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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 Vayechi, 5781
(Vol. 12)



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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

לעילוי נשמת

אי"א נו"נ עוסק בצ"צ
איש אמת תם וישר מלאכתו מלאכת שמים
הרה"ח הרה"ת ר' מנחם אהרן
ב"ר יוסף הכהן ע"ה
ראדאל

אהוב לבריות וחביב לכל אדם
קיבל את כולם בסבר פנים יפות
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זכה להיות שליח כ"ק אדמו"ר מה"מ
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קירב משפחות רבות לתורה ומצוות
נטע הכרת הבורא ע"י גילוי נפלאות הבורא
לתלמידים הרבה באהבה
זכה לגדל ולראות בנים ובני בנים
דור ישרים יבורך
עוסקים בתורה ומצוות בדרכי החסידות
ומהם שלוחי המלך
נפטר ביום שני לסדר וטיהרו הכהן
כ"ח ניסן ה'תשע"ז
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
(מנוסח המצבה)

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נדפס ע"י משפחתו שיחיו

VAYECHI

ויחי

A

I. When Jacob blessed his son Asher, he said to him, 'From Asher — his bread [food] shall be fat.'^a Rashi explains this to mean that he will have an abundance of olive-oil: "The food that will come from the territory of Asher will be fat, for there will be numerous olive-trees in his territory so that *it will flow with oil like a fountain*. Moses blessed (the tribe of Asher) in a like manner — 'and he will dip his foot in oil.'^{'1}

We have frequently discussed the idea that all physical things have a spiritual counterpart. (Actually it is the reverse: the spiritual reality is the cause for the emergence of their counterparts in the physical realm.^b If this is the case with worldly matters, how much more so with everything mentioned in the Torah. Everything in the Torah must have a spiritual reality; for every detail of Torah has not only *pshat* (the plain, literal meaning), but also *remez* (allusion), *derush* (allegorical and hermeneutical meaning), and *sod* (mystical or esoteric meaning).^c

a. [Genesis 49:20]

1. Deuteronomy 33:24.

b. [Cf. *Shemot Rabba* 33:4: 'For all that is in Heaven and in the earth' (I Chronicles 29:11) — you will find that everything G-d has created in heaven, He has also created on earth (thus 'All that is in heaven is *also* in the earth'). Cf. R. Dov Ber of Mezhibezh, *Or Torah, Vayeira*, sect. 24; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. II, p. 363 ff.; and also *Mystical Concepts in Chassidism*, chapter I, section 1 (and in particular note 5, quoting R. Isaiah Horowitz, *Shenei Luchot Haberit*, Toldot Adam: Bayit Neeman).]

c. [In the context of the Talmudic passage of the 'Four who entered the *Pardes* (Garden; Orchard)' — *Chagigah* 14b, the *Zohar* reads the word *pardes*

Our generation is the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption, as proclaimed and announced by my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, the Yosef of our generation (named after the first Yosef who proclaimed and announced that "G-d will surely remember you and bring you up from this land to the land that was sworn to Avraham, to Yitzchak and the Yaakov"¹). For all our deeds and Divine service have already been completed, all appointed times have already passed, teshuvah has already been done, and all the preparations have already been finished. In a manner of "great preparation," all is ready for the festive meal² of the time to come, Livyosan, Shor Habor³ and Yayin Meshumar.⁴

(From the talk of the 10th of Teves (may it be transformed into rejoicing), and Shabbos Parshas Vayechi, 14 Teves 5752)

1. Our Parsha 50:24.

2. Based on the expression of our Sages, of blessed memory - Avos, chapter 3, Mishneh 16. Sanhedrin 38a and Rashi's commentary.

3. See *Bava Basra* 75a. And *Vayikra Rabba* chapter 13:3.

4. *Brochos* 34:b. See there for cross references.

king"¹¹ has acquired an exclusively **positive** connotation, one that is **visibly and manifestly good, even to eyes of flesh**. In the words of our sages:¹² The Holy One Blessed be He says to Israel, "My children have no fear. All that I have done¹³ I have done exclusively for you... the time of your Redemption has arrived."

