



## "THE ALTER REBBE — HELPING JEWS RETURN"

**Farbrenge – 24 Tevet, 5741-1980**

*On 24 Tevet 5573-1813, The Alter Rebbe, founder of Chabad Chasidism, passed away.*

*The Alter Rebbe writes, "On the day of a Tzaddik's passing, all the effort of man, in which his soul toiled during his lifetime, is revealed and radiates in a manifest way."*

*The Rebbe speaks on one of the Alter Rebbe's accomplishments: "the people that he made" — Returnees to Judaism.*

"The people that he made..." for the Alter Rebbe, outreach was a primary focus.

There are different types of people. Whom did he focus on most? There are the "heads of your tribes" or was the emphasis on "your water carriers?"

The distinction between Yissachar and Zevulun, which are two general categories within the ten levels from "the heads of your tribes" through "your water carriers." They correspond to the distinctions between the saintly and returnees.

The two categories are related. Generally, Yissachar refers to a scholar who is completely engrossed in the Torah and Mitzvot, surrounded by Judaism — which is the mode of service of the saintly, the Tzaddik— steadily moving forward. As Maimonides rules, a Jew must live where it is easy to carry out all that Judaism requires.

And then there is the role of Zevulun. He is involved with Cana'an — trade, a business man. As a result, he must journey outside the confines of the synagogue and study hall. A synagogue is not a place for trade, business dealings. On the contrary: It is forbidden to conduct trade in a synagogue or study hall, as stated in the Code of Jewish Law. That is why after going to the synagogue, he must "go out" to business — "pursuing the way of the land" within the mundane world.

These two methods fit distinctions: Yissachar is, for the most part, the path of the saintly — Torah and Mitzvot— while Zevulun represents the path of the returnee.

In this regard we have a clear directive, a clear declaration, as to the main focus — the primary "toil" — of the Alter Rebbe. The Mittlerer Rebbe had a dream, which was related, written, and published by my father-in-law, the Rebbe: People were walking across a mighty river on a bridge, and the bridge shook as they walked. And when the Alter Rebbe walked across, it did not shake.



The interpretation of the dream has also been published: Although the Alter Rebbe worked and toiled throughout his life with the righteous, as well, nevertheless, his main service, his main toil was bringing people back to the proper path.

There is a lesson in this. And it may also explain why my father-in-law, the Rebbe, toiled to translate both the esoteric and the exoteric Torah into many languages, in order to reach Jews who would otherwise have no access to it.

Jews who as yet don't even want to learn the language in which the Written Law was written, or the language in which the great Sages of the Mishna and Talmud studied. Nor the language of the Ba'al Shem Tov, who, the Alter Rebbe writes, would teach in Yiddish. Similarly, the Rebbes who succeeded him, from the Alter Rebbe to my father-in-law, all spoke in Yiddish.

Yet, though these people have no desire to learn the language, become closer, and study the teachings as they were said, the Torah was further disseminated to reach them. This was done especially in this generation, by the Rebbe, who recognized the needs of the generation.

He recognized the proper approach for this generation: The Torah had to be translated to many languages —which he did, and he instructed us to continue doing so until it would be available to the people of each country in their own language. For such Jews, too—on the contrary, especially for them.

The Midrash on Shemot —the portion we read last Shabbat, from which “all days of this week are blessed” — relates that Moshe was a shepherd, whose main efforts were reserved for the “stray sheep” which ran away from the flock. It ran away into the desert, a place of “snake, scorpion, and thirst.”

Yet, Moshe followed it there, and carried it back in his hands —as the story, a part of Torah, and a lesson in Torah, is told at length in the Midrash Rabba.

