

Pre-Selichot 5773 shiur

26 Elul 5773

(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

1. Rebbe Michel of Zlotshov's love for his fellow Jew

Today on Shabbat was the *yahrzeit* of Rebbe Yichiel Michel of Zlotshov, one of the Ba'al Shem Tov's most well known disciples. Since we are here in the 4th meal of King David, *melaveh malkah*, it is appropriate to tell stories about *tzadikim*.

Let's start with a saying from Rebbe Michel. He used to say that if one would take all the love, all the love that every father loves his children (he didn't include the mothers, but certainly that was his intent) and all of it would be put together, all the love in the world, it would not begin to be near the love that the Almighty loves a wicked Jew, a *rasha* in the Jewish people.

He continued and said, "If I see a Jew exiting a house of iniquity (that is the phrase he used—meaning, a place where people go to sin), my love for that particular Jew would not change even a hairsbreadth because I see him departing that place, but I'll think of him as having fallen on his head and broken his head, and assess the situation and think about what needs to be done to repair him."

Each of the great *tzadikim*, each of the students of the Ba'al Shem Tov has a special saying about the love of the Jewish people, great love (אַהֲבָה רַבָּה), which has no boundaries. Apparently, this is the one that typifies Rebbe Michel of Zlotshov.

2. Stones of love

Rebbe Michel said that if he were to see a Jew coming out of a house of iniquity, then the love towards him would not decrease at all, on the contrary it should increase, because now he has compassion for him (as we know that many times it is compassion, *rachamim*, that awaken love, as in the verse "Jacob who redeemed Abraham" where Jacob represents compassion and Abraham love). But the question might be posed: What would Rebbe Michel do if he saw a Jew about to enter such a place? What then? Without a doubt, his love for this Jew would not diminish, but the question is, since there is a mitzvah to prevent another person from doing something wrong (לְאַפְרוּשֵׁי מַאֲסוּרָה), what would Rebbe Michel do?

It is written in the Tanya that when Moshe Rabbeinu was faced with such a situation he preferred to get angry in order to prevent the Jewish people from sinning, all out of true love of Israel. Apparently Rebbe Michel would also act the same way. But, what exactly would he do? Would he throw a stone at this Jew? If out of experience he would know that throwing stones isn't very helpful (there are certain Jews who throw stones at cars driving on Shabbat), what would he then do, especially since it awakens the opposite from *teshuvah* in a person? All the more so, if the rebuke doesn't come out of true love for one's fellow Jew, considering how he described how the Almighty loves even the greatest *rasha* among the Jewish people. If there is such love and yet there is a

mitzvah to prevent someone from doing a sin, you have to put your mind to what can be done.

Rebbe Michel spoke about someone coming out of a house of sins, and then assessing the spiritual damage that befell him and treating it. The three-letter roots of “damage” (נזק) and “throw” (זרק) come from the same two-letter root, זק. Now, it is written that the Mashiach will come to interpret the meanings of the cantillation marks. The first ta’am of cantillation mark is *zarka* (זִרְקָא). So apparently in relation to throwing (לזרוק), and there is a lot taught in Chassidut about the power of throwing (even stones), and these two cantillation marks, זִרְקָא סְגוּל are the two highest. They can prevent “damage” (נזק). How much does “throw” (זרק) plus “stone” (אבן) equal? It equals 307 plus 53, or 360, the value of *Shechem* (שָׁכֶם). “Stone throwing” (זִרְיקַת אֲבָנִים) equals 770. A strong connection between the two. “Stone(s) throwing” (זִרְיקַת אֲבָנִים, in the plural, in Hebrew there is a difference) equals 820, the value of the verse, “You shall love your fellow as yourself” (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ). *Lechaim lechaim*.

In the Book of Formation, we find the word “stone” (אבן) standing for the word “letter”: 1 stone builds 1 house, 2 stones build 3 houses, 3 stones build 6 houses, and so on. This teaching is the secret of “permutations” (צְרוּרֵי), or “combinations,” based on the mathematical function called a factorial. Therefore the highest level of love that is actually useful is to throw not stones, but letters; letters that are words that come from the heart and enter the heart and act.

