



TETZAVEH

FARBRENGENS: WHERE HEAVEN MEETS EARTH

Discovering the spiritual magic of Chasidic gatherings

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Tetzaveh

G-d tells Moses to receive from the Children of Israel pure olive oil to feed the “everlasting flame” of the *menorah*, which Aaron is to kindle each day, “from evening till morning.”

The priestly garments, to be worn by the *Kohanim* (priests) while serving in the sanctuary, are described. All *Kohanim* wore: 1) the *ketonet*—a full-length linen tunic; 2) *michnasayim*—linen breeches; 3) a *mitznefet* or *migbaat*—a linen turban; and 4) an *avnet*—a long sash wound

above the waist.

In addition, the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) wore: 5) the *efod*—an apron-like garment made of blue-, purple-, and red-dyed wool, linen, and gold thread; 6) the *choshen*—a breastplate containing twelve precious stones inscribed with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; 7) the *me’il*—a cloak of blue wool with gold bells and decorative pomegranates on its hem; and 8) the *tzitz*—a golden plate worn on the forehead, bearing the

inscription “Holy to G-d.”

Tetzaveh also includes G-d’s detailed instructions for the seven-day initiation of Aaron and his four sons—Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar—into the priesthood, and for the making of the golden altar on which the *ketoret* (incense) was burned.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Does Jewish practice inspire you?
If yes, can you zero in on precisely
what you find inspirational?



RASHI RULES

1. Rashi takes it as a given that the Torah never repeats itself. Rashi will therefore explain any apparent redundancy.
2. If Rashi's commentary fails to explain an apparent redundancy, we must reexamine his words. If we haven't found it, we have yet to understand Rashi's comment.



The Tabernacle:
G-d's dwelling place
and Tent of Meeting.

TEXT 1A

Exodus 29:38-46

לח. וְזֶה אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ כִּבְשִׁים בְּנֵי
שָׁנָה שְׁנַיִם לַיּוֹם תָּמִיד.

לט. אֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ הָאֶחָד תַּעֲשֶׂה בַבֹּקֶר וְאֶת הַכֶּבֶשׂ
הַשֵּׁנִי תַעֲשֶׂה בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים . . .

מב. עֲלֹת תָּמִיד לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לִפְנֵי
ה' אֲשֶׁר אוֹמֵד לָכֶם שָׁמָּה לְדַבֵּר אֵלַיְךָ שָׁם.

מג. וְנִעַדְתִּי שָׁמָּה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִקְדַּשׁ בְּכָבוֹדִי.

מד. וְקִדַּשְׁתִּי אֶת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְאֶת
אֹהֶלן וְאֶת בְּנֵיוֹ אֲקַדֵּשׁ לְכָהֵן לִי.

מה. וְשִׁכְנֹתִי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִיטִיתִי לָהֶם
לְאֻלָּמִים.

מו. וְיָדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי
אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְשִׁכְנִי בְּתוֹכָם אֲנִי ה'
אֱלֹהֵיהֶם.

38. And this is what you shall offer upon the altar: lambs in
their first year, two a day, continually.

39. The one lamb you shall offer up in the morning and the
other lamb you shall offer up in the afternoon. . . .

42. It shall be a continual burnt offering for your generations,
at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting before G-d, where I will
arrange meetings with you, to speak to you there.

43. There I will arrange meetings with the Children of Israel,
and it will be sanctified by My glory.

44. I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and I will
sanctify Aaron and his sons to serve Me [as kohanim—priests].

45. I will dwell in the midst of the Children of Israel and I will
be their G-d.

46. They will know that I am their G-d, Who brought them out
of the land of Egypt in order that I may dwell in their midst; I
am their G-d.

TEXT 1B

Rashi, ad loc.

THE RASHI

”אֲשֶׁר אֶנְעֵד לָכֶם.” כְּשֶׁאֶקְבֵּעַ מוֹעֵד לְדַבֵּר
אֵלַיָּךְ, שָׁם אֶקְבָּעֶנּוּ לָבֹא.

“Where I will arrange meetings with you”: When I arrange an appointment to speak with you, I will arrange it there to come there.

מוֹעֵד

mo'ed

=

An appointment with
a time and place.

אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד

Ohel Mo'ed

=

An appointed place.

TEXT 2A

Exodus 29:43

וְנַעַדְתִּי שָׁמָּה לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

And I will arrange meetings there with
the Children of Israel.

TEXT 2B

Rashi, ad loc.

