

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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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
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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 II: *Shemot*

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In English rendition
with Introduction and Notes
by
Jacob Immanuel Schochet

A

I. When the Torah was given to Israel it says: 'And G-d spoke all these words, saying.'^a The commentators dwell upon the meaning of the word *leimor* ('saying' or 'to say'). Whenever the Torah states 'And He spoke . . . saying,' the meaning of *leimor* is to repeat, or convey, those words to the Jewish people who did not hear at the time. When the Torah was given, however, all Jews were present and all heard. What then does the word *leimor* signify?

To say that it may refer to transmitting those words to later generations will not do, for *matan Torah* was witnessed and experienced by all the souls of the later generations as well.¹

The *Maggid* of Mezhirech explains^b that *matan Torah* served to infuse the *Aseret Hadibrot* (Ten Commandments) of the Torah into the *Asarah Ma'amarot* (Ten Utterances) of the Creation: the *Zohar*² interprets the double expression of 'ten' in the verse 'each spoon (weighing) *ten, ten* (shekels) after the holy shekels'^c to indicate that the *Asarah Ma'amarot* correspond to the *Aseret Hadibrot*. Thus it says in our text '*Vayedaber . . . leimor*' (And G-d spoke . . . saying), to infuse the

a. [Exodus 20:1]

1. *Shemot Rabba* 28:6

b. [Or Torah, Hossafot, sect. 8. See also *Likutei Amarim*, sect. 264; and *Or Torah*, sect. 96 and 235.]

2. *Zohar* III:11b.

[See *Lik. Sichot*, vol. I, Toldot, sect. XXVII.]

c. [Numbers 7:86]

vayedaber, the *Asseret Hadibrot*, into the *leimor*, the *Asarah Ma'amarot*.^d

II. In the context of serving G-d this means that the light of Torah, the Ten Commandments, must be made to radiate even in worldly matters, in the Ten Utterances.

There are those who think that Torah and the world are two separate entities. In a Torah-environment they will conduct themselves according to the Torah, but in a worldly environment they will act according to the perceptions and practices of the world. In truth, however, all his affairs, even those relating to the world, must follow the premises of the Torah.

We are not discussing things that are forbidden. After all, that which is prohibited is out of the question. Rather, even in the sphere of things permitted one must not be guided by the perspectives of the world at large, by a layman's perspective, but by Torah-premises.³

III. This illuminates the verse "My tears were sustenance for me, day and night, when it is said to me all day long 'Where is your G-d?' "^e

'My tears were sustenance for me, day and night:' he

d. [The universe was created by Ten Utterances (*Avot* 5:1; *Rosh Hashanah* 32a), that is, by the ten fiats 'Let there be . . .' mentioned in Genesis, ch. 1. This creation, however, was conditional: The first word of the Torah, *bereishit* (in the beginning), can be divided into *be* (the letter *bet*, which is also the number 2), *reishit* (beginning), thus rendering 'two *reishits*.' This is interpreted to mean that G-d created the heavens and earth for the sake of two things that bear the name *reishit*, namely the Torah and Israel (see Rashi on Genesis 1:1). In this context, G-d made a condition with the works of creation: 'If Israel accepts the Torah, you will exist; but if not, I will turn you back into emptiness and formlessness.' (*Shabat* 88a; Rashi on Genesis 1:31) *Matan Torah*, the giving of the Torah and its acceptance by Israel, thus assured the endurance of the works of creation: the Ten Commandments (alluded to in the word *vayedaber*) correspond to the Ten Utterances (alluded to in the word *leimor*), and to serve to infuse these with the power of endurance.]

3. See *Meirat Einayim* on *Choshen Mishpat*, sect. 3, note 13.

e. [Psalms 42:4]

is so embittered that his tears have replaced all other nourishment, for as known, *merirut* (bitterness of the heart and soul) has the effect of removing any feeling of hunger. And the verse explains the cause for this *merirut*, 'when it is said to me,' that is, there is an insistent demand from Above: 'Where is your G-d *all day long*?'

Elo-hecha (your G-d) means your strength and life-force.⁴ Who is *Elo-hecha*? *Havaya* — the Eternal — is your G-d! *Havaya*, the One who is beyond time and space,^f the One who transcends *hishtalshelut* (the process of the creative development), *He* is *Elo-hecha*, your strength and life-force! Moreover: '*Anochi* — I am *Havaya Elo-hecha*.' *Anochi* stands for '*Anochi mi sheAnochi*, I am who I am,^g the One that is not alluded to by any letter or jot,⁵ *He* is *Elo-hecha*, your strength and life-force.

This, then, is the demand from Above: Where is *Elo-hecha all day long*? Where is your awareness of the *Anochi Havaya Elo-hecha all day long*?

To sense the principle of *Elo-hecha* at the time of prayer or Torah-study, or at a *farbrengen*, is not enough. That is not the ultimate intent, for that could be achieved even with angels or with the souls above as they are under

4. See *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chayim, sect. 5.

[The root-word of this Divine Name is *El*, which means strength, rigor; see *Yevamot* 21a and *Zohar* III:132a. Thus, when uttering this Name one should have in mind the idea that G-d is our strength, our vitality or life-force, without which we cannot endure.]

f. [Cf. above, *Shemot*, note r.]

g. [Cf. *Zohar* III:11a: 'I am who I am, and it is not known who He is.' *Anochi*, the ultimate 'I,' thus refers to G-d the Uncaused, the Transcendent, the only truly Independent (cf. Maimonides, *Hilchot Yessodei Hatorah* 1:1ff.). The aspect of *Anochi* thus transcends even the sublime aspect indicated by the Divine Name of *Havaya*. No being can truly be called *Anochi* — the totally autonomous, uncontingent 'I' — except the Eternal, Who is thus the true *Anochi*.

