

IN HONOR OF

The Soldier of "Tzivos Hashem" **Dovid Yehudah** שיחי
On the occasion of his 10th birthday, 24 Mar-Cheshvan, 5779

AND IN HONOR OF HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS

The Soldiers of "Tzivos Hashem"

Shlomo Mordechai, Esther Leah, Alisa Chaya, and Avraham Yosef שיחי

MAY THEY MERIT TO BE A SOURCE OF CHASSIDIC PRIDE
TO THEIR FAMILY AND A TORAH LIGHT TO THEIR COMMUNITY.

AND IN HONOR OF THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Adam** and **Miriam** שיחי **Brooker**
(On the occasion of his birthday, 28 Mar-Cheshvan, 5779)

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR FRIENDS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי **Shagalov**

* * *

IN HONOR OF

The Soldier of "Tzivos Hashem" **Rivkah** תחיל **Hoffman**
On the occasion of her fifth birthday, 27 Cheshvan 5779

AND IN HONOR OF HER BROTHER AND SISTER

Soldiers of "Tzivos Hashem"

Menachem Mendel and **Baila Guta** שיחי **Hoffman**

AND IN HONOR OF THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Aryeh Yosef** and **Rochel Orah** שיחי
Hoffman

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR GRANDPARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Binyamin** and **Leah** שיחי **Hoffman**
Mr. & Mrs. **Shabtai Yosef (Alex)** and **Milka Miriam (Emillia)** שיחי
Novoseltsky

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Chayei Sarah, 5779
(Vol. 5)



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THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

And even if there is only a doubt that G-d will restrain the Jews in exile even a minute for the great pleasure and satisfaction that the Divine service in exile creates for Him, a Jew cries: "all that the master of the house tells you, do, except to leave."²³ All that the master of the house - this is G-d - says, one must do "except to leave." One must not remain even a minute, G-d forbid, in a situation of "leaving," the table of their father. One begs and demands, as it were, of G-d: "send now the one You will send" - in the beginning of the year "by whom You will send"²⁴ and bring **already** the true and complete Redemption!

And together with the completion of the work of *shlichus* (at the conclusion of *Likkutei Torah*, Parshas Brocha²⁵) one immediately reaches the completion of the wedding - the Song of Songs - of Israel and G-d (specifically through an actualization of the good resolution to learn all of *Torah Or* and *Likkutei Torah*, all their chapters until the end. For learning the Torah contained within them hastens the actual Redemptive process.)

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah, 25 Mar-Cheshvan, Blessing of the month of Kislev, 5752)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע"ה
Ekman
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע"ה
Marenburg
Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
ה. נ. צ. ב. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y. and Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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Executive Director

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23. *Pesachim* 86:b.

24. [The Hebrew words numerically add up to (5)752, the year in which the sicha was said. Translator's note.]

25. [Torah Or and Likkutei Torah, comprise the Alter Rebbe's Chassidic discourses on the five books of the Torah and the Song of Songs. The concluding words on Deuteronomy deal with Shlichus and the commencement of the next section on Song of Songs deals with the wedding of Israel and G-d. Translator's note.]

BESURAS HAGEULO

Moshiach,"¹⁸ but all the days of Moshiach - also the completion of "absolutely Moshiach"¹⁹ etc.)

From the international convention must come and be brought good resolutions such that every *shliach* must prepare himself and prepare all Jews in his place and city, etc. to greet our righteous Moshiach. This should be done through his explanation of the concept of Moshiach, as explained in the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, in a way that **it will be received** by everyone according to his intellect and understanding. This includes in particular learning the subject of Moshiach and Redemption, and specifically in a manner of Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge.

And since this is the Divine service of the time, it's understood this applies to every Jew without any exception whatsoever.

...Further and fundamental: since the work of shlichus has already ended, every *Shliach* needs to approach the true *M'Shalayach*²⁰ - G-d - and declare: I have done my *shlichus* and now the time has come that You, as it were, should do Your *shlichus* (for G-d is also a *shliach* (He tells His word to Yaakov, etc."²¹) and together with the ten Sefiros (G-d, Himself, it is essence and being, as it were, is our righteous Moshiach²²), is the essence and being as it were of our righteous Moshiach). "Send now the one You will send" - send us our righteous Moshiach in actual reality.

18. Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, chapter 11, halacha 4.

19. *ibid.*

20. [*M'Shalayach* - literally the one who causes to be sent. As a "shliach" is an emissary, the "m'shalayach" is the one who sends him on his task. Translator's note.]

21. *Tehillim* 147:19. See also *Shmos Rabba* chapter 30, 9.

22. [*In the sicha* the Rebbe refers to the fact that the word "shliach" (numerically 348) plus ten equals "Moshiach" (numerically 358). Translator's note.]

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 VI: *Bereishis*

•
In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

CHAYEI SARAH

ENDEAVORING TO UNDERSTAND THE MIDRASH

Our Sages¹ associate the verse:² “And Sarah’s life was 127 years...,” with the quote:³ “G-d knows the days of the righteous,” and explain: “Just as they are perfect, so too their years are perfect.” The *Midrash* continues, explaining that this concept is exemplified by Sarah, whose years were complete; there was nothing lacking to the time with which she was endowed.