THE RASHI

”וְנַעַדְתִּי שָׁמָּה”. אֶתְנַעֵד עִמָּם בְּדַבּוּר, כְּמֶלֶךְ.
הַקּוֹבֵעַ מְקוֹם מוֹעֵד לְדַבֵּר עִם עֲבָדָיו שָׁם.

“And I will arrange meetings there”: I will gather with them to speak, like a king who appoints a meeting place to talk with his subjects there.

QUESTION ON RASHI

In both passages, the Torah calls it a Tent of Meeting to address the Jews.

Why doesn't Rashi resolve the redundancy?

A SINGLE VARIATION

RASHI'S FIRST COMMENT

G-d appointed a
place to speak
to the nation.

ONE-SIDED

RASHI'S SECOND COMMENT

G-d appointed a
place to speak
with the nation.

CONVERSATION

TEXT 3

*Rabbi Meir Leibush
Malbim, Ayelet
Hashachar 339*

הדיבור, כשיתקשר עם מלת עם או את, הוא
הדיבור המשותף, ששני המדברים מחליפים
הדיבור זה עם זה.

When we say "speak *with*" it is a
conversation: two speakers exchanging
words with each other.

FIRST PASSAGE

מוֹעֵד

mo'ed

Refers to the *place* where meetings are held.

SECOND PASSAGE

מוֹעֵד

mo'ed

Refers to the event—the actual meeting, or the *farbrengen*.

TEXT 4

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Likutei
Sichot 31, p. 168*

פירושה של תיבת "אועד" שבכתוב הקודם . . . הוא קביעות מקום . . . וכתרגום אונקלוס שהוא לשון הזמנה. והיינו שהוא מיועד ומיוחד לדבר מסויים.

אבל בפסוק דידן הכוונה היא לענין שני: "ונועדתי" לשון "אתועד עמם", מלשון "בית ועד" . . . היא למקום הקהלת העדה.

ונמצא, שב"אוהל מועד" - שני פירושים: (א) . . . מקום קבוע ומזומן לדיבור ה' אל משה. (ב) . . . "בית ועד" של בני ישראל.

The first passage's words, "I will arrange a meeting" . . . refer to the appointment of a place: as Onkelos translated it, a place dedicated and assigned to a specific purpose.

The second passage has a different meaning. [In this passage,] "I will arrange a meeting" means "I will gather with them." [The Tent of Meeting] is a house of gatherings where the nation comes together.

This means that the title Tent of Meeting has two meanings: (A) an established, dedicated place where G-d spoke to Moses, and (B) a gathering house for the Jewish people.



Who were the Jews
conversing with
when they gathered
in the Tabernacle?

TEXT 5

Numbers 10:3

וְנוֹעְדוּ אֵלַיךְ כָּל הָעֵדָה אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד.

And the entire nation will gather before
you at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

The gatherings were organized and attended by G-d. It was a place where G-d came to *farbreng* with the Jews, not just a place where Jews came to *farbreng* with each other.



TEXT 6

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Likutei
Sichot 31, p. 168*

והטעם שרש"י מוסיף "אתועד עמם בדיבור" - כי בפסוק נאמר "ונועדתי שמה", היינו שאין זה רק "בית ועד" של ישראל בינם לבין עצמם, אלא המקום שהקדוש ברוך הוא "מתועד" עם ישראל.

ולכן, צריך רש"י לפרש במה הוא ה"קשר" בין הקדוש ברוך הוא וישראל במקום זה, ולכן אומר "בדיבור".

Rashi adds the words, "I will gather with them to speak" because this passage states, "I [G-d] will arrange meetings there." This means that it is not just a gathering house for Jews to meet each other. It is a place where G-d spends time with the people.

Therefore, Rashi had to specify how G-d bonds with the nation in this place. The answer is through speech.

FIRST PASSAGE

מוֹעֵד

mo'ed

Meeting Place



עַד

ad

Until

SECOND PASSAGE

מוֹעֵד

mo'ed

Gathering



וַעַד

vaad

Gathering

TEXT 7

Job 38:2-11

ב. מי זה מחשיך עצה במלין בלי דעת.

ג. אָזָר נָא כְּגִבֹּר חֲלָצִיךָ וְאַשְׁאֲלֶךָ
וְהוֹדִיעֲנִי.

ד. איפה היית ביסודי ארץ הגד אם ידעת
בינה.

ה. מי שם ממדיה כי תדע או מי נטה עליה
קו.

ו. על מה אדניה הטבעו או מי ירה אבן
פנתה . . .

ח. וינסך בנדלתיים ים בגיחו מרחם יצא . . .

יא. ואמר עד פה תבוא ולא תסיף ופא
ישית בגאון גליף.

