

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER
HaRabbonis **Alte Chana** bas **Reb Asher Zelig Halevi** ע"ה
Schevelowitz

Passed away, on 22 Shevat, 5775

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HER LOVING CHILDREN

Mr. & Mrs. **Mordechai Tzvi HaLevi** and **Esther Zelda** שיחיו **Nashofer**

Mr. & Mrs. **Mattisyahu Naftali** and **Simcha Yehudis** שיחיו **Stavsky**

and her grandchildren & great-grandchildren שיחיו

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

Mrs. **Esther** bas **Reb Volf** ע"ה

Passed away on 23 Shevat, 5759

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF HER SON

Mr. **Zev** שיחיו **Oster**

May he go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS FRIEND

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

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Yitro, 5779
(Vol. 17)



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THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

"International Convention of Shluchos" At this time, the last moments before Redemption one must raise one's own awareness and that of all the wives and daughters of Israel concerning the great merit of the wives and daughters of Israel to actually bring the true and complete Redemption, imminently and immediately. This comes "in the merit of the righteous women of the generation,"⁶ as mentioned above.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 20 Shvat, and Sunday night and Monday, 22 Shvat, 5752)

6. *Yalkut Shimoni Rus, remez 606 at the end (from Midrash Zuta Rus).*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** ע"ה
ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** ה"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
ת. נ. צ. ג. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחיי
Shagalov

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BESURAS HAGEULO

progression and innovation of a new period began, and "the lights were hung" of the seventh generation from the Alter Rebbe (or the ninth generation from the Baal Shem Tov); 3) the period after the passing of the daughter of my sainted father-in-law on the twenty-second of the eleventh month (22 Shvat 5748).

...The tenth day of the eleventh month is connected with and completes the Divine service of purifying the last "remnants" of exile, "polishing the buttons."

...The day afterwards, the eleventh day of the eleventh month, signifies that in addition to and after the Divine service of the tenth day of the eleventh month, one has achieved and been elevated (according to the principle, "elevate in holiness"⁵) to the revelation of the eleventh (day) as well.

...One comes afterward to yet a higher level. After the Divine service of all the purifications has already been completed, and we have already also "polished the buttons," etc., we need only stand ready to receive our righteous Moshiach. This is the perfection of eleven (completely incomparable to ten)... as alluded to in **22** Shvat - eleven doubled.

...After the 22nd of Shvat (the day of passing of his daughter), the last stage in preparing the world (as a dwelling place for G-d here below) for the Redemption has been accomplished. The completion of this matter comes through and in the merit of the wives and daughters of Israel.

Therefore, the lesson for the wives and daughters of Israel in general, and in particular for the *shluchos* [emissaries], may they live and be well, of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, who have gathered from all corners of the world for the

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 VII: *Shmos*

•

In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

5. *Brochos* 28a. See cross references there.

YISRO

A TURNING POINT IN THE WORLD'S SPIRITUAL HISTORY

As has been mentioned on several occasions, the giving of the Torah is associated with the uniting of the spiritual and physical realms. Before the giving of the Torah, there was a decree separating the physical from the spiritual as reflected by the verse,¹ "The heavens are the heavens of G-d, and the earth He gave to man." There was no medium through which the two could be brought together.

At the giving of the Torah, this changed. The decree was nullified; G-d began by descending to Mount Sinai, and His descent gave the Jewish people the potential, through observance of the *mitzvos*, to elevate material reality heavenward, and bring it into contact with the spiritual.

For this reason, the *mitzvos* which our Patriarchs observed before the giving of the Torah, although performed with material objects, did not have the power to infuse holiness into those objects. For in that era, there was no connection between spirituality and material entities.

The objective of the Patriarchs' performance of *mitzvos* was primarily to draw G-dliness into the spiritual realms. The bodies of each one served as "a chariot for G-dliness."² To explain the analogy: The Patriarchs were totally given over to G-dliness, to the extent that they did not regard themselves as

Our generation is the last generation of exile and the first generation of the Redemption. As my sainted father-in-law, the one whose *yahrtzeit* we commemorate, announced and publicized many times, all requirements have already been completed and all that is necessary is to actually greet our righteous Moshiach. Obviously then, if in the meantime there was a physical removal, as was the case on the twenty-second of Shvat four years ago (5748)¹, this is surely only to bring the only elevation that still remains - the elevation of the true and immediate Redemption.

