

The Fall of Iran and the Rise of Moshiach

by R' Yankev Bock

War with Iran is approaching round two – could this be the final groan of golus, the cracking of the shell, the spilling forth of the light of Geuloh that the world is longing for? After all, Iran is simply the preferred modern name of ancient Persia – the very same nation. And we have the testimony of the sages of the Gemara that before Moshiach comes Persia will fall at the hands of Rome!¹

Evidently, we are describing an event of global proportions. But the chess-board of world politics is merely the playing out of an internal spiritual drama of the Jewish people, as Chassidus explains the verse “He gave the world over to their hearts”² (**גם את העולם נתן בלבם**). How should we understand this drama – especially since it is described as being intertwined with the coming of Moshiach?

By attempting to analyze both aspects – both the worldly external events and the inner service of Hashem – based on the words of our sages and the teachings of Chassidus, we will, with Hashem’s help, find them even more significant than we might have thought.

The Fall of Persia: the External Dimension

We will start by mentioning words spoken by the Lubavitcher Rebbe in order to establish the significance of this matter in our generation. The Rebbe told Ron Nachman, mayor of the Israeli city of Ariel, to explain to the Americans that **“it is imperative that there be a strong Israel in order to check the spread of the influence of Syria, Iran, and so forth, for they are against the US no less than they are against Israel and maybe moreso.”**³ Clearly, the Rebbe was not discussing with him a sugya in the gemara or esoteric ideas of Chassidus – this is practical advice which even the gentile government in the United States is expected to understand.

Additionally, former Israeli Ambassador Yehuda Avner was interviewed a number of years ago and shared that the Rebbe in the mid-1970s told him (years before the Iranian revolution) that **“the emergence of an Islamic Iran carries with it the seeds of jihadism that will spread across the Middle East, threaten Europe, and ultimately**

¹ Yoma 10a. The sages also quote an opposite opinion: Rome will fall at the hands of Persia, but that opinion is considered to have been rejected.

² Koheles 3:11, and see Sicha Bo, 5751 (ch. 9) and Bamidbar, 5750 (ch. 7).

³ Free translation from video at the distribution of dollars on 28 Tishrei, 5752 (6 October 1991).

the whole of Western Civilization.”⁴ We understand clearly that the military threat from Iran is a pressing contemporary issue which in the Rebbe’s view is of the gravest consequence.⁵

Today, it is unfolding before our eyes.

We will now look at the relevant sources in Torah, with hope to gain some small insight into the gravity with which the Rebbe views the developments in Iran (Persia).

The gemara, Yoma 10a, states as follows:

Rebbi said that in the future Rome will fall at the hands of Persia.... Rav said that Persia will fall at the hands of Rome. Rav Kahana and Rav Asi said to Rav: Can the builders [Persia, who permitted the rebuilding of the Holy Temple] fall before the destroyers [Rome, who destroyed the Temple]?!⁶ He said to them: Yes, it’s a decree of the King.⁷

The commentary of Tosefos⁸ clarifies that Persia is the nation destined to fall and adds a critical element: “**We were told that in the future Persia will fall at the hands of Rome, that is, in immediate proximity to the coming of Moshiach.**” Meaning, it’s not just one of many future events, but an event **immediately preceding** (-לֹן) the coming of Moshiach!

Rome, as we know, is Edom.⁹ Edom is commonly understood to mean the Western world in general, and Rome is the center of its financial and military power. Just as Rome was the mightiest and wealthiest world power of its time, so, too, the United States today.

One could, however, ask a question on the relevance of this gemara to our times: Following the first Persian Gulf War, the Rebbe referenced the midrash Yalkut Shimoni that refers to a war in the year Moshiach is revealed and stated that it had been fulfilled that year – what need do we have for Persia to fall at the hand of Rome?! We can answer that the Yalkut Shimoni itself states the difference between “the year Moshiach is

⁴ Interviewed by JEM for the video presentation “Faithful and Fortified”.

⁵ Let us note that “an Islamic Iran” is a combination of Paras (the nation) and Yishmael (the religion of Yishmael). The Mitteler Rebbe (Shaarei Teshuva, ch. 23, p. 91a) writes that “the main aspect of the Geuloh is dependent upon the fall of the Sar (spiritual source) of Yishmael davka, as stated in the Zohar”. The Maharal writes (Netzach Yisrael, ch. 21) that “malchus Yishmael and malchus Paras are all one malchus.” Furthermore, the expression used is that the Sar of Yishmael must “fall”, which matches the gemara that Paras “falls” at the hands of Rome, and Bereishis 25:18 regarding Yishmael: “before all his brothers he will fall.”