The question arises: Before and after Sarah’s life, there were many righteous men and women whose “years were perfect.” Why is Sarah chosen as the paradigm?

The explanation is that the continuous Divine service of other righteous men and women was rewarded with the fulfillment of G-d’s promise:⁴ “I will fill the span of your days,” i.e., they were given a long life. When years were taken from the lifetime of a righteous man,⁵ it indicates that that person’s Divine service was lacking. Sarah, by contrast, passed away before her time because of an external factor — her soul expired when she was told of the binding of Yitzchak⁶ — and

1. *Bereishis Rabbah* 58:1.
2. *Bereishis* 23:1.
3. *Tehillim* 37:18.
4. *Shmos* 23:26.
5. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 63:12, which states that five years were taken from Avraham’s life.
6. According to some, she died because of grief at the news that Yitzchak was to be sacrificed (*Bereishis Rabbah* 58:5, see also *Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 32). Others say she died out of great joy (see the Commentary of Rivo to the Torah, which cites a parallel instance in *Kesubos* 62b; see also *Sefer HaYashar*).

now at the opening and commencement of the "International Convention of *Shluchim*."

We must come out with a resolution and an announcement to all *shluchim* that the work of *shlichus* now and for every Jew is to their capacity to lead to the greeting of our righteous Moshiach.

This means that all the details of the work of *shlichus* in spreading the Torah and Judaism and spreading the Wellsprings of the inner teachings of Torah outward must be permeated with greeting our righteous Moshiach.

As emphasized in the program of the convention - "all the days of your life **to bring** the days of Moshiach."¹⁶ All aspects of Divine service (every day of your life, and in every day itself - in every detail and hour of the day) must be permeated with "to bring the days of Moshiach." It's not sufficient "to increase" (as stated in many places),¹⁷ or that he (the *shliach*) should stand and wait until Moshiach will come, at which point he will take part and have the satisfaction. Rather he is "**to bring**." He does all that depends on him **to bring** "the days of Moshiach." [The word "days" is] in the plural, [meaning] not only the beginning of one day but the days of Moshiach (and not only when Moshiach is "presumed to be

16. *Brochos* chapter 1, mishneh 5. [The expression "All the days of your life to bring the days of Moshiach" is the Mishneh's interpretation of the Biblical commandment to "Remember the Exodus from Egypt all the days of your life." The Mishneh deduces that the added emphasis of the word "all" is "to bring (i.e., include) the days of Moshiach." This means simply that we will have to remember the exodus even in the Messianic Age. The Previous Rebbe in his *sicha* cited by the Rebbe combines the Biblical phrase and the Mishneh's interpretation to produce a novel idea, namely, that "All the days of your life [you must endeavor] to bring the days of Moshiach." Translator's note.]

17. [See previous note. In most places where a Biblical word implies the inclusion of other points, the Talmudic term employed is "to include" rather than "to bring." This the Rebbe interprets as a lesson for us to be proactive in bringing the days of Moshiach. Translator's note.]

The *shluchim* have already begun long ago to fulfill the work of *shlichus* in spreading the Torah, Judaism and the Wellsprings of the inner teachings of Torah outward, and for a long time have even reached **completion** in the work of *shlichus*, according to the announcement of my sainted father-in-law mentioned above. Nevertheless, the true and complete Redemption has not yet actually come. It must be said, then, that there must be something that remains to be done that will bring the Redemption into reality.

What is needed is the following: It is known that "in every generation an individual descended from Yehuda is born who is qualified to be the Moshiach for Israel,"¹³ and that "one who qualifies because of his righteousness to be the Redeemer and when the time arrives G-d will be revealed to him and send him, etc."¹⁴ And according to the announcement of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the singular *shliach* of our generation, the singular Moshiach of our generation, that everything has already concluded, it's understood that there has begun to be fulfilled the "send now the one You will send,"¹⁵ the *shlichus* of my sainted father-in-law. And therefore it's obvious that the only thing that now remains in the work of *shlichus* is **to greet our righteous Moshiach in actual reality**, in order that he should be able to fulfill his *shlichus* in actuality and bring all the Jews out of exile!

...This then must be the practical lesson that results as we gather

princes is Moshiach. Translator's note.]

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, ff.

15. *Shmos* 4:13. [In the passage from *Exodus* referenced in note 9, Moses demurs from the *shlichus*, or mission, of redeeming the Jewish people. His last protest before accepting the *shlichus* are the words quoted. This phrase, "send now the one You will send" is classically seen as a reference to Moshiach. Thus, Moses asked G-d to send Moshiach immediately. This - the immediate sending of Moshiach - was also the *shlichus* of the Previous Rebbe. Translator's note.]

yet "her years were perfect." Since this is a unique phenomenon, her example is cited to illustrate this concept.

Nevertheless, since the lessons taught by the Torah are extremely precise, it is unlikely that this is the *only* reason the *Midrash* associates this idea with Sarah. Indeed, the reason stated above — that her days were full despite the fact that she died before her time — does not contribute anything to our understanding. Moreover, the implication is that the concept of "complete years" shares more of a connection with Sarah than with other righteous people.

