

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

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Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

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AND IN HONOR OF
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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

RELATING TO THE WEEKLY SECTIONS OF THE TORAH AND
SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Volume VI: *Bereishis*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

BEREISHIS

WHY COULDN'T ADAM PRACTICE RESTRAINT?

Parshas Bereishis is read at the end of Tishrei (the month which begins the new year), and contains guidelines for the coming year.

Of the concepts it mentions is G-d's first command: the directive to Adam not to partake of the Tree of Knowledge. It is apparent from the *Midrash*¹ that this command applied only on the day after Adam's creation. Indeed, when considering the events which occurred on the sixth day of creation, it appears that the command was to be in effect for only three hours. G-d's command was given in the ninth hour after day-break.² Three hours later, the day was to end, the first *Shabbos* to begin, and the prohibition was to be lifted. But despite the short time involved, Adam could not restrain himself, and violated G-d's commandment.

The question arises: "Adam was fashioned by the hands of the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself,"³ and heard this prohibition directly from Him. How is it that he was unable to restrain himself for even three hours?

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1. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 21:7. See also the commentary of the *Sifsei Cohen* to this Torah reading, and the explanations given in *Likkutei Torah*, at the beginning of *Parshas Kedoshim*.
 2. *Sanhedrin* 38b.
 3. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 24:5.

It's true that many mystical secrets are associated with this sin, but every Biblical narrative is also to be understood in a literal sense.⁴ Why did Adam trespass?

THE FOCUS OF THE *YETZER HORA*

The answer becomes clear when one realizes that the entire intent of the *yetzer hora* (the evil inclination) is to cause a person to do the opposite of what G-d wants. All the arguments offered by the *yetzer hora* to convince a person to transgress a prohibition, or not to perform a *mitzvah* have one motive: that the person should transgress G-d's will.

There are situations (either because of the individual involved, because of the place, or because of the time)⁵ in which the observance of a *mitzvah* takes on particular importance. In these situations, the *yetzer hora* makes a special effort. Although in truth such *mitzvos* can be easily kept, since their observance is of great importance, the *yetzer hora* will present all kinds of demands and rationales with the intent of keeping the person from fulfilling G-d's will.

There are times when each of us can "hear the voice" of our evil inclination trying to persuade him in this manner. Certain aspects of the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* should logically be far easier to perform than others. And yet there are times when a person feels that it is actually these "easy" matters which present the greatest challenge. For as explained above, it is precisely with regard to the matters which are most relevant to a person that the *yetzer hora* presents the greatest challenges.

The *halachic* weight of the questions involved is not significant. There are times when the matter which presents a challenge is Rabbinic in origin, or merely dictated by Jewish

4. *Shabbos* 63a.

5. See *Sanhedrin* 97a with regard to the place named Kushta. See also *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5693, sec. 5 (Eng. Vol. I, p. 35).

custom, while a *mitzvah* of Scriptural origin will be far easier to observe. And yet, where a person's spiritual welfare is considered, the Rabbinic *mitzvah* or custom can be more important (at that time).

To refer to a parallel concept: Chassidic thought⁶ interprets the quote:⁷ “With regard to [the observance of] which [*mitzvah*] was your father more careful?” as meaning that every soul has particular *mitzvos* which are more connected with its mission on this physical plane than others.⁸ Since the *yetzer hora* knows that these *mitzvos* are more important, it presents greater obstacles to their observance.

In this vein, we can explain our Sages' statement:⁹ “Whenever a person is greater than a colleague, his *yetzer hora* is greater than he is.” For the greater a person is, the more important are the *mitzvos* he performs. And therefore, the *yetzer hora* presents him with greater challenges.

(There is also another explanation for this concept. To allow for free choice, the powers of holiness must be equally balanced with the forces which oppose holiness. Since he is “greater than his colleague” — i.e., he has been endowed with greater powers in the realm of holiness — “his *yetzer hora* is greater than he is” — his *yetzer hora* is *also* granted increased power.)