⁶ The Persian kings who ruled at the end of the Babylonian exile gave permission for the rebuilding of the Second Beis Hamikdosh (see Rosh Hashana 3b/4a). Four centuries later, the Roman general Titus destroyed it. In another sense, the spiritual power of Persia (explained below) allows for the construction of the Mikdosh, whereas the power of Rome destroys it.

⁷ Rabbi Yehuda Hanosi was the redactor of the Mishnah. Rav was his student. We must ask why his student rules differently, and specifically why does Rabbi rule that Rome must fall whereas Rav rules that it is Paras that must fall. We might suggest as follows: the gemara in numerous places describes the friendly relationship between Rabbi and the Roman ruler Antoninus. The Yerushalmi (Megillah 1:11) debates whether or not Antoninus actually converted to Judaism (and even if not, “he will be at the head of those who will come to convert in the time to come”). So we see that Rabbi not only lived under Roman rule, but his avoidah included transforming the aspect of Rome from an oppositional force to a friendly force which eventually rejoins the Jewish people (“rejoins” because the ancestor of Rome was Esav, who was a Jew). Rav not only lived in Bavel most of his life, but more importantly he was from the generation that followed the avoidah of Rabbi. His task was to continue to the next stage: the fall of the aspect of Paras as will be explained.

⁸ Tractate Avodah Zora 2b, משכָא מִלְכָתֵיכָה. Based on the statement that Moshiach comes only after Rome rules the entire world for 9 months. Maharsha on Yoma 10a also accepts this as the final ruling.

⁹ Rashi on Bereishis 36:43: “Aluf Magdiel, Aluf Iram, these are the chieftains of Edom...” Rashi: “Magdiel this is Rome”. Pirkei d’Rebbi Eliezer ch. 38. Also Radak on Ovadia 1:1 – “What the prophets said regarding the destruction of Edom at the end of days they said about Rome. Radak on Yeshaya 34:1 – “..the kingdom of Rome they are all Edomim who adhere to the xtian religion, Ibn Ezra on Yeshaya 61:1, and the Ramban “Sefer Hageuloh”.

revealed" and "the hour Moshiach comes". The Rebbe stated¹⁰ that the first part – Moshiach was revealed – took place in 5751, and since then we are standing on the cusp of "the hour Moshiach comes". And further, the Rebbe declares numerous times in these sichos that "*kolu kol hakitzin*", "all the end times have passed", *avodas habirurim* has been finished – and consequently the Rebbe expresses his astonishment that "Moshiach still hasn't come!"

In light of this, we can bring an amazing statement from the sefer Yaaros Dvash¹¹:

The gemara states that [Moshiach] ben Dovid doesn't come until the Persians will fall at the hands of the Romans. And the commentators note that it doesn't state "before [Moshiach] ben Dovid comes" the Persians will fall at the hands of the Romans, but [rather the exclusionary language of "doesn't come until"] to teach that even if the end-time will arrive, nevertheless it will be delayed until the Persians will fall at the hand of the Romans...¹²

He is describing a time when the final *ketz* has arrived (as the Rebbe has stated) and there is a perplexing delay in Moshiach's coming – exactly our situation as per the Rebbe's description. And the reason, according to Yaaros Dvash, is the matter of the fall of Persia (Iran) at the hands of the Romans (the most powerful of the Western nations).

However, one could protest that the Rebbe responded to the situation (that all the end times have passed and still Moshiach hasn't come) with astonishment – not an explanation from the Yaaros Dvash! What connection do we find here to the Rebbe's astonishment and disbelief?!

With a deeper look at the "fall of Persia", and how it relates to the Rebbe's declaration that *avodas habirurim* has been completed, and especially the gemara's expression that the fall of Persia is "a decree of the King" – we may find an answer.

The Fall of Paras: the Inner Dimension

First of all we must understand what is the spiritual significance of the nation of Paras (Persia/Iran). Every nation in the world (70 distinct national entities, according to Torah) is an expression of a different underlying spiritual quality which can have an effect on a Jew's performance of Torah and Mitzvos.