The emphasis of this generation - particularly this year, the year designated as "It shall be a year of wonders I will show him" - should be placed on the concept of G-d's support of those who have fallen,¹⁴ to strengthen and encourage the Jewish people, emphasizing particularly the support and encouragement acquired through faith in the coming of Moshiach and the implicit trust that "behold he (our righteous Moshiach) is coming."¹⁵ This should be accompanied with enhanced preparation for his arrival by way of teshuvah [repentance, return] and observance of Torah and mitzvos. In the words of the pronouncement of my sainted father-in-law - the leader of our generation: "immediate Teshuvah, immediate Redemption."¹⁶ "Return, O, Israel, unto G-d your G-d; prepare yourselves and your family to greet our righteous Moshiach, who shall arrive soon, in the most literal sense."¹⁷

*(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas Vayechi
(and Asara b'Teves, may it be transformed into joy) 5751)*

11. *Yechezkal* 24:2.

12. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu* 499.

13. This includes the efforts of the Babylonian King, who is merely an ax in the hands of the one who chops with it. [i.e. He is G-d's instrument.]

14. [The phrase *סומך ונפלים* - "supports the falling" - is similar to the expression mentioned before - *בבל מלך בבל* - the Babylonian King besieged," which the Rebbe interpreted in a positive vein to mean that "he supported." Translator's note.]

15. *Shir HaShirim* 2:8. See *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* on this verse (2:8(b)).

16. In his *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 5, end of p. 361 ff., 377 ff., 408 ff. and in other places.

17. *Hayom Yom* - 15 Teves.

The rule that 'A verse does not depart from its plain meaning'² obviously applies also to the blessings of 'From Asher — his bread shall be fat,' and 'He will dip his foot in oil.' There was an abundance of olives in the portion of Asher in a literal, physical sense, as evident in the Talmudic story³ cited by Rashi.^e Even so, this does not exhaust all implications of the verse, and there must be a spiritual meaning as well.

II. Spiritually speaking, 'oil' alludes to *chochmah* (wisdom), the highest part of man, while 'foot' is the lowest part of man. 'He will dip his foot in oil' indicates that the foot makes use of the oil. The implication, therefore, is that the foot, though externally the lowest level, has a virtue inaccessible even to wisdom [oil], and that precisely is why the foot utilizes the oil.

A similar expression is used in reference to the Messianic era: 'On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives.'⁵ Oil signifies wisdom, and olives are the source of oil. The *Mount of Olives* is even loftier than olives, for the olives grow out of it. Obviously the 'Mount of Olives' signifies a very exalted level, yet it is said, 'On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives' — which clearly implies that 'feet' transcend even the Mount of Olives.

In terms of *avodah*, 'oil' (wisdom) signifies the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvot* motivated by in-

as an acronym for *pshat, remez* (or *re'iyah*), *derush* and *sod*, which are the four levels of meaning and interpretation of the Torah; see *Zohar Chadash*, *Tikunim* 107c, and *ibid.*, 102b; also *Zohar* I:26b, III:110a and 202a. For an example of the application of these four levels of interpretation, and their relationship to Chassidut, see *Kuntres Inyanah shel Torat Hachassidut* (*On the Essence of Chassidus*), ch. 9-17.]

2. *Shabbat* 63a. [Cf. above, Mikeitz, note r.]

3. *Menachot* 85b.

d. [On *Genesis* 49:20]

4. See *Menachot* 85b.

5. *Zechariah* 14:4. Cf. R. Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, *Sefer Hachakirah*, Hossafot, p. 272f.

tellectual understanding and delight. The aspect of 'foot' signifies an *avodah* based on *kabalat ol*.