On this basis, we can understand why Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Since he was “fashioned by the hands of the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself,” he was “greater than his colleague[s],” and thus “his *yetzer hora* [was] greater than he.” This is particularly true since the command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge had far-reaching implications —

6. *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 7; *Kuntres Yud-Beis Tammuz*, 5708 (*Sefer Ha-Maamarim* 5708, p. 240ff); *Sefer HaSichos* 5700, *Sichos Shushan Purim*.

7. *Shabbos* 118b.

8. The Hebrew word used for “careful” in the above quoted is *זריז* which relates to the word *זרר* meaning “shine.” The *mitzvah* serves as a medium which enables the person's soul to shine forth.

9. *Sukkah* 52a.

as reflected in the extent of the descent suffered by Adam and all his descendants as a result of his sin. Therefore the *yetzer hora*, which enclothed itself in the serpent,¹⁰ contended with Adam with all its power, and compelled him to eat from the Tree of Knowledge.

TO WHOM DID G-D SPEAK?

When G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people, He told Moshe:¹¹ “Say the following to the House of Yaakov.” As our Sages explain,¹² He had Moshe tell the women about receiving the Torah first. Why? Our Sages explain¹³ that G-d wanted to prevent a recurrence of what had happened with the Tree of Knowledge, when Adam, and not Chavah, was the one who heard the command from G-d.

This had made the sin possible. The creation of Chavah was G-d’s handiwork, as it is written:¹⁴ “And G-d built the rib....” Nevertheless, since Chavah had not heard the command from G-d Himself, she erred by increasing the scope of G-d’s prohibition, stating that it involved not touching the tree as well as not partaking of it. It was her addition which led to the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge.¹⁵

Had Chavah heard the command not to partake of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge from G-d directly, she would not have been fooled by the serpent, and would have kept Adam from sinning, despite all the challenges presented by the *yetzer hora*, as reflected in our Sages’ statement¹² regarding the giving of the Torah.¹⁶

10. See *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 35b; *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 13.

11. *Shmos* 19:3.

12. *Mechilta* and *Rashi*, commenting on the above verse.

13. *Shemos Rabbah* 28:2.

14. *Bereishis* 2:22.

15. As explained in *Bereishis Rabbah* 19:4, quoted in *Rashi’s* commentary, *Bereishis* 3:3, the snake pushed her until she touched the tree, and then told her, “See, just as touching does not involve a punishment, neither does eating.”

16. See also *Sanhedrin* 109b-110a.

BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN MICROCOSM

The very name Torah relates to the word *horoah*, meaning “instruction.”¹⁷ As mentioned above, the stories related in *Parshas Bereishis* provide us with instruction for our behavior throughout the year. Similarly, the concept explained above provides us with a directive regarding the conduct of a Jewish home.

Every Jewish home is “a sanctuary in microcosm,”¹⁸ of which G-d says: “I will dwell within.”¹⁹ The conduct of the home is dependent on its mistress, referred to in our Torah tradition as “the mainstay of the home.”²⁰ She should therefore be encouraged to add energy and satisfaction to her Jewish practices. This encouragement should be given with the understanding that “[The Torah’s] ways are pleasant ways, and all its paths are peace,”²¹ rather than by means of automatic directives.

This approach will protect her entire household, her husband included, from stumbling blocks. For as stated above, had Chavah heard the command from G-d Himself, not only would she not have created a complication by sinning herself, she would also have prevented Adam from being influenced by the overtures of the serpent.

Thus the foundation of every person’s Torah activity must begin within his own household. As the Rebbe Rashab once said:²² Just as putting on *tefillin* every day is a Scriptural commandment incumbent upon every Jew, regardless of whether he is a renowned Torah scholar or a simple person, so too there is an obligation for every Jew to spend half an hour

17. *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 53b.

18. Cf. *Yechezkel* 11:16.

19. *Shmos* 25:8. See the *maamar Basi LeGani*, 5710 which develops the concept of the Divine indwelling within every individual Jew.

20. *Tehillim* 113:9 uses the expression *akeres habayis*, “the mistress of the house.” Our Rabbis interpret this to mean *ikro shel bayis*, “the mainstay of the house.”