Another question arises: What is the intent in describing the righteous as "perfect"? It could not be to indicate that they are perfect in their observance of the 613 *mitzvos*, for this can be inferred by the very word "righteous." This applies even when considering the simple meaning of the term; how much more so when taking into consideration the meaning as described in *Tanya*.⁷

By using the term "perfect," the *Midrash* appears to be pointing to an attribute of the righteous aside from their observance of *mitzvos*. What is this quality?

A further point: When the Torah associates two concepts, the implication is that there is an inner link, or that one concept leads to the other. So when the *Midrash* says: "Just as they are perfect, so too their years are perfect," it is hinting that the perfection of the righteous shares an inner connection with, or leads to, the perfection of their years.

This is difficult to understand. On the surface, the very fact that these individuals are righteous and have carried out their Divine service in observing the *mitzvos* is sufficient reason for "their days to be perfect." (As stated above, the promise to "fill the span of your days" refers to a reward granted for continuous Divine service.) It is thus necessary to understand why the *Midrash* associates the perfection of a

7. Ch. 10.

righteous person's years with the perfection of the righteous person himself.

IS ADVANCED AGE AVRAHAM'S GREATNESS?

The above difficulties can be resolved by referring to a comment of the *Midrash* on another verse in this Torah reading. On the verse,⁸ "Avraham was old, advanced in years," the *Midrash* comments:⁹ "There are men who are old, but who are not advanced in years, and others who [appear] advanced in years, but are not old. In this instance, his age paralleled his advancement in years, and his advancement in years paralleled his age."

The commentaries to the *Midrash*¹⁰ explain that there are times when a person appears elderly although he is not advanced in years, e.g., R. Elazar ben Azariah, who looked like an old man, despite the fact that he was only 18.¹¹ And conversely, there are men who are advanced in years but who appear much younger. In Avraham's instance, his appearance matched his chronological age.

This entire passage is somewhat problematic, because both an elderly appearance and chronological age are seemingly superficial qualities. How could they express the greatness of Avraham our Patriarch?

"Avraham possessed singular uniqueness."¹² In a world of idolaters, he was the only one who worshipped G-d. It was he who "began to illuminate,"¹³ reflecting G-dly light within the world. Avraham ushered in a new epoch in the world's history — the two millennia of Torah.¹⁴ Why then did the Torah

8. *Bereishis* 24:1.

9. *Bereishis Rabbah* 59:6.

10. R. Zaeve Wolf Einhorn et al.

11. *Berachos* 28a.

12. *Yechezkel* 33:24. Note the interpretation of this verse by the *Tzemach Tzedek* cited in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5710, p. 144.

13. *Shmos Rabbah* 15:26; *Bereishis Rabbah* 2:3.

14. *Avodah Zarah* 9a.

We also see (as mentioned many times) that many of the signs of the Redemption have been fulfilled in the events of the world, beginning with the sign (in *Yalkut Shimoni*⁴) that "the time for your Redemption has arrived" when "the nations incite one another."⁵ This has taken place particularly in the Arab countries.

...And we see in reality how it was and it will be that "he will fight the wars of G-d"⁶ and be victorious in various situations, and specifically through a war of peace.⁷ And "victory" is also an expression of "eternity,"⁸ connected with the revelation of "Endurance":⁹ Nun - revelation of the 50th gate;¹⁰ Tzaddik - the ninetieth year (as Jewish people have designated the year);¹¹ and Ches - the revelation of our righteous Moshiach, who is connected with the number eight (eight princes of man¹²).

4. *Yeshayahu*, *remez* 499.

5. *Midrash Lekach Tov*, *Lech Lecha* 14:1. See also *Bereishis Rabbah*, chapter 42, 4.

6. Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, chapter 11, halacha 4.

7. [*"Fighting the wars of G-d" is one of the qualifications an individual must meet before being presumed to be Moshiach. There is no necessity, however, for the war to involve bloodshed or even to be on a physical level (as the fight for spirituality and observance of mitzvos may also properly be described as a "war of G-d.") Hence the expression "a war of peace." Translator's note.*]

8. [*The word for "victory" in Hebrew - nitzachon - is etymologically related to the Hebrew word for "eternity" - nitzchiyus. Translator's note.*]

9. [*"Endurance" - Netzach, in Hebrew - is one of the ten Sefiros, or Divine Attributes through which the universe is created. It is etymologically related to nitzachon and nitzchiyus (victory and eternity, respectively) Its three Hebrew letters - nun, tzadik and gimmel - are here used not just as the letters of a word but as an acronym revealing a deeper meaning of the word.. Translator's note.*]

10. [*A reference to the fiftieth and final gate of Wisdom. Translator's note.*]

11. [*The numerical value of the letter Tzadik is 90. This discourse was delivered in the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach's 90th year. Translator's note.*]

12. *Sukkah* 52:b. [*The numerical value of the letter Ches is 8. The passage in the Talmud referenced in note 6 discusses a verse in the prophetic book of Micah that mentions seven shepherds and eight princes. In the Talmudic discussion, each of the shepherds and princes is identified. One of the eight*

48

The most recent innovation in the work of *shlichus** is: **to receive our righteous Moshiach in the true and complete Redemption.** Indeed, the preparation for the coming of our righteous Moshiach is the most all encompassing aspect of Judaism and includes all the other points and details of the work of *shlichus*.

