

“He Is Alive”; But what does that actually mean?

An **excerpt** from Chapter 9 of [Od Avinu Chai](#), a comprehensive (but concisely written) work on Rebbe-Chasid relationship, based entirely on the Rebbe’s own words in Sichos and Igros Kodesh. Compiled and written by Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin, Head Shliach of Wisconsin. The second in a series on COLlive.com in connection with Gimmel Tammuz.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The following chapter takes on the very complexed issue of “Hu B’Chayim”, that the Rebbe is alive, explaining it in great length and detail. Towards the end you will find 2 incredible stories - from after Gimmel Tamuz - on the topic

Readers are strongly encouraged to read this chapter (and the entire booklet) in its entirety by clicking here (in PDF format) : [Od Avinu Chai](#),
You can obtain a printed copy by clicking here: <http://www.Chabadwi.org/OAC> or from Kehot by clicking here: <https://store.kehotonline.com/prodinfo.asp?number=ERE-ODAV>

The soul exists perpetually, even after the Histalkus. When speaking of the neshomo of a ישראל נשיא, the eternity of his soul is expressed in his נשיאות as well; i.e., his effect in the world, (which is the meaning of "Nesius"), continues in perpetuity.

As the Talmud says of Moshe (Sotah, 13b), “Just as before he stood and served – so too now, he stands and serves.” Even after his passing, a Jewish leader “stands and serves,” to help every Jew fulfill his Divine mission to make the world a “dwelling” and “garden” for G-d.

משיחת י' שבט תשמ"ג – תו"מ עמ 890

Subsequent to *Histalkus*, the Tzaddik’s soul, while ascending to a higher world, *האמת עולם*, remains alive and is imminent in our physical plane as well.

Meaning: it is not just that the Tzaddik’s soul lives on in Gan Eden,(and the pleasure caused on high from its avodah results in a downward flow of Divine energy). Rather, the soul itself lives on here in our world, i.e., the soul continues to exist and function here.

Moreover, in a certain respect, the presence of the Tzaddik’s soul in our world after his passing is even greater than it was previously. In the words of the Zohar,

מבחינה יתיר - More than during his lifetime [while in a physical body].

Simply put, הוא בחיים means all that which represents life – e.g., awareness, understanding, feeling, seeing, and hearing – are now just as they were before.

And in relation to ourselves, הוא בחיים is to say that in all that which represents life, the Rebbe is alive with us today. He is aware of what happens with us; he sees and listens to us; he celebrates in our *simchas* and shares our pain; he intervenes in prayer and beseeches G-d on our behalf. All as it was before – and even more so now.

This idea – that even after their physical departure from this world, the *neshomos* of Tzaddikim remain connected with, aware of, and feel what transpires here on earth – is found in the words of our Sages, quoted by Rashi in *Parshas Chukas* (Bamidbar 20:15), “The Patriarchs suffer in the grave when calamity befalls Israel.” The *Midrash Eicha* (and the *Kinah* אבות קברי על ירמיהו בהלוך אז) describes at length the anguish of our Patriarchs and Matriarchs over the suffering of the Jewish people during the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdosh*.

For ordinary people – to whom physical matters are necessarily of significant concern – upon their passing, the body that had been a critical part of their being is no longer; and the soul, which is non-corporeal, departs the body and its concerns and ascends to a spiritual realm. It can now be found on high, where it lives on, but not in this world.

But there are extraordinary souls, the *neshamos* of true Tzaddikim, whose earthly existence is consumed by their consummate devotion to G-d, and whose bodies are merely instruments through which their pure souls act. During their earthly sojourn, they live as a mere vehicle in the service of G-d. These souls, even after their departure from the physical body, remain active in the here and now, continuing to impact our world.

I.E. even in the absence of his body, the Tzaddik’s eternal soul continues to concern itself and be actively engaged in the tasks in which it was occupied, and into which it had invested all its energies while housed in the physical body. Thus, our earthly connection with him remains unabated.

There are numerous levels and dimensions to the Rebbe’s ongoing presence in our world, and to his connection with what takes place here:

1. “*Mah zar’o b’chayim, af hu b’chayim*” In spite of our flawed spiritual state, and

in regards to *hiskashrus* in particular -- as the Rebbe stated in a *Sicha*, after the *histalkus* of the Frierdicker Rebbe, that it takes greater effort to achieve *hiskashrus*. Nevertheless, we are witness to the remarkable phenomenon of a new generation “which did not know Yosef,” but is nevertheless profoundly *mekushor* to the Rebbe.

This *Hiskashrus* is expressed in multiple ways, both in the personal lives of chassidim today and, especially, in the growing aspiration since Gimmel Tammuz to go on *shlichus* and the dramatic growth and expansion in all types of *shlichus*, programs and *פעולות*.