For example, the Rebbe in 5751 during the first Gulf War discussed the guidance and instruction in *avodas Hashem* that must be taken from the fall of the Iraqi dictator. The Rebbe states that the nation of Bavel (Babylon/Iraq) is related to "*bilbul*" — confusion, the confusion that hinders a Jew's Divine service¹³. Similarly, other nations (Mitzrayim is limitation; Madai is "*mida*", measurement; Yavan is *chochma* of *klipa*, etc). When the Jewish people were confronted by these nations in the physical world it was a reflection of being challenged by their spiritual sources. When the Jews overcame the challenge in

¹⁰ Dvar Malchus, Parshas Naso 5751.

¹¹ Yaaros Dvash chelek 2, 162b, drush 7 Adar.

¹² Also based on the statement that Rome rules the world for 9 months.

¹³ See the previously unpublished sicha of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Parshas Bo, 5751 (published in English by Sichos in English, 2003) where the Rebbe links the military defeat of Iraq (Bavel) with the ability of the Jewish people to conquer their inner "Bavel" (confusion).

their spiritual source, these nations fell. In order to understand the significance of defeating Iran in our days, we must first understand the spiritual root of Paras (Persia/Iran).

Serving Hashem for Reward

The very name “Paras” is from the Hebrew root which means reward¹⁴. As explained in Chassidus¹⁵, Paras (פָּרָס) is related to “prusa” (פָּרָסָה), which means a piece, a fraction of something much greater (a slice of bread, for example, which is merely a portion of the whole loaf). In *avodas Hashem* it refers to the “portion” of Divine revelation that the neshoma enjoys in Gan Eden, the result of the sparks of G-dliness that it refined through learning Torah and performing mitzvos¹⁶. A reward of spiritual delight.

Even now, while enclothed in a body, the neshoma gets tremendous motivation from the spiritual reward it receives for doing mitzvos. Serving Hashem in order to receive reward, including spiritual reward, is considered an acceptable preliminary step in spiritual development. As the Rambam rules: “**when one teaches children, women, and most of the common people, one should teach them to serve out of fear and in order to receive a reward.**”¹⁷

This is *avodas Hashem* in the spirit of Paras – for the sake of reward,¹⁸ and not for the sake of fulfilling Hashem’s will (which is the essence of the Mitzvah). The Rambam rules that it is a kosher, but inferior, level.

Serving Hashem Not to Receive Reward

The ultimate goal is not to serve for the sake of reward (p’ras) but the opposite. The very first chapter of Pirkei Avos¹⁹ states:

Antigonus of Socho received the Torah from Shimon the Righteous. He used to say: Be not like servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward [p’ras פָּרָס] , but be like servants who serve their master not upon the condition of receiving a reward [p’ras פָּרָס] ; and let the fear (awe) of Heaven be upon you.

The time comes when the fulfillment of Torah and Mitzvos for the sake of spiritual reward must evolve, it must give way to the higher level: serving Hashem for its own sake. Because He is the King and he said so. In this Mishna, the inner dimension of the

¹⁴ See Machir Yayin p.13 “Paras has the meaning of reward (שָׁכָר), as they say ‘in order to receive reward (p’ras)’”.

¹⁵ See for example Likutei Torah Tazria 20b, Ohr Hatorah Bamidbar III, Chukas 783a.

¹⁶ See Ohr Hatorah Bamidbar III, Chukas 790.

¹⁷ Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Tshuva, 10:4.

¹⁸ Rosh Hashana 28a: The gemara discusses whether a person fulfills a mitzvah if he is forced. The sages ask regarding one who was forced to eat Matzah on Pesach night. Who forced him? Says the gemara: Parsim (Persians)! We can understand it as eating matzah for reward, without any intention to fulfill the aspect of “Mitzvah” – binding and connection with the Commander of the Mitzvah. Perhaps related also to Kiddushin 72a, which states that Parsim “eat and drink like a bear, become fat like a bear, and are restless like a bear”.

¹⁹ Mishna 3.

Mishna, the Sages are instructing us not to serve our Master (Hashem) for the "reward" (p'ras) of the spiritual revelation that is generated by our divine service in refining sparks of holiness. This revelation is, after all, merely a "slice". The "real thing" is Hashem's Essence, "atzmus u'mahus", which comes through serving Hashem with the soul's essence, *etzem haneshoma* – with no self-interest.²⁰ An *avoda* which may feel remote, but we can strive to reach it.