...The amazing innovation and advantage of this generation - the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption - has been mentioned frequently, that it completes and concludes "our work and our Divine service"² of the Jews of all previous generations. It completes the last purification of exile, as expressed by my sainted father-in-law,³ "polishing the buttons." Our Divine service consists of bringing the Redemption into reality, for this generation and for all generations preceding it! This means, that this generation concludes the work and Divine service of all preceding generations of Jews.

...The generation of the leader of our generation itself comprises several stages and periods. In general, there are three stages:) the tenth day of the eleventh month (10th of Shvat, 5710), the conclusion of the period of my sainted father-in-law's Divine service during his life in this world; 2) the day after - the eleventh day of the eleventh month (the first complete day after his passing), particularly commencing with the eleventh year (5711)⁴, when the

1. *Tehillim* 115:16; see the interpretation of *Shmos Rabbah* 12:3; *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Parshas Va'eira*, sec. 19. See also the *sichos* to *Parshiyos Lech Lecha* and *Chayei Sarah* in this series, where this concept is explained.
2. See *Tanya*, ch. 23, which states that "all their limbs were holy."

1. [*Passing of the Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. Translator's note.*]
2. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.
3. Talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.
4. See *Sefer HaSichos*, 5750, vol. 1, p. 255, note 99.

"MiYaD"¹ is Moshe, Yisroel (the Baal Shem Tov) and Dovid, the king Moshiach. This means that the first generation, that of the giving of the Torah (the generation of Moshe) is bound up with the last generation (that of the Redemption through Dovid, the king Moshiach) by means of the revelation of Chassidus from the Baal Shem Tov and our Rebbeim and leaders who succeeded him. Thus when your wellsprings overflow, "the master will come," the king Moshiach.²

One might say that, according to the meaning of the word "MiYaD" (immediately), the three letters are not connected with three different times (Moshe in his generation, Yisroel the Baal Shem Tov in his generation and Dovid the king Moshiach in his generation). Rather they all come together, actually simultaneous ("MiYaD" - immediately) in every generation and at all times. That the word "MiYaD" is also the acronym for "Moshe, Yehoshua, Doram [their generation]" all three in the same generation, alludes to this as well.

One can also apply this to our generation. For in this same generation one has the revelation of all three: Mem (the first letter of Moshiach³), Yud (the first letter of both names of my sainted father-in-law) and Daled (Doram). Combining [Mem] the Moshe of our generation (my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation) with the concept of [Yud] ten (tenth of Shvat), which also includes his revelation of the Torah of Chassidus (the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov), one has as well the revelation of the aspect of eleven, "the first Redeemer is the final Redeemer,"⁴ Dovid King Moshiach.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 20 Shvat, 5752)

1. [The Hebrew word "miyad" means immediately. It consists of three letters: Mem, Yud and Daled. Translator's note.]

2. The well known holy letter of the Baal Shem Tov - *Keser Shem Tov* at the beginning and several places.

3. It should be noted that "Menachem is his name" (Sanhedrin 98b).

4. See *Shmos Rabba* Chapter 2:4, 2:6. *Zohar*, vol. 1 253a. *Sha'ar HaPesukim*, the verses, *Parshas Vayechi. Torah Or Mishpatim* 75b.

independent entities, just as a chariot is totally given over to the will of its driver.

As they lived within this material world, their spiritual service permeated their existence. And so it was also expressed in the observance of *mitzvos* on this material plane. Nevertheless, the intent was not to affect the material realm. The physical activities were merely a manifestation of spiritual advancement.

For this reason, although the Patriarchs' spiritual service involved material entities, the identity of the object used for a particular service was not important. For example, it is explained³ that by setting out staves of poplar, hazel, and plane trees before Lavan's sheep,⁴ Yaakov drew down the same spiritual influences that we — after the giving of the Torah — draw down through the observance of the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*. Similar concepts apply with regard to the observance of other *mitzvos*.