21. *Mishlei* 3:17. See *Gittin* 6b.

22. *HaYom Yom*, entry Teves 22.

every day thinking about the education of his children. He must do everything within his power — and indeed, even things which are *beyond* his power — to insure that his children follow the path in which he guides them.

Efforts to increase the Torah involvement of Jewish women will also have a beneficial effect on Jewish men. For this will help ensure that a wife's thoughts, words and deeds will not run contrary to those of her husband, but rather that she will assist and complement him in all things,²³ contributing *binah*, understanding, to the household. As our Sages comment:²⁴ “A greater dimension of *binah* was given to women than to men.”

A wife active in Torah will affect her entire household, making it a fit place for the Divine Presence to rest. This is reflected in the wedding blessing:²⁵ “Grant abundant joy to [these] loving companions, as You bestowed upon Your created being[s] in the Garden of Eden as before.” Why is the term *mikedem*, “as before,” included in the blessing? Everyone knows that the story of Adam and Eve took place many years ago. The blessing, however, refers to the time “before” — the time before the Sin.

We are therefore wishing that every new marriage will be like the bond between Adam and Chavah before the Sin, when each assisted the other. This will allow a household to be conducted in a manner fit to host G-d's Presence. And

23. See *Yevamos* 63a.

24. *Niddah* 45b.

25. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 410.

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then there will be joy, as “You bestowed upon Your created being[s] in the Garden of Eden as before.”

(Adapted from *Sichos Simchas Torah*, 5723)



BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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In our times, miracles and wonders are happening throughout the world. These include "great wonders,"¹ beyond those miracles discernable to G-d "Who **alone** performs great wonders," but where "the beneficiary does not recognize the miracle."² Rather, the miracles we experience now include wonders obvious and revealed to all; they are thus representative of, analogous to and a prelude for the miracles and wonders of the future Redemption, which shall arrive imminently. About this imminent Redemption, it is said:³ "As in the days of your departure from Egypt, **I will show him wonders.**"

To illustrate:

a) Several major and powerful regimes are undergoing progressive, positive developments and changing for the better - in the spheres of goodness, righteousness and justice.⁴ These transformations are representative of, analogous to and a prelude for the **correction and perfection of the world in the days of Moshiach.**⁵ Further, by affecting the Jewish people, granting them freedom in all matters associated with Judaism, Torah and Mitzvot, even permitting the exodus of hundreds of thousands of Jews to freedom [from the former Soviet Union, etc.], these changes are also representative of, analogous to and a prelude for the **ingathering of the exiles**⁶ which will transpire in the days of

1. *Tehillim*, 136:4.

2. *Niddah*, 31a.

3. *Micha*, 7:15.

4. See also *Sefer HaSichos* 5750, vol. I, p. 152 ff.

5. See Rambam, *Hilchos Melachim*, end of ch. 11: "And he will perfect the world."

6. In the spirit of "those who savor it will merit eternal life." See *Likkutei*

BESURAS HAGEULO

Moshiach.

b) The events which occurred in the Persian Gulf - *are among the signs of the Redemption*, based on the saying of our sages that when "nations provoke one another..."⁷ it portends the coming of *Moshiach*. More specifically, our sages in the *Midrash* present the following scenario as an indication of the arrival of the Era of Redemption: "The king of Persia (obviously referring to the entire geographic area comprising Iraq) will provoke the Arabian king... and all the nations of the world will be in turmoil and terror... and (G-d) says to them (Israel)... "Do not fear, the time for your Redemption has arrived."⁸ The *Midrash* continues and concludes: "When the King *Moshiach* comes, he will stand on the roof of the *Beis HaMikdash* [Holy Temple] and proclaim to Israel: "Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived."

Ironically, in recent days the (seventy) nations of the world gathered, in a way reminiscent of "The nations are in an uproar and the peoples mutter,"⁹ in order to accuse Israel: "You are thieves for having conquered the land of Israel," They refer not just to Gaza or Samaria, but also (and primarily) to Judea which includes **Jerusalem**, the capital of the Land of Israel, "The city where David encamped."¹⁰ This accusation comes at a time when everyone knows the refutation, as clearly enunciated by Rashi at the very beginning of his commentary to the Torah: "All of the earth is G-d's, He is the one who created it and gave it to whomever was just in His eyes... He gave it to us."