Any thinking person understands that it takes far more than a powerfully focused sense of purpose for a young couple, *יוסף את ידע לא אשר*, to leave behind the comforts of a familiar world and dedicate themselves with complete *mesiras nefesh* to do the Rebbe’s *shlichus* in the most remote corners of the globe, often under the harshest conditions.

This is a genuine manifestation of *בחיים זרעו* – which declares that *בחיים הוא*, that his spirit is a tangible force active in our world, finding its expression in the lives of those who are bonded with him and walk in his footsteps.

2. Anyone who cherishes the Rebbe – even those who never actually saw the Rebbe – also cherish objects that are associated with him. They consider the dollars or *קונטרסים* (booklets) the Rebbe distributed to be sacred. Why this intense feeling? Because they believe and feel in their hearts that an object which once belonged to the Rebbe continues to be imbued with the Rebbe’s *kedushoh*; it is alive and offers protection and added blessing and success.

This is illustrated by the famous story of the Alter Rebbe who, when fleeing during the Napoleonic War, was meticulous to take all his possessions with him. When he was already on the way he realized a pair of slippers (*pantofel*) was left behind and dispatched a special messenger to fetch them. Because everything that belongs to a Tzaddik is suffused with his sanctity, the Alter Rebbe was concerned lest any of his possessions fell into Napoleon’s hands. (Indeed, it is told that upon reaching Liadi, where the Alter Rebbe had lived, Napoleon searched but was disappointed to discover that he could not lay his hands on any object belonging to the Alter Rebbe.)

In other words, any object that belonged to the Rebbe, including *קטנים פכים*,

continue to retain the Rebbe's *kedushoh* – for ממקומה זזה לא קדושה – even after others acquired them. Just as the Rebbe's *neshomo* continues to be alive, so too the objects in which he invested his energy, his spirit, stay connected with him. When one learns from a *kuntres* which the Rebbe handed to him or carries a dollar bill (or other object) given by the Rebbe – in that moment, the Rebbe relates to that individual from where he is now, and helps him in his spiritual and material concerns.

3. Furthermore, the assertion that בחיים הוא, that the Rebbe is alive, is to say that the Rebbe's *neshomo* itself is present in this world. Not only through the agency of those who were impacted by him, or through the objects with which he was associated, but rather the Rebbe's *neshomo* itself is present in our world. This is true regarding the place where he dwelled here, and especially in connection with his holy body, as the Alter Rebbe writes in הקודש אגרת, Ch. 27, and in the ביאור that follows; and as the Rebbe discusses, both in written and spoken form, regarding the Frierdicker Rebbe. Similarly, the Frierdicker Rebbe describes an episode in which he saw his father (the Rebbe Rashab) entering the chamber of his father (the Rebbe Maharash) for יחידות long after his *histalkus*.

There are personal accounts of how the Rebbe (like his predecessors) would respond to those who had turned to him in their thoughts with a request for blessing or advice, or in contemplation of *Hiskashrus*. Indeed, the Rebbe relates in his *sichos* how the Rebbeim would respond to letters even before they had reached the Rebbe's hand.

How much more so now, when the Rebbe's soul is no longer constrained by his body, he certainly responds to whoever seeks him, even more than before. And, in fact, as the Alter Rebbe writes in the aforementioned *Iggeres haKodesh*, he tends to us now from a deeper dimension within his soul.

Indeed, we are often witness to wondrous acts of the Rebbe responding to our queries and pleas, to aid our appeals to arouse Heavenly mercy, and for his intercession regarding all manner of matters.

Furthermore, just as there are many stories and personal accounts of how, during his life on earth, the Rebbe saw things and pre-empted situations throughout the world; so too today – after Gimmel Tammuz – there are numerous accounts of the Rebbe making “house calls” on his own initiative without being asked through a פ"נ, offering a “helping hand” to aid Jews throughout the world, including those who had never before seen or even heard of the Rebbe or Lubavitch.

It goes without saying that this is true now regarding the letters the Rebbe would send for a joyous occasion. Just as the Rebbe expressed delight and participate in a *simcha* through his letter of blessings – whether to a Bar or Bas Mitzvah, on the occasion of the birth of a child, or to a *chosson* and *kallah* for their *chasunoh*, etc. – so too now, the Rebbe showers his blessings on those who seek his *brocho*, and he participates in their *simcha*.

Quote

“We all must know, that we had and now too we have a great Rebbe, ח"מ וק"כ, מ"ה ר"אדמו, the Rebbe, who pleaded and impacted, and now too, affects blessing and success for Jews in general, and for those who are bonded with him in particular.”

