemption.

R. Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shor 1, p. 286

6 If we think that there is still time, are we not mistaken? All the predictions concerning the "Birth pangs of the Messiah" have already been fulfilled. An evil leader rose over us, harsh decrees, burning, murder, starvation and deprivation. We've seen it all fulfilled. The wicked empire continues to spread, and all the nations assemble against us. Is there still time to ignore the words of Elijah that we are hearing?

R. Eliyahu Dessler, Miktav MeEliyahu 1, p. 209

Source, p. 23 Biography, p. 20

7 The sages of the Talmud refrained from speculating on the time of the final redemption, for they knew that it was far off, and did not want to exhaust our hopes. However, our generation is already close to the redemption, and it is important to discuss it, in order to prepare ourselves for its imminent arrival.

The Maggid of Dubnow

Biography, p. 16

8 This is not a normal time, especially for the Jews. We bear witness to events that we could never have imagined... so strange and startling that we are left aghast and bewildered. But this is only if we try to understand them in terms of human reasoning. ...To grasp the essence of these changes in our lives, we must look at the verses and statements concerning the period called the "Footsteps of the Messiah" — the final period of the exile, immediately preceding the arrival of the Messiah. By juxtaposing the verses to the events, the Torah will shed a clear light on all that is happening to us and its causes.

Jewish history can be divided into different periods: the Mishnaic period, the Talmudic period, the period of the Rabbanim and Savoraim, of the Geonim, the Rishonim, etc... The very last period in Jewish history is referred to by the Torah as, the "End of Days." In the Talmud, we find the terms "the Footsteps of the Messiah," or the "Birth pangs of the Messiah." Whereas the "End of Days" refers both to the eve of the redemption and the period of redemption itself, the "Footsteps," or "Birth pangs" of the Messiah refers only to the final period before the coming of the Messiah.

The Torah itself describes the spiritual and physical state of the Jewish people at that time. The Book of Daniel states that the hardships of those days will surpass any that the Jews have ever experienced... The sages, who foresaw what would happen, declared, "Let it come, but don't let me see it!" The Vilna Gaon explained that the final redemption is called a "birth," because the Jewish nation will be reborn. And just as birth pangs of labor increase in strength until the moment of delivery, so will the "Birth pangs of the Messiah" become more and more intense as time progresses.

R. Elchanon Wasserman, Baranovitz 1936, Ikvasa D'Moshiach

Biography, p. 16

9 The doctrine of evolution that is now pervasive in all areas of human thought corresponds to the mysteries of Kabbalah to a greater extent than any other philosophy. In this doctrine, there is evidence for the progressive character of history, which only G-d makes possible. If there is constant advancement, elevation and growth, there must be an eye that sees and directs the process of evolution toward a higher goal. In spite of descents and retrogression, history is a forward-moving process.

Rabbi A.Y. Kook, Orot HaKodesh 2, p. 555, see p.565ff.

Biography, p. 17

10 As we approach the end of this millennium, we are well aware of the sweeping changes that have taken place in the world during the last several generations. The very landscape of our world has been radically altered, and we can anticipate even more revolutionary changes in the coming years... The sweeping technological changes that have occurred during the past several thousand generations are in keeping with the prediction some 2,000 years ago in the Zohar — a classical text of mysticism — stating that in the year 1840, there would be an outburst of “lower wisdom,” or advancements in understanding the physical universe, and an increase in “sublime wisdom,” or spirituality, that would begin to usher true unity into the world, leading toward the final redemption. The current technological revolution is in fact the hand of G-d at work; it is meant to help us make G-d a reality in our lives. And as time passes and new discoveries are made, it will become more apparent how science reflects and parallels the truths of G-d, thereby revealing the intrinsic unity in the entire universe....

Our sages tell us that there will come a day when our earthly reality will be a flawless mirror of its Divine source, its Architect's vision. We are now on the threshold of that day. There has never been a better time to reach people, for their hearts and souls are thirsting for nourishment, understanding and love. Instead of using modern technology only for personal and business means, we must learn to use it to spread inspiration and goodness.

