

Digital Hafatzat HaMayanot: Three Conditions for Wellsprings on the Platforms

Aryeh Leib Thorne Toren · Jerusalem · Thursday 22 October 2026 (11 Cheshvan 5787), the week of Parashat Lech Lecha

The answer given on Rosh Hashanah 5507

On Rosh Hashanah 5507, in September 1746, the Baal Shem Tov made an ascent of the soul and reached the chamber of Mashiach. He wrote it all down in a letter to his brother-in-law, Rabbi Gershon of Kitov, which was first printed in 1781 at the end of Ben Porat Yosef. In it he asked, “אימתי קאתי מר”, when will the Master come? The answer came in the language of Mishlei 5:16. It would be when “your teaching becomes public and revealed in the world, and your wellsprings spread outward (לפוצו מעינותיך חוצה).” It would be when “that which I have taught you and you have comprehended” reaches others, so that “they also shall be able to perform unifications and elevations as you.” Then “all the kelipot will cease to exist, and there shall be a time of good will and salvation.”^[1]

The answer has stages. First the teaching has to become public. Then the wellsprings themselves, not some diluted report of them, have to reach the outside. Last, the people who receive them have to become able to do the work themselves.

The Rebbe's three details

The Rebbe wrote a short foreword to the kuntres for Yud-Tes Kislev 5711, dated Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5711 (November 1950). In it he drew three demands out of Mashiach's precise wording. We must (a) disseminate, (b) the wellsprings, (c) even in the peripheries.^[2] Each word carries its own demand.

Yafutzu, “spread.” This is active dissemination, not a library waiting for visitors. The teaching has to be carried out to people.

Maayanosecha, “your wellsprings.” The Rebbe built this on a halachic point. Wellspring water (mei maayan) is superior to every other kind of water for purification. Wherever it flows, even at a distance, it keeps its status, but only while its bond with its source is never broken. Once the link is cut, it loses the status of a wellspring. He cites the ruling of the Tzemach Tzedek (Respona, Yoreh Deah 164:2).^[2] The spiritual demand follows. What we spread has to stay connected to its source. In the Rebbe's words that means “an uninterrupted bond with the source,” hiskashrus with the Nasi of the generation.

Chutzah, “outward.” The spreading is meant for the peripheries, beyond every familiar circle.

The Rebbe also traced the process, citing the Rebbe Rashab, to the Alter Rebbe's release from prison in Petersburg on Yud-Tes Kislev 5559 (1798). From then on, Chassidus made it possible for every Jew, not only a lofty soul, to understand and internalize a G-dly idea.^[2]

A week later, on 8 Kislev 5711, the Rebbe added a further condition in a letter to Rabbi Shlomo Matusof, who was then preparing to go to Morocco. According to the Rambam (Hilchot Mikvaos 9:9), he wrote, the wellspring water must also flow out beyond the pool. The spiritual meaning is that it is not enough to be inspired enough to inspire others. We must “stir those who are

inspired to the extent that they can also inspire others,” like wellspring water that leaves the pool and reaches “even far-removed peripheries.”^[3] That is the Baal Shem Tov’s own condition, “they also shall be able,” put as a practical rule.

Lech Lecha: the journey is the spreading

This week’s parasha supplies the pattern. The Midrash compares Avraham before lech lecha to a sealed flask of perfume set in a corner. Its fragrance goes nowhere until it is carried from place to place. So G-d told him: travel, and your name will become known in the world (Bereishit Rabbah 39:2).^[4] The going-forth is itself the spreading.

In Torah Or, the Alter Rebbe reads “vayisa Avram halokh venaso’a” (Bereishit 12:9) as two journeys.^[5] One rises from below to above, out of Ur and Charan. The other descends from above to below: the exalted, hidden intellect of “Avram” is brought down into the land and into action. Both directions matter here. The teaching has to rise to its source, and then come down into the plain language of daily life without losing that source.

The platforms as chutzah

On Thursday night, 4 Cheshvan 5737 (28 October 1976), the Rebbe held an unscheduled weekday farbrengen. He said that new technology had broken down barriers that once seemed permanent: a voice in one place could now be heard around the world at the same moment. Those inventions had a purpose. They existed to bring Torah, and above all Chassidus, to every person in preparation for Mashiach.^[6]

Fifty years later to the day, on 15 October 2026, Kehot Publication Society, Vaad Hanachos B’Lahak, Chabad.org and Sichos In English launched Chabad.AI as a joint project, with Sichos In English as the managing operator. It is a library of seforim with an AI assistant, Daiah, that answers with citations so the learner can check the original source.^[7] Whatever one thinks of the tool, its design follows the Rebbe’s halachic image: its value depends on the water staying connected to the spring.