מכתב ט"ז אלול תש"י

“The energy the Rebbe bestows through Toras Hachassidus – continues to be transmitted and given to us now too, without change from his side; and for us as well there is no change such that we should think that the Rebbe is not with us, ה"ו ...”

Sicha, Shabbos Parshas Terumah 5710 – Toras Menachem, p. 16

“...those who knew the Rebbe during the thirty years of his leadership, know that the Rebbe will not abandon his Chassidim and that they should be left on their own ... certainly the Rebbe directs the entire world, and Anash in particular, and rouses great mercy, etc., as it has been until now; and, furthermore, in greater measure with greater strength.”

Sicha, Shabbos Parshas Terumah 5710 – Toras Menachem, p. 16

“On the final חג הגאולה of his lifetime in this world, the Rebbe saw fit to make clear that matters of kedushoh are eternal; and (so that there would be no mistaking his intent) he explained the concept of “long life,” “true life” which does not cease – that we shouldn’t think that things are as they appear to our flesh eyes, ו"ח (which is not relevant in kedushoh); rather, we should know that also after the histalkus there is life that continues without interruption – eternal life – for the הדור נשיא, and through him eternal life is imparted to the entire generation. Now too, therefore, each one can and should vitalize (not only himself, but also) others in matters of kedushoh.”

Sicha Parshas Chukas 5710 – Toras Menachem, p. 120

“As we find with regard to a נ"פ – as is known among chassidim that when we

write a pidyon and send it to the Rebbe, its impact is already affected even if the pidyon has not yet reached the Rebbe's hands; and hence, he has not yet seen it with his physical eyes. The chossid must do his part to dedicate himself to the Rebbe and rely on him; and when he does his part and there are no obstructions from his side, then the inyan is already affected through the Rebbe."

"Similarly in our case, when the chossid poses a question to the Rebbe, and dedicates himself and relies on the Rebbe such that there are no obstructions from his side – then he receives the Rebbe's "answer," even when the Rebbe does not respond explicitly."

Sicha Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5711 – Toras Menachem, p. 238

"My father, the Rebbe [Rashab] said: It is clear to me that when a chossid sits in the Beis Hamidrash and learns or חסידות chassidus in public – this brings the Rebbeim joy; and this joy brings bounteous goodness, material and spiritual, for him, his children, and his children's children."

Hayom Yom 13 Adar I

From a letter (blessings for the health of a child), 26 Menachem Av 5710

"... Certainly, he sleeps with a yarmulke on his head, and he is told, in language appropriate for his age, about our נשיא כ"ק מו"ח; and also that now too, a tzaddik who passes is found in all worlds – also in olam hamasey – more than during his lifetime, and that he sends blessings to all those who are bonded with him and, especially, to boys and girls – as is explained in Chassidus that "[Because] Israel is a na'ar [lad], and [therefore] I love him."

"Ordinally after a lengthy period of time has elapsed, particularly a period of ten or twenty years; it is, therefore the place here to mention again – it should be known that when we are going on the Rebbe's shlichus, he also travels along with us, for he is present now exactly as before. As he said of his father, "The shepherd of Israel will not abandon his flock:" so, too, he issued a "verdict" on himself in the same way; and "just as before he stood and served; so, too, now he stands in the higher realm and serves," and thus leads us in all the matters he is choosing to direct."

Sicha Shabbos Parshas Tavo, 5733 – Sichos Kodesh, p. 379

We'll Dance at The Wedding

We met and befriended each other while camping together at Camp Gan Israel in

Swan Lake, NY some thirty years ago. Mr. H. immigrated from a different country and was a few years older than me. He then attended yeshiva at "770." Eventually each of us married; Mr. H settled in Flatbush, NY and my wife and I moved to South Florida, as Shluchim of the Rebbe. Having met here and there, we kept a cordial relationship. In the winter of 2000 (28 of Adar II, 5760) we married off our first daughter. Among the many acquaintances we invited Mr. H. As we were walking down the aisle to the Chuppah, I was surprised to notice Mr. H, as I didn't expect him to travel all the way from New York to come to the wedding, especially since he didn't respond to the invitation.

After the ceremony Mr. H and I found a private corner to talk. "I will tell you what brought me here," he said. But first I must tell you something that happened twenty-three years ago. I knew you were married for a number of years and did not yet have children. I decided to approach the Rebbe and ask him for a brocho for you and your wife. One day as the Rebbe came out of 770, I approached him and asked for a blessing for children for Yosef Yitzchok Ben Zvetel Gitel and his wife Bayla Rochel bas Devorah. When the Rebbe heard that, he immediately said "Devorah Leah," making a correction on your wife's mother's name; and added he "I already gave them a Brocha."

