

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
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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
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** תח"ל
Shagalov

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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 I: *Bereishit*

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In English rendition
with Introduction and Notes
by
Jacob Immanuel Schochet

VAYISHLACH
19th OF KISLEV*

וישלח
י"ט כסלו

A

I. On the verse, 'I have sojourned (*garty*) with Laban,'^a Rashi comments: The word *garty* has the numerical value of *t'ryag* (613), implying that 'Though I have sojourned with the wicked Laban, I have observed the 613 *mitzvot*.'

But this raises some questions: (a) What relationship is there between this interpretation (*drash*) of 'I have observed the *t'ryag* (a term made up of the same letters as *garty*¹) *mitzvot*' and the plain sense (*pshat*)^b of *garty*

* [*Yud-Tet Kislev* (the nineteenth day of *Kislev*) is a universal Chassidic festival commemorating the release from prison of the *Alter Rebbe*, R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi, in the year 5559 (1798). The *Rebbe* had been persecuted and arrested for disseminating the teachings of Chassidut. *Yud-Tet Kislev* thus marks not only a personal victory for the *Alter Rebbe* and his followers, but, more significantly, it signifies the ultimate vindication of Chassidism in general. As such it has come to be known as the *Rosh Hashanah* (New Year) for Chassidism. (For a full account of this event and its significance, see *The Arrest and Liberation of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi — The History of Yud-Tet Kislev*, published by Kehot.)

This day is also the *yahrtzeit* (anniversary of the passing) of R. Dov Ber, the *Maggid* of Mezhiroch, disciple and successor of the *Baal Shem Tov* and principal master of the *Alter Rebbe*.

As *Yud-Tet Kislev* usually falls close to *parshat Vayishlach*, some *sichot* of this *parshah* discuss the significance of this day.]

a. [Genesis 32:4].

1. See *Midrash Lekach Tov*, and *Midrash Hagadol*, *ad loc.*

b. [*Pshat* is the literal meaning or plain sense of Scripture, and *drash* (resp. *drush*) is its hermeneutical or homiletical interpretation. (Cf. *above*, *Vayeitze*, end of section XIII and note *ff ad loc.*) Though the *drash* introduces a new and different perspective, it must remain related to the *pshat* and cannot be altogether out of context. (Cf. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. III, p. 782, and *ibid.*, pp. 896, 924, and 1014.)

Rashi states frequently that the objective of his commentary is to expound the *plain sense* of Scripture (e.g., see his commentary on Genesis 3:8

which is an idiom of *ger* (stranger; alien), and thus refers to a stranger's sojourn? (b) What purpose was there in informing Esau that 'I have observed the 613 *mitzvot*'? And (c), what is the instruction relevant to us?

II. 'I have *sojourned* with Laban' means that all aspects of Laban, all the physical objects of 'oxen, donkeys, flocks, and manservants and handmaids,'^c were to Jacob no more than *garty* — something alien and strange. They were not his true self.

His true home was the soul and the aspects of Torah and *mitzvot*. All material things were no more than *gerut* (a sojourn of a stranger).

Thus later in the *sidrah* we are told that 'he built for himself a house and made booths for his cattle'²: 'For himself,' for his true being, i.e., the soul and its concerns — he built a house, a permanent dwelling-place; 'for his cattle,' that is, for the material objects which are something supplementary, acquired, he made booths, i.e., a temporary dwelling-place. (For the soul *per se*, and especially the soul on high — i.e., as it is before descending to be vested in a physical body — has no need for 'cattle.' In fact, the soul has no point of contact with it, and material objects are 'acquired' only when she descends to this world.)

The *Rebbe*, my father-in-law, once quoted a saying of the *Maggid* of Mezhirech:³ 'At home it is different! At home one does need everything. On a journey, however,

and 3:24; etc.). Though he includes also the other levels of interpretation, these are cited in the context of the *pshat* (cf. *Likkutei Sichot*, vol. V, p. 1, and the notes *ad loc.*). As Rashi explains our verse according to both the literal meaning and the cited *drash* of *garty*, there must be a clear relationship between them.]

c. [Genesis 32:5].

2. [Genesis 33:17] Cf. *Boneh Yerushalayim*, p. 95.

3. *Likkutei Diburim*, vol. II, p. 427.