Every platform a writer uses is now a road out to the chutzah. X is the busy public street. LinkedIn is the professional room, where many readers have never opened a Tanya. A permanent website is the reservoir that does not scroll away. None of them is neutral. Each can carry living water or flat water.

The test for every post

If the Rebbe’s three details and his further condition are the structure, then there is a simple test for anything posted in the name of Torah.

Is it actually going out (yafutzu)? A thought kept in a private file has not spread.

Is it still connected to the spring (maayanosecha)? A post that has drifted from its sources, or that recycles an earlier post instead of going back to the text, is no longer wellspring water. That is why every piece in this work carries its sources and its dates. Accuracy is part of the bond with the source, not a decoration on it.

Is it reaching the outside (chutzah)? The goal is not that people who already agree see one more post. It is that the teaching reaches people for whom the beis midrash is far away.

Does it make the reader a source (the Rambam's condition, "they also shall be able")? The best response to a piece is not a like. It is a reader who takes the idea to his own table, office or class.

These demands protect one another. Spreading without the connection produces volume that no longer purifies. The connection without spreading leaves the spring closed up. Going out to the edges without either is neither wide nor alive.

A word on freedom

I have written elsewhere about Philip Pettit's republican idea of freedom as non-domination: not living under anyone's arbitrary power.^[8] There is an echo of it here, and I offer it as an analogy, not as a source. A person who depends entirely on someone else to tell him what the Torah says depends on that person's will. The Baal Shem Tov's hope was the opposite of dependence: that "they also" would be able to do the unifications themselves. Spreading the wellsprings so that the reader can draw on his own is a kind of freedom that no algorithm can grant or take away.

Different approaches exist, and they should be named fairly. Some teachers hold that the inner Torah belongs inside the beis midrash, and that broadcasting it cheapens it. Others chase reach and lose the source. Others see technology itself as the danger. The Rebbe's reading answers all three without dismissing their worry. Spread, yes, but only water still joined to its spring, and only so that the receiver becomes a source in turn.

The channel stays open

The condition named on Rosh Hashanah 5507 is still open. The work is already under way. "More" means holding all of the demands together: going out wider, staying joined to the source, reaching further out, and helping each reader become a spring himself. Pittsburgh taught me that steady digging is how anything gets built. Jerusalem teaches that the water is already there.

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Sources

1. The Baal Shem Tov, letter to Rabbi Gershon of Kitov (Rosh Hashanah 5507), first printed in Ben Porat Yosef (1781); translation and notes: "The Chamber of Mashiach," Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380401/jewish/The-Chamber-of-Mashiach.htm (accessed 18 October 2026).
2. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Letter No. 815, foreword to the kuntres for Yud-Tes Kislev 5711, dated Rosh Chodesh Kislev 5711 (1950); also in Likkutei Sichos vol. 10, p. 243; trans. Eli Touger, Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/letters/default_cdo/aid/2277184/jewish/An-Explanation-of-the-Phrase-Spreading-the-Wellsprings-Outward.htm (accessed 18 October 2026).
3. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Letter No. 818, to R. Shlomo Matusof, 8 Kislev 5711, Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/letters/default_cdo/aid/2277190/jewish/Further-Explanation-of-the-Phrase-Spreading-the-Wellsprings-Outward.htm (accessed 18 October 2026).
4. Bereishit Rabbah 39:2, https://www.sefaria.org/Bereishit_Rabbah.39.2.
5. Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Torah Or, Lech Lecha, on Bereishit 12:9; summary: Chabad Research Unit, "Two Directions of Travel," <https://chabadresearch.net/library/alef-kaballah/two-directions-of-travel>.
6. The Lubavitcher Rebbe, sichos of 4 Cheshvan 5737, Chabad.org, https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/552237/jewish/4-Cheshvan-5737-Sicha-1.htm; summary of the content as given in Anash.org (note 7).

7. Anash.org, "Chabad.AI Opens a New Frontier in Learning Chassidus," 15 October 2026 (4 Cheshvan 5787), <https://anash.org/chabad-ai-opens-a-new-frontier-in-learning-chassidus/>; COLlive, "4 Chassidus Publishers Partner to Create Chabad.AI," <https://collive.com/4-chassidus-publishers-partner-to-create-chabad-ai/>.
8. Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford University Press, 1997).