As has already been said many times, according to the declaration of our Sages of blessed memory¹ "all the appointed times have passed." According to my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that teshuvah has already been done, to the extent that all aspects of Divine service have already been completed (even "polishing the buttons"²), and we therefore stand ready to greet our righteous Moshiach. The work of *shlichus* must be to prepare in reality to **actually** greet our righteous Moshiach.

Thus the goal of today's international convention of *shluchim*³ is: to produce good resolutions of how to accomplish the special *shlichus* of these times: greeting our righteous Moshiach.

...It was already mentioned earlier that my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, had declared that already all aspects of Divine service have already ended and we stand prepared ("stand all of you prepared") to greet our righteous Moshiach.

* [*"Shlichus" comes from the word "to send." Thus a "Shliach" is an emissary or messenger and "shlichus" is the mission or purpose for which he is sent. The term "shlichus" here refers to the goal of Chassidism in general, and Chabad in particular; to spread the wellsprings of Torah, increase observance of mitzvos and be a resource for one's fellow Jew, materially and spiritually. Translator's note.*]

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.
 2. See the talk of Simchas Torah 5689.
 3. [*"Shluchim" is the plural of "Shliach," hence it means "emissaries."* Translator's note.]

choose to associate his greatness with chronological age and an elderly appearance? The fact that the Torah makes such an association, nevertheless, indicates that there is indeed something about the possession of these two qualities which expresses Avraham's greatness.

SPIRITUAL, RATHER THAN MATERIAL ATTRIBUTES

The terms used by the Torah for these two qualities: זקן and בא בימים are both subject to interpretation by our Sages: זקן is interpreted¹⁵ as "one who acquired wisdom." בא בימים is interpreted¹⁶ as meaning: "He comes with his days," i.e., there was not a single day in which Avraham did not observe *mitzvos*. (This refers, of course, to the *mitzvos* as they existed before the giving of the Torah.)

Thus the two qualities mentioned by the Torah refer to two spiritual qualities. זקן refers to the perfection of Avraham's soul — that his soul acquired wisdom. בא בימים refers to what he accomplished — that he was able to fill each day with *mitzvos*.

The intent is not to report merely that Avraham performed many *mitzvos*, but to indicate that each of his days was *filled* with *mitzvos*. Were the purpose to say only that *mitzvos* contributed to his personal development, it would not make any difference whether he had fulfilled these *mitzvos* on every one of his days, or he had performed the same number of *mitzvos* on one day. For with regard to his soul, we are speaking about the same amount of *mitzvos*. The attribute of זקן refers to what one has accomplished in each of one's days. It therefore follows that each day is associated with a particular *mitzvah*.

15. *Kiddushin* 32b. See *Toras Kohanim* and *Rashi* to *Vayikra* 19:32, which explain that the association is implied by the letters of the word זקן. See also *Taamei HaMitzvos*, at the conclusion of *Parshas Kedoshim*.

16. See *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 224a; *Torah Or* 16a; *Yahel Or* to *Tehillim* 139:16 (sec. 5).

TWO DIRECTIONS OF GROWTH

6

In general, the difference between the Torah and its *mitzvos* can be explained as follows:¹⁷ The Torah is G-d's wisdom, an intellectual and spiritual entity. When a Jew studies the Torah, he advances and develops his soul. *Mitzvos*, by contrast, are en clothed in material existence. Their performance is not intended primarily for the development of the soul, but rather to illuminate the material dimensions of the world at large, and in this way transform it into a dwelling for G-d.

Therefore, when speaking about wisdom (i.e., the Torah), our Sages use the expression: "one who has acquired wisdom," for the intent is to say that one brings the Torah's wisdom into one's soul. When, however, the Torah speaks about the performance of *mitzvos*, it uses the expression, בא בימים, implying that the person's energy is directed outward; through his observance of *mitzvos*, he refines the world. And this involves the passage of time — a fundamental aspect of our material realm — as indicated by the expression "advanced in years."

There is another point alluded to by the use of an expression involving time. In contrast to material entities which remain unchanged, e.g., the heavenly bodies, the sun and the stars, which are "as strong as they were on the day they were created,"¹⁸ time involves change.

Even on the earth, there are entities that have been endowed with a measure of eternity, e.g., the Sanctuary,¹⁹ the ark and the anointing oil²⁰ made by Moshe are eternal. At present, they are entombed, but in the Era of the Redemption, they will emerge. G-d's intent, however, is that a dwelling for

In our days we have completed all the requisite actions and Divine service, in all the details symbolized by the "hundred years," the "twenty years," and the "seven years" associated with the age of the Matriarch Sarah's passing, years which like Sarah's were all equally good.¹

This is consistent with the words of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, that we have already polished the buttons² and we therefore stand ready³ to receive our righteous Moshiach.

More particularly, since then several decades have elapsed, during which time the Jewish people have cried out "*ad mosai* - how long must we remain in exile!" (which must also have a limit)

May it thus be G-d's Will -- that the true and complete Redemption, through our righteous Moshiach, will occur immediately.