Based on this, we can understand why the fall of Paras must precede the Geuloh: because as long as our neshomos are enjoying the "slice" of the reward for refining the world through mitzvos, they are distracted, so to speak, by the spiritual delight and delaying the ultimate goal: the coming of Moshiach and the revelation (via our *avodah* in the time of gulos) of Hashem's Essence. According to this, it can be understood why this level of *avodah* is particularly relevant upon the completion of *avodas habirurim*.

Avoidas Habirurim Has Been Completed

The Rebbe astonished everyone listening when he first stated that the divine service of the Jewish people in exile (refining the sparks of holiness that fell into this lowest of worlds) has been completed²¹. Not only that – even the teshuva of the Jewish people has been done. The Rebbe himself said that it is completely beyond understanding how Moshiach hasn't come.

On the surface, this situation fits the description of the *Yaaros Dvash* – the *ketz* has arrived but we are still waiting for the coming of Moshiach. However, the *Yaaros Dvash* offers an explanation: we are waiting for the fall of Paras at the hands of Rome. How does the Rebbe's declaration that it is "inexplicable" fit with the neat explanation of the *Yaaros Dvash*, and how do they both relate to the completion of *avodas habirurim* and the statement of the gemara that the fall of Paras is "a decree of the King"?

At this point we will bring the words of the Mitteler Rebbe²²:

[...the level of Moshiach elevates Torah and Mitzvos that are performed to refine the 288 sparks of kedusha that fell²³]. **But there is a second level of mitzvos which is from the essence of performing the mitzvah alone even without intent and reason and secrets at all. Which means [mitzvos performed] not for the sake of tikkun or refinement of the 288 sparks at all, but rather only because He said and His will is done. Because this is the Essence, similar to the mitzvos we will do in the time to come which are above the level of refining sparks.**

²⁰ The sages tell us that in the future the Parsim come before Hashem claiming "We built bridges, conquered great cities, and made many wars, all in order that Yisrael can engage in Torah." Their claim is rejected by Hashem: "You intended for your own benefit!" (Avodah Zara 2b/3a)

²¹ See the sichos of Vayishlach and Vayeshev 5752, Vayishlach 5750, and others.

²² Toras Chaim, Beshallach p.156c.

²³ Chassidus and kabbalah explain that, prior to Creation, 288 sparks of kedusha fell into the lowest level of evil in the physical world. The Jewish people separate the kedusha from evil through Torah and Mitzvos. These are the sparks which are the reward ("pras") for the neshoma, as was explained. When Moshiach comes, he will elevate these sparks back to their source Above.

In other words: the higher level of fulfilling Torah and Mitzvos (not for receiving reward) becomes **most relevant** after the completion of *avoidas habirurim*. As long as the neshoma was refining the sparks of holiness, it was quite a daunting task to ignore that and to fulfill Torah and Mitzvos only because they are Hashem's will. But once that *avoidah* has been completed, and the neshoma is left to perform the mitzvah **without** the reward of that Divine spark (since it has already been refined), and only the aspect of Hashem's will remains – serving “not in order to receive reward” becomes the relevant *avoidah*²⁴ (All this is as regards the neshoma, but as regards the animal soul enclothed in the physical body: it lacks a feeling or recognition for what is going on with the Divine sparks and can continue to fulfill Torah and Mitzvos (or, *chas v'sholom*, not fulfill) according to its own considerations of reward, honor, logic, custom, etc.)

This explains the gemara's wording explaining the fall of Paras (at the hands of Rome): “it's a decree of the King.” Meaning: when we will be fulfilling Torah and Mitzvos as “the decree of the King”, Hashem's will, and **not** in order to receive any reward – this brings about the fall of Paras! This can imply that the Rebbe's astonishment is that since all the end times have passed, *avoidas habirurim* has been finished (and we have even been *informed* of this fact), and the world is no longer opposing Yiddishkeit as had been the case so many generations, and the prerequisites for Moshiach have been met including teshuvah – it is **absolutely not understandable at all** why the Jewish people continue to fulfill Torah and Mitzvos for side reasons, including reward?! In the Rebbe's words: “An inner *golus* in *avoidas Hashem*!”²⁵

Even Chassidim who were raised on the Alter Rebbe's words “I don't want your Gan Eden, I don't want your world to come...” still received tremendous motivation from an encouraging wave of the Rebbe's holy hand, from a letter expressing the Rebbe's satisfaction, and the other “prizes” the Rebbe distributed. The neshomas are ready, the world is ready, the time for the fall of Paras has arrived – but inexplicably we remain in a comfortable Torah and Mitzvos *golus* (even a Chassidishe *golus*) in the reward dimension of “Paras”.

