

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FRIEND**  
**Reb Shraga Feivel ben Reb Avner ע"ה**  
**Silver**

Passed away on 20 Mar-Cheshvan, 5778

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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# LIKKUTEI SICHOS

## AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the  
**Lubavitcher Rebbe**  
**Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson**

Reprinted for Parshat Vayeira, 5781  
(Vol. 4)



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**VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS**  
788 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213  
5770 • 2010

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 Los Angeles, CA 90036  
 Tel.: (323) 934-7095 \* Fax: (323) 934-7092

<http://www.torah4blind.org>  
 e-mail: [yyys@torah4blind.org](mailto:yyys@torah4blind.org)

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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**

•  
Volume I: *Bereishit*

•  
In English rendition  
with Introduction and Notes  
by  
**Jacob Immanuel Schochet**

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
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ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.  
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DEDICATED BY HER FAMILY שיחיו

## VAYEIRA

## וַיְהִי

## A

I. As today is the twentieth of *Marcheshvan*, the birthday of the *Rebbe ReShaB*, I will recall a story<sup>1</sup> which I told already on an earlier occasion.

Every year on his birthday, the *Rebbe ReShaB* visited his grandfather, the *Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek*, to ask for a blessing. This may well have been the practice of all the grandchildren of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. At one such occasion (when he turned four or five; for he was born in the year 5621, and in *Nissan* 5626 the *Tzemach Tzedek* passed away), he burst out crying. When the *Tzemach Tzedek* asked him for the cause of his crying, he replied: he had just learned, or heard from someone, that the Almighty had revealed Himself to our father Abraham – (this incident occurred during the week of *parshat Vayeira*); and he was crying because G-d did not reveal Himself to him.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* answered him: 'When a Jew (or according to another version: When a Jew a *tzadik*) decides at the age of ninety-nine years that he ought to circumcise himself, he deserves that the Almighty reveal Himself to him.'

The child accepted the answer and stopped crying.

II. This story about the *Rebbe ReShaB* happened when he was still a child, prior to his *bar-mitzvah*, and even prior to the age of *chinuch* (instruction).<sup>a</sup> Even so it

1. See *sichot* of the *Rebbe* (R. Yoseph Yitzchak), of *Shabbat parshat Vayeira*, *Marcheshvan* 20, 5693.

a. [By law a minor is exempt from having to observe the *mitzvot*, but

Moshiach for Israel,"<sup>13</sup> and that "one who is worthy because of his righteousness to be the Redeemer, and when the time arrives, G-d will reveal it to him and will send him, etc."<sup>14</sup> And if it were not for the undesirable things that got mixed in, which delayed and obstructed, he would have been revealed and come in actual reality.

And according to the pronouncement of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the Moshiach<sup>15</sup> of our generation, all matters of Divine service have already been concluded and completed, and we stand ready to greet our righteous Moshiach. We are therefore at a time when all obstacles and hindrances have been nullified. Since this is so, there is now not just **the existence** of Moshiach, but also **the revelation** of Moshiach. Now we need only **greet** our righteous Moshiach in actual reality!

...With this in mind, every activity must be penetrated with the subject of Moshiach and Redemption, including one's eating and drinking. For the longing for the meal of *Livyason*, *Shor HaBor* and *Yayin Meshumar*<sup>16</sup> is so great that even **after** the meal one remains hungry for it. Consequently, he will complain to G-d that he cannot fulfill the commandment of "And you shall eat **and you shall be satisfied** and you shall bless"<sup>17</sup> **in earnest** until G-d seats us at His table for the feast of the world to come.

(From the talk of *Shabbos Parshas Vayeira*, 18 Mar-Cheshvan 5752)

13. The commentary of the *Bartenura* on *Megillas Rus*.

14. See *Sha'alos v'Teshuvos Chasam Sofer Choshen Mishpat* (vol. 6) at the end (section 98). And see *S'dei Chemed*, *Peas HaSadeh*, entry *Aleph*, klal 70. And in other places.