We mentioned *Shechem*, *Yosef Hatzadik’s* city and about *Yosef* it says that he is the “stone of Israel” (מִשָּׁם רוּעָה אֲבָן יִשְׂרָאֵל). The word “stone” (אבן) in Hebrew is considered an acronym for “father” (אב) and “son” (בן) and the plural form, “stones” (אבנים) is an acronym for “fathers and sons” (אבות וּבָנִים). The first time the word “love” appears in the Torah is when God commands Abraham to take his beloved son Isaac and sacrifice him. In all, the word “love” appears 42 times in the Pentateuch and we call these the 42 journey of “love” (מב מסעות אהבה) in the Torah. The first journey, its revelation in the world is in the love of a father—Abraham—for his son—Isaac. When you throw a stone, a letter, that comes out of the heart, with a lot of strength, it should be with the strength of the first love, that of Abraham for Isaac, even though they had different character traits (Abraham is loving-kindness, the right axis of the *sefirot* and Isaac was might, the left axis of the *sefirot*), they were united by the *Akeidah* as we will explain.

3. The deeper meanings behind a stone

If we want to go even further with the meaning of stone, in *Sha’ar Hayichud Veho’emunah* it says that the word for “stone” in Hebrew, אבן, is a combination, a unification of two holy Names. The letters בן are the filling of *Havayah* that equals 52 (יוד הוה) and the additional א comes from either the filling that equals 45 (יוד הא ואו הא) or the filling that equals 63 (יוד הי ואו הי). The Alter Rebbe brings the stone as an example of how all objects in the world are created from the Hebrew letters, and of all the things to bring he chose the stone.

All this is just a prelude to our main topic this evening: *Selichot*. During *Selichot*, we ask the Almighty for forgiveness, but we do not forget to also ask for the Mashiach and for the redemption. That is the main request we are making tonight. In this sense, Jews are very wise. When someone has done something wrong and comes to ask forgiveness, he may not necessarily understand that the best time to ask for something more from the person you wronged is when you are asking for forgiveness. But, that is what Moshe Rabbeinu did and from him we learn how to conduct our *Selichot*. After the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe Rabbeinu saw that God was forgiving and therefore asked for more. So on the one hand, one should come with great lowliness and humility to *Selichot*. We are guilty of wrongdoing and are embarrassed for that, but at the same time, use the opportunity to ask for everything you need from the Almighty.

In the word אבן the letter ב is common to both the father (אב) and the son (בן). But, if we were to add a “mother” (אם) and a “son” (בן), we would find that their acronym is “Amen” (אמן). So every time we say *Amen* we should meditate on the love of a mother for her children, depicted in the verse, הָאִם רֹבֶצֶת עַל הַבָּנִים. The father is from afar and the mother’s love is close and near. When we add these two acronyms together, אבן אמן their sum is equal to 144, or 12 squared. The point: if you throw a stone, it better be such that the other person is willing to answer *Amen*. They are like to companions that do not part, so if there is no *Amen*, apparently it didn’t work. *Amen* is said after a blessing. This is connected to today since Rebbe Michel of Zlotshov passed away in 5546 (תקמ"ז), which was 227 years ago and the value of “blessing” (בְּרָכָה) is 227! So there is a lot of blessing from him right now.

4. Rebbe Michel prays later in the day

More about Rebbe Michel. He was the first among the disciples of the Ba'al Shem Tov to daven (pray) late in the day. The Ba'al Shem Tov himself, in his *minyán* would *daven vatikin*, at sunrise. The first one to leave this and many learnt from him was Rebbe Michel. The amazing thing is that he belonged to the *cloise* in Brod, a hub of great geniuses of Torah. And even though he *davened* late, no one said a word. Until one day a young, well-to-do man came in and asked him, Why do you *daven* so late? We never heard such a thing, not even by the Ba'al Shem Tov! Rebbe Michel replied with a bit of boldness. He said to the wealthy young man: Look at all the great Torah scholars here, they’ve seen me do this for years and no one asked me this question. You are the first to do so. So I have to conclude that it’s not you asking the question, it’s your money. And since it’s your money that’s asking me, and I don’t count your money for anything, I’m not going to give it an answer.

What we learn from this is that if you don’t count money for anything, you can *daven* late. And also that since Rebbe Michel passed on the day of the world’s creation (the 25th of Elul), you have to have a connection to the creation. One of the reasons that he *davened* late was to gather all sparks from all the prayers said by those before him and to rectify them. There are a number of different ways to explain the reason for *davening* late, but the one who started this *minhag* was Rebbe Michel.