[See *The Great Maggid*, p. 24f.]

it does not matter if the (transitory) dwelling and furniture are not so beautiful; and after all, he is on a journey.'

We can now understand the relationship between the plain sense of the text and its interpretation: Jacob 'so-journed with Laban' (*garty*) because for him material objects were alien, on a plane of *geyrut*; thus they did not disturb or obstruct his spiritual life and he was able to achieve — 'I have observed the 613 (*t'ryag*) *mitzvot*.'

III. Moreover, by keeping the material concerns in a state of *geyrut*, alien-ness, Jacob assured not only that they would not interfere with the spiritual life but also that a dimension of spirituality would be infused even into matter — transforming that matter into something spiritual and holy.

Thus the passage concludes: 'And I have (*li* — lit.: 'there is to me) oxen and donkeys, flocks, and manservants and handmaids.'^d All these came to be *li* — to me, i.e., subordinated to the very essence [spirit] of Jacob.

IV. The *Midrash*⁴ comments on this particular text: '*Chamor* (donkey) refers to the royal Messiah of whom it is said 'lowly and riding upon a donkey . . .'⁵

The coming of the Messiah is contingent upon the *avodah* of *birurim*.⁶ That is, when every Jew purifies his body, his animal soul, and his part in this world,' utilizing

d. [Genesis 32:5].

4. *Bereishit Rabba* 75:6.

5. Zechariah 9:9.

6. *Tanya*, chapter 37.

e. [When the body is used in the context of man's spiritual nature or *avodah*, the physical is subordinated to the spiritual and thus the body is purified (cf. *above*, Toldot, note h). The same applies to (a) man's 'animal' or natural soul — the basic life-force and faculties relating to the natural or physical life of man (see *Tanya*, ch. 1; *above*, Noach, note c) — which is 'purified' when its potential holiness is actualized, and (b) to man's environment or 'part in this world' (see *above*, Vayeira, note g). See *Tanya*, ch. 37 at length, and also *ibid.* ch. 38-39 and 53.]

them for holy purposes, he will bring about the manifestations promised for the future era.

This concept is indicated in the sequence of the verses: 'I have sojourned with Laban . . . And I have oxen and donkeys.' As Jacob regarded physical objects on a plane of *geyrut* and used them as instruments for G-d's purposes — taking the word *garty* literally, that G-d's presence *dwell* in them — he was ready and prepared for the Messiah: 'And I have . . . *chamor* refers to the royal Messiah.'⁷

That is why he sent messengers to Esau, to tell him that he had completed all his *birurim* and was ready for the Messiah. Jacob expected that Esau had completed his own *birurim* as well,⁸ and that even on the part of Esau the redemption was now possible.

The messengers, however, answered that 'We came to your brother, to Esau': 'As far as you are concerned he is already 'your brother,' *you* are ready for the redemption; but he, on his part, still is Esau, *he* is still prior to *birur*, and thus the redemption is not yet possible.'

V. The Torah and its instructions are everlasting, relevant to every Jew in all times and places. The lesson of the above is as follows:

Every Jew must realize that although his environment, the world, may hardly be ready for the redemption because it has not yet been purified and refined, nonetheless, he on his part must still prepare himself and

7. See *supra*, note 4.

8. See *Torah Or*, Vayishlach, p. 24b.

f. [Genesis 32:7. Rashi quoting the *Midrash (Tanchuma-Kadum, Vayishlach, par. 6; cf. Zohar I:167b)*, notes here the double reference of 'your brother' and 'Esau,' and therefore interprets: 'We came to your brother, that is — to him of whom you said he is your brother; but he behaves toward you as Esau the wicked — he is still harboring hatred.' The explanation following here is based on the same distinction.]

everything related to him — ‘flocks, and manservants and handmaids’ — for the complete redemption.

This preparation is by means of ‘I have sojourned with Laban’: the realization that all of this world is no more than *garty* — ‘I am a stranger (*ger*) on the earth.’⁹

No matter what the duration of a person’s life, whether ‘seventy years, or even by reason of strength eighty years,’¹⁰ or ‘his days shall be a hundred and twenty years,’¹¹ these years are no more than *garty*, a stranger’s temporary sojourn. From this perspective, the physical is not in conflict with the spiritual. In fact, this attitude will result in having ‘oxen and donkeys, flocks, and manservants and handmaids’ — prosperity even in the physical sense.