The giving of the Torah began a new phase. The *mitzvos* we perform have the potential to infuse holiness into the physical entities with which they are performed, to the extent that the entities themselves become holy. Therefore, with regard to the overwhelming majority of *mitzvos*, the physical entity with which the *mitzvah* is performed is significant, and must have certain features that make it possible for it to be used for that purpose.⁵

TRUE TRANSCENDENCE

The potential for the *mitzvos* performed after the giving of the Torah to infuse holiness into material entities stems from a level of G-dliness which transcends the divisions between the physical and spiritual. Because this level is truly transcen-

3. *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 162a; see *Torah Or, Parshas Vayeitzei*, p. 23c.

4. *Bereishis* 30:37.

5. See the *maamar* entitled *Yaviu Levush Malchus* in *Torah Or* and in *Shaarei Orah*.

dent, restricted by neither material nor spiritual limitations,⁶ it can make a fusion of the two realms possible.

From this, we can appreciate that the innovation brought about by the observance of *mitzvos* after the giving of the Torah affects not only the material plane — allowing for the infusion of holiness into that level — but also reflects a higher level within the *mitzvos* themselves. *Mitzvos* performed before the giving of the Torah were limited to the spiritual plane; they did not have a connection with G-d's essence. This is why they could not develop an internalized connection with the material world.

The *mitzvos* performed after the giving of the Torah, by contrast, derive their power from G-d's essence.⁷ Since He is not bound by either the physical or spiritual planes, He is able to unite the spiritual with the material.

G-DLINESS PENETRATING MORTAL WISDOM

The above-mentioned change which accompanied the giving of the Torah is alluded to in the Ten Commandments, which include two types of *mitzvos* at seemingly opposite poles.⁸ The first commandments: "I am G-d your L-rd," "You shall not have any other gods before Me,"⁹ reflect the deepest levels of G-d's unity. On the other hand, this same revelation

6. [The fundamental point is that we conceive of the spiritual and the infinite as unbounded. This is, however, a misconception, for although they are not bounded by the limits of material existence, they have their own inherent limitations. Since infinity is not finiteness, it has a defined scope, and cannot be conceived of as truly infinite. True infinity can be ascribed only to G-d's essence, which "transcends the finite, transcends even the infinite; He has absolutely no limits, and includes everything" (the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov Shel Rosh HaShanah* 5666, p. 187).]

7. On this basis, we can appreciate the significance of the Rambam's statements in his *Commentary to the Mishnah* (*Chulin*, the conclusion of ch. 7), which emphasize that our observance of the *mitzvos* depends not on the observance of the Patriarchs, but on G-d's command at Mount Sinai.

8. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. I, *Parshas Yisro*; Vol. II, Section of Letters, p. 670.

9. *Shmos* 20:2-3.

BESURAS HAGEULO The Announcement Of The Redemption

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"A great congregation will return here,"¹ to our holy land, "a land that the L-rd your G-d constantly observes; the eyes of the L-rd your G-d are on it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year."²

Therefore,³ also before the Redemption the children of Israel dwell in it **in security**, without fear from "the nations of the world [who] are in terror and turmoil" because "the kings of the nations of the world struggle with each other" since the Holy One, Blessed be He "says to them (to Israel), my children, do not be afraid, all that I have done I have done only for your sake... (and the subject is repeated in the Midrash) do not fear, the time of your Redemption has arrived,"⁴ "the King Moshiach stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash [Holy Temple] and he proclaims to Israel, 'Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived.'"

(From the talk of *Shabbos Parshas Yisro*, 18 Shvat, 5751)

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At this time, as we stand immediately preceding the true and complete Redemption... as mentioned frequently of late, that already all conditions have been met and now there only has to be the actual Redemption.

* * *

It has been mentioned many times that a possible acronym of

1. *Yirmiyahu* [Jeremiah] 31:7.

2. *Ekev* 11:12.