15. The general *Yechida*, which shines through and is revealed in the soul of the leader of the generation and therefore includes all the souls of the Jewish people in that generation (See the discourse title "Padeh V'Shalom" in *Shaarei Teshuva* of the *Mitteler Rebbe*, chapter 12).

16. [*Levyaton is the great fish, Shor HaBor the great ox and Yayin Meshumar the aged wine that will feed the righteous in the era of Moshiach. Translator's note.*]

17. *Eikev* 8:10.

Redemption in actual reality through Dovid, Melech HaMoshiach. In the words of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, while he was alive in this world, all the Divine service **has already been concluded and completed**, and we stand prepared to greet Dovid, Melech HaMoshiach. This is all the more so the case, since the Divine service has continued in a manner of "the L-rd has give you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear."<sup>8</sup>

We now find ourselves in the 90th year<sup>9</sup> - which follows the conclusion of the 89th year, which is connected with the 89th Psalm that concludes "who revile the footsteps of your anointed" and "Blessed is the L-rd forever amen and amen." This refers to a complete victory in the wars of the House of Dovid. [This puts us] at the beginning of the period connected with the 90th Psalm, which concludes and ends with "May the pleasantness of the L-rd our G-d be upon us... and the work of our hands **establish it.**" This refers to the future Beis HaMikdash<sup>10</sup> , "The sanctuary, O L-rd, which Your hands have established."<sup>11</sup>

\* \* \*

Furthermore, and this is the main point:

It was explained above, that Moshiach exists in the spark of Moshiach (the aspect of Yechida<sup>12</sup>) within each and every Jew. In addition Moshiach also exists in the literal sense (the general Yechida). For it is known that "in every generation an individual from the descendants of Yehudah is born who is qualified to be the

8. Tavo 29:3.

9. [The letter equivalent for the number 90 is "Tzadik." The word "Tzadik" has two meanings: the name of a letter and a righteous person. This discourse was delivered in the Rebbe's 90th year. Translator's note.]

10. Midrash Tehillim on the verse.

11. Beshallah 15:17.

12. [Yechida literally means singular or singularity. It is the part of the soul that is directly connected with and thus an actual part of G-d above. Translator's note.]

warrants attention. The fact that the *Rebbe* ReShaB related it to his only son, the *Rebbe*, and the *Rebbe* passed it on to be publicized, clearly indicates that the story is relevant to us as well. Indeed, two morals can be derived from it, from both the lament and the answer.

III. The *Rebbe's* crying because G-d had not revealed Himself to him teaches us that every Jew, regardless of his state, can demand that the Almighty reveal Himself to him just as to our father Abraham. Moreover, he can demand this with insistence, as is indicated by the crying. For crying is an aspect of seeking with insistence: it is an aspect which transcends reason, transcending the intellect which is no longer able to bear a condition, and thus the overflow of intellect is expressed in the emergence of **tears.**<sup>1\*</sup>

he must be taught and trained in Torah and *mitzvot*. This involves, generally speaking, three aspects:

1. The Scriptural precept of 'And you shall teach them to your sons' etc. (Deuteronomy 11:19), i.e., the *mitzvah* of teaching them Torah, which commences as soon as the child begins to talk – teaching him various verses, benedictions etc. (see *Sifre*, Devarim, par. 46; *Sukah* 42a).
2. *Hergel mitzvot* – to accustom the children to the performance of *mitzvot*, from as early an age as possible.
3. The Rabbinic precept of *chinuch* – to instruct and train the child in the proper observance of the *mitzvot*, "To train him in sanctity and avoidance of sin, as it is said 'Train the child according to his way' etc." (Proverbs 22:6; see Maimonides, *Hilchot Ma'acholot Assurot* XVII:27-28). For this obligation of *chinuch* there is no clear-cut age *per se*. We distinguish between a 'minor who has reached the age of *chinuch*' and a 'minor who has not yet reached the age of *chinuch*'; see *Berachot* 15b (and Rashi *ad loc.*); *Yoma* 82a; *Sukah* 28b (See *Tossafot a.l.*) and 42a-b (See Rashi and *Tossafot a.l.*); *Chagigah* 2a (see Rashi and *Tossafot a.l.*) and 4a. These sources make it clear that the age of *chinuch* is relative, specifying different criteria for different *mitzvot* – all depending on the mental and physical maturity of the child (which would enable the child to observe the precept properly). Generally speaking, though, approximately six to seven years is the average age for *chinuch* for most *mitzvot*, and in the case of an unusually bright child the age of five years.