Though it would seem that simple *kabalat ol* is an inferior level because it lacks personal delight and enthusiasm, nevertheless, the *avodah* based on *kabalat ol* has an advantage over an *avodah* based on mind and reason, as will be explained shortly. That, indeed, is the reason why in the physical realm (which, as stated, reflects the spiritual realm) feet have an advantage over the head: feet specifically lend wholeness and completion to the head, as explained in *Likutei Torah*, section *Nitzavim*.⁶

III. The tribe of Asher was included in the Camp of Dan." The significance of this camp will help us understand the advantage of 'foot' over the head, and the connection between the virtue of 'foot' and the tribe of Asher.

The Camp of Dan was the one 'who gathered in (everything belonging) to all the camps': it marched in the rear of all camps and thus was able to find anything lost by the preceding camps and restore it to the owners.

In other words, though the Camp of Dan marched in the rear — which denotes a rank inferior to the others, the aspect of 'foot' — nonetheless, and precisely for this reason, it was able to restore the losses of the other camps.

6. [p. 44a]. See also *Likutei Sichot*, Nitzavim, vol. II, p. 398ff.

e. [The tribes of Israel, as they travelled in the desert following the Exodus, were divided into four camps of three tribes each: the Camp of Judah (tribes of Judah, Issachar, Zebulun); the Camp of Reuben (tribes of Reuben, Simeon, Gad); the Camp of Ephraim (tribes of Ephraim, Menasseh, Benjamin); and the Camp of Dan (tribes of Dan, Asher, Naphtali). They travelled in this order, with the tribe of Levi (subdivided into its constituent families of Gershon, Kehot and Merari) and the wagons in the center and the Camp of Dan in the rear. See Numbers, chapter 2 and 10:11ff].

7. Numbers 10:25. See there Rashi, citing *Yerushalmi* [*Eruvin* V: end of 1].

were previously a perfectly wicked person, she is betrothed, for perhaps he had a thought of teshuvah."

Considering the above, it is with utmost certainty that our righteous Moshiach must arrive **here and now, immediately, [mamosh] in the most literal sense.**

Now, this exercise of finding merit⁷ in and of itself should suffice to bring about the Redemption. Moreover, in addition to the finding of merit, the imminence of Moshiach's arrival constitutes a **definitive ruling issued by many rabbis and halachic authorities.** Further, since Torah "is not in heaven,"⁸ this ruling issued by the earthly courts "obligates," so to speak, and affords a unique privilege to, the heavenly courts. **And so it will be confirmed!**

* * *

In our day and age, after G-d has vented His rage with the destruction of the Holy Temple, and after all of "our deeds and actions throughout the duration of exile,"⁹ and after all the decrees of oppression and persecution - may Hashem, indeed, shield us and protect us from them - the Jewish people have endured throughout the protracted and arduous final exile, particularly the Holocaust of the very last generation, the process of refinement and purification has, without any doubt, been achieved in full, "enough and even too much." Consequently, the [current¹⁰] "siege of the Babylonian

7. [i.e., that we have already passed all the deadlines as well as satisfying the condition of Teshuvah. Translator's note.]

8. *Netzavim*, 30:12. See *Bava Metzia* 59b.

9. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.

10. [The Hebrew term *Samach*, which means "besieged," can also be rendered "supported." This talk was delivered on the fast day *Asara b'Teves* (the Tenth of the month of Teves), the anniversary of the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian king. The Rebbe here is alluding to the threats of the modern day Babylonian dictator, which are actually the events which serve as preludes to the Redemption. Translator's note.]

The Announcement Of The Redemption

11

With respect to Gideon, we find that: "In his days¹ the Jewish people were in distress. The Holy One, Blessed be He, sought a person who would find merit in them. When He found Gideon to be meritorious, because he found merit in them, an angel immediately appeared to him, as it says: "And the angel of G-d appeared to him and said to him, 'Go with this power, with **the power of the merit you have found in my children.**'" "Said the Holy One, Blessed be He, it is within your capacity to find a defense for Israel. **In your merit they shall be redeemed.**"²

...The merit which will hasten the Redemption is the following:

Even in the Talmudic era it has been said that "all the deadlines have passed."³ Certainly now that we have endured a lengthy and arduous exile, the duration of which has exceeded 1,900 years, **and he has still not arrived...** And in regard to Teshuvah ("It depends only on Teshuvah³) [repentance, return, a prerequisite for Redemption], they have already done Teshuvah. Indeed, there is no Jewish person who has not entertained a thought of Teshuvah, (not just once, but) several times in the course of his lifetime. This [thought of Teshuvah] can transform "instantaneously"⁴ a perfectly wicked person into a perfectly righteous individual, in accordance with the Talmudic ruling⁵ that one who would betroth a woman "stipulating that I am a (perfectly⁶) righteous individual, even if he

IV. As already stated, all aspects in the physical realm derive from, and denote, counterparts in the spiritual realm. The concept of a loss is expressed by our sages as follows:⁸ 'Who is a fool? He who loses all *mah* (what) is given to him.' Chassidut⁹ interprets this passage as follows: Every Jew is given a potency of *mah*,^{9*} i.e., the potential of self-negation before G-d.' The *yetzer hara*, however, which is referred to as 'an old and stupid king'¹⁰ – a fool – may cause one to lose this *mah*. It is this loss which was found and restored by the Camp of Dan 'who gathered in (everything belonging) to all the camps.'

For the camps which went in front and were closer in proximity to the Sanctuary, even for the tribe of Levi – and even for the family of Kehot, there remained the distinct possibility of losing the *mah* and self-negation to G-dliness. The Camp of Dan alone, however – that is, specifically the aspect of 'foot', would keep the soul-aspect of *mah* intact, and in addition was even able to restore this *mah* and self-negation in all others.

In this sense, then, as stated earlier, the 'feet' complete and perfect the 'head'.

1. *Tanchuma, Shoftim* 4.
 2. *Yalkut Shimoni, Shoftim* 62.
 3. *Sanhedrin* 97b.
 4. *Zohar* I, 129, end side a.
 5. *Kiddushin* 49b. Rambam, *Hilchos Ishus*, 8:5. *Tur, Shulchan Aruch, Even HoEzer*, 38:31.
 6. Based on the version cited on *Or Zarua* 112.

8. *Chagigah* 4a.
 9. *Likutei Torah, Massey*, p. 91c; *ibid.*, Re'ey, p. 33a.
 [See *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 292; *Or Torah* (of the Maggid), Agadot, sect. 423.]
 9*. As in the expression *venachnu mah* ['what are we' – Exodus 16:7-8; see there Rashi: 'of what importance are we.']
 f. [The numerical equivalent of the word *adam* (man) – the most sublime of the terms by which man is referred to in Scripture; (*Zohar* III:48a) – is 45, the letters of *mah*. In this context the concept of *mah* (literally 'what', as in the expression cited in note 9*, or in the question 'what is it?' – which signifies the concept of naught) represents the very essence or spirituality (*tzelem*; Divine image) of man. For man to stand in complete submission and total self-negation before his Maker means that his aspect of *mah* manifests itself and dominates.]
 10. *Ecclesiastes* 4:13; see Rashi *ad loc.*

V. The same idea is implied in another verse in this week's *sidrah*, namely, 'Dan shall judge.'^g

The *Gemara*,¹¹ relates: "A certain man used to say 'Judge my case.' Said they, 'This proves that he is descended from (the tribe of) Dan, for it is written 'Dan shall judge' etc.'"

The declaration 'Judge my case' means that this person always seeks to verify the proper conduct as prescribed by the *Shulchan Aruch*, regardless of how insignificant the case may seem to be. Such a person fully realizes that the world is not lawless, and that the Torah has directives for even the most minute detail.

This approach originates only in *kabalat ol*. In the context of a rational approach to Torah and *mitzvot*, even the logic of Torah differentiates between major and minor matters; thus Torah itself refers to one *mitzvah* as 'the lightest of all' and to another as 'the most severe of all.'¹² From the perspective of *kabalat ol*, however, the 'lightest' and the 'most severe' are altogether equal, for both are equally decrees of the Almighty.