By preparing himself and all his affairs for the redemption, he affects the whole world in like manner. For as the world is evenly-balanced,¹² one good deed on his part will turn the scale in favor of the whole world and bring about the redemption throughout the world.

Maimonides thus rules:¹³ ‘When Israel will do *teshuvah* (return to G-d), they will be redeemed *miyad* (immediately)’; and the *Alter Rebbe* adds, *teykef umiyad* (at once).¹⁴ Thus it follows that regardless of the world’s condition, one can — by means of *teshuvah* — effect a per-

9. Psalms 119:19.

10. Psalms 90:10.

11. Genesis 6:3.

12. See *Kidushin* 40b. — [See above, *Bereishit*, note 9].

13. *Hilchot Teshuvah* VII:5.

14. *Igeret Hateshuvah* [*Tanya*, part III], chapter 11. For the significance of the *Alter Rebbe*’s addition (of the word *teykef* to the original *miyad*) — see *Ta’anit* 19b (‘what is meant by this *miyad*’ etc.), and Rashi on *Shabbat* 89a, *s.v.* ‘*miyad*’ [which show that the term *miyad* is used even where there may be an interval of days or longer], while the word *teykef* [implies literal immediacy, as seen from] *Zevachim* 33a; *Tossafot* on *Shabbat* 39a, *s.v.* ‘*kol*’; and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim*, sect. 166.

sonal redemption as well as the general redemption for the entire world.

VI. Divine Providence governs all particulars. The redemption of the *Alter Rebbe* and Chassidut, on *Yud-Tet Kislev* 5559, occurred in the week following the *parshah* of *Vayishlach* which contains the lesson mentioned.^g

Chassidut confers upon every individual the strength not to be deterred by deplorable conditions of the world around him, but to personally experience the *avodah* of 'I have sojourned (*garty*) with Laban' — thus attaining the 'And I have . . . *chamor*, the royal Messiah.'

Chassidut is a preparation and instrument for the manifestation of the Messiah; for the fulfilment of 'let your springs be dispersed abroad'^h brings about that 'the master (the Messiah) shall come' — speedily in our own days.

(From the *Sicha* of Shabbat Parshat Vayishlach 5716, and 5718)

g. [One of the basic doctrines of Chassidut is the principle of *hashgachah pratit* — G-d's providence extending to all particulars in the universe, from the greatest and most sublime details to the smallest and seemingly least significant. This doctrine is an integral part of the total cosmological perspective of Chassidut, substantiated by Talmudic and Midrashic sources, though it goes beyond the general concept of Divine Providence as discussed in earlier works. For a detailed analysis of the Chassidic doctrine of *hashgachah pratit* in historical context, see *Likutei Sichot*, vol. VIII, pp. 277-284; cf. also *ibid.*, vol. V, p. 63ff.]

As everything is governed by *hashgachah pratit*, no detail can be said to be accidental or coincidental. This must be said also about the fact that the events of *Yud-Tet Kislev* occurred in the week following *parshat Vayishlach*; there must be a relationship between them: the contents of the one illuminate and elucidate the other (see above, *Lech Lecha*, section VI; cf. *Shenei Luchot Haberit*, s.v. *Torah shebiktav*, beginning of *Vayeshev*, noting that all special occasions during the year are related to the *parshah* read in the week they occur, 'for everything is from G-d').]

h. [Proverbs 5:16; see above, *Toldot*, note 99.]

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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The "deeds and Divine service" of all the Jewish people throughout the generations brought about the culmination and perfection of all aspects of refinement to the world, **within the parameters of the world**, as my sainted father-in-law was able to publicize that all aspects of the Divine service have been completed. This includes "polishing the buttons," and everything is ready for the coming of Moshiach.

In particular, this process was effected by the revelation of the teachings of Chassidus on the 19th of Kislev, which was the principal beginning of "your wellsprings will spread farther outward.")¹ From that time onward, the dissemination has progressively increased through our Rabbeim and leaders from generation to generation until the leadership of my sainted father-in-law, through whom the wellsprings spread to the farthest corner of the world.