I then responded to the Rebbe, saying, "I want a guarantee." To this the Rebbe said, "you and I will dance at the Chasunoh (wedding)." I then asked, "the Rebbe will dance? The Rebbe doesn't go to chasanas?" The Rebbe looked at me and said, "Don't worry, we will both dance at their children's wedding." I asked the Rebbe "Who is we? Me and the Rebbe?" The Rebbe repeated this sentence two more times. And that was the end of the conversation.

Knowing that the Rebbe does not attend weddings, I could not help but wonder what did the Rebbe mean. But I kind of forgot about it. Then came Gimmel Tammuz, and I remembered what the Rebbe said, and I was wondering even more: Just how was the Rebbe going to keep his promise?"

Mr. H then continued his story. "On Friday night, the twenty-fourth of Adar, just a few days before your daughter's wedding, I had a dream. The Rebbe and your father Yiddel appeared and the Rebbe said to me, 'I promised we will dance at the wedding.' I didn't answer. Then the Rebbe continued 'Why aren't you going to the wedding? We had a deal that we would dance together at the wedding?' I woke up, and did not pay attention to the dream."

"The following night, Motzoei Shabbos, the twenty-fifth of Adar, I had my second dream. The Rebbe came to me again; this time alone. Once again the Rebbe

asked me 'Why aren't you going to the Chasunoh?' I responded, 'that I have no money to go.' To this the Rebbe said, 'Chosid never has a problem with money.' To which I replied 'but I am not a Chosid.' The Rebbe answered in Yiddish, 'dubist - you are' and with that the dream ended. I did not pay attention to this dream as well. The next night, Sunday night the twenty sixth of Adar I had yet a third dream. The Rebbe came to me and asked, 'Nu, why aren't you going to the wedding?' I responded, 'It's too difficult financially.' The Rebbe answered, 'Du vest hobben di gelt - you will have the money.' With that I awoke.

"That day, Monday morning on my way to work I met a friend in the street. He said to me, 'You look worried.' I answered, I haven't slept for a few night's. My friend said to me 'I want to give you \$400.00 to take a vacation and go to Florida.' I responded that, I didn't have the time to go to Florida for a vacation. But my friend insisted 'You can take a vacation even for one day.' That afternoon when I came home, my wife suggested that I call the Bistons to wish them Mazal Tov. I then said to my wife, 'Maybe I should go to the wedding instead of just calling.' I called my friend and asked him, 'is your offer still good?' 'Of course' he said. I called the airlines and booked a ticket, then booked a hotel in Florida. The total price was \$300.00. I called back my friend and told him that I would only need \$300.00. His response was, 'How could you go to a wedding and not bring a gift? Give the extra hundred dollars to the Choson and Kallah.' So, 'Here I am', concluded Mr. H."

"I was totally dumbfounded by his story and the chain of events, the dreams, and how the Rebbe keeps his words. Of course, we danced and danced, as we knew that we were dancing with the Rebbe."

As told by Rabbi Y.Y. Biston, Shliach in N. Broward and South Palm Beach Counties, Florida

Home Visitation

On Yom Kippur day, 5767 (2006), during the break between the morning and afternoon services, a distinguished member of our community, Mr. Isaac Benky approached me and said he needed to share what had recently happened to him, while he was visiting Israel for his granddaughter's wedding.

"The morning of the wedding I went to the Kotel (Wailing Wall) with some members of the wedding party. While there I put on tefillin at the Chabad table

and had all those with me do so as well.”

“Later that evening, at the wedding, I suddenly felt unwell. I was given some water to drink, but I couldn’t swallow it; then the glass dropped from my hand. My daughter (mother of the bride), who is a doctor, immediately came over and told me that I was having a stroke. They rushed me to the hospital where I was indeed told that I had suffered a stroke. By that time, I was totally paralyzed on one side and was unable to talk. They gave me various medications and hooked me up to all sorts of machines. Eventually, I fell asleep.”

“While asleep I dreamt that a rabbi came to see me. I recognized from the pictures that I had seen that it was the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The Rebbe asked me if I had put on Tefillin that day, and I answered eagerly that I had put them on with the Rebbe’s Chassidim at the kotel. The Rebbe asked me to show him, so I pulled up my sleeve (in my dream, of course) and showed the marks from the straps, which were clearly visible. The Rebbe’s face lit up with a huge smile. He put his hand on my arm and said, ‘Zeit gezunt’ (‘be well’), and then walked off. “I woke up the next morning and to the astonishment of the doctors and my family I was able to move and talk without any problem whatsoever.”

On Yom Kippur, thank G-d, Isaac was the picture of perfect health, no one, including myself and a number of Shul members who listened to Isaac’s retelling of the story could have guessed what had happened to him. The tears in his eyes and the sincerity on his face were very moving.

by Rabbi Mordechai Gutnick, Melbourne, Australia