We can also see the connection to the Rebbe's declaration that the *shlichus* of every neshoma in the world now includes the “main gate” of accepting the Kingship of Moshiach. Persia falls due to “the decree of the King” – we need a King, *Melech Hamoshiach*, in order to effect the fall of Persia. Only by “accepting Moshiach *Tzidkeinu*” can we rise above our own self-interest and need for various rewards to motivate our performance of Torah and Mitzvos.²⁶

Even if we can understand why Paras must fall to make way for Moshiach – serving Hashem for reward must fall to make way for serving Hashem in a way of “the King decreed” – we are still left with a question Why this is to take place at the hands of Rome, who destroyed the *Beis Hamikdosh*, and who don't seem to represent **any** level of Divine service at all, not even for the sake of reward?!

²⁴ Also according to the understanding that the Rebbe is saying the **required amount** of *avoidas habirurim* has been finished (and not that every single Divine spark has already been refined) – since this is no longer the *avoidah* it is easier for the neshoma to separate itself from the desire for that reward.

²⁵ The famous “do all that you can” sicha of 28 Nisan, 5751.

²⁶ Described in “*Mitzvas Minui Melech*” in *Derech Mitzvosecha*.

Why Paras Falls at the Hands of Rome

In order to explain why Paras falls at the hands of Rome, we need to identify the spiritual dimension of Rome.

Rome is “*romemus*”, meaning the negative manifestation of exaltation and majesty, such as haughtiness and self-aggrandizement. The sages tell us that Rome descends from Edom, which spiritually represents the root of desire.²⁷ Practically speaking: impure desire. The present fourth and final exile of the Jewish people is in Edom. As such, Rome and Edom represent the desire for worldly pleasures and the desire for sin (“*maaseh Edom*”)²⁸ – directly opposed to the mission of the Jew to reveal G-dliness by following the Torah’s restrictions and limitations.

On the level of individual *avodas Hashem*: the dimension of Paras – the motivation to serve Hashem for spiritual reward (which is a valid stage in a Jew’s spiritual growth) – allows him to make himself a mikdash.²⁹ The dimension of Rome/Edom, on the other hand – irrational, self-indulgent desires and “*taivos*” – serves only to destroy his mikdash. Our sages liken Edom to a pig,³⁰ the desire of the evil inclination to wallow in the filth of worldly pleasures; Rome manifests itself as haughtiness and self-aggrandizement which destroys Holiness, and its “I do whatever I want to do” attitude is not fitting even to be a way-station in the service of Hashem.

However, the sages also note that while the pig is a non-kosher animal, it possesses one of the signs of a kosher animal: split hooves. The midrash³¹ says it sticks out its hooves as if to say “see, I am pure!” Additionally, the pig is called “*chazir*” because in the future the pig will return (“*chozer*”) and actually become pure!³² Similarly there is a rectification for Edom and Rome. In fact, the time has come for this rectification, as the Rebbe said: “**our divine service in the exile of Edom has brought about a refinement (*birur*) in Edom, as our Rabbis say, that ‘in the future the pig will be purified.’”³³**

The transition of Rome/Edom from an unrectified and impure state to a rectified and purified state is indicated when the Torah enumerates the eleven chiefs of Esav³⁴ (the progenitor of Edom and Rome). The tenth chief is Magdiel, whom Rashi identifies as Rome, who is “made great over all g-ds”³⁵ – idolatry which is in opposition to true G-dliness. The eleventh and final chief is Iram, who “in the future will pile up (לערום) treasures for Melech Hamoshiach.”³⁶ This reflects the time when, as the Rebbe expresses it:

Rome will no longer be an opponent, but on the contrary — via the refinement of the kingdom of Rome, it will be transformed to a helper of

²⁷ See Sha’arei Tshuva of the Mitteler Rebbe, section 2 page 90[ע] which states that Edom is “כִּי הַתָּאוֹה לְעַצְמֹו וְלִגְרָמָיו”.