R. M.M. Schneersohn, Toward a Meaningful Life, “Our Generation,”

Science and technology, adapted by R. Simon Jacobson

Biography, p. 18

11 People say that the present is not as good as the past. Things in the past were better and cheaper, Rabbi Nachman disagreed. The opposite is true, he said. G-d runs the world today much better than before.

R. Nachman of Breslov, Sichos HaRan 307

Source, p. 22 Biography, p. 19

12 The Torah and good deeds that each generation performs never disappear, but remain rooted in the hearts of the Jewish people forever. If not, what would be the point of this long exile, with the generations in a continual state of deterioration? How would we ever deserve the coming of the Messiah, seeing that those who lived before us, who were so much greater and better than we are, didn't merit to see it?

Therefore, even though from the perspective of the generations themselves things are getting worse, nonetheless, because the merit of previous times — their Torah learning and good deeds which are carried forward to the heart of the future generations — each generation has an advantage over that which preceded it. This is like a midget riding on the shoulders of a giant. From this perspective, the generations are constantly improving. (Poked Akarim 6, p. 45) Even though the later generations are weaker, they have an advantage over the earlier ones. They have access to all the supernal gates that the earlier generations opened, and can continue to open additional gates. Even though they are on a much lower level than those who lived before, they are much more profound, because they already passed through the gates in their souls that the earlier generations opened.

R. Tzadok Hakohein of Lublin, Resisei Lylah 13 p.14, 15

Source, p. 24 Biography, p. 19

13 According to Kabbalistic tradition, there are 400 subdivisions to the spirit of impurity. In order to annul them, 40 seah of water are needed. Each seah is equivalent to 144 beitzim. Therefore, 40 seah equals 5,760 beitzim of water. This is the amount of water in a mikvah. The hidden meaning of this is that when 5,760 years of the creation have passed, the verse will be fulfilled; "I will cause ... the unclean spirit to pass out of the land" (Zecharia 13:2) and "I will remove the evil beasts from the land" (Leviticus 26:6).

R. Avraham Azulai, Chesed LeAvraham, nahar 59

Source, p. 24 Biography, p. 20

14 According to how a dream is interpreted, says the Talmud, that is how it becomes manifest in reality. The same holds true of historical events that are open to a multitude of interpretations. Their outcome depends upon how the affected generation relates to them. A vision of the future can shrink to irrelevance when viewed with an uninspired attitude.

Avraham Kariv in M'Sod Chachamim, p. 176

15 'Behold, I send to you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers...'

Malachi 3:24 Source, p. 22

Biographies

The Zohar

The Zohar is the central work of the Kabbala and Jewish mysticism. It first became known in the thirteenth century. The Zohar is actually composed of several works, the most well-known that of the commentary of the five Books of Moses. Because of its esoteric nature, the Zohar was not published until 1558 when it appeared in Mantua, Italy amidst some controversy. Numerous commentaries have been written on different parts including those by R. Moshe Cordovero, the Gaon of Vilna, and R. Gershon Henoch Lainer of Radzyn. R. Dovid Luria (Kadmus Sefer HaZohar) and R. Isaac Chaver (Magen V'Tsina) wrote works to prove the antiquity of the Zohar. It is a complex work of varying levels of difficulty. It has inspired many generations to a deeper understanding of the Torah. R. Pinchas of Koretz, one of the Hasidic masters and an associate of the Ba'al Shem Tov commented that he could not exist without the Zohar. **M.G.**

Rav Moshe Ben Maimon, The Rambam (1135-1204)