Another thing about Rebbe Michel was that he received the key to the chamber of music of Chassidut, which is why the Magid of Mezritch sent the Alter Rebbe (the founder of Chabad) to Rebbe Michel to receive the secret of *nigunim* from him. The connection between the two, Rebbe Michel and the Alter Rebbe remained, even though the Alter Rebbe didn't stay with him. One Shabbat, Rebbe Michel was heard saying a teaching in the Chabad style, which was not his style at all. Where did he hear it? He later explained that he heard it telepathically from the Alter Rebbe and in his honor repeated it.

5. Rebbe Michel's trust in the Almighty

Let's tell another story about him before we get to *Selichot*. When he was married, his father-in-law gave him a tremendous dowry, a thousand gold dinars. Something truly astounding at that time and an amount he could invest and live off the profits for his entire life with. His first thought was to do exactly that and free himself to learn Torah his entire life. But, then he had a second thought. His second thought was that if his livelihood would come from an investment and would be secured for his entire life, how would he be able to work on his confidence and trust in God—that God provide for him. So he thought he should give half the huge sum to *tzedakah*. He gathered all the poor people he knew and asked them all to bring other poor people, and he was able to pass out half the dowry before long.

But, since the sum was so great, even with only half, he could invest and live off the profits. So he started thinking about his situation again, and decided that he would still have a problem with developing his trust and confidence in the Almighty. So he made the decision to give the other half of the dowry away to *tzedakah* too. Again more and more poor people came and the other half was gone. He threw away his money, just like you might throw stones away (indeed, diamond merchants refer to diamonds as stones). From the entire tremendous dowry he had received, he only kept a cow for himself, so that at least he would have milk in the morning. Every morning his wife would go milk the cow so that she had at least something to give their children at the start of the day.

One day he thought, Where is my trust in Hashem? So he called the shochet to *shecht* the cow and gave all the meat to poor people. He didn't tell his wife, and the next morning she went out to milk the cow. She asked naively where the cow was? And he answered, she went up to heaven. His wife understood what had happened. Then she asked, What will be with us? He said, God will help.

6. Rebbe Michel's wife and infinite tzedakah

After a while, a poor bride came, she had no money for her wedding and didn't have a dress. He went to his wife, who had one dress. He asked her to give her dress to this poor girl. She was happy to do so.

What we see from these two stories is that everything comes from one's wife. All the money was hers and every time he thought again about what to do with his money, it was thanks to his wife.

So his wife gave her dress happily and made herself a burlap dress. It doesn't say how long she had to wear it.

A few days ago we learnt in the Tanya that when it comes to *tzedakah*, Rabbi Akiva's teaching, "your life comes first" (חייך קודמין) only pertains to when you and the poor person has the basic necessities for living. But, but if he has less, you have to make sure that he is provided for, before you can provide yourself and your family with anything beyond the basic necessities. If the poor person doesn't have bread to feed his family, but you have meat, you have to make sure that the poor family has what you have.

In today's Tanya, we learn the verse, "Your mitzvah is very wide" (רחבה מצותך מאד), which refers to the mitzvah of *tzedakah* that God performs with the world, by sustaining it for free, as an act of charity. Likewise, when we give *tzedakah* we create an infinitely large vessel for the revelation of God in the future to come. By *hashgachah*, the strongest letters in *Igeret Hakodesh* about *tzedakah* are in the *Chitat* for the final days of Elul. The high point on the entire calendar for giving *tzedakah* according to the Arizal is Sukkot eve, but the entire month of Elul is special for *tzedakah*.

In the previous *shiur* we mentioned the verse, "Skin for skin" (עור בעד עור) etc. This verse is brought three times in the Tanya and one of the instances is in that *igeret*, which is why we suggested that every person increase their *tzedakah* by 276, the value of "skin" (עור).

5774: A year of love

Now we come to the main thing this evening, which is to show that the coming year 5774 is all about love. The Jewish people at the end of their exile will do *teshuvah* and immediately they will be redeemed, as the Rambam rules, and it is simple that the *teshuvah* must be out of love. When the awakening is from below, *Ani ledodi*, is called small love, אהבת עולם. While when the awakening is from above, *Vedodi li*, that is the great love, אהבה רבה. Indeed, the sum of "worldly love" and "great love" (אהבת עולם) together is 774. Meaning that this entire year should be dedicated to love, to augmenting love.