²⁸ See Tanya ch. 17, p. 23a.

²⁹ “Every Jew, whomever he may be and in whatever state of keeping Torah and Mitzvos he may be – he is a Beis Hamikdash of the Holy One, blessed be He.” (Igros Kodesh v.27, p. 470, letter #10450).

³⁰ Vayikra Rabba, also Rashi on Toldos 26:34.

³¹ Midrash Tehillim, 80:6.

³² Rabbeinu Bechaya parshas Shemini; Shelah parshas Chayei Sara; Torah Ohr Vayishlach 25a.

³³ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Sefer Hasichos 5751 parshas Vayetzei, section 8. See footnotes 76 and 78 of the sicha for greater analysis of Edom as a pig and the transformation of the pig (klipas nogah) from impurity to purity.

³⁴ End of Vayishlach, perek 36.

³⁵ Ramban on the posuk.

³⁶ Bereishis Rabba 83:4.

holiness [...] and thus will become the *romemus* (aggrandizement) of holiness.³⁷

The power of pure desire which is the root of Edom will be rectified, the desire will cease to be for its own indulgence in worldly pleasures and instead will be used in service of Hashem. A true and pure desire to fulfill Hashem's Torah and Mitzvos, for no logical reason. To fulfill mitzvos only because they are "the decree of the King" is *kabbolos 'ol*, accepting the yoke. But it lacks enthusiasm and *chayus*. The *chayus* in *kabbolos 'ol* comes from the rectified aspect of Edom which doesn't merely accept the King but actually *desires* to serve the King!

This means that the refined Edom — the rectified desire to serve Hashem as King (via accepting the kingship of Melech Hamoshiach) — will bring about the fall of Paras³⁸ (the novice level of serving Hashem for reward).

In terms of spiritual service, we can now understand why the gemara first presents the seemingly contradictory statements that "Rome will fall at the hands of Paras" and its opposite: "Paras will fall at the hands of Rome". First one must overcome his self-serving desires (Rome/Edom) by developing a motivating awareness of spiritual reward (Paras). That is the fall of Rome at the hands of Paras. But comes a point when this level of Paras must be overcome as well. Who can depose it? The rectified Edom/Rome — the enthusiastic desire to unconditionally accept Hashem's Kingship. The unrectified Rome must fall at the hands of Paras, meaning the list for *taivos* and the arrogant "I do whatever I want to do" attitude must be brought down by the promise of reward. But ultimately, Paras (reward) must fall at the hands of the *rectified* Edom/Rome which wants and desires to accept the Divine yoke of Kingship³⁹.

If this analysis is accurate, then we have a clue to the incomprehensible situation of having completed our divine service but remaining in exile. And perhaps we can understand the Rebbe's startling words⁴⁰:

What more can I do to motivate the entire Jewish people to clamor and cry out, and thus actually bring about the coming of Moshiach? All that has been done until now has been to no avail. For we are still in exile; moreover, we are in an inner exile in regard to our own service of G-d.

The inner exile is the exile of Paras, doing mitzvos for the sake of rewards. This includes the *p'ras*, the portion of G-dly revelation that the neshoma enjoys as a reward for elevating sparks of holiness. Instead of a slice of the pie, we need to be crying out for Moshiach — a burning desire for the revelation of the essence, the entire pie (which transcends "slicing") that Hashem is eagerly waiting to give us. (In fact, it has already been given; what remains is for us to accept it!) When we reveal that our "Esav (he is

³⁷ Lubavitcher Rebbe, Sefer Hasichos 5751 parshas Vayishlach, section 4.

³⁸ An illustration of this can be found in halacha (see Rambam's Mishneh Torah Nezikei Mamon 4:14, Shulchan Aruch HaRav), where a Persian Date is considered beautiful but a Roman date is not. Dates are a metaphor for tzaddikim, and the halacha could be understood to be saying that a tzaddik (perfect observance of mitzvos) motivated by Rome (*romemus*, self-aggrandizement) is unattractive to Hashem, but a tzaddik motivated by Paras (the desire for spiritual reward) is attractive. The description given by R' Yosi ben Kisma of the war of Gog u-Magog (Sanhedrin 98a) could be understood in a similar vein: "there is not one palm-tree in Babylon to which a horse of the Persians will not be tethered", implying that the tzaddikim of Babylon (the oral Torah) will be firmly attached to the horse (the power) of Paras — the motivation of serving Hashem for reward.