(From the Ma'amar "Vayihyu Chayei Sarah, 5751" - Sefer HaMa'amarim melukat, vol. V p. 60)

17. See *Tanya*, chs. 23 and 37, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, the conclusion of Epistle 20.
 18. See the *Jerusalem Talmud* (*Berachos* 1:1). See the *Tzemach Tzedek's* introduction to his *Sefer HaChakirah* (the *maamar* entitled *Siu Marom Eineichem*) and in sec. 1, ch. 3. See also the series of *maamarim* entitled *Mayim Rabbim* 5636, ch. 33.
 19. *Sotah* 9a.
 20. *Kerisus* 5b; *Rambam, Hilchos Beis HaBechirah* 4:1.

1. [The age of Sarah is presented in the Torah (*Bereishis* 23:1): "The life of Sarah was a hundred years, twenty years and seven years." The Rebbe explains in his discourse how these three time periods of Sarah's life relate to different aspects of her soul which were permeated with Divinity and goodness. The same is true of the cumulative service of the Jewish people; it is complete not only in a general and peripheral manner, but it has penetrated into the inner dynamics of the Jewish nation's character, represented by the numbers hundred, twenty and seven. See the original discourse for the elaboration of these concepts. Translator's note.]
 2. Talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.
 3. See *Igros Kodesh Admor MaHaRayatz, vol. IV, beg p. 279.*

to Moshiach, as specified in the Yalkut Shimoni:⁸ "The year in which the King Moshiach will be revealed... the king of Persia will be in conflict with the Arabian king... All the nations of the world will be in turmoil and terror." (Indeed, we have clearly seen how confused and disoriented the nations of the world were, not knowing how to react, groping for solutions, etc.) And G-d says to Israel, "My children do not fear. Whatever I have done, I have done only for your sake... the time for your Redemption has arrived." The Yalkut then continues: "The King Moshiach... will stand on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash⁹ and proclaim to Israel: "Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived." As was, and continues, to be proclaimed, especially most recently.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah,
22 Mar-Cheshvan, 5751)

Him be established in this material world,²¹ the lowest of realms. As such, the dwelling must encompass even those aspects of material existence which are affected by change. This is implied by the expression "advanced in years."

WORKING WITH ONESELF AND WITH OTHERS

Based on the above, we can understand the uniqueness of the fact that Avraham's chronological age paralleled his appearance. The implication is that his personal development (זקן) was thoroughly coupled with his achievements in the world (בא בימים). These are two different — and to a certain degree, opposite — thrusts, and there are few who can combine them. For example, the text *Maggid Meisharim*²² relates that R. Yosef Karo was told that he had merited to die as a martyr, and to be burnt *al Kiddush HaShem*, for the Sanctification of G-d's Name. Afterwards, however, because of an incidental factor, he was not granted this opportunity.

Had he died a martyr's death, he would have reached the peak of personal development (זקן), but would not have been able to compose the *Shulchan Aruch*, the text which serves as the guideline for Jewish law; the merit of the composition of that text would have been given to another individual. In actuality, R. Yosef Karo *did* author the *Shulchan Aruch*. He thereby made a contribution to the world at large (בא בימים), but at the expense of achieving the peak of martyrdom. For himself, his personal development would have been crowned by such self-sacrifice, and indeed, having that rung withheld is considered a punishment.

In Avraham's instance, there was no such dichotomy. His personal development and his achievements in the world were perfectly coupled. It is therefore appropriate that the *Midrash* singles out Avraham as the one who began to illuminate the world with G-dly light.

21. *Tanya*, ch. 36.

22. *Parshas Bereishis*, *Parshas Emor*, and *Parshas Bechukosai*.

8. *Yeshayahu* 499.

9. Note the emphasis of the Midrash that "he will stand on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash" - the roof being a part of the Temple which was not sanctified (Pesachim 85, end b. Rambam, Hilchos Beis HeBechirah 6:7). It may be suggested that this alludes to the fact that the announcement "Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived," comes from the diaspora which has not been sanctified with the holiness of Eretz Yisrael, analogous to the distinction between the roof of the Beis HaMikdash and the Beis HaMikdash itself.

THE TRAILBLAZER OF THE TORAH'S PATH

The above also enables us to understand the statement of our Sages that Avraham's Divine service began "the two millennia of Torah." As reflected in the expression,²³ "The deeds of the Patriarchs are a sign for their descendants," the Divine service of the Patriarchs, and particularly of Avraham, the first Jew, began the preparations for the giving of the Torah.

The giving of the Torah brought about a fusion between the material and the spiritual realms. To quote the illustration given by the *Midrash*:²⁴

To what can the matter be likened? To a king who made a decree: the inhabitants of Rome will not descend to Syria, and the inhabitants of Syria will not ascend to Rome.

In a similar way, when G-d created the world, He decreed:²⁵ "The heavens are the heavens of G-d, and earth He has granted to man." When He desired to give the Torah, He nullified this initial decree, saying the lower realms will ascend to the higher realms, and the higher realms will descend to the lower realms.