In the Tanya, the two forms of love are towards heaven, but the source of the phrase, 'worldly love' is in the *Tanach*, from the prophet Jeremiah, who on the one hand is prophet of the destruction and the exile, but in chapter 31 of his book he comes to the highpoint of positive prophecy, "God appears to me from afar" (מרחוק ייחזה נראה לי), which itself is equal to 676 (26, the value of *Havayah*, squared). The afar, says *Rashi*, is in merit of the patriarchs. And according to the principle that everything follows the inception, and indeed the first time this word, "from afar" (מרחוק) appears is before the *Akeidah*, when Abraham saw the place from afar (וירא את המקום מרחוק). He saw the land of Moriah, the place from where the law goes out to the world. So the merit of the patriarchs refers to the ten trials Abraham endured. And as we read in *Pirkei Avot*, the *Akeidah* was the tenth, and it is the source of "from afar [God appears to me]."

The verse from Jeremiah ends with the words, "And eternal love I have loved you, therefore I have pulled you with loving-kindness" (ואהבת עולם אהבתיך על בן משבתיך חסד).

loving-kindness is to Abraham. So this entire verse alludes to Abraham, the man of love and loving-kindness. But the *pshat* is of course that the Almighty loves the Jewish people.

When the Alter Rebbe was asked which is greater, love of God or love of Israel, he replied the love of Israel, because it is loving what the Beloved loves, what God loves. He could have brought this verse from Jeremiah as proof that God loves Israel. So again, worldly love begins with God's love for us, but if we are awakening the love, then it is what is described in Tanya, that we love God. But it also means that we love our fellow Jew, as we say, "Jews love Jews" (יהודים אוהבים יהודים).

Worldly love and greater love

Now which is greater, worldly love or great love? The Alter Rebbe writes that even though the order is first fear than love, sometimes the love descends first and then comes the fear, or awe. And that is an example of worldly love that comes from *teshuvah*. Great love is predicated upon meditation, upon contemplation, but worldly love is predicated on *teshuvah*, as illustrated in the example of Rabbi Elazar ben Dordiya. Great love comes only to a person that has perfect awe and fear of God, and then from above, the great love descends upon him. What we get from there is that worldly love is elevating of feminine waters, while great love is the descent of masculine waters.

From all this it sounds that worldly love is less than great love. But, there are *drushim* in Chabad that explain that worldly love comes not from meditating on worldly matters and seeing the Divine in them, but rather that "worldly" means "eternal," and this type of eternal love, which is like how God is eternal and unchanging (as is His love for Israel, it is *נִצְחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁקַר וְלֹא יִנָּחַם כִּי לֹא אָדָם הוּא לְהִנָּחַם*) is something that a person can also possess, and this type of eternal love is greater than the great love (*אַהֲבָה רַבָּה*).

Another important point. In the 43rd chapter of Tanya he writes that great love is itself pleasurable love (*אַהֲבָה בְּתַעֲנוּגִים*). And thus if 774 is both types of love (worldly and great), there is no other type of love left. Still in many *drushim* it seems that there are 3 levels, which sometimes are corresponded to the three parts of *בְּכַל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכַל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכַל מְאֹדְךָ* and that these three levels of love correspond to the three patriarchs. In any case, great love combines both great love and pleasurable love as in the phrase, *אַהֲבָה רַבָּה בְּתַעֲנוּגִים*. The phrase pleasurable love also appears in a verse, *מִה יִפִּית וּמִה נְעֻמַת אַהֲבָה בְּתַעֲנוּגִים*.

Do we use great love or eternal love?

The first time we meet the phrase great love is in tractate *Berachot*. The Talmud asks, what is the second blessing said before *Kriyas Shema*? Shmuel says, *אהבה רבה*, great love and Rabbi Yochanan says, *אהבת עולם*. Where did Shmuel get this phrase? There are *Rishonim* that say it is from *חדשים לבקרים רבה אמונתך* and Shmuel changed faith into love.

How should we rule? The case here is Shmuel against the rest of the sages. Yet, still there is a principle stated in the Talmud that we follow Shmuel in this case. But, the Rif says we say *Ahavat Olam*, *אהבת עולם*. That is why in the end the *Tosafot* and the Rosh

agree that what we do is that in the morning we should say אהבה רבה (like חדשים לבקרים – in the mornings, רבה אמונתך) and in the evening we say אהבת עולם. The *Rashba* says that the way in Ashkenaz was to make a compromise, not like the *Rif* and not like the *Rosh*. The sephardic *minhag* is though to always say אהבת עולם. And so says the *Arizal* based on the *Zohar*, never to say אהבת עולם. There is an opinion according to Kabbalah to say אהבה רבה on Shabbat morning. There is even an opinion that all year long one should say אהבת עולם but on the morning of Yom Kippur one should say אהבה רבה. So we see how difficult it is to give up on the great love. Now there is an opinion that says to say great love always.