Moses Maimonides is known as the greatest Jewish philosopher and codifier of Jewish law in history. Born in Cordova, Spain, he was forced to flee from fanatical Moslems at the age of thirteen, where he traveled with his family to North Africa, and ten years later to Palestine. As a result of the devastation left by the Crusaders, Palestine was virtually uninhabitable, forcing the family to move to Fostat (current day Cairo). Throughout these journeys, the young Maimonides had concentrated on Torah studies under the guidance of his father, and by the time he reached Fostat had become a famous scholar. Supported by his merchant brother, the Rambam was able to write copiously, gaining international acclaim in both Jewish and secular fields of knowledge. After the tragic death of his brother, the responsibility of supporting his family fell on the Rambam's shoulders, and through his fame he was appointed chief physician of the Sultan. Despite the immense workload that was required, not only with his responsibilities to the royal family, but to the entire Egyptian community

as the official Nagid (royally appointed leader), and to the halachic questions of world Jewry known as responsa, the Rambam was remarkably able to complete some of his greatest Jewish works, including his philosophical work *The Guide for the Perplexed* and his magnum opus the *Mishna Torah* - the great codification of all Jewish law. While he was considered an undisputed leader of world Jewry at the time, there was bitter opposition to much of his works because they incorporated much of Aristotelian philosophy that went against the traditional purist ideology of much of Ashkenazic Jewry, and others believed his codifications would make much of the role of the rabbi and the oral tradition obsolete. **A.B.**

The Dubnow Maggid (1741-1804)

Born in a province of Vilna, Jacob ben Wolf Kranz showed exceptional homiletical and Kabbalistic talents at an early age, and by the age of twenty became the darshan of his city. From there he began preaching through the cities of around Lublin in Poland, finally settling in Dubnow. His reputation as a maggid (preacher) spread, bringing him in contact with the great rabbis of the period, including the Vilna Gaon. The majority of his works were in homiletics, using stories and parables to transmit deeper ethical and moral teachings.

Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (1875-1941)

The Hazon Ish once testified that Reb Elchanan totally fulfilled the principle "I placed G-d before me at all times." In a generation renowned for its many great Roshei Yeshivot, he was distinguished not only for his great learning but for the impact his personality made on his students.

Reb Elchanan was born in Birz, Lithuania. He studied in the Telshe Yeshiva under R. Shimon Shkop. In 1897 he met R. Chaim Brisker and became his disciple. Whereas R. Shimon was concerned with the "why" R. Chaim said "One has to know what is stated, not why." Reb Elchanan was deeply influenced by both but eventually developed his own approach.

A new era began for Reb Elchanan when he met the Chofetz Chaim in 1907. Though he had already served with noted success as Yeshiva head of Amtchislav and was now a mature man of 32, he joined the Kodoshim Kollel of the Chofetz Chaim. Reb Elchanan viewed the Chofetz Chaim as a living Torah and trembled in his presence. The Chofetz Chaim became Reb Elchanan's lifetime role model. In 1910 he became a Rosh Yeshiva in Brisk until the outbreak of the war in 1914. In 1921, he became head of the Yeshiva Ohel Torah in Baranovitch, where he remained for the rest of his

life. Because of his great influence the Yeshiva grew and, in spite of its abysmal poverty, attracted many hundreds of disciples.

Besides his role as yeshiva head, Reb Elchanan was deeply involved in communal matters, and was active in Agudas Israel. In addition to his lectures and Talmudic writings, he was also a thinker and interpreter of contemporary events and his ideas were published in a book of essays (*Kovetz Maamorim*). He maintained that just as the Torah provides guidance in strictly halachic matters, it also provides illumination of the era in which we live. Thus, for example, his essay, *The Footprints of the Messiah*, presented a sweeping view of modern life. Two of his main points are the rapid pace with which the world is developing in contrast to previous generations and the idol of nationalism which he saw as striving to replace Torah as the central factor of Jewish life.

He visited America in 1939 and though, he could have remained and avoided the imminent catastrophe, he never considered it as a possibility. He felt that he must return to his Yeshiva and be with his students.

While on a visit to Kovno the Germans declared war on Russia and Reb Elchanan was unable to return to the yeshiva. On July 6, 1941 Reb Elchanan was studying in the house of R. Avrohom Grodzensky, in the company of a group of scholars, when four armed Lithuanians came in shouting and taunting. It was obvious that the end was near and Reb Elchanan spoke his last words:

"Heaven apparently considers us righteous people, for it wants us to atone with our bodies for Jewry as a whole. So we must repent now...if we repent, we will thereby save the remaining Jews, our brothers and sisters, so that they will be able to carry on as the remnant of Jewry." **M.G.**

Rabbi Abraham Yitzchak Kook (1865-1935)

The first chief rabbi of what was then Palestine, Rabbi Kook was perhaps the most misunderstood figure of his time.