3. [Because the land of Israel enjoys special Divine supervision. Translator's note.]

4. *Yalkut Shimoni Yeshayahu*, remez 499.

regulated their conduct according to the law,” i.e., without adopting positive attributes *beyond* the measure of the law.

Conversely, when a person knows G-d in all his ways, he at once acquires the body of the Torah. He has formed a relationship with *Enochi*, *Havayah*, and *E-lohecha* — indeed, with the entire Ten Commandments, which include all of the *mitzvos*.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Va'eira*, 5722)



included the most elementary of commands:¹⁰ “Do not kill;... do not steal,” which invoke moral maxims understood and accepted by mankind as a whole.

The inclusion of both types of mandates in the Ten Commandments points to the fusion of the physical and the spiritual mentioned above. As indicated by the *Midrash* cited previously, the giving of the Torah wrought a two-fold change: the spiritual descended to the material, and the material ascended to the spiritual.

This process is reflected in the relationship between the two types of commandments mentioned above. Those involving spiritual matters: “I am G-d...” and “You shall not have any other gods,” must descend and affect the realm of conduct that relates more directly to the commandments: “Do not kill” and “Do not steal.” Conversely, even within the observance of the *mitzvos* already mandated by human wisdom, the fundamental G-dliness which lies at their core must be felt, as reflected in the command “I am G-d your L-rd.” These *mitzvos* should not be observed merely because human logic requires it, but because they were commanded by G-d Himself.¹¹ This commitment to G-d’s will must be the fundamental reason for observing the prohibitions against murder, theft and the like.

We cannot separate the commandments “Do not kill” or “Do not steal” from the commandment “I am G-d your L-rd,” and leave the observance of those which appear as moral imperatives to the dictates of human logic. Firstly, self-love can cause a person to rationalize his conduct, and interpret the violation of one of these prohibitions as a *mitzvah*, as implied by the verse:¹² “Love covers up all transgressions.” Certainly, such a person will not be on guard against violating the finer nuances of these prohibitions. For example,

Tanya.)] [After prayer, however, the latent evil within a person can ruin all his spiritual attainments.]

See also the commentary of the *Ramban* at the beginning of *Parshas Kedoshim*, particularly the portion where he equates the command “Be holy” with the first of the Ten Commandments.

10. *Ibid.*:13.

11. See the *Rambam’s Commentary to the Mishnah*, Introduction to tractate *Avos* (*Shemoneh Perakim*), ch. 6.

12. *Mishlei* 10:12.

embarrassing a colleague in public is an extension of murder,¹³ and deception is an extension of theft.

One little finger, held close to the eye, can obscure a person's view of the entire world. Similarly, because a person is preoccupied by self-concern,¹⁴ his self-love will cover all faults, even willful transgressions.¹⁵

Moreover, even when a Jew's mortal intellect alone would obligate him to observe the *mitzvos* scrupulously, the fundamental thrust of his Divine service should be to connect all his affairs, even the most simple, with G-d's essence. The proclamation: "I am G-d your L-rd" must permeate every action. Even good deeds mandated by human wisdom should be imbued with G-dliness.

Our Sages taught:¹⁶ "If, Heaven forbid,¹⁷ the Torah had not been given, we would have learnt modesty from a cat, and [the prohibition against] theft from an ant," i.e., we could have learned the bare minimums of the moral imperatives by observing the patterns of conduct with which G-d imbued animals. But were it not for the giving of the Torah, the spiritual import of these *mitzvos* would have been lacking; they would have been merely natural deeds. For without the giving of the Torah, it would have been impossible to connect G-dliness with lowly material matters.

When the Torah was given, the potential was granted to unify the spiritual with the material. Accordingly, even the positive tendencies reflected in the animal kingdom must be emulated, not because they are part of nature's pattern, but because they are permeated with the Torah's holiness. These

13. *Bava Metzvia* 58b. See also *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 156:10.

14. Cf. *Yevamos* 25b.

15. See *Yoma* 36b; *Shavuos* 12b.

16. *Eruvin* 100b.