2. Who is this who gives dark counsel, with words,
without knowledge?

3. Now gird your loins like a man, and I will ask
you, and [you] tell Me:

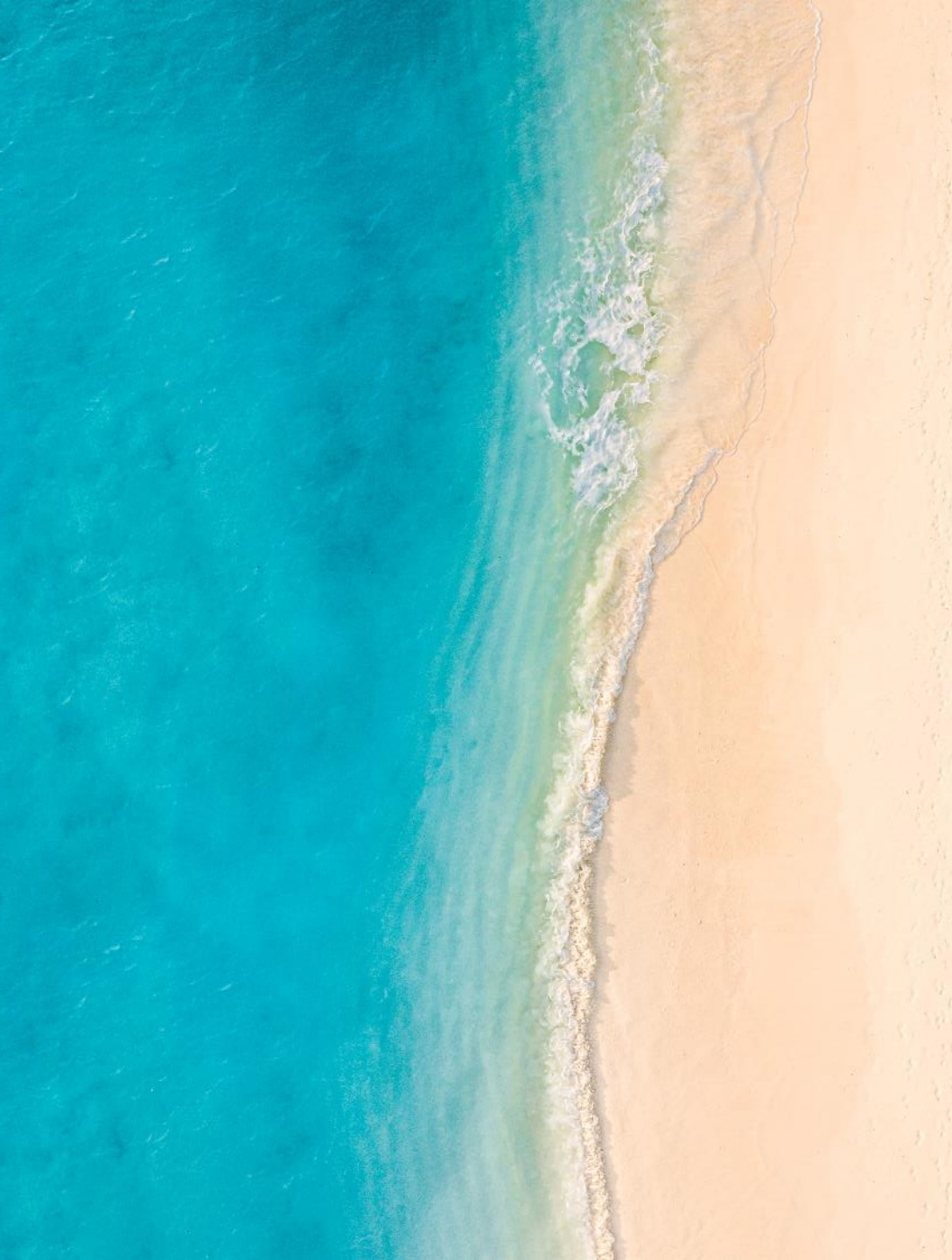
4. Where were you when I founded the Earth? Tell
me if you understand.

5. Who placed its measures, if you know, or who
extended a line over it?

6. On what were its sockets sunk, or who laid its
cornerstone? . . .

8. And [who] shut up the sea with doors when it
broke forth and issued from its womb? . . .

11. "And said, "Until here you may come but no
further, and here [your strength] shall place your
waves with pride."



Just as the sea meets the shore but goes no further, our understanding of G-d has limits—His ways remain beyond our grasp, yet they are still absolute truth.