Born in Latvia of staunch Hasidic and Mitnagdic stock, he retained throughout his life a unique blend of the mystical and the rational. He was a thorough master of the entire Halachic, Midrashic, philosophic, ethical, and Kabbalistic literature. But more important, he brought to bear the entire tradition upon the contemporary scene. He saw the return to Eretz Yisrael as not merely a political phenomenon to save Jews from persecution, but an event of extraordinary historical and theological significance. Rabbi Hutner once said that Rav Kook peered down on our world from great heights and hence his perspective was unique.

Above all, Rav Kook pulsed with a sense of the Divine. And, he sought to reach those who had strayed. He once quoted the rabbinic dictum that one should embrace with the right hand and rebuff with the left and commented that he was fully capable of rejecting, but since there were enough rejecters, he was fulfilling the role of embracer. On the other hand, he was never tolerant of desecration of Torah, as will be clear to any objective student of his life and works.

Though keenly aware of the huge numbers of non-observant Jews, he had a vision of the repentance of the nation. His concept of repentance envisioned in addition to the repentance of the individual, a repentance of the nation as a whole; a repentance which would be joyous and healing. He refused to reject Jews as long as they identified themselves as Jews. In a noteworthy exchange with his great friend, admirer, and opponent, Rabbi Yaakov David Willowski, Rav Kook explained the two components of a Jew: his essential nature — the *pintele yid*, and the path he had chosen in exercising free will. Even if the second element were weak, as long as the first was not repudiated, there was still hope.

He called for and envisioned a spiritual renaissance where “the ancient would be renewed and the new would be sanctified.” His vision of repentance disdained fear and apprehension and looked forward to “the poet of Teshuva, who would be the poet of life, the poet of renewal and the poet of the national soul waiting to be redeemed.”

Perhaps he was that poet.

M.G.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (1902-1994)

The seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe, eldest son of the saintly Kabbalist, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, Rav of Yekaterinoslav; fifth in direct paternal line from the Tzemach Tzedek; son-in-law of the Rebbe Rayatz.

As the leader of one of the largest Chassidic groups in the world the Rebbe expended a great deal of time and effort on outreach. “Chabad Houses,” Outreach Centers, can be found on college campuses and in Jewish communities throughout the world. These centers conduct classes, distribute literature on Judaism and promote Mitzvah observance. A Chabad house can be found almost anywhere in the world where there is a pocket of Jewish families.

The Rebbe was a renowned Torah Scholar and authored many Halachic, Chassidic and homiletic works.

Y.R.

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810)

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov was one of the most creative, influential and profound of the Chassidic masters. A great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, he was recognized as a tzaddik while still a young man. From his youth, he followed a path of asceticism and prayer, though he warned his followers not to abuse themselves physically. He was a passionate individual, given to intense swings of emotions. These he put toward the service of G-d, and spoke often of how to find G-d even in the low states of mind, and how to serve Him during the emotional highs. Central to his teachings is the role of the tzaddik, who has the power to descend into the darkness to redeem lost souls; the path of prayer as the main expression of religious life. His main work is *Likutey Moharan*, composed partly by himself, partly by his chief disciple, Rabbi Nossan Sternhartz. The book is a collection of sermons delivered by Rabbi Nachman, given mostly on the holidays when his Chassidim gathered. The lessons are long and complex, masterfully drawing on the entire body of Talmud, Midrashic and Kabbalistic literature. Ideas are connected by a poetic and intuitive grasp of the texts. In addition, Rabbi Nachman wrote thirteen “Tales”—mythical stories of kings and wizards based upon Kabbalistic thought and capturing the essence of Rabbi Nachman’s teachings. These tales were known to have influenced later authors such as Franz Kafka. Rabbi Nachman died of Tuberculosis at the age of 38. Despite the fact that there was never another “Breslov Rebbe” to fill his place, the mystery and depth of his teachings continue to attract students today, and Breslover Chassidism is one of the largest and most vibrant of Chassidic groups.