17. My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, related that when his father, the Rebbe Rashab would quote this statement, he would always add the words "Heaven forbid."

"Did you descend to Egypt?"⁴⁴ was successful in securing the Torah for the Jewish people.

A BOND WITHIN OUR LIVES

From the above, we see that we cannot content ourselves with individual endeavors in the realm of holiness. We have to involve ourselves with the world at large. This involvement has two aspects: a) Not to sequester oneself, but to endeavor to make the world a vessel for G-dliness; b) With regard to one's Divine service, not to devote oneself merely to Torah study, prayer, and the observance of *mitzvos*, but to "Know Him in all your ways,"⁴⁸ and bring spirituality into one's ordinary activities.

It is not enough to observe the *mitzvos* mandated by Scriptural or Rabbinic law, even if one adds the stringencies and practices ordained by the sages. (These practices are also contained within the Torah, of which it is said: "Its measure exceeds the earth."⁴⁹) One must "know G-d" (and knowledge connotes connection)⁵⁰ in all one's worldly affairs.

This is not a light matter. On the contrary, our Sages have described⁵¹ the mandate to "Know Him in all your ways" as "a small passage on which is dependent the entire Torah." For a person who does not so "know" G-d, even though he conducts every aspect of his life according to Jewish law, may be building a house of holiness on sand. To cite a parallel, our Sages declare:⁵² "Jerusalem was destroyed only because they

48. *Mishlei* 3:6. Note the *Tur* and the *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim, ch. 231)*, which interpret this as an all-encompassing directive for our Divine service.

49. *Iyov* 11:9.

50. See *Tanya*, the conclusion of ch. 3.

51. *Berachos* 63a.

52. *Bava Metzvia* 30b. To elaborate on the parallel: *Tanya*, ch. 13, states that a *benoni* (although he has never violated a transgression) possesses evil within his nature. Indeed, this evil has become stronger through his involvement in worldly activities. It is only when the person is involved in prayer that "one rises." ([The latter phrase is borrowed from] *Megillah* 6a in which "one" refers to Jerusalem. In a personal sense, "one" refers the G-dly soul, as explained in

the use of an Egyptian term for G-d's essence has implications regarding that service.

How is it possible to appreciate *Anochi*, G-d's essence? When one is involved with matters related to Egypt. As long as one remains aloof from worldly involvement — the transformation of “Egyptian” concerns into mediums for G-dliness — one's Divine service is restricted. Even though one is involved with Torah study and prayer, one's Divine service, (no matter how great) and one's spiritual level (no matter how high) is limited.

Yes, through Divine service that follows the dictates of reason, one becomes a medium for the revelation of the name *E-lohim* (the dimension of G-dliness contracted within the limits of reason and nature). And through Divine service which *transcends* reason, one becomes a medium for the revelation of the name *Havayah* (the dimension of G-dliness that combines the past, present, and future as one).

But this is not the way to relate to G-d's *essence*. For even the highest levels are not appropriate mediums for His essence, as it is written:⁴⁵ “The heavens and the celestial heights cannot contain You; can this house?” Yet it is a structure in this material world, the world of *Asiyah* — of which it is said: “even I Have made it”⁴⁶ — which G-d has chosen as His dwelling. For it is only through involvement with lowly, material entities — “Egyptian” matters — that a connection can be established with G-d's essence.

Our Sages⁴⁷ interpret the word *Anochi* as an acronym for an Aramaic phrase meaning: “I wrote down and gave over Myself.” And in which language did G-d communicate Himself, His essence? In Egyptian. And therefore the argument

mitzvos must be performed in response to G-d's command, accepting the yoke of His Kingship.

This will “elevate the material to the spiritual.” Part of the purpose for the lightning, fire, smoke and thunder which accompanied the giving of the Torah was to impress and dissuade those individuals who by virtue of their natural tendencies might otherwise either kill or steal.

This, however, does not convey the whole reason for which the Torah was given. These phenomena were also intended to elevate these individuals and enable them to comprehend G-dliness, introducing them to the highest form of wisdom. As the *Rambam* writes in the Introduction to *The Guide for the Perplexed*, the knowledge of G-dly wisdom must be preceded by an awareness of all the lower forms of wisdom. This indicates that the comprehension of G-dliness is the most elevated level of knowledge.