The giving of the Torah made it possible for spirituality to be fused with material existence through the observance of the *mitzvos*. The preparations for this fusion began with the Divine service of Avraham our Patriarch, for this fusion was reflected in his efforts. This is illustrated by the coupling of his efforts toward personal development (זקן) with his achievements in the world at large (בא בימים).

The righteous men who existed before Avraham, in the two millennia of *Tohu* (the term means "void," for these 2,000 years did not share any connection to the giving of the Torah) lacked this drive towards fusion. Their Divine service

23. See the sources mentioned in the *sichah* of *Parshas Lech Lecha*, note 8.

24. *Shmos Rabbah* 12:3.

25. *Tehillim* 115:16.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

study of the revealed parts of Torah;³ the propagation of Torah and Judaism, including - and with special emphasis on - the establishment of new institutions; and the fortification and strengthening of the existing institutions of Torah, prayer (Divine service) and loving kindness - shall hasten and bring immediately the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

Then, according to the *Midrash*, we will say specifically to the Patriarch Yitzchak, "That you are our father,"⁴ and thus we will be called "Toldos Yitzchak - the offspring of Isaac."

The reference of the Redemption to Yitzchak gains added importance because of the connection to my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation - whose second (and final) name was Yitzchak, since already in his time he declared that all of our service was completed, including the "polishing of the buttons."⁵ He therefore directed and empowered us to "stand ready all of you"⁶ to greet our righteous Moshiach. How much more so is this true in our own day.

The relationship between the future Redemption and Yitzchak becomes even more significant when we consider the recent developments involving the "offspring of Yishmael" (discussed in the conclusion of this week's Torah portion). Generally speaking, conflicts among nations - any nation - constitute one of the signs of Redemption. As our sages said:⁷ "If you see nations provoking one another, anticipate the footsteps of Moshiach." Involvement of the "descendants of Yishmael" in the conflict magnifies the connection

3. [As indeed several matters of the revealed part of Torah can be found in this additional discourse of the *Rebbe Rashab* which was recently discovered and distributed. *Translator's note.*]

4. *Yeshayahu* 63:16. *Shabbos* 89b.

5. Talk of *Simchas Torah* 5689.

6. His *Igros Kodesh*, vol. IV, beg. p. 279.

7. *Bereishis Rabba*, 42:4. *Midrash Lekach Tov, Lech Lecha* 14:1.

The Announcement Of The Redemption

5

[This talk refers to the publication, and the Rebbe's subsequent distribution to men, women and children, of two special treatises by the Rebbe Rashab. The first, "Kuntres Eitz HaChaim," was written shortly after the Rebbe Rashab founded the Yeshivah Tomchei Temimim and appointed his son and successor, the Rebbe Rayatz, director. In "Kuntres Eitz HaChaim" he outlines the objective of the founding of the Yeshivah and what was expected from its students. The second treatise was a previously unpublished Chassidic discourse of the Rebbe Rashab.]

...One of the reasons for the publication of the special edition of *Kuntres Eitz HaChaim* and its distribution to all the men, women and children at the conclusion of the Rebbe Rashab's birthday on the 20th of MarCheshvan (which led into this erev Shabbos)... is to emphasize that all these words of the *Kuntres Eitz HaChaim* have retained their power and perfection (with even added force) through the leadership of his son and successor, my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the "director" of the Yeshivah Tomchei Temimim. This is especially true since forty years after his passing "one can fathom the ideas of his teacher."¹

Consequently, the service of the third generation (from the Rebbe Rashab), the generation of Redemption, has already been completed. Concerning this generation, it is said: "On the third day He will raise them up and we will live before Him."²

...May it be G-d's will that: the increased study of the teachings of Chassidus and its dissemination, along with an increase in the

encompassed either personal development or efforts within the world; there was no fusion of the two.

This reflects the spiritual climate of the era of *Tohu*. As explained in *Chassidus*,²⁶ the emotional attributes of *Tohu* were each revealed independently, without any interrelation. As such, each attribute did not allow for the expression of any other.

To apply these concepts in terms of our Divine service: There were righteous men whose service focused only on personal development (יָקָן). To cite an example from a later period, consider Ben Azzai, who did not marry, saying "My soul firmly desires the Torah."²⁷ He devoted himself to Torah study without having anything to do with worldly matters.

Similarly, before Avraham's time, there were others who devoted themselves solely to efforts with others (בָּא בַיָּמִים)²⁸ without seeking personal development. Avraham was the first to fuse both thrusts.

To emphasize this, the *Midrash* highlights the fact that Avraham possessed both qualities. It's true that others, e.g., Yehoshua and David, as cited in the *Midrash*, also possessed both qualities, but Avraham was *the first*.

26. See the *maamar* entitled *VehaOretz Hoysa Tohu*, 5568, and *Likkutei Torah, Emor*, the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *VeHeinif*.

27. *Yevamos* 63b.

28. This does not contradict our Sages' statement that "Before Avraham, the world perpetuated in darkness." For although in the two millennia of *Tohu*, there were righteous men whose service centered on bringing light to the world, since they lacked the personal development implied by the service of יָקָן, they were not able to draw down spiritual light in its pristine state. Instead, the light became encloded in material trappings. As such, the situation which prevailed in the world could be described as darkness.