TEXT 8

*Talmud, Chagigah
12b*

וְחֹשֶׁךְ וְעָנָן וְעַרְפֶּל מְקִיפִין אוֹתוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "יִשֶּׁת חֹשֶׁךְ סָתָרוֹ סְבִיבוֹתָיו סוּכָתוֹ חֲשֹכֶת מַיִם עָבִי שְׁחָקִים" (תְּהִלִּים יח, יב).

וְיָמִי אֵיכָא חֲשׂוּכָא קָמִי שְׁמַיָּא? וְהִכְתִּיב: "הוּא גִלָּא עֲמִיקָתָא וּמְסִתְרָתָא יָדַע מָה בְּחֲשׂוּכָא וּנְהוּרָא עֵמָּה שְׂרָא" (דְּנִיָּאל ב, כב).

לֹא קִשְׁיָא. הָא בְּבִתִּי גִנְאִי, הָא בְּבִתִּי בְּרָאִי.

Darkness, cloud, and fog surround Him, as the passage states, "He made darkness His hiding place, His pavilion round about Him; the darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies" (Psalms 18:12).

But is there darkness before G-d? Is it not written, "He reveals deep and secret things, He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him" (Daniel 2:22)?

This is not a question. One passage refers to the inner houses [where there is light], and the other refers to the outer houses [where there is darkness].

We stand at the boundary of the *Ohel Mo'ed*, the appointed place of meeting, where we encounter G-d but cannot fully grasp His infinite essence.





The *Ohel Mo'ed* is not just a demarcating line but a place of connection, where G-d and the Jews *farbreng*, bridging the finite and the infinite.

WITNESS

עַד

ad

Until



עֵד

ed

Witness

The *Ohel Mo'ed* served as a **witness** to G-d's presence, testifying to what we could not see, much like a witness conveys truth to a judge.

TEXT 9

*Talmud, Shabbat
22b*

מתיב רב ששת: "מחוץ לפרוכת
העדות יערוך" (ויקרא כד, ג),
וכי לאורה הוא צריך? והלא כל
ארבעים שנה שהלכו בני ישראל
במדבר לא הלכו אלא לאורו!

אלא עדות היא לבאי עולם
שהשכינה שורה בישראל.

מאי עדות?

אמר רב: זו נר מערבי שנותן בה
שמן כמדת חברותיה, וממנה
היה מדליק, ובה היה מסיים.

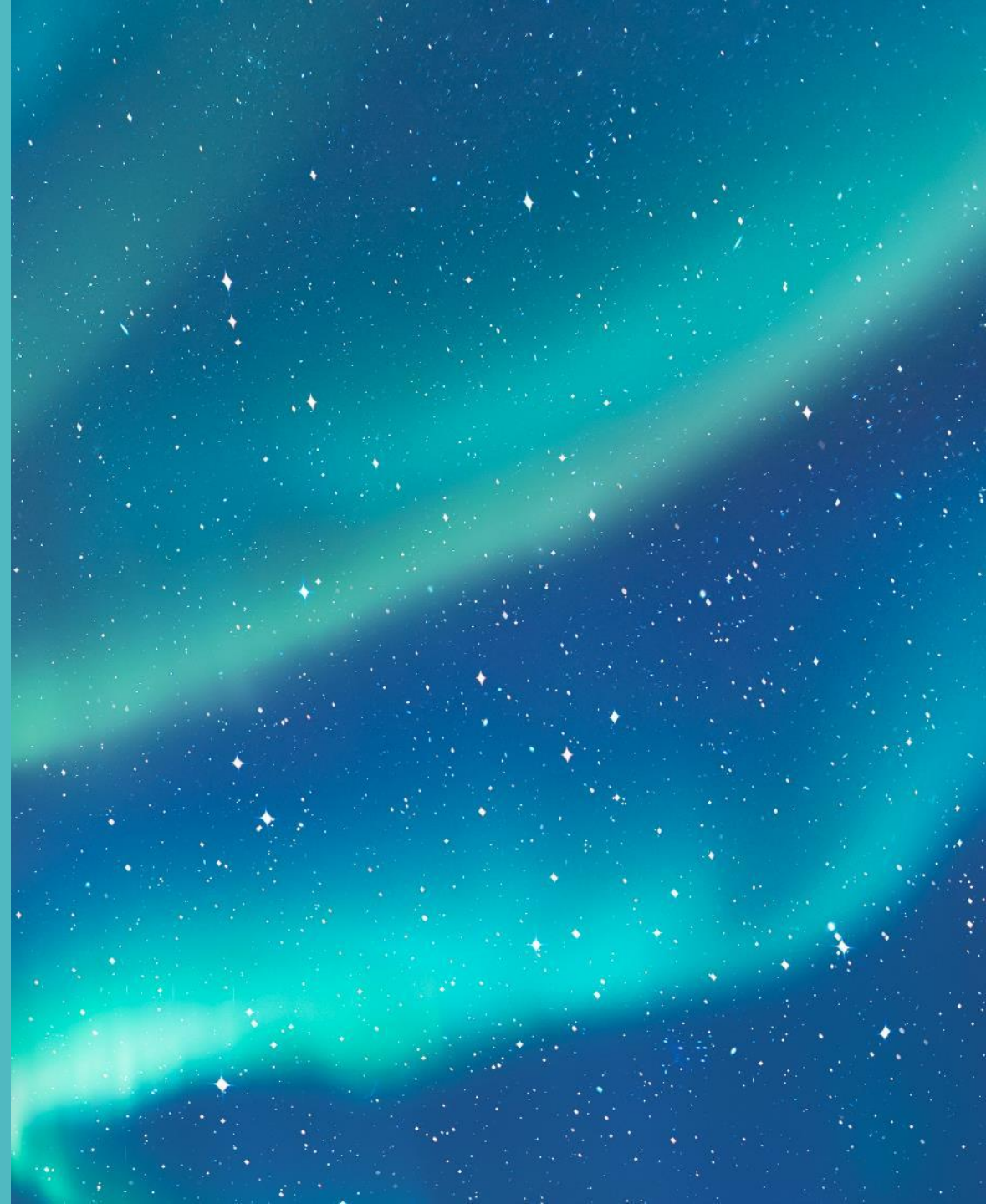
Rabbi Sheshes asked, [the passage states], [The priest] will set up [the candles] outside the curtain of testimony (Leviticus 24:3). Does G-d require light? Did the Jews not travel forty years in the desert to G-d's light?