So how many levels do we have here?

1. Shmuel says great love morning and night.
2. The *Rashba* says great love every morning
3. There is an opinion to say great love Shabbat morning.
4. And finally, an opinion to say great love on the morning of Yom Kippur.

But, our ruling is that we never say אהבה רבה, great love. Why? Because אהבת עולם should be eternal. So to stop at any moment would be to make the love not eternal. This reminds us of *Kotzk* where they said, however you were on a weekday, that is how you will be on Shabbat, how you will be on Yom Kippur, you just remain you. You can never assume the state of great love. This is a point of connection between *Kotzk* and *Chabad*. This again is the *pshat*, the literal meaning of worldly/eternal love.

Now, there is another explanation that I didn't see written. All the love is related to the chamber of love, before you say *Shema*, you don't enter the chamber of love and so you still can't say great love, you can only say worldly love.

According to the sages there are only two pillars of love, worldly/eternal and great, but in *Chassidut* there are three. So if this year is the year of אהבת עולם אהבה רבה then it combines all the form of love.

How does the *Zohar* prove that we never say "great love" in the morning? It writes that in the *Akeidah*, Abraham received the love that comes from the world of *Atzilut*, that is great love. But, when we *daven*, when we say the second blessing before *Shema*, we are still in the *chesed* of the world of Creation, so we are not yet in *Atzilut*, or at most it is the love in all the lower 3 Worlds, but not in *Atzilut*. That's what the *Zohar* says.

Various explanations on the difference between worldly and great love

Now let's add a few more explanations of worldly love and great love from *Chassidut*. Again, we began with *Rebbe Michel* who says that we need to throw love stones, letters of love upon other Jews. The more we speak things that come from the heart, or to write these things, if one has a gift for writing. If one has a gift for speaking, one needs to speak as many words of love as possible, זרקא סגול.

The *Maharal* explains in a few places, he doesn't use the phrases, but he means the phrases that the difference between worldly and great love is that great love is sanctified (מקודש), while worldly love is constant (תדיר). Therefore, we always say worldly love,

אהבת עולם. Why not to make a compromise and on special days to say something sanctified? Great love is holiness in the heart, the holiness one feels on special days? If we like speaking about natural consciousness, which is higher than Divine consciousness, it is more the purpose of the land of Israel, how can we explain it in relation to love? It is certainly the worldly love that comes after great love.

The *Ma'or Einayim* says that worldly love is the love that I love the Divine that is immanent in reality, while great love is loving God Himself. But, if there is worldly love that is higher than great love, that is what we call natural consciousness. One who has natural consciousness is constant, he doesn't change.

Rebbe Tzadok says that worldly love is love of God during the time of exile, that is constant. But, great love is love of God during the redemption. He adds an important point, that it is not only during the redemption but that because of our great love, our enemies fall before us. Meaning that if we have an exile-oriented love of God, then we can perform commandments, but we can't win against our enemies, we can't form a state according to Torah with worldly love of God. In order to perform the mitzvot of the public, like appointing a king, fighting Amalek and building the Temple, especially the middle one, we need great love. Worldly love might be enough to appoint a king, but for this king to go out to war and conquer our enemies, we need great love. So great love is a *segulah* for defeating our enemies.

So all the people here who want our enemies to be defeated have to reach great love.

In the Tanya he says that reaching great love is only dependent on being with perfect awe of God, and then it descends of itself. In *Igeret Hakodesh* he mentions that the first thing revealed by *tzedakah* in the heart is great love. So giving *tzedakah* is a *segulah* for being victorious.