The Camp of Dan practised an *avodah* based on *kabalat ol*. On the surface this type of *avodah* may appear rather inferior because it lacks personal understanding and enthusiasm. In truth and essence, however, *kabalat ol* transcends the intellectual approach in two respects:

(a) First of all, the human intellect is limited. G-d is infinite, and thus cannot be grasped by the intellect.^h When serving G-d on the basis of reason, therefore, one

And by virtue of the *avodah* of *shemita* — *kabalat ol* — we shall merit the destined revelation of 'Then shall the land make her Sabbaths find favor.'⁴⁰ This, in turn, will bring about the realization of 'Eternal One, You have favored Your land, You have returned the captivity of Jacob.'⁴¹

(Excerpts from the Sichot of Sukot (Simchat Bet Hashoevah) and Shabbat Parshat Bereishit 5719)

g. [Genesis 49:16]

11. *Pessachim* 4a.

12. See *Yalkut Shimoni*, Yitro, par 298; *Yerushalmi*, *Pe'ah* I:1; *Devarim Rabba* 6:2; et *passim*.

h. [*Tikunei Zohar* 17a: Lord of the Universe . . . You are higher than the highest; You are the mystery of all mysteries, no thought can grasp You at all . . . No one can know You at all.]

the Messianic era, however, the unique virtue and advantage of 'deed' — which signifies the aspect of total submission to G-d and *kabalat ol* (and towards which the study of Torah is in some respect a means) — will become evident, as R. Tarfon said 'deed is superior.' See *VeDavid Avdi*, par. VIII, p. 231f.]

40. Leviticus 26:34.

41. Psalms 85:2. See *Midrash Tehilim* on this verse.

The *avodah* of 'a rest [in honor of] the Eternal' can be carried out in physical matters and in a place of concealments and obstructions [to the fulfillment of G-d's Will] — even in a place which gives rise to objections — only by means of *kabalat ol*. *Kabalat ol* confers the ability to go even into a place of darkness.³⁸

It is especially and specifically Asher, signified by *pnimiyut sheberegél*, who can bring out and reveal the very core and basis of this *kabalat ol*. By virtue of being 'the one who gathered in for all camps', the tribe of Asher conferred this quality of *kabalat ol* upon all Jews, as our sages said that he supplied all of Israel with food.

XIV. This analysis of the special quality of Asher explains the meaning of the verses, 'From Asher — his bread shall be fat' and 'He dips his foot in oil,' as noted earlier [sections I-II]. For the virtue of *kabalat ol* radiated in Asher from his very root and essence, analogous to the future-era when 'deed will be superior.'³⁹

38. See *Likutei Sichot*, vol. II, p. 427f.

39. See *VeAvdi David 5708*. [Sefer Hamaamarim 5708, p. 225ff.]

[The *Gemara*, *Kidushin* 40b, discusses whether the study of Torah is superior to 'deed' — i.e., to the comprehensive observance of the *mitzvot*, or *vice versa*. R. Tarfon argued that deed is superior, while R. Akiba argued that study is greater. (The issue in dispute is obviously which of these two factors should *predominate* in the life of man. There is no suggestion whatsoever that either one should be followed to the exclusion of the other. He who devotes his life to the intellectual study of Torah is obligated to observe *mitzvot*, just as he who concentrates on the practical observance of *mitzvot* must include therein the precept of *Talmud Torah* (Torah-study) — and actually could not fulfill the *mitzvot* properly without the prerequisite knowledge of the relevant Torah-teachings, as it is said (*Avot* II:5) 'The illiterate cannot be pious nor can the boorish person be fearful of sin.' See *Igeret Hakodesh*, end of sect. V, p. 108bff., and the footnotes in the English translation.)

The *Gemara* concludes with R. Akiba that 'study is superior because it leads to deed' (i.e., the proper Torah-student allows himself to be guided and influenced by his studies to bring his theoretical knowledge to practical application and realization). Thus nowadays the study of Torah is superior. In

grasps Divinity in a limited way, restricted to the limitations of the intellect. *Kabalat ol*, on the other hand, means a total submission and commitment to G-d as He is, infinite.