Similarly, these individuals are asked to comprehend the highest levels within the realm of G-dliness itself: not only the level associated with the name *E-lohim*, nor even that associated with the name *Havayah*, but also G-d's essence, the level associated with the word *Anochi*, as will be explained.

THREE DIMENSIONS OF G-DLINES

The concept mentioned above — that the fusion of the material and the spiritual was made possible by the power granted the Jewish people at the giving of the Torah — is alluded to in the first three words of the Ten Commandments: *Anochi Havayah E-lohecha*, “I am G-d, your L-rd.”

These three names represent three levels within the revelation of G-dliness. The name *E-lohim* refers to the G-dly power invested within created beings. For within every created being is en clothed a different aspect of G-dly power, one which is expressed according to the particular nature of that

45. *I Melachim* 8:27.

46. *Yeshayahu* 43:7; note the explanation in *Likkutei Torah*, the beginning of *Parshas Balak*.

47. *Shabbos* 105a. [Our translation of this comment reflects the understanding of this quote in Chassidic sources.]

being.¹⁸ For this reason, a plural modifier is used for the name *E-lohim*, as it is written:¹⁹ א-להים קדושים. For the name *E-lohim* alludes to the fact that every created entity is infused with an aspect of G-dliness appropriate for it. This is also reflected in the numerical equivalence of the word *E-lohim* (א-להים) and the word *hateva* (הטבע), meaning “nature.”²⁰ For this aspect of G-dliness is en clothed within those created beings which G-d governs by natural law.

This is also alluded to by the possessive form used in the above verse: *E-lohecha*, “your G-d.” Indeed, *E-lohim* is the only name of G-d that is used with a possessive form. Since this dimension of G-dliness undergoes a process of self-contraction to suit the levels of the various created beings, it can be appreciated by human intellect. This is the intent of the possessive form, “your G-d,” i.e., the G-dliness which you can appreciate.²¹

The name *Havayah*, by contrast, refers to the dimension of G-dliness which transcends nature. This is reflected in the interpretation of the name *Havayah* as היה הוה ויהיה כאחד, “past, present, and future as one.”²² Within the limits of nature, the past, the present, and the future reflect different tenses. The name *Havayah*, however, transcends these limits, fusing the three tenses together.

This is the difference between the faith of the Jews and the faith of the pious among the gentiles. The gentile nations are aware only of *E-lohim*, the G-dliness en clothed within

Similar concepts apply with regard to the 70 languages. The 70 possess several levels of refinement,⁴⁰ of which the lowest is expressed by the Egyptian language. For Egypt is referred to as “the nakedness of the land,”⁴¹ and its inhabitants were reputed to be both decadent and wanton.⁴² Thus the Egyptian language was the direct opposite of *Lashon HaKodesh*. Nevertheless, when it was necessary to refer to G-d’s essence, the Torah used an Egyptian word.

WHERE G-D MANIFESTS HIMSELF

The apparent difficulty can be resolved as follows: With the first word G-d uttered at Mount Sinai, He communicated the purpose of the giving of the Torah. Why was the level represented by *Anochi* — i.e., not just a ray of G-dliness, but G-d’s essence — revealed? To permeate the Egyptian language and the level of existence associated with it.

The ultimate purpose of the Torah is not merely to draw down holiness into matters associated with *Lashon HaKodesh* — for that, the new empowerment granted the Jews at the giving of the Torah was not required. Instead, the purpose was to infuse holiness into the lowly realms dominated by the 70 languages, including Egyptian.

For that reason, when Moshe ascended to receive the Torah and the angels asked of G-d: “Bestow Your glory upon the heavens,”⁴³ Moshe responded: “Did *you* descend to Egypt?”, and this response was accepted by G-d.⁴⁴

The purpose of the giving of the Torah was twofold: not only to reveal G-dliness from above, but also to elevate the material realm through the Jews’ Divine service. Accordingly,

18. This does not, heaven forbid, create division and multiplicity within G-d. Our Sages (*Sanhedrin* 39a) illustrate this concept with an analogy, referring to the light of the sun, which enters many different windows simultaneously. See also *Tanya*, the conclusion of ch. 35.