E.S.

Reb Tzadok HaKohein of Lublin (1823-1900)

Rav Tzadok, or “The Kohein” as he was known amongst Chassidim, was one of the most prolific authors in the history of the Chassidic movement. Born into a non-Chassidic rabbinic family, Rav Tzadok became famous as a child prodigy authoring articles and books which later became classics. Later in life, Rav Tzadok became Chassidic and became a Chassid of the Izbitcher Rebbe. Having excelled in both the Chassidic and non-Chassidic world, Rav Tzadok’s writings became a synthesis of analytical logic and mysticism. Eventually, Rav Tzadok became the Rebbe of Lublin. His writings are treasured by scholars everywhere.

Y.H.

Rabbi Abraham Azulai (1570-1643)

Rabbi Abraham, the great-grandfather of the illustrious Rabbi Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai, was born in Fez, Morocco. In the field of Kabballah he was greatly influenced by Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, and was born in the same year that Rabbi Moshe died. While in Fez he wrote many works. However, when he moved to Eretz Israel, his works were lost.

He wrote works on the Mishne and a major work on Tanach, Baalei Bris Avraham. He wrote a number of works on Kabballah, including the popular Chesed L'Avraham and a three part commentary on the Zohar. The latter was based in large part on the commentary of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, which was not printed till recent years. The third part of his commentary Ohr Haganuz, the most mystical section was never published.

With all of his involvement in Kabballah, Rabbi Abraham was also deeply interested in philosophical questions and his previously mentioned commentary on Tanach, is more a philosophic than a Kabbalistic work. A recent work published in Israel is devoted to Rabbi Avraham's theory of free will. **M.G.**

Rabbi Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler (1891-1954)

Rabbi Dessler was born into a family steeped in the musar movement founded by Rabbi Israel Salanter and he remained a musar personality for his entire life. However, his thought went considerably beyond the ordinary concerns of other musar thinkers and he integrated other systems and confronted different problems as well.

Most of Rabbi Dessler's education took place at the Kelm Talmud Torah where his father had been an outstanding disciple of R. Simcha Zissel. The family resided in Homel where Eliyahu had the opportunity to meet outstanding Chabad thinkers. In 1929, he became a rabbi in London and in 1941 accepted the directorship of the Gateshead kollel. Over the years, he became familiar with Kabbalistic and Hasidic thought, particularly the thought of Rabbi Zadok HaCohen and the Tanya.

His essays and letters have been collected in four volumes (several volumes under the title Strive for Truth have been edited and translated into English by Rabbi Aryeh Carmel). His topics include perennial questions such as free will and faith as well as contemporary problems in education, evolution and how to respond to the Holocaust. **M.G.**

Sources

Genesis 49:10

ספר בראשית פרק ט
א) וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶל בְּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאִסְפוּ וְאֶגְיֹדָה
לְכֶם אֶת אֶשֶׁר יִקְרָא אֶתְכֶם בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים:

3.

Genesis 17:11 Zohar, Vayera

ובכל ששים וששים של אלף הששי. תגבר ה' ותעלה
במדרגות להתחזק. ובשש מאות שנה לאלף הששי יפתחו
שערי החכמה למעלה. ומעיני החכמה למטה. ויכין עצמו
העולם ליכנס באלף ה'. כאדם המכין עצמו ביום הששי
אחר צהרים להכנסת שבת. כן גם בזה. וסימןך בשנת
שש מאות שנה לחיי נח וגו' נבקעו כל מעינות תהום רבה.
ואו יתראה הקשת בענן כגונים מאירים, כאשר המותקטטת
לבעלה. שכתוב וראיתיה לזכור ברית עולם. וראיתיה כגונים
מאירים כראוי. ואו יהי' לזכור ברית עולם. מהו ברית
עולם. זו כנסת ישראל. ויתחבר ׀ בה ויקים לה מהעפר.