(b) Moreover, *kabalat ol* not only transcends intellect by reaching much more sublime heights, but in effect is the very foundation of *any* form of *avodah* — including the *avodah* based on mind and reason.ⁱ

One must not and cannot build on intellect alone. *Kabalat ol* is an essential prerequisite if intellect is to function and guide us properly. Thus it is stated in *Tanya*,¹³ on the authority of the *Zohar*^j — 'If this [acceptance of the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven] is not found in him, holiness cannot rest on him.'¹⁴

VI. We can now understand why the Camp of Dan marched at the rear — 'the one who gathered in for all the camps.' There are three reasons:

(a) The *avodah* of Dan was one of *kabalat ol* which — on the external level — appears to be lowly, the aspect of 'feet.' Just as their spiritual level was (on the surface) at the rear [the lowest level], so, too, was their physical positioning.

(b) By virtue of the self-negation implicit in *kabalat ol*, the Camp of Dan sacrificed their personal interests in order to be the one who gathered in for *all* the camps — even for the stragglers and the tardy. They did so even though this caused them to be a great distance away from the Sanctuary, indeed at the very rear.

For he who is in the state of self-negation implicit in

i. [Total submission to G-d implies total absorption, thus total unity, as it were, with infinite Divinity.]

13. *Tanya*, chapter 41.

j. [*Zohar* III:108a]

14. See also *Likutei Sichot*, vol. II: pp. 421ff. and 426ff.

kabalat ol is not an entity to himself. His very being is geared exclusively to fulfill the Supernal Will. His own fate does not matter to him, for his sole concern is that the Supernal Will be realized. Thus he is prepared to be far removed from the Sanctuary, indeed at the very rear, so long as he can fulfill the Supreme Will by drawing another closer to G-d.

(c) The feet are the foundation for the total structure, and they support the head. So, too, the Camp of Dan — i.e., *kabalat ol* — sustains and is the foundation for the totality of *avodah*, even for the intellect.

VII. All this offers the following directive in *avodah*:

One may study Torah and observe *mitzvot* on the most exalted level, to the point of being in closest proximity to the Sanctuary and the Ark; yet it is possible that simultaneously one is thinking exclusively of personal benefit and is devoid of any sense to extend kindness to another. This self-concern may even be of a spiritual nature (i.e., in pursuit of spiritual development and welfare); but the fact that he lacks the basic principle of the entire Torah,¹⁵ namely 'Love your fellow like yourself,'¹⁶ may cause him to lose the *mah* of his soul.

Only he who devotes himself to *ahavat Yisrael* (love of Israel) with *mesirat nefesh* can be sure of himself. He himself will remain intact and will also be able to restore the spiritual losses of others.

VIII. The great quality achieved by an *avodah* based on *kabalat ol* and *mesirat nefesh* for *ahavat Yisrael*, is to be found in *parshat Berachah*, in the blessing for the tribe of Naftali — the tribe which marched at the very rear of

the *manna* — in which one could taste all kinds of flavors³⁴ and which was free of any worthless components;³⁵ but it will be ordinary, physical bread with all the deficiencies and worthless components of physical matter.

Moreover, all this will occur neither on Mount Sinai nor in the desert — but in the fields and vineyards of the Land of Israel.

The seventh year thus is so bound up with normal, physical reality that it can provoke the question, 'If you say what shall we eat.' Nevertheless, the *mitzvah* of *shemita* is observed with *kabalat ol*; and that precisely is why 'I will command My blessing' in physical food on the very lowest [— i.e., physical and material] level.

This also explains why the days of the Sabbatical year are observed as regular weekdays, even though of *shemita* it is said, 'The land shall keep a rest [in honor of] the Eternal'³⁶ — in the same sense as in the case of the weekly Sabbath.³⁷ Its days are ordinary weekdays unlike a Sabbath on which work is prohibited, or a *Yom Tov* (festival) on which the work of preparing food for the festival itself is permitted but all other forms of work are prohibited. In the Sabbatical year, all work is permitted, as on any weekday. The 'rest [in honor of] the Eternal' is to be observed precisely in one's ordinary affairs of the earth, 'which everyone steps upon.'