For various *halachot* relating to *chinuch* see *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chayim, sect. 243 – especially the *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch*, and the commentary *Kaf Hachayim*.]

1\*. *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5700, s.v. 'Ahalalah,' sect. 3.

## BESURAS HAGEULO

### The Announcement Of The Redemption

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This applies even to one who has not yet reached the level of instruction — that is, he still lacks the maturity of understanding on his own, and cannot even absorb the influence of another. In terms of actual age he may already be an adult, but spiritually he is still like a child who has not yet reached the level of instruction. The *Rebbe*, my father-in-law, used to say that Jewish years are not measured by the birth-certificate: according to the birth-certificate one could be an old man; but according to one's true, spiritual age, that is, in terms of observance of Torah and *mitzvot*, one still is a small child playing under the table.

IV. Moreover, one can demand that the Almighty reveal Himself to him as he did to Abraham *after* the latter had already fulfilled the precept of circumcision; for it was then that 'the *Eternal* appeared to him.'<sup>b</sup> Indeed, the revelation symbolized by 'the *Eternal*' (the Tetragrammaton)<sup>c</sup> was revealed unto Abraham before then also, but the revelation after the precept of circumcision was altogether different and superior.<sup>2</sup>

When the Almighty revealed Himself to Abraham after the circumcision, his name had already been changed to Abraham — with the additional *hey*. The *Gemara*<sup>3</sup>

b. [Genesis 18:1]

c. [The various names of G-d allude and correspond to the ways G-d reveals Himself (see *Shemot Rabba* 3:6; *Zohar* III:257bf.; *Lekach Tov*, other *Midrashim* as well as Rashi, on Exodus 6:3). The Tetragrammaton is essentially the *nomen proprium*, and generally relates to the highest category of revelations. But within that category itself there are further gradations. G-d had revealed Himself to Abraham with the Tetragrammaton even prior to his circumcision (e.g., Genesis 12:7 and 15:7). The circumcision, however, effected a superior level of revelation, in terms of both a greater manifestation to Abraham and a greater vision and absorption by Abraham (see *Tanchuma*, Lech Lecha, par. 20, and *Vayeira*, par. 6; *Zohar* I:88b f. and 98b; and note 2 following.)

2. See *Bereishit Rabba*, beg. of *Vayeira* [48:2ff.]; *Likutei Torah*, *Tazria*, p. 21a [See preceding note.]

3. *Nedarim* 32b. — [At first he was called *Abram* — the numerical equivalent of which is 243, for G-d gave him mastery over

The accomplishment of the Rebbe Rashab<sup>1</sup> in founding the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim is explained in the well-known discourse<sup>2</sup> "All Who Go Out to the Wars of House of David." The students of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim are the "soldiers of the House of David" who fight the wars of the House of David against those "who revile the footsteps of your anointed."<sup>3</sup> In the words of the Rambam in his *Laws of Kings and their Wars and the King Moshiach*:<sup>4</sup> "He [Moshiach] will fight the wars of G-d" until he is "victorious."<sup>5</sup> [That Moshiach will be victorious] is also indicated by what follows after "who revile the footsteps of your anointed," in the words "Blessed is the L-rd forever **Amen and Amen**."<sup>6</sup> For "Amen" (and all the more so when Amen is repeated) testifies to victory in war,<sup>7</sup> through which the coming and revelation of Dovid, Melech HaMoshiach will be accomplished in actual reality.

Our generation, the third generation from the Rebbe Rashab and his students, the soldiers of the House of David, will be witnesses to the **conclusion and completion** of their Divine service to bring the

1. [The founder of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim was the Rebbe Rashab, father of the Previous Rebbe and the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe. Translator's note.]