קולו של אליהו

... והנה מי יוכל להתרכז ולהסתכל במאורעות הזמן הנוכחי, מי שיש לו מנוחת הנפש הדרושה לזה, הלא אחרת לגברי יראנה מאשר יראה שאר בני האדם, אחרת ישפוט ואחרת יעשה. אנחנו, למרות כל השגתינו בענין עקבא דמשיחא, אין זה אצלינו למעשה כלל, אבל לעולם כך הי' ; יש טראו, ויש שהשינו אבל לא ראו, ויש אשר גם השגתם לא הגיעה לנקודה הנדרשת. עם הדומה לחמור" — בשביל שלא ראו... ואם הראשונים כבני אדם אנו כחמורים" — כחמורים ממש, ממשמים — אמרו חז"ל על עצמם, איך כה זה אשר נדמה אליו אנחנו?... ואיך כמה רחוקים אנו מראי נבונה ומשמועה הגונה... אבל אשר יראונו מן השמים, הלא לראות הוא, ואיך נטעה את עצמינו לאמר שלא נוכל? נתבונן נא ונראה.

ז"ל הילקוט שה"ש ב', על הפ' מדלג על ההרים) "ד"א קול דודי, כיה שישמיע קול השופר, כ' זועות באים לעולם, י' מקומות נהדגיק, וי' מקומות נשרפין (י' פ"י כלל) — גזירה כללית של הריגה וגזירה כללית של שריפה. לא חסרו לנו כבשונות ולא חסרו כלי זיין להורגים) מלמד שאין הפתח (פתח הגאולה הפנימית) נפתח כולו כאחד, אלא אליהו ז"ל בא לעיר א' ונעלם מחברתה, ומדבר עם האיש ונעלם מחברו, ופי' מהר"ל (נצח ישראל פ' כ"ח) "פעמים הרבה הי' אליהו מגיד לא' דברים ולא ידע האדם מאיך באו לו הדברים, והי' נדמה לו כאלו הדברים היו מעצמו, ואינן אלא דברי אליהו שהגיד לו". — מה זה הי' לנו שלא נראה ולא נדע? קול השופר חזק מאד בכל העולם כולו זה עשיריות שנים, הרועות מלחמה וחורבנות, והריסות יסודות העוה"ז כולו

קולו של אליהו. — מתוך מכתב ששלח רבנו ז"ל מאנגליה לשיבת פוניבית

ניסן, תש"ח

רפעים יד החזקה - הלכות מלכים פרק יב
 ב) אמרו חכמים אין בין העולם הזה לימות המשיח אלא שיעבוד מלכויות בלבד יראה מפשוטן של דברי הנביאים שבתחילת ימות המשיח תהיה מלחמת גוג ומגוג ושקודם מלחמת גוג ומגוג יעמוד נביא לישראל ולהכין לבם שנאמר הנה אנכי שולח לכם את אליה וגו' ואינו בא לא לטמא הטהור ולא לטהר הטמא ולא לפסול אנשים שהם בחזקת כשרות ולא להכשיר מי שהוחזקו פסולין אלא לשום שלום בעולם שנאמר והשיב לב אבות על בנים ויש פן החכמים שאומרים שקודם ביאת המשיח יבא אליהו וכל אלו הדברים וכיוצא בהן לא ידע אדם איך יהיו עד שיהיו שדברים סתומין הן אצל הנביאים גם החכמים אין להם קבלה בדברים אלו אלא לפי הכרע הפסוקים ולפיכך יש להם מחלוקת בדברים אלו ועל כל פנים אין סדור הויית דברים אלו ולא דקדוקיהן עיקר בדת ולעולם לא יתעסק אדם בדברי ההגדות ולא יאריך בפרשנות האמורים בעניינים אלו וכיוצא בהן ולא ישימש עיקר שאין מביאין לא לידי יראה ולא לידי אהבה וכן לא יחשב הקצין אמרו חכמים תפח רוחם של מחשבי הקצים אלא יחכה ויאמין בכלל הדבר כמו שבארנו.