19. *Yehoshua* 24:19; i.e., in this verse, not only does the name *E-lohim* itself employ a plural form, the modifier קדושים is also plural.

20. *Pardes, Shaar* 12, ch. 2. From a note in the *Sheloh, Shaar HaOsios, Os Kedushah*, 89a, it appears that this concept has its source in the *Zohar*.

21. See *Likkutei Torah, Balak*, p. 73b, *Nitzavim* p. 53c.

22. *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 257b; *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehoEmunah*, ch. 7.

40. See *Pesachim* 87b, the conclusion of the tractate of *Sotah*.

41. *Bereishis* 42:9.

42. See *Koheles Rabbah* 1:4; *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Lech Lecha*, sec. 5.

43. Cf. *Tehillim* 8:2.

44. *Shabbos* 88b.

This question can be resolved as follows: There is a name for these entities in *Lashon HaKodesh*. This name, however, embodies a holiness far different from the ordinary conception of sexuality. It is only when the matter is dealt with in the terminology used by secular tongues that the ordinary conceptions of sexuality prevail.

To cite a parallel: In *Chassidus*,³⁶ an explanation is given for the effects of the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge, based on the verse:³⁷ “And they understood that they were naked.”

Why was it that only after the sin did Adam and Chavah realize they were naked? Did the sin increase their understanding?!

Before the sin, Adam and Chavah were unaware of material desire. Every organ in their bodies was dedicated to serving G-d. Therefore, despite the fact that “they were both naked,” “they were not ashamed.”³⁸ Their nakedness was necessary in order to fulfill the charge to “be fruitful and multiply,”³⁹ and in that there was nothing to be ashamed of. Just as a person is not ashamed when performing the *mitzvah* of wearing *tefillin*, there was nothing to be ashamed of in performing the *mitzvah* of reproduction. Indeed, this was the very first *mitzvah* given to mankind.

The Sin of the Tree of Knowledge changed this. It introduced material desire into the world, and thus attached undesirable connotations to certain dimensions of our behavior. It was such a connotation that caused Adam and Chavah to believe they should be ashamed. The fulfillment of the *mitzvah* to be fruitful and multiply remained a holy act; only man’s conception of it was affected.

36. See the comments of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to *Bereishis* 3:7 in *Derech HaEmunah*. See also the comments of Rabbeinu Bachaye to that verse, and *Kuntres U'Mayon*, Discourse 26.

37. *Bereishis* 3:7.

38. *Ibid.* 2:25.

39. *Ibid.* 1:28.

nature. Therefore Yosef told Pharaoh:²³ “*E-lohim* will provide an answer regarding Pharaoh’s fortune.” This is a dimension of G-dliness to which Pharaoh can relate. With regard to the name *Havayah*, by contrast, Pharaoh states:²⁴ “Who is *Havayah* that I should listen to him?... I do not know *Havayah*.” He has no comprehension of those levels of G-dliness which transcend nature.

Anochi refers to G-d’s essence, as it is said:²⁵ “I am (*Anochi*) who I am; I cannot be alluded to either with a letter or a point [within a letter].” Not only is this level above the name *E-lohim* which is associated with the laws of nature, it is above the name *Havayah*, which transcends nature.

G-d is not limited by *any* constraints, neither by those of nature, nor by those above nature. And for this reason, this level can fuse the natural and the transcendent.

This level was revealed within the Holy of Holies, of which it was said:²⁶ “The place of the ark was not included in the measure.” From east to west, the Holy of Holies was 20 cubits long. And yet there were 10 cubits from the *paroches* (the dividing curtain) to the ark, the ark itself was 2.5 cubits long,²⁷ and there were 10 cubits from the ark to the western wall. All the measurements of the ark had to be precise, and yet, the entire span was not effected by its length. Here we saw a fusion of finiteness and infinity.