To explain the above: As mentioned, the word יָקָן is associated with the phrase "one who acquired knowledge." Acquisition (קָיָן, in Hebrew) implies that an object is transferred from one owner to another, but that it does not undergo any fundamental change. On the contrary, it remains as it was, with its full strength (see *Torah Or*, the beginning of *Parshas Mishpatim*). Unless a person acquires Divine light in this manner, the light which he conveys to others will already have undergone concealment.

1. *Avodah Zara* 5b3)

2. *Hoshea* 6:2. See *Metzudas David* there.

This was the beginning of the two millennia of Torah. For the purpose of the Torah is to unify different and even opposite tendencies, as the *Rambam* states:²⁹ “In its entirety, the Torah was given to establish peace within the world.” And peace implies the coordination and fusion of opposing tendencies, thrusts which require that peace be established between them.

A SINGLE PATH IS NOT SUFFICIENT

Like all the narratives of the Torah, the narrative which relates that Avraham was “Old, advanced in years,” serves as a directive for our Divine service.³⁰ There are some individuals who continuously pursue worldly achievement, without showing any concern for their own development. Others devote their energies to furthering their own spiritual development.

This is a never-ending process. For the further a person proceeds in his spiritual development, the more he realizes the endlessness of his journey and the need to proceed onward. “As one increases knowledge, one increases pain,”³¹ i.e., the pain of knowing that there is an untouched frontier ahead. And as one advances, one desires to advance even further, as reflected in our Sages’ statement:³² “Whoever possesses 100 desires 200.” Involved in his desire for personal growth, such a person may forget about spreading light to his surroundings.

Avraham’s fusion of these qualities teaches us that every Jew must endeavor to achieve both זקן and בא בימים, and establish harmony between the two. For as mentioned previ-

29. *Mishneh Torah*, the conclusion of *Hilchos Chanukah*.

30. See *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 53b.

31. *Koheles* 1:18.

32. *Koheles Rabbah* 1:13. See also *Shaarei Teshuvah* of Rabbeinu Yonah Vol. II, p. 27, the commentary of *Ramban* and Rabbeinu Bachaye to the conclusion of *Parshas Chayei Sarah*.

this world. This runs contrary to the thrust of בא בימים, involvement in the world, and relates more to the thrust of זקן, seeking one’s own personal development. Therefore the *Midrash* underscores the fact that despite the strength of this thrust, “her years were perfect,” i.e., she also possessed the advantage of בא בימים.

TORAH’S INNER DIMENSION

The above concepts share a special connection to this year, as reflected by the fact that this Torah portion is read on the *Shabbos* during which the month of Kislev is blessed. Kislev is the third month, the month in which *Pnimityus HaTorah*, the inner dimension of the Torah, is revealed.⁴¹ *Pnimityus HaTorah* represents the ultimate fusion of opposite thrusts, as the *Zohar* states:⁴² “There (in *Pnimityus HaTorah*), there are no questions which stem from the side of evil, nor any differences of opinion which stem from the spirit of impurity.” On the contrary, this approach is characterized by peace and synthesis.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah*, 5722)



41. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. I, *Parshas Vayishlach*, which states: “In the third month after Nissan (which relates to the Divine service of the righteous), the revealed Torah was given. In the third month after Tishrei (which relates to the Divine service of *baalei teshuvah*), *Pnimityus HaTorah* was revealed.”

42. Vol. III, p. 124b, explained in *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 26.

Even a person whose Divine service centers on one vector alone can be described as righteous, as mentioned previously with regard to the righteous men who lived during the two millennia of *Tohu*. Perfection, by contrast, implies that a person's Divine service is multi-faceted; that it is perfect in both thrusts of Divine service, following the example by which Avraham initiated the two millennia of Torah.

Because “they — the righteous — are perfect..., their years are perfect.” Just as in their own Divine service they unify two opposite tendencies, so too, “their years are perfect,” the years (i.e., the changes⁴⁰ they undergo) are perfect. They are able to manifest their spiritual perfection even in matters which are subject to change, making them also perfect.

For this reason, our Sages described Sarah at the time of her death as “perfect.” For it was Avraham and Sarah who began the preparations for the giving of the Torah; they blazed the path towards unity and synthesis which brought opposite thrusts together.

This concept also relates to the explanation given previously, that Sarah's years are described as perfect, despite the fact that she died before her time. Although “her soul expired” at the time of the *akeidah*, “her years were perfect.” This reflects a fusion of two opposite thrusts. The expiration of a person's soul reflects a desire to rise above the limits of

relations with other created beings. “Righteous” refers to his relations with the Holy One, blessed be He.

The *Ritva* continues explaining that with regard to the *Sefiros*, the term *tzaddik*, “righteous,” refers either to the level of *tzaddik elyon* or *tzaddik tachton* (which relate to the *Sefirah* of *Yesod*). *Tamim* refers to the *Sefirah* of *Malchus*, and thus is identified with *Knesset Yisrael*, the Jewish people, so called because they gather in (*konsos*) [the influence of] all the *Sefiros* which are above.

