

NIGGUNIM

When we sing a song, we connect to the thoughts of the composer of the song. When we sing a song composed by a tzaddik, we connect with the tzaddik's highest level of their neshama-chaya and yechida.

We all have five parts to our neshama. The three lower parts (nefesh, ruach and neshama) are in our body and the two higher parts (chaya and yechida) above our body. Our highest part, the yechida, being revealed at special times: on Yom Kippur, after mincha on Shabbos. When Moshiach comes, our Yechida will always be revealed. However, we have the ability to serve Hashem from our Yechida, when a Yid gives up his life for Hashem; that's the Yechida shining through.

The yechida is the part of ourselves where we love each other- where we are all equal, and all we want to do is Hashem's will, with our entire being, even if we need to sacrifice.

The soul of Moshiach is made up of everyone's yechida. When we reveal the yechidah within ourselves - and we all do that, then Moshiach will have no choice but to come and reveal himself to us!

When we sing a niggun from a tzaddik, we connect with their highest part of their soul- the chaya-yechida. We invite their holy neshama in the room, to be with us at this time. Our thoughts can become one with the teachings of this tzaddik.

"If words are the pen of the heart", taught the Ba'al haTanya, "then song is the pen of the soul." The soul's pen however writes in the opposite direction from the heart's. While words carry meaning downwards from Hashem into the minds of sages and prophets-to give them over to the people that he loves, then song carries the soul upwards to be absorbed within the Infinite light.

That is why niggunim generally have no words. Words, limit and define, but the Niggun tears the soul beyond all bounds. Beyond words.

Ba'al haTanya:

Once the Ba'al haTanya passed through Shklov, on one of his journeys. Among those who visited the Ba'al haTanya at his lodgings we're many of the town's greatest scholars, who presented to him the questions and difficulties they accumulated in the course of their studies. The Ba'al haTanya listened attentively to all the questions put to him but did not reply to any of them. However, when the scholars of Shklov invited him to lecture in the central study hall, he accepted the invitation.

The Ba'al haTanya began to speak..."All those of shir (song)," he quoted, "go out with shir and are drawn by shir." "The masters of song," explained the Rebbe, "the souls and the angels, all go out in song and are drawn by song. Their yearning for Hashem and their drawing back to fulfill the purpose of their creation, are by means of song and melody."

And then the Rebbe began to sing. The room fell utterly silent. All were caught in the thrall of the melody, a melody of yearning and resolve, of ascent and retreat. As the Rebbe sang, every man in the room felt himself transported from the crowded hall to the innermost recesses of his own mind, where a man is alone with the confusion of his thoughts, alone with his questions and doubts. Only the confusion was gradually being dispelled, the doubts resolved. By the time the Rebbe finished singing, all the questions in the room had been answered.

Among those present in Shklov study hall that day was one of the town's foremost prodigies, Rabbi Yosef Kolbo. Many years later, Rabbi Yosef related his experience to the Chosid Reb Avraham Sheinis "I came to the study hall that day with four extremely difficult questions...questions which I had put forth to the leading scholars of Vilna and Slutzk, to no avail. When the Rebbe began to sing, the knots in my mind began to unravel, the concepts began to crystallize and fall into place. One by one, my questions fell away. When the Rebbe finished singing, everything was clear. I felt like a newly born child beholding the world for the very first time. That was also the day I became a Chosid," concluded Rabbi Yosef.

A year after the Tanya was published in 1796, a group of Chassidim came to the Ba'al haTanya with a problem. They couldn't understand the Tanya. The Alter Rebbe responded, "You can't get half of anything. To understand the Tanya you have to have the music that comes with it." It was from that point on that the Ba'al haTanya began to teach Chassidim his niggunim.