XIII. This explains why the promise 'I will command My blessing' — i.e., the manifest blessing and elicitation of *pnimiyut*, the Divine Essence — relates specifically to the portion of the tribe of Asher.

34. Yoma 75a.

35. Ibid. 75b.

p. [The locales of Moses' ascent and the provision of manna, thus the locales where the life of our ancestors was on a supra-natural level.]

36. Leviticus 25:2.

37. See *Sifre* [cited by Rashi] on this verse.

15. *Shabbat* 31a; see *Tanya*, ch. 32.

16. Leviticus 19:18.

land that are related to human food must cease. Thus Scripture states that 'if you say what shall we eat . . .?' the answer is, 'I will command My blessing upon you' etc.

This passage needs further clarification: Why should the Torah elaborate with the seemingly superfluous words of 'And if you say' etc.? Moreover, why should the Torah instigate a problem? In turn, since the question *does* appear in the Torah, it follows that it is a legitimate argument even from the perspective of Torah. The indication here is that the Sabbatical year is *not* intended to occur in a manner that will preclude any questions, but on the contrary — it should give rise to a question and problem, and a serious one at that ['what shall we eat?'], and yet will be observed by a cessation of the prohibited forms of labor as ordained by the Almighty.

The *mitzvah* of *shemita* is related to a place and circumstances that give rise to a problem, which nonetheless will not affect the Jew's conduct; and that is precisely why 'I will command My blessing.'

In fact, the promise of 'I will command My blessing' will not be realized in some manner obviating a need for the produce of the land — as, for example, in the case of Moses' ascent to Heaven when 'I did not eat bread and did not drink water.'³² Neither will it be by way of a special strength in the food of the sixth year, i.e., that the food eaten in the sixth year will keep them satiated through the seventh year — as, for example, in the case of the prophet Elijah who went on the strength of one meal for forty days and forty nights.³³

The promise 'I will command My blessing' means that there will be bread and food for the seventh year itself. And this food of the seventh year will not be like

32. Exodus 34:28.

33. I Kings 19:8.

the Camp of Dan itself: 'And to Naftali he said . . . *yam vedarom yerashah* (the west and the south — possess).'¹⁷

The three words *yam vedarom yerashah* signify three planes in an ascending order:

(1) *Yam*: The *Gemara*¹⁸ states that the *Shechinah* dwells in the *West*. That is, the *West* is but one of the four points of the compass, thus limited in terms of space just like the others; nevertheless, there is a greater *manifestation* of the Divine Presence in the *West* than in the other directions.^k

(2) *Vedarom*: It is stated in *Likutei Torah*¹⁹ that the sun's heat radiates most intensely in the *South*. The sun symbolizes G-d, as it is said: 'For a sun [is] the Eternal.'²⁰ *South* thus transcends *West*:²¹ 'West' is the manifestation of Divinity referred to as *Shechinah* (Divine Indwelling, or Immanence), which is confined within the categories of time and space' (hence 'The *Shechinah* is in the *West*'²²). 'South' is the manifestation of *shemesh Havayah* — 'A sun is *Havayah* (the Eternal)'^m — past, present and future as one²³ — which transcends both time and space.

17. Deuteronomy 33:23.

18. *Baba Batra* 25a.

k. [The *Shechinah* is everywhere, omnipresent, thus cannot be said to be limited to any particular location or direction (see *Shemot Rabba* 2:5, and other *Midrashim* on Exodus 3:2; *Tikunei Zohar* 57:91b and 70:122b), yet manifests itself in one place more than in another (see *Sanhedrin* 39a; *Tanya*, end of ch. 35).]

19. *Likutei Torah*, Tazria, p. 19d.

20. Psalms 84:12.

l. ['For a sun and a shield is *Havaya Elokim* — the Eternal G-d;' see *Tanya*, II:ch.4].