See *Sichas Chof Alef Kislev*, 5673 (*Toras Sholom*, p. 178ff) which explains these spiritual rungs in a slightly different manner.

40. In Hebrew, the word שנה, “year” and שינוי, “change,” share a similar root. See *Avodas HaKodesh*, Vol. IV, ch. 19; *Or HaTorah*, Mikeitz 338b.

ously, the Torah is characterized by unity, harmony, and peace.

CREATING A DWELLING FOR G-D

Although there is a need for effort along both paths, *Chasidus* places greater emphasis on בא בימים, the drive to refine the world at large. This can be explained based on the chasidic interpretation³³ of our Sages' statement:³⁴ “One hour of *teshuvah* and good deeds in this world is better than all the life of the World to Come.”

The World to Come reflects the pleasure which man, a created being, will experience from the revelation of G-dliness. Our Divine service of *teshuvah* and good deeds, by contrast, brings G-d pleasure. This Divine pleasure is incomparably greater than the pleasure experienced by man, for in no way can a created being and his pleasure be equated with the Creator and His pleasure. As such, the *teshuvah* and good deeds we perform in this world surpass the pleasure we will experience in the World to Come.

In a similar vein, the Divine service associated with the quality of יקן, i.e., a person's own development, cannot be compared with the service associated with בא בימים, illuminating the world at large. For it is the latter service which fulfills G-d's intent in creation, establishing a dwelling for Him in this world. And this brings Him pleasure.

For this reason, the Rebbeim always highlighted the importance of carrying out G-d's intention in creation, by expressing that intent in the lowest levels of existence — material entities that are subject to time and change.

The Divine service which transforms this world into a dwelling for G-d is more relevant in the present age — a time of darkness and concealment — than ever before. This is

33. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *VeKachah*, 5637, ch. 12.

34. *Avos* 4:17.

particularly true here in America, where attention is so focused on material things. Moreover, this desire for material things is subject to the vicissitudes of change. For example, every day one needs a different wardrobe³⁵; otherwise a person feels that he or she is lacking. It is particularly in such an environment that it is necessary to transform these material entities, which are in constant flux, into a dwelling for He of whom it is said:³⁶ “I G-d have not changed.”

WHEN ONE’S DIVINE SERVICE FLUCTUATES

The Divine service associated with *בא בימים* is relevant, not only with regard to one’s efforts in the world at large, but with regard to one’s own self. Every Jew has certain *mitzvos* which he observes continually and habitually. For one person, it will be the *mitzvah* of charity which he will be more accustomed to fulfilling. For another, it will be the punctilious recitation of the *Shema*, and for a third, it will be still another *mitzvah*. Every person has, however, certain *mitzvos* which he does not observe with such regularity. On the contrary, his observance of these *mitzvos* fluctuates from time to time, and he must apply more effort to observe them.

The person might thus think: Why should I put effort into matters that will not become ingrained in my character easily? It seems more profitable to invest energy in those matters which will be perpetuated. Moreover, the fact that the observance of certain *mitzvos* comes more naturally to him, and are not subject to change, indicates (apparently, and perhaps in truth), that they share a deeper connection to his soul, the fundamental Jewish spark which is above change. As such, one might conclude that it would be preferable to enhance those energies which are more closely related to this essence.

35. The spiritual import of clothes is discussed in the *maamar* entitled *Mizmor Shir Chanukas HaBayis* (Likkutei Torah at the conclusion of *Parshas Berachah*).

36. *Malachi* 3:6.

In this context, Avraham’s service of *בא בימים* teaches each of us the importance of having our Divine service encompass matters which are subject to change, for it is through such service that G-d’s desire for a dwelling in the lower realms is accomplished.

As explained in the writings of the *AriZal*, and in *Chasidus*,³⁷ every soul has a particular *mitzvah*, and a mission to achieve certain goals, which lead to the fulfillment of its purpose in descending into this world. The fact that difficulties arise with regard to certain matters indicates that the essence of one’s mission *involves* these matters. Since this is the fundamental duty with which the person is charged, the *yetzer hora* (evil inclination) presents the greatest challenges to hinder its fulfillment.³⁸

As such it is demanded of every Jew that he or she not despair should certain dimensions of the Torah and its *mitzvos* not be thoroughly ingrained within their nature, or if from time to time their observance becomes weaker. Indeed, even if, heaven forbid, one begins to doubt the fundamentals of one’s faith, one should not lose hope. On the contrary, one should concentrate one’s Divine service precisely in those areas where fluctuation is felt. When one does this, one’s efforts will surely be reinforced with help from above.

SARAH’S PERFECTION

On the above basis, we can comprehend the wording of our Sages’ statement: “Just as they are perfect, so too, their years are perfect,” and also comprehend the advantage which this attribute of perfection contributes to a righteous person.³⁹

37. *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, the conclusion of Epistle 7; *Sichas Shushan Purim* 5700, *Kuntres Yud Beis Tammuz*, 5708.

38. See the *sichah* of *Parshas Bereishis* in this series, which focuses on this concept.

39. See the gloss of the *Ritva* to *Avodah Zarah* 6a which highlights the description of Noach (*Bereishis* 6:9) as “a perfect righteous man.” “Perfect” refers to his