Rather, [these candles] testify to all citizens of the world that the Divine presence dwells among Israel.

What is the nature of this testimony?

Rav explained it refers to the westernmost candle. It was filled with the same measure of oil as the others, yet [it burned longer than the others]. With it, the priest would kindle the other candles, and with it, he would conclude.

The miracles that occurred
in the *Ohel Mo'ed* testified
to G-d's presence.



DUAL DYNAMICS IN THE HOLY HOUSE

A. Awe and Humility – It was G-d's home, where He remained abstract and unknowable, requiring faith in His presence.



B. Sense of Connection – Through daily miracles, one could develop a conviction and awareness of His presence.



שְׁמֵעַ יְשׁוּרְאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ

ה' אֶחָד:

TEXT 10A

Rabbi Yaakov Ben
Asher, Sefer Baal
Haturim,
Deuteronomy 6:4

עין ודלת גדולים, הרי עד. וזהו "ואתם
עדי נאם ה'" (ישעיה מג, יב).

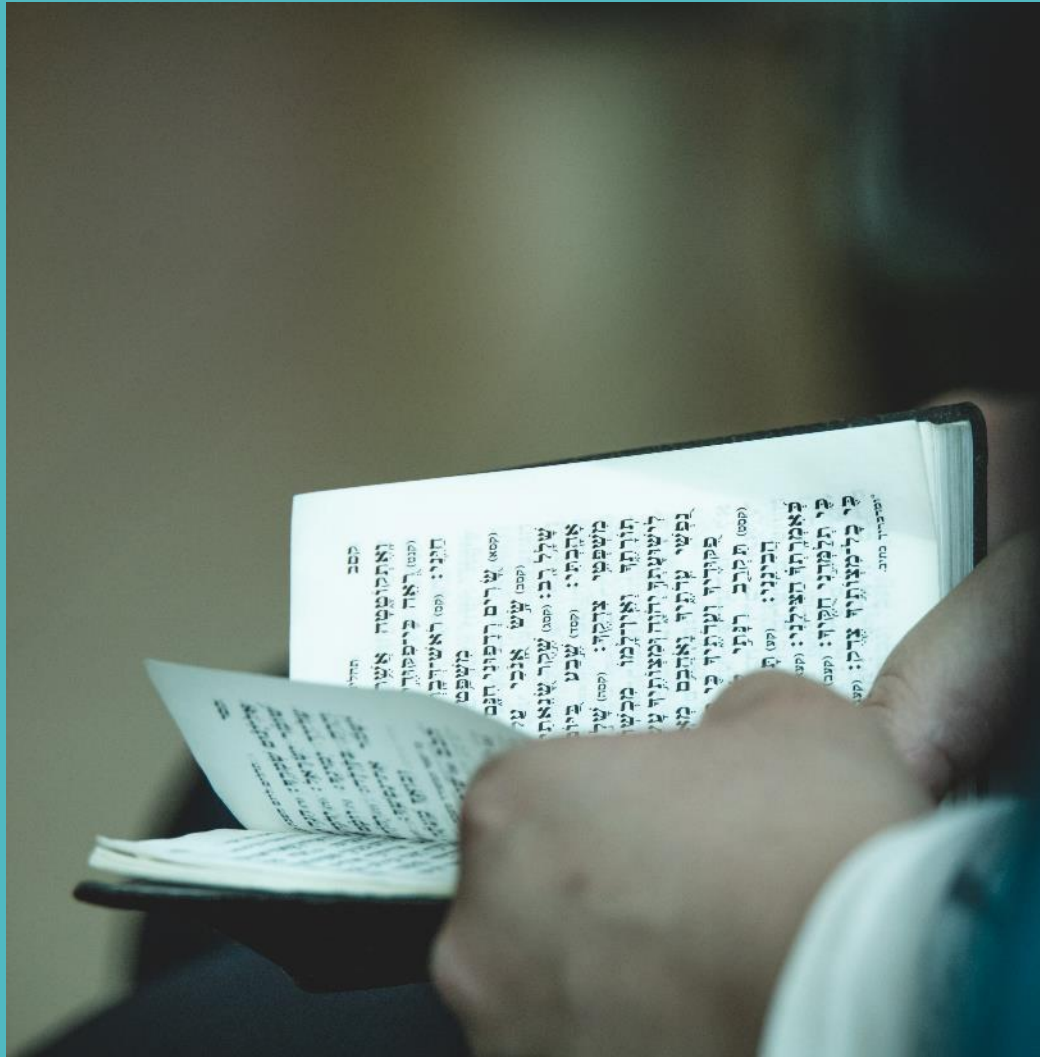
The large letters *ayin* and *daled* spell the word *ed*—witness. This alludes to the passage, "And you are My witnesses, says G-d" (Isaiah 43:12).