The *Sefat Emet* says that before the circumcision, Abraham only had worldly love, but with the added letter hei in his name, he merited great love. What can we learn from this? Every Jew has a state in his soul before the *brit milah*, where he is not yet pure. One might think that if one is not pure nothing is relevant. What does he do if he doesn't have a *mikveh* for instance, to immerse in. Should he give up totally? No. There is hope. Worldly love is always relevant, even before the *mikveh* you can meditate on God's greatness. Don't be afraid to meditate on God before you are pure. This is like what the BST told his disciple the *Ba'al Hatoladot*, that on a day you get angry, you should not make a *chiddush* in Torah, because it will be wrong. So again, we learn from this that whatever your state, you should not be afraid to meditate on God's greatness and I should always have love for God and love for Israel. So if you're before a *bris*, with all that implies, you can make do with worldly love, but if you are pure and you have merited recitifying the blemish of your covenant, then you can have great love too.

In one place it says that Abraham is great love and that Aharon is worldly love, but in the Zohar it says explicitly that Abraham is worldly love during his trials.

The *Shem Mishmuel* says the opposite. He writes that there is a level of worldly love that is higher than great love. He writes that great love is in the heart, while the worldly love is in the mind. Great love is like the external altar, corresponding to the heart. While the inner altar, which is far more sanctified and there are no flesh sacrifices there,

just incense, that is worldly love. So here, worldly love is greater than great love. This fits with what it says in Chabad that there is a form of worldly love that is higher than great love.

There is worldly love in *malchut*. We said that אבן is the Name בן with an additional *alef*. And so worldly love is the power that elevates בן, feminine waters, the power of *malchut*. But, the *alef* from another Name, comes from the great love in *Zeer Anpin*.

What about in *Ima*, what is there. In the daughter (בתי) there is worldly love, in the sister (אחותי) there is great love and in the *Ima*, the mother, there is pleasurable love. But, since pleasurable love is just a form of great love, then there is a greater love that is in wisdom, in the father principle. That is the daughter that will eventually ascend even higher. So in wisdom there is the higher form of worldly love.

The source of great love is in *Arich* and the source of pleasurable love is in *Atik*, and thus we are left with *Radla* as the source of worldly love.

So what we have is that all the *partzufim* and all the *sefirot* are all about love. God created the Jewish people for love. He needs non-Jews to fear Him, but he made Jews to love. He made us to be *mashpi'im*, he didn't create us to fear Him, not even with higher fear (יראה עילאה), just to love Him. And in merit of this love, the generation of love, our love, we will merit the redemption. And the best year for this is 5774, the unification of these two pillars of love.

So we saw here 7 levels of love: two series of worldly love, great love, and pleasurable love, which are revealed in *malchut*, *ze'er anpin* and *Ima*, but their sources are in *Abba*, *Arich* and *Atik*. But, above it all is the *Radla*, the unknowable head, where the end joins with the beginning, which is once again worldly love. Faith is the constant thing. Even when a Jew sins, whether he is going into the house of iniquity, is in it, or coming out, what defines a Jew all the time, which is why he is infinitely loved from Above, is his faith, what we inherit from Abraham the first and head of all the faithful.

World and eternal

We will end this with a *remez* for the children in *cheider*. The main verse we looked at was מרחוק הו'י נראה לי ואהבת עולם אהבתיך על כן משכתיך חסד. It has 43 letters, which is the 7th covenant number.

מ ר ח ו ק י
 ה ו ה נ ר
 א ה ל י
 ו א ה
 ת ב
 ע
 ו
 ל
 א ס
 ה ב ת
 י ך ע ל
 כ ן מ ש כ
 ת י ך ח ס ד

Let's look at the corners, we get תמיד which is constant. This is the most fitting word for this verse, which again is "worldly/eternal" love mentioned in the verse. We might ask, how many times does this word appear in the *Tanach*? It appears 78 times, not including this one. The first time is לחם פנים לפני תמיד and the value of לחם, bread is 78. So what do we learn from this, that the best time to reach worldly/eternal love is when one eats bread, תמידין בסדרן.

Let's end with another story from Rebbe Michel. He was of the type of *tzadikim* who used to eat (there were other *tzadikim* who fasted). One of his sons was a faster. One time, that son had a dream that was actually a soul-ascent. He went into the halls of *Gan Eden* and there he asked to enter the chamber of the BST but they didn't let him in. So he asked that they at least show him what he does when he eats (he knew the BST liked to eat). So they showed him that when his father, Rebbe Michel eats, it is infinitely more than what he does when he fasts. So he went to his father, Rebbe Michel who already knew what had happened, and his father asked him: So which is better, eating or fasting? See, it's much better to eat. That is the moral of the story.

May his merit protect us and all of Israel. שנה טובה ומתוקה.