By saying “I (*Anochi*) am G-d (*Havayah*), your L-rd (*E-lohecha*),” G-d told the Jews that at the giving of the Torah, the boundless power of *Anochi* was bringing about fusion between *Havayah* and *E-lohim* (i.e., between the levels of G-dliness which transcend nature, intellectual compre-

23. *Bereishis* 41:16.

24. *Shmos* 5:2.

25. *Likkutei Torah*, *Pinchas* p. 80b; see *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 257b.

26. *Yoma* 21a.

27. *Shmos* 25:10.

hension, and indeed, the entire creation, with those levels which can be grasped by the human mind).

This is the reason for coupling those *mitzvos* which can be grasped by human logic, “Do not kill” and “Do not steal” with the infinitely profound *mitzvos* “I am G-d” and “You shall have no other gods,” which communicate the deepest dimensions of G-d’s unity.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, 5723)

CALLING G-D BY AN EGYPTIAN NAME

On the verse, “I am G-d, your L-rd,” the *Midrash*²⁸ notes that *Anochi*, “I,” is an Egyptian word. This raises a question: The Ten Commandments are “general principles including the entire Torah.” As stated in the *Azharos* of Rav Saadia Gaon,²⁹ all the *mitzvos* are included within the Ten Commandments. This is alluded to in the fact that the Ten Commandments contain 620 letters, symbolizing the 613 *mitzvos* of the Torah and the seven *mitzvos* prescribed by the Rabbis.³⁰

Within the Ten Commandments themselves, the commandment “I am G-d,” includes all the positive commandments, and “You shall have no other gods” includes all the negative commandments.³¹ That is why the entire nation heard these two seminal commandments from G-d Himself.³²

“I am G-d” precedes “You shall have no other gods.” The implication is that “I am G-d” conveys the most fundamental concept.

This can be appreciated from the content of the two commandments. The very fact that the second commandment

28. *Midrash Tanchuma* (Buber edition), *Yisro*, sec. 16; *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Yisro*, sec. 286.

29. See also *Rashi*, *Shmos* 24:12; *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 90b.

30. *Sheloh*, *Parshas Yisro*, in the name of the sages of previous generations.

31. See *Sheloh*, *op. cit.*; *Tanya*, ch. 20.

32. See *Makkos* 24a. The other eight of the Ten Commandments, by contrast, were conveyed to the people by Moshe.

forbids acceptance of other gods implies that there is a possibility of doing so. The first commandment, by contrast, is a direct statement which does not recognize any other possibility; there is no consideration of the false notion of other gods.

Within the first command itself, *Anochi* is the first word. As such, it is said³³ that *Anochi* includes within it the entire Torah. And as mentioned before, *Anochi* refers to G-d’s essence, which “cannot be alluded to either with a letter or a point [within a letter].”

Why was *Anochi*, an Egyptian word, used to refer to G-d’s essence? With regard to the levels of G-dliness which are described by names, Hebrew names which are used. Why then is an Egyptian term, *Anochi*, used to refer to G-d’s essence itself?

THE EFFECT OF THE SIN OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

The difficulty mentioned above is reinforced by contrasting *Lashon HaKodesh*, the Holy Tongue, with other languages. One of the reasons given for calling the language in which the Torah is written is called “the Holy Tongue” is that it does not contain any terms for the sexual organs.³⁴

From a mystical perspective, there is a difficulty with this interpretation, for every created thing derives its life energy from the name by which it is known in *Lashon HaKodesh*. The letters of the entity’s name are a medium through which passes the G-dly life energy expressed through the Ten Utterances of Creation.³⁵ Thus every part of creation must have a name in *Lashon HaKodesh*. How is it possible that there are certain entities, e.g., the sexual organs, for which there is no name in Hebrew?

33. *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 85b; see also Vol. II, p. 25b.

34. *Rambam*, *The Guide to the Perplexed*, Vol. III, ch. 8; note the discussion of this concept by the *Ramban*, *Shmos* 30:13.

35. See *Tanya*, *Shaar HaYichud VahaEmunah*, ch. 1.