TEXT 10B

Ramban,
Deuteronomy 6:20

אלה המצות הנקראים עדות, בעבור שהם זכר
לנפלאותיו ועדות בהם, כגון המצה והסוכה
והפסח והשבת והתפילין והמזוזה.

Some commandments are testimonials because they remember His wonders and testify to them. These include matzah, sukkah, paschal lamb, Shabbat, *tefilin*, and *mezuzah*.



Through *mitzvah* observance, we testify to G-d's presence and connect with Him, just as the Jews did in the *Ohel Mo'ed*.

A farbrengen:

a gathering designed to encourage and enhance our connection with G-d, much like the *farbrengen* in the *Mishkan*.



TEXT 11A

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Torat
Menachem 5745:2, p.
741*

עיקר עניין התוועדות הוא, בלשון הכתוב - "היילכו שניים
יחדיו בלתי אם נועדו", והכוונה בזה היא - כדי להוסיף
בעניין דונועדתי לך שם על ידי לימוד התורה וקיום
המצוות.

The primary purpose of a *farbrengen* can be understood through the verse: "Can two walk together unless they have met?" [Amos 3:3]. The deeper intent of such gatherings is to strengthen the bond with Hashem through increasing in the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvot*, fulfilling the ideal of "and I will meet with you there."

TEXT 11B

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Letter
Dated 25th of Elul,
5733 [September
22, 1973],
www.chabad.org/
1244711*

The purpose of a Chassidic *farbrengen* is [for the participants] to encourage each other in Torah learning, the fulfillment of the *Mitzvot* with *Hiddur* [beauty], and the spreading of Yiddishkeit [Judaism] in general. This includes, of course, the proper conduct in matters of *Derech Eretz* [respect and proper manners] and good *Midot* [character traits].



one of the primary
elements of a *farbrengen*
is the camaraderie—not
just gathering, but
uplifting each other
through life's challenges.

TEXT 12A

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Torat
Menachem 5747:1,
pp. 576-577*

המושג של התוועדות - אינו שייך ביחיד, כי אם לכל הפחות בשניים, על דרך לשון הכתוב "היילכו שניים יחדיו בלתי אם נועדו" . . . ותכליתה של ההתוועדות - כדי שאיש את רעהו יעזורו, יחזקו ויעודדו כו', בכל ענייני יהדות תורה ומצוותיה, עד למעיינות דתורת החסידות - הן בנוגע לעצמם והן בנוגע להפצה חוצה.

The concept of a *farbrengen* doesn't apply to an individual—it requires at least two people, as reflected in the verse: "Can two walk together unless they have met?" (Amos 3:3). The purpose of a *farbrengen* is for one person to help and support the other—"Each shall help his friend" (Isaiah 41:6)—to strengthen and encourage each other in all areas of Judaism: Torah, *mitzvot*, and even the wellsprings of Chasidus.