It follows then that now, as long as our righteous Moshiach delays his coming (for utterly incomprehensible reasons), our Divine service is no longer one of "refinement" (since we have already concluded and perfected the service of refinement), but one unique to bringing the revelation into reality in the world.

The uniqueness of our generation is alluded to in the Haftarah of Parshas Vayishlach - "And² the house of Yaakov will be a fire and the house of Yosef a flame and the house of Eisav straw... and the inhabitants of the South will inherit the mountain of Eisav... and the exiled... until **Tzarfis**... will inherit the cities of the South. And the

1. See *Sefer HaSichos Toras Shalom* end of p. 112 ff.

2. *Ovadyah* 1:18 ff.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

saviors will ascend Har Tzion [Mount Zion] to judge Har Eisav [the mountain of Eisav]."

The "House of Yosef of our generation (my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation whose first name was yosef) distinguishes itself in comparison to former generations, even that of the Alter Rebbe ("The House of Jacob.")³ The innovation of our Yosef is that through him the wellsprings spread to the farthest ends of the world, beyond which there is nothing further, as the country of **Tzarfas** (France). The times of the Alter Rebbe (and also in the times of our Rebbeim and leaders that followed) the revelation of the wellsprings of the Torah of Chassidus was not so well established in France due to its lowly state (to such an extent that the Alter Rebbe feared it might be victorious...⁴). Precisely in our generation, through "the House of Yosef," the wellsprings were revealed and spread even into France, through the establishment there of the Yeshiva "Tomchei Temimim," as in the city of Lubavitch. Therefore, we have actually reached the time of "they will inherit the cities of the South" and "the saviors will ascend to Har Tzion to judge Har Eisav."

This can be expanded and elucidated through an allusion:

"Tzarfas" in Gematria is seven hundred and seventy (770).⁵ This is the perfection of the number seven, since it includes ten sevens (70) and a hundred sevens (700) and both of them together (770).

3. The particular connection between the Alter Rebbe and Yaakov (see at length *Ma'ayanei HaYeshua* (Kehot 5748 p. 101 ff.) should be noted.

4. See *Sefer HaToldos Admur HaZakein* (Kehos 5736) p. 259 ff. And elsewhere. [During the Napoleonic Wars, the Alter Rebbe was a vehement antagonist to Napoleon and the so-called "Enlightenment" he brought with him. Translator's note.]

5. [The number 10 represents completeness, and thus 100 perfection. Here, we have the completeness and perfection of the number 7, which represents the physical world (seven days of Creation, etc. Translator's note.)]

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It may be said that herein is an allusion that in the refinement of France (Tzarfas) lies the overall completion and perfection of the world, which was created in the seven days of building, with all its myriad details.

It should be noted that the refinement of "Tzarfas" which has the numerical value of "770" was accomplished through ("the flame" that is ignited from) "the house of Yosef." This refers to the house of Yosef in its simplest sense, the house which my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, chose and bought and lived in for the last ten years of his life in this world. From there he continued and extended (in an "ever increasing measure") the Divine service of "the house of Yosef - whose number is (the house number in the obvious sense) is "770."

On a deeper level, the letters of "Tzarfas" are the same as "U'faratzta." This implies that the revelation and spreading of the wellsprings are "Tarfes" (breaks through all barriers⁶). The wellsprings not only penetrate to even the lowest possible level (because the barriers of the wellsprings were breached) but this [occurs] from **the perspective of the nether regions**, exemplified by the correspondence of the letters of "Tzarfas" with those of "U'faratzta." Through this is accomplished, "You have broken through⁷ for yourself," and "This is Moshiach, as it says,⁸ "The

6. [The root letters for "Tzarfas" (south, France), "U'faratzta" (spread forth) and Pritzas (breaking through) are the same: Pey, Reish, Tzadik. Thus, the etymological connection indicates a deeper significance. Translator's note.]

7. Vayeishev 38:29. [The Hebrew emphasizes the concept by repeating the word as both verb and noun: "Paratzta alecha paretz," literally, "you have breeched for yourself a barrier." (Note that the f-sound and the p-sound are physiologically related, i.e., made by a closure of the lips. In Hebrew, the same letter is used for both; they are differentiated by an indicator of stress, called a dagesh. Translator's note.)]