21. See *Da'at Zekeinim miBa'alei Tossafot*, Deuteronomy 33:23: *yam* refers to *this* world; *darom* refers to the world to come.

l. ['West' signifies the Divine power as it 'dwells' in and is subject to the bounds of time and space — the *immanence* of G-d.]

22. See *Tanya*, ch. 42.

m. [The *transcendence* of G-d.]

23. *Tanya*, II: ch. 7.

[The Divine name *Havayah*, the Tetragrammaton, can be read as a

(3) *Yerashah*: There is a difference between an inheritance" and a purchase or gift. In the case of a purchase, the purchaser must pay money. The significance and value of the object acquired is reflected in the purchase-price. With a gratuitous gift, too, it is said that if the donor would not derive some benefit he would not give the present.²⁴ Thus it follows that there is a proportionate relationship between the gift and the benefit or pleasure the donor derives from the donee.

An inheritance, however, does not depend on the heir or his condition. An inheritance comes *of itself*, even to one very young in age.

The same applies to spiritual matters:²⁵ 'Purchase' and a 'gift' signify the manifestation of G-d's Light commensurate to the individual's *avodah*. A change in this *avodah* will effect a corresponding change in the manifestation. Inheritance, however, applies to every Jew (for 'You are children of the Eternal, your G-d'²⁶ — which makes everyone an heir): it transcends the individual capacities of the recipient and is unlimited.

IX. *Yerashah* is attained by means of an *avodah* of *kabalat ol* and *mesirat nefesh* for *ahavat Yisrael*. An *avodah* based on mind and reason will elicit G-dliness only in a limited degree — relative to the person's mind and the extent of his perception. *Kabalat ol*, however, means devotion to the Almighty as He is, infinite.

Inheritance applies to *all* Jews; however, this may be in

compound of the three words *hayah* (He was), *hoveh* (He is), and *yihyeh* (He will be) — 'He was before all beings, He is in all beings, He will be after all beings;' *Zohar* III:257b, thus indicating the timelessness or infinity (transcendence) of G-d.]

n. [*Yerashah* literally means 'inherit'.]

24. See *Megilah* 26b; *Gitin* 50b; *Baba Batra* 156a.

25. See *Torah Tzivah* — 5702 [Sefer Hama'amarim 5702, p. 39.]

26. Deuteronomy 14:1.

a concealed manner (and as explained in terms of 'Who is a fool? He who loses all of *mah* — what is given to him.'). *Kabalat ol* reveals the heritage; *kabalat ol* brings it out into the open.

X. Within the Camp of Dan itself the tribe of Asher was in the middle. As a rule, the middle one — and not the extremes on either side — is especially prized.²⁷ Thus it follows that the tribe of Asher is *pnimiyut sheberegel* — the very essence of the aspect of 'foot'.

Just as the Camp of Dan benefitted all Jews in a general way, as stated earlier [sections III-IV], the tribe of Asher did so in a more particular way. Thus it is said of Asher, 'let him be acceptable to his brothers,'²⁸ and our sages comment²⁹ that Asher supplied all others with food in the Sabbatical year (*shemita*).

XI. What special connection is there between the beneficence of the tribe of Asher and the Sabbatical year? The Torah declares of the Sabbatical year, 'And if you shall say, What shall we eat...? I will command My blessing upon you' etc.³⁰ Thus it would seem that the Divine blessing should be found among *all* tribes. Why, then, should all others be dependent on the tribe of Asher?

XII. The idea of the Sabbatical year^o is clearly explained in Scripture as a rest for the land with regard to the labors of ploughing etc.: 'You shall desist from the ploughing and the harvesting.'³¹ Those labors on the

27. *Megilah* 21b.

28. Deuteronomy 33:24.

29. *Targum Yonathan*, and *Sifre* [Deut., sect. 355], on this verse.

30. Leviticus 25:20-21.

o. [This *sichah* was delivered at the beginning of the *shemita*-year of 5719.]

31. Exodus 34:21. [See Rashi *ad loc.*, citing *Rosh Hashanah* 9a.]