TEXT 12B

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Torat
Menachem 5711:3,
p. 162*

כדאי ונכון לערוך התוועדות חסידית, מתוך אהבה ואחדות,
ומתוך שמחה, שכן, על ידי התוועדות יכולים לפעול הרבה
יותר מפעולת היחיד שיושב בפני עצמו ולומד מן הספר.

It is worthwhile and proper to hold a Chasidic *farbrengen*,
conducted with love, unity, and joy. Through a *farbrengen*,
much more can be accomplished than what an individual
sitting alone with a book can achieve.

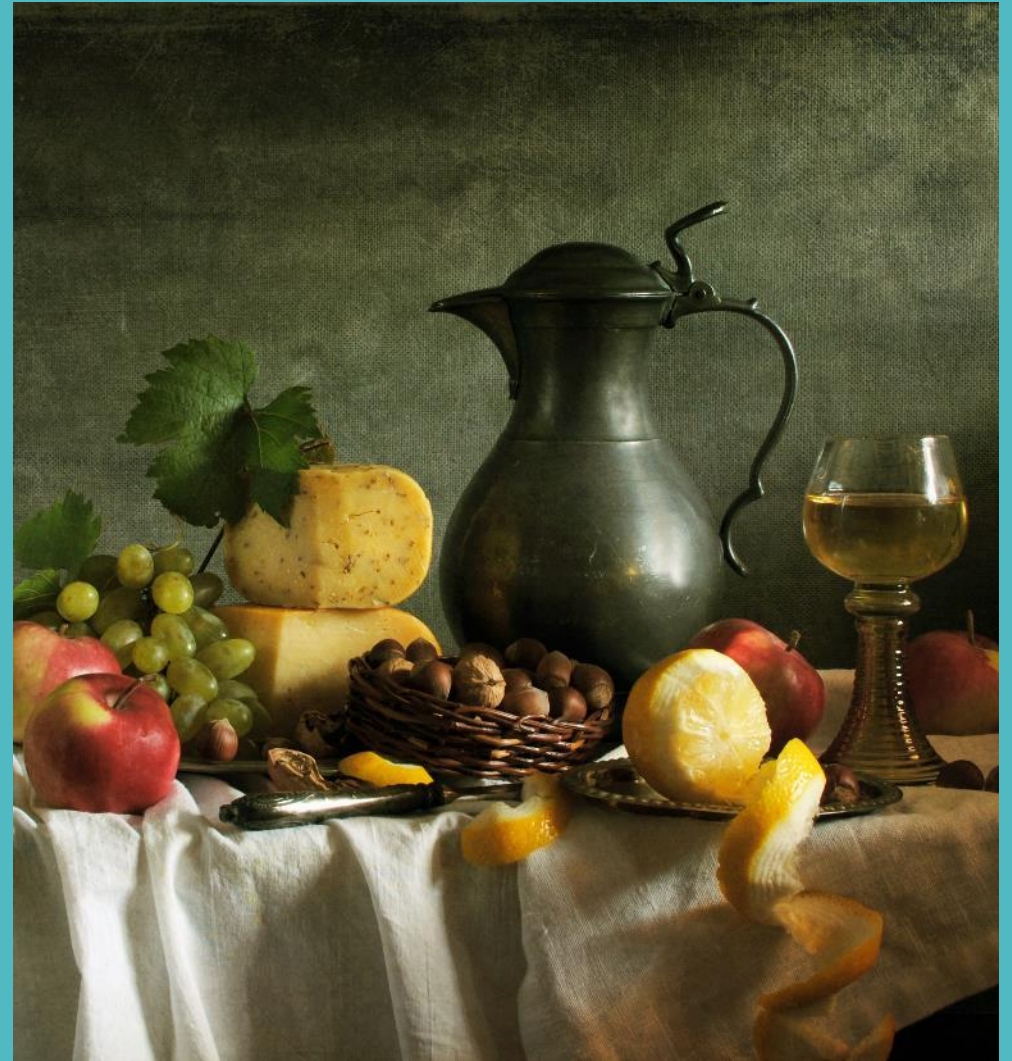
TEXT 13

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Igrot
Kodesh 11, p. 401*

הכוונה בהתוועדות בכדי להתעורר לתורה ומצוות מתוך חיות
ושמחה ומרירות יחדיו, אלא שרואים במוחש האמור בדברי
רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, "גדולה לגימה שמקרבת" (אף שנזקקים
לזהירות בזה, כמובן).