ספר שיחות מוהר"ן אות - שי

לענין מה שדרך העולם להמר בכל שנה ובכל עת שעכשו אינם עתים טובות ובשנים הקודמים היה טוב יותר וכו'. כידוע שיחות כאלו בין רב העולם, דברנו עמו מזה הרבה, ורב השיחה היה שספרו לפניו הרבה שבימים הראשונים הטובים היה הכל באל גדול הרבה יותר משל עכשו. כי לא היה אז נגידיים ועשירים גדולים כמו עכשו. ומה שמוציא עכשו בעל הבית פשוט ואפלו מקבל חשוב הוא יותר משהוצאות של הנגידיים, שבשנים הקודמים כידוע ומפורסם כל זה. ענה ואמר: הלא אדרבא, השם יתברך מנהיג עתה העולם יפה יותר מקדם ואמר בזה הלשון: אדרבא דער אייבערשטער פירט היינט שענייר דיא וועלט (תפב).

ספר מלאכי פרק ג

כג) הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא לפני בוא יום יהוה הגדול והפוא:
 כד) והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבותם פו אבוא והפיתי את הארץ חרס:

12.

R. Tzadok Hakohein of Lublin, Resisei Lylah 13, p. 14, 15

ספר פוקד עקרים אות [א]
כי כל דור ההולך התיימ שלהם נשארו ונקבעו בלבבות בניי בדור הבא דלולי כן מה התועלת באריכות הגלות והדורות הולכים ומתקטנים ואיי התקוה לזכות לביאות המשיח כיב מה שלא זכו בה דורות הראשונים שהיו גדולים וטובים פאלה אבל אף כי מצד הדורות עצמם הם מתקטנים ונקי עקבתא דמשיח שהנפשות הם מהעקביים פיימ מצד מה שכל הזכויות של כל דורות הקודמים כולם וכל תיימ שסיגלו בעוה"ז הכל נשאר קבוע ותקוע במעמקי הלבבות שבדור האחרון, ומצד כזה כל דור מאוחר יש לו יתרון הכשר מעלה ועייך שמשילם בענין החכמה כננס עיג הענק כידוע כיה גייכ בענין העבודה תיימ,

ספר רסיסי לילה אות [יג]

ידוע דכל דבר שכבר היה אחד שהרגיש בירור אור זה על בוריו כבר נפתח שער אוטו האור בעולם. והוא פתוח אחיך לכל דזה כל ענין עסק הדורות שקבע השם יתברך אף על פי שהם מתקטנים והולכים. לפי שכל האורות שנפתחים בכל דור ודור על ידי אנשי סגולה מחכמי ישראל אין נסתמים עוד והם פתוחים לעולם ונעשים הלבבות קבועות לכל ישראל. ולפיכך אף על פי שדורות אחרונים קטנים מכימ יש להם מעלה זו דננס עייג ענק. כי כבר פתוחים לפניהם כל שערים שפתחו קדמונים והם מחדשים והולכים לפתוח שערים אחרים. אף על פי שהם קטנים מאד מכימ הם במעמקים יותר. כי הם כבר עברו שער בנפשם שנפתח לראשונים.

13.

R. Avraham Azulai, Chesed LeAvraham, nahar 59

נביא בכאן את דברי בעל החסד לאברהם (נהר נט):

"דע כי מסורת קבלה היא בידינו מחכמי האמת – שארבע מאות כיתות הטומאה" שורים על רוח הטומאה, וכדי להעביר אותן הכוחות של רוח הטומאה. צריך ארבעים סאה מים [מים הם סמל לטהרה ולעונש וכנ"ל] וכל סאה מחזקת קמ"ד ביצים, וכל הארבעים סאה, עולים חמשת אלפים ותש"ס ביצים ... דע, כי שיעור המקוה – היא חמשת אלפים ושבע מאות ביצים, וסוד הענין, כי לסוף ה' אלפים ושבע מאות וששים ליצירה, יתקיים הפסוק (זכריה יג, ב): "ואת רוח הטומאה אעביר מן הארץ, ויתקיים מקרא (ויקרא כו, ה) "והשבת חיה רעה מן הארץ".