(And, incredibly, this cacophony of nations accusing Israel includes even those who have traditionally endeavored to further

Sichos, vol. XX, p. 173. See there for cross references.

7. *Bereishit Rabbah*, 42:4. *Midrash Lekach Tov*, *Lech Lecha*, 14:1.

8. *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Yeshayahu*, *remez* 499.

9. *Tehillim*, 2:1.

10. *Yeshayahu*, 29:1.

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the cause of righteousness and justice in the world, as seen by their reaction to the events of the Persian Gulf; there, they based their behavior on righteousness and justice, (that is, to prevent a state of theft of one individual from another, of country from country, etc.). However, in this matter, they too have conducted themselves improperly towards the **Children of Israel.**)

One might suggest the following explanation for this paradoxical phenomenon (that such an undesirable situation occurred in this era of open miracles):

As mentioned earlier [in the full text of the *Sicha*], in the Divinely ordained system for this world, concealment and darkness precede the revelation of light. Thus, we should not be dismayed by the "Nations raising an uproar and the peoples muttering," since it is - as the verse concludes - "In vain." As the Midrash comments: "All of their uproar is... in vain,"¹¹ because "the One who dwells in Heaven will laugh, G-d will mock them."¹² Therefore, the Jewish people stand firm in all matters relating to the integrity of the Land of Israel (particularly Jerusalem), knowing that "All of the earth is G-d's, He created it... and gave it to us."

Moreover, the phenomenon of "the nation raising an uproar and the peoples muttering" is, in and of itself, one of the **signs of Redemption**, as Rashi observes that: "Our sages interpreted the entire verse of the "nations raising an uproar..." as a reference to the **King Moshiach.**"

(From the talk of Shabbos Bereishis (Isru Chag of Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah) 5751)

11. *Midrash Tehillim* and *Yalkut Shimoni* loc cit.

12. *Ibid* 4.

We have already openly seen the miracles at the beginning of this year, in continuation of the miracles of last year, in connection with the fact that that country (Russia) freed and assisted thousands and thousands of Jews to go the land of Israel (and other places). In those places they can live their individual lives in full freedom. This reveals the greatness of Israel, that even the nations of the world recognize this and assist them.

The revelation in the world and recognition by the nations of the greatness of the Jewish people has increased from generation to generation. As we approach ever nearer to the final and true Redemption, the declaration that "And nations will go by your light,"¹ "And kings will be your midwives and their princes your nursemaids,"² comes closer to its fulfillment.

Over the course of generations - even in the time of exile - we find that the nations of the world have recognized that the Jewish people are the Chosen People. We see this in many places in the Midrashim of our Sages of blessed memory. (For example, in Zevachim,³ saying to the Rabbi] "I will fulfill the Biblical prediction of: kings will be your midwives," **and in other sources.**)

It is also known that non-Jews call the Jewish people (even when speaking among themselves) - the "Chosen People."

In the United States and other benevolent countries, Jews are permitted to perform their Divine service with a calm mind and amidst physical comfort. Jews in the Diaspora and in Israel are

1. *Yeshayu* 60:23.

2. *Ibid* 49:23.

3. 19a at the beginning.

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commonly offered assistance.⁴ This assistance itself has increased in recent years, specifically last year (the year of "I will show them wonders") and beginning with this year (a year with miracles within it) in relation to the permission to emigrate and the aid from that country to our fellow-Jews to go to the land of Israel.

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Bereishis,
Blessing of the month of Mar-Cheshvan 5752)*

4. There are many well-known stories in which non-Jews gave honor to our Rebbeim and leaders (see for example in relation to the Rebbe MaHaRash, *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket*, vol. 4, p. 26.)

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Reb **Ariel Leib** ben Reb **Chaim** ע"ה **Milner**

Passed away on 27 Shevat, 5779

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(From The Rebbe's Letter To Parents In Connection
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