The purpose of a *farbrengen* is to inspire involvement in Torah and *mitzvot* with vitality, joy, and a sense of reflection and contrition combined. At the same time, it reflects the truth of the sages' teaching: "Great is a shared drink, for it fosters closeness" (Eruvin 65b), though naturally, this must be approached with appropriate caution.

The act of eating and drinking at a *farberngen* brings us closer not only to each other, but also to G-d.



TEXT 14

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Torat
Menachem 5747:1,
p. 577*

התוועדות קשורה עם עניין של לגימה, גדולה לגימה
שמקרבת - לא רק הקירוב דהמתוועדים עצמם, אלא
גם הקירוב עם אבינו שבשמים.

A farbrengen is connected with the concept of sharing a drink, as expressed in the saying: "Great is a shared drink, for it fosters closeness" (Eruvin 65b). This closeness is not only among those participating in the *farbrengen* but also between them and our Father in Heaven.

TEXT 15

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Sichot
Kodesh 5721, p. 243*

הרבי היה אומר שבין התוועדות להתוועדות נוספת
אין הפסק חס ושלום... אין זה אלא שנחים
בינתיים, כדי שיוכלו להתוועד עם חיות מחודשת
ושמחה מחודשת.

The Rebbe would say that there is no true interruption between one farbrengen and the next—Heaven forbid. It is merely a pause in the meantime, allowing for rest so that the next farbrengen can be conducted with renewed energy and joy.

TEXT 16

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Torat
Menachem 5744:4, p.
2229, Parshat Pinchas*

ישנם כאלו שמחכים שיזמינו
אותם להתוועדות, ודווקא על
ידי שלוחים חשובים ביותר -
זקני מואב וזקני מדין, שיבטיחו
לו מלוא ביתו כסף וזהב! ... מה
לך להמתין עד שיזמינו אותך
להתוועדות?! ... הרי אדרבה,
עליך לכתת את רגליך ולהקיש
על דלתותיהם של כל הקהל,
לעוררם משנתם - עורו ישנים
משנתכם ונרדמים מתרדמתכם -
כדי שיילכו להתוועדות חסידית!
אם יהיה שם מי שיכול לומר
משהו - מוטב, ואם לאו - ילמדו
מתוך הכתב, וכיוצא בזה.

There are some who wait to be invited to a *farbrengen*, and not just by anyone—they expect to be summoned by the most important emissaries, the likes of the elders of Mo'av and Midian, with promises of a house full of silver and gold! But why wait for someone to invite you to a *farbrengen*? On the contrary, you should be the one to take the initiative—travel far and wide, knock on the doors of everyone in the community, and awaken them from their slumber: *Awaken, you sleepers, from your sleep, and you slumberers, from your stupor!*

Even if there isn't someone there who can lead or speak, it doesn't matter. Read aloud from a written text, share a teaching, or do whatever is necessary. The main thing is to inspire and ensure that the *farbrengen* happens!



The main goal of a *farbrengen* is to inspire lasting growth, making us more devoted, sincere, loving, and proud Jews.

TEXT 17A

*The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, Igrot
Kodesh 10, p. 199*

פעולת התוועדות הרי צריכה להיות
ניכרת במשך שבועות וחודשים
שלאחרי זה.

The impact of a *farbrengen* should
be evident for weeks and even
months afterward.

TEXT 17B

Ibid. 11, p. 3

תשואות חן על הבשורות טובות של ההתועדות, והעיקר
בהתעוררות של המתוועדים בהנוגע לימים שאחרי ימי
התועדות, ובטח גם לאחר זה הנה משגיחים כל אלו
שהיכולת בידם על זה שתבוא ההתעוררות בפועל גם
בימות החול.

Thank you for the good news about the *farbrengen*. The main focus, however, is the inspiration it brings to the days following the *farbrengen*. Certainly, those who have the ability are ensuring that this inspiration translates into action, even during the mundane days of the week.

A Chasidic *farbrengen* replicates the original *farbrengen* in that it's designed to bring us closer to G-d.



KEY POINTS

1. The Tabernacle is called a Tent of Meeting in two consecutive passages. Yet their meaning is different: one is about G-d addressing the nation, and the other is about G-d and the people conversing with one another.
2. The *Mishkan* was the meeting place with G-d because it was also a place of testimony, as in the word *ed*—also associated with *mo'ed*.
3. Though the Jews couldn't actually see G-d there, they could feel His presence by way of the miracles there, which bore witness to the reality of His existence.
4. We, too, have the opportunity to *farbreng* with G-d through constant observance of *mitzvot* that make His presence palpable in our lives.
5. A Chasidic *farbrengen* replicates the original *farbrengen* in that it's designed to bring us closer to G-d and is a critical plank in the Chasidic way of life.