2. The discourse of Simchas Torah 5661 - *Likkutei Dibburim* vol. 4, 787b and following. *Sefer HaSichos* 5702 end of p. 141 and following.

3. *Tehillim* 89:52. [The word for "anointed" in Hebrew is "Moshiach." Thus this verse is seen as a reference to the king Moshiach, descendent of King David, who will bring Redemption. Translator's note.]

4. End of chapter 11.

5. [Clearly Moshiach will not fight the wars all by himself. Rather, as the king, he will direct his soldiers, the students of the Yeshiva Tomchei Temimim, in battle. This is the connection between the passage from the Rambam and the directive given at the founding of the yeshiva. Translator's note.]

6. *Ibid*, 53.

7. See *Nazir* at the end. See there for cross references.



'world.' Rather, as man himself is 'the first in the work of creation and the last in the work of creation,'<sup>10</sup> he contains *within himself* the possibility of multiple evolutions.)

But when there is the general *bitul* (self-negation), that is, the realization that he must circumcise himself, he is aware that his present condition is insufficient and that he must change. This is the prelude to reaching higher levels: 'And the Eternal appeared to him' just as He did to our father Abraham after the precept of circumcision. In fact, he himself becomes 'Abraham,' with the additional *hey*: he is able to master all his senses, even those which normally he could not control.

Moreover, he assumes control over his part in this world,<sup>h</sup> just as *tzadikim* who effect self-purification also effect a purification of their part in the world. He who masters his senses is also able to master his part in the world, i.e., all those things which he needs to serve G-d, whether it be in terms of children, life or sustenance,<sup>h</sup> and that all these be bountiful.

(From the Sicha of 20th of Marcheshvan 5713)

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f. [In other words, the possible degradation does not necessarily mean a drastic fall from a higher 'world' to a lower one (see glossary for the concept of World(s)), a descent from one cosmic plane to a lower one, but an internal degeneration on the very plane on which man finds himself.]

10. *Berachot* 61a. *Bereishit Rabba* 8:1: 'R. Simeon bar Lakish said, (Man) is the latest in the work of the last day and the earliest in the work of the first day.' *Tanchuma*, Tazria, par. 1 (note the version cited in *Eitz Yoseph*); *Torah Or*, p. 3d; *Likutei Torah*, Shemini Atzeret, p. 86c.

g. [The various (material and spiritual) parts and aspects within creation that are associated with the individual. Man must purify and sublimate not only himself, but also his part or share in this world, by using it or relating to it in the Divinely intended context of man's destiny and *avodah* in life.]

h. [Cf. above, *Bereishit*, note c]

states that this change signifies that Abraham had achieved mastery over the five organs over which man, by his very nature, does not have control: the two eyes, two ears, and the membrum. His original name was Abram, without a *hey*, for then he had mastered only that which man can control naturally. Later, however, by virtue of his personal efforts to the utmost of his abilities, Heaven granted him even such things that man cannot attain on his own, and Abraham mastered even those elements which under natural conditions man cannot control.

It follows that the revelation to Abraham after the circumcision was far more sublime than any before. Even so, every Jew — even he who has not yet reached the stage of instruction in his spiritual life — can demand that the Almighty reveal Himself to him as He had done to Abraham as he was on the level after circumcision.

V. The reply of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, that the revelation to Abraham was because he had realized that he ought to circumcise himself, teaches us the following: Every Jew may indeed demand that G-d reveal Himself to him, but this requires a prelude: one must know that circumcision is essential, regardless of all levels already attained actually or potentially.

(Potentially every Jew can reach the very highest levels, as it is said<sup>4</sup> that every Jew is obligated to say 'When shall my deeds approach the deeds of my ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' The very fact that Abraham is mentioned alongside Isaac and Jacob indicates that we refer to Abraham as he was *after* the precept of circumcision.<sup>4</sup>)

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243 of the 248 limbs; then he was called *Abraham* — the numerical equivalent of which is 248, as G-d gave him mastery over the remaining five limbs as well. The additional *hey*, equivalent to the number five, signifies these five additional organs.]