³⁹ Perhaps we could connect this final stage being based on the chiefs of Edom, who are the aspect of Tohu, with the Rebbe's statement that the *avodah* now must be done in a way of "oiros d'Tohu in keilim d'Tikkun", but the Rebbe's

⁴⁰ The famous sicha of 28 Nissan, 5751.

Edom)" has been rectified, that our inner "Magdiel" has given way to "Iram", that we truly desire *Atzmus* (both the *avoidah* of *Atzmus* and the revelation of *Atzmus* that comes with the Geuloh) – then our Torah and mitzvos are performed not for reward but because this is the decree of the King! This is the destruction of Paras at the hands of Rome!⁴¹

Practical Application

Based on all this, the fall of Iran that we presently see in the headlines is

- a) the **result** of our *avoidah* in toppling our spiritual "Paras", and
- b) an **instruction** intended to arouse a similar and greater "fall of Paras" in our *avoidah*.

Beginning in the months leading up to Gimmel Tammuz, the world of Chabad-Lubavitch was thrust into a new reality which demands revealing the inner desire (the rectified Rome/Edom) – to fulfill the Rebbe's will without any of the rewards to which Chassidim had become accustomed. In addition, the efforts to promote *kabbolos pnei Moshiach* in an *oifen hamiskabel* have only strengthened the aspect of "the decree of the King" which the gemara points to as the reason for the fall of Paras. Add to this the awakening of Jews of all backgrounds since the dreadful events of October 7th, and we can see how the present reality of a united front to weaken and perhaps bring down Islamic Iran (the fall of Paras) is a result of the *avoidah* of the Jewish people ("He gave the world over to their hearts").

But that's not the end of the story.

As was mentioned, the Rebbe instructed us to draw a lesson from the fall of the ruler of Iraq⁴² – that a Jew must bring about the fall of his inner "Bavel" (confusion in Divine service):

[The] underlying purpose [of the condition of Bavel, confusion in divine service] is that every individual should master it. G-d will help - but only help - in this endeavor. Our own exertion is crucial, so that we will not benefit from 'the bread of shame,' but rather will carry out our Divine service on our own initiative and in this manner become G-d's partner in creation.

In our case the enemy is not Bavel but Paras, as described above at length. But the instruction is the same. We have come a long way since 5751, and we must continue. Not merely accepting Moshiach in concept and in slogans, but in a deep and internalized manner. The way to *pnimiyus* is through learning, and the Rebbe already revealed that the most direct path to the complete Geuloh is learning about it in Torah. This learning

⁴¹ It could be said that a significant stage of the spiritual fall of Paras at the hands of Rome already occurred during World War II. The German military spirit is recognized as being epitomized by the region of Prussia, in Hebrew נ'וֹרָא, the root of which is "Paras". Note that the gemara (Kiddushin 49b) states that 10 measures of (military) might came into the world and the Parsim took nine. We also find that the archetypal Jew-hater Haman (from the nation of Amalek) arose in ancient Paras. In contemporary history. Germany was defeated at the hands of the Western Allies, led by America, which even contains the letters of "Romi" as well as fulfilling the aspect of economic *romemus*, exaltedness, as the gemara states: "ten measures of wealth came to the world and the Romans took nine."

⁴² "Hidden Sicha" of Parshas Bo, 5751.

must be coupled with an *avodah* that results both in an increasing emphasis on “the King” and a decreasing emphasis on “my reward”. What Chassidus calls “*bittul*”. Not just the *bittul* of *kabbolos ‘ol*, but *bittul* with the **desire and enthusiasm**⁴³ of one who truly wants to perform the will of the King.

As reflected in the world around us that the Rome of our days is partnering with Israel to bring about the downfall of Paras. An instruction in avoidas Hashem to bring the true and complete Geuloh via Moshiach Tzidkeinu!

יחי אדוננו מורהנו ורבינו מלך המשיח לעולם ועד

⁴³ See maamar “V’eleh Hamishpotim” Kuntres 22 Shevat, 5752, ois 12 (Maamarim Meluket 5, p.112).