8. Micha 2:13.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

breaker [HaPoretz] has gone up before them."⁹

...In these days we really only need to open the eyes and to see the existence in actual reality¹⁰ - that we are sitting together with the Holy One, Blessed be He ("Israel and the Holy One Blessed be He are altogether one"¹¹) at the "Prepared Table" for the wedding feast, the feast of Livyosan, Shor HaBor and Yayin Meshumar.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach, 16 Kislev 5752)

9. *Aggados Bereishis*, end of chapter 63. And see *Bereishis Rabba* end of chapter 85 and in the commentary of Rashi.

10. That is to say, not only is the Divine service completed and the revelation needs to be brought into the world (as mentioned above), but more than this, that it already is actually revealed. All that is needed is to open the eyes, because **already (in the past) "He gave to you... eyes to see."**

11. See *Zohar* Vol. 3 73a.

The unique advantage of the 19th of Kislev of this year is that it occurs after the completion of the **eighty-ninth** year, in Gematria "**Redeem**."¹ The Redemption from every thing that obstructed and hindered the coming of Dovid the King Moshiach, "who reviled the footsteps of your Moshiach," (as Psalm Redeem-89 [PaDaH--Pey-Tes] concludes) has been completed. We find ourselves already in the **ninetieth** [Tzaddik] year, connected with the third Redemption and the third Temple.

...In these times - **the days of Moshiach** - in which we now find ourselves,² we only need "to open the eyes." Then we will see that the true and complete Redemption already exists, in the simple sense. All the Jewish people, "with our youth and our aged, etc., with our sons and our daughters,"³ are prepared, in every single, last detail, "to approach and sit at the table," the table prepared with every delicacy and delight, beginning with those of the Redemption, Livyosan, Shor HaBor⁴ and Yayin Meshumar.⁵ Also, [the Jewish people are ready for] the most important thing, "to know G-d,"⁶ "the world will be filled with knowledge of the L-rd

1. *[This address was given in the Rebbe's 90th year. The Hebrew letters for "89" are "Pey, Tes." The Hebrew word for "Redeem" is spelled "Pey, Daled, Hey." The letter "Tes" has the numerical equivalent of 9; the letter "Daled" has the value of 5 and the letter "Hey" the value of 4. Thus, the word "PaDaH" (Redeem) is numerically equivalent to and therefore connected with the number Pey-Tes (89). Translator's note.]*

2. As mentioned many times by the leader of our generation, my sainted father-in-law, that already much earlier all the appointed times have passed, and all aspects and preparations have been completed, including the buttons, etc.

3. *Bo* 10:9.

4. See *Bava Basra* 75:a. *Vayikra Rabba* chapter 13:3, and in other places.

5. *Brochos* 34:2. And in other places.

6. *Rambam* at the conclusion of his work the *Mishneh Torah*.

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as the waters cover the ocean bed."⁷

*(From the talk of the end of 19 - beginning of 20 Kislev 5752
- in a group private audience)*

7. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

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In all that has been said this year, what requires the most emphasis is what the times require: the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach. As has been said frequently of late, all the requirements have already been completed and we only need to greet our righteous Moshiach in actual reality. This will be hastened even more through learning Torah in general, and in particular through learning all of the Talmud as divided on Yud Tes Kislev, when the inner teachings of Torah were given. For through "engaging in Torah study, etc."¹ one realizes "Redeem my soul in peace"² - "A Redemption for me and my children from the nations of the world,"³ through the true and complete emancipation and Redemption.

*(Pamphlet on the occasion of the completion of the division of the Talmud
for study, 19 Kislev - Sefer HaSichos 5752, p. 491)*

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1. *Brochos* 8a.
 2. *Tehillim* 55:19.
 3. *Brochos* 8a.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mrs. **Chana** (Carrie) bas Reb **Meir** ע"ה **Greenberg**
Passed away on 9 Sivan, 5781

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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CHABAD OF OAK PARK, CALIFORNIA
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yisroel** and **Leah** שיחי **Levine**

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER
Mrs. **Chaya** bas Reb **Avrohom** ע"ה **Hoffman**
Passed away on 20 Kislev, 5769

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

DEDICATED BY HER CHILDREN שיחי

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FREIND
Reb **Yosef Yisroel** ben Reb **Sholom** ע"ה **Rosner**
Passed away on 7 Menachem-Av, 5777

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

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