4. *Tanna Devey Eliyahu*, chapter 25.

d. [Abraham is mentioned here in sequence with Isaac and Jacob. As

VI. Moreover, even those already in actual possession of these virtues — that is, the *tzadikim* who, like Abraham, are in control over those organs which normally one cannot master — they, too, must realize that they require circumcision.

There is another well-known story about the *Rebbe ReShaB*: He complained once of an inability to hear with one ear. When searching for the cause, it was discovered that on the Shabbat, while he expounded Chassidut, there was some talking in an adjoining room which disturbed him. But as the *Rebbe* felt it his function to teach Chassidut — with which the talking interfered, he removed the sense of hearing from the ear facing the adjoining room.

Thus it is mentioned in a *maamar*<sup>5</sup> that there are *tzadikim* who divested themselves of the sense of vision or of hearing when it interfered with the Divine soul. For *tzadikim* master even those senses which normally one cannot control.

Still, even they who stand on so high a plane, they, too, must know that they require circumcision.

VII. Circumcision is essential, because even the most diaphanous, spiritual 'foreskin' may ultimately evolve into coarseness.

This explains the emphasis in the *Tzemach Tzedek's* reply: 'When a Jew, a *tzadik*, at the age of ninety-nine years, knows that he requires circumcision . . .'

At the age of a hundred years, that is, after having sublimated all ten soul-powers — each of which subdivides into ten" — one no longer need fear anything, for

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the birth of Isaac did not, and *could not*, happen prior to Abraham's circumcision (see futher on, section VIIff.), it follows that the sequence implies that we refer to Abraham on the superior level effected by his circumcision.]

5. *Ki Yishalcha Bincha* 5654.

e. [There are ten general soul-powers or potencies (*kochot hanefesh*), analogous to the ten *Sefirot* (see *Tanya*, chapter 3, and *Igeret Hakodesh*, section XV). Each of these subdivides into ten (compounding the aspects of all

he is no longer subject to mundane affairs. Thus it is said that 'At one hundred years one is as if dead, and passed and ceased from the world.'<sup>6</sup>

Offhand, though, this expression (in *Avot*) that 'At one hundred years one is as if dead, and passed and ceased from the world' requires further attention. All the subjects enumerated in that *Mishnah* offer relevant instructions on how to conduct oneself: 'Five years is the age for the study of Scripture; ten years for the study of *Mishnah*; thirteen years for the fulfilment of *mitzvot*'; etc. What instruction is indicated by 'At a hundred years one is as if dead, and passed and ceased from the world'?

However, in the plain sense this means that when one has sublimated all ten soul-powers, and done so quite specifically in all details<sup>7</sup> — that is, each one as it consists of ten sub-powers<sup>8</sup> — thus becoming a *ben me'ah* (a hundred), then he is as if he had passed and ceased from the world: he no longer belongs to the world, he is no longer related to mundane affairs and need no longer fear, just as if he no longer had a *yetzer hara*.<sup>9</sup>

At the age of ninety-nine, however, something is still missing in the *birur* (refinement and sublimation) of all ten soul-powers. Thus there is a need for circumcision, for otherwise there remains the possibility of a degeneration to coarseness by way of multiple evolutions. (By multiple evolutions we do not mean to say that the person is presently in one 'world' and thence descends to another

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others in itself) just as the *Sefirot* subdivide (e.g., *chessed* of *chessed*, *gevurah* of *chessed* etc.), thus adding up to a total of one hundred 'sub-powers'.]

6. *Avot* V:22.

7. *Kuntres Ha'avodah*, chapter 6.

8. *Derech Mitzvotecha*, Shores Mitzvat Hatefilah, p. 144b, and *ibid.*, Biur 'Veshavtah,' p. 170b. Cf. the various *maamarim* on *Chaye Sarah*.

9. See *Yerushalmi*, end of *Berachot* [IX:5]; *Zohar* II:107b; *Tanya*, chapter 1; *et passim*.