Note that this paragraph relates the first of the Ten Commandments '*Anochi* — I am *Havaya* (the Eternal) *Elo-hecha* (your G-d) . . .' (Exodus 20:2) to our text from Psalms 42.]

5. See *Likutei Torah*, Pinchas, p. 80b.

the Throne of Glory.^h The purpose of the soul's descent into a body is to purify the body and the animal soul [for the soul by itself is not in need of *tikun* (mending) at all].⁶ Man must be conscious of the principle of *Elo-hecha* all day long — when he eats, drinks, conducts business, and converses with others, even as he understands and senses this principle at the time of prayer and Torah-study.

(Adapted from the Sichot of Shabbat Parshat Mikeitz 5713)

B.

IV. There are those who claim that the teachings of Chassidut belong to the realm of the esoteric and thus should not be studied, Heaven forbid. The response to this is as follows:

At the time of *matan Torah* the whole Torah was given, both the *nigleh* (the exoteric, revealed part) and the *nistar* (the esoteric part) of Torah. In fact, the *nigleh* of Torah was then concealed: the Ten Commandments consist of 620 letters, alluding to the 620 *mitzvot*⁷ — the 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah and the 7 *mitzvot* instituted by the rabbis;ⁱ thus all *mitzvot* were given in the Ten Command-

^h. [See *Zohar* I:113a and III:29b (and cf. *Shabbat* 152b), that the souls, prior to their descent, are under G-d's Throne of Glory.

To be in a state of Divine consciousness and ecstasy in an exclusive context of Divine worship is readily applicable to angels and to souls prior to their descent. That would not necessitate the creation of the physical body to become involved with this world. Cf. *Shabbat* 88b, the argument between Moses and the angels about whom the Torah should be given to.]

⁶. *Tanya*, ch. 37

⁷. [*Bamidbar Rabba* 13:16. *Zohar* II:90b and 93b.]

See Rashi on Exodus 24:12; Ba'al Haturim on Exodus 20:13.

ⁱ. [The rabbis instituted seven precepts in addition to the 613 precepts in the Five Books of Moses: a) The recitation of *Halel* at appropriate times (festivals; *Rosh Chodesh*); b) the reading of the Scroll of Esther on Purim; c) the kindling of the Chanukah-lights; d) the kindling of the Sabbath-lights; e) laving the hands before eating bread; f) the recitation of blessings when partaking of material enjoyments (e.g., food, drinks etc.) and when perform-

ments, but only by allusion and in a concealed form. The *nistar* of Torah, however, was manifest at the time: all of Israel saw there *Ma'aseh Merkavah*^j [as alluded in the verse 'The Chariot of G-d . . . thousands of *shinon* . . . in holiness at Sinai':^k the word *shinon* is an acronym for *shor* (ox), *nesher* (eagle), *aryeh* (lion), and the *nun* stands for the face of man,]^l which is the very substance of *pnimiyut haTorah*.

(Adapted from the Sichot of Shavu'ot 5713)

C

V. Those who are opposed to the study of Chassidut generally use two arguments:

a) If this study were essential, why was it not done before? If, for so many years, we were able to do without Chassidut, obviously it is not really essential.

b) This kind of study leads to a nullification of the reality of matter and empirical substance — which means pure negation [with no apparent positive elements].

VI. The response to this is as follows:

Maimonides notes in *Shemonah Perakim*⁸ that just as there are diseases and cures relating to the body, so too there are diseases and cures relating to the soul. Thus it follows that much can be learned from physical diseases and cures with regard to the diseases and cures of the soul.

ing *mitzvot*; and g) the requirement of an *eruv* to permit certain actions on the Sabbath and festivals. Cf. also *Sefer Hamaamarim* 5708, marginal note on p. 165.]

j. [*Ma'aseh Merkavah*, the Work of the Chariot, specifically referring to the Theophany described in the first chapter of Ezekiel (generally also referring to Isaiah, ch. 6), is the very substance of the *nistar*-part of Torah. See *Chagigah*, ch. 2.]

k. [Psalms 68:18]

l. [*Zohar* I:18b and 149b. These are the four forms described in Ezekiel 1:10.]

8. Chapter 3. See also *Hilchot De'ot* 2:1.

VII. Disease, may the Merciful spare us from such, generally means a defect or disorder in a certain part of the body. There is, though, a disease where the body does not lack anything, but is in fact added to by a growth of new tissue. One might say 'who cares that there is an extra growth, since nothing is missing from those parts that should be present'? Nonetheless, this is clearly seen as a disease. In fact, this may be a disease much more serious than if there had been a defect in the body, indeed so serious that people avoid calling it by its name.

The extra growth is damaging to that part where it is and may, Heaven forbid, spread ever further.

Just as this disease differs from all others, so, too, is its cure different from all others. With other cures one *adds* something to the body. The cure for this disease, however, is to destroy the additional part, and that is how the patient's health may be truly restored.

The cure for this disease was discovered only a few generations ago. The ways to use this cure was discovered still later, and research continues in that field.

VIII. Someone may refuse to use this cure because (a) the purpose of medicine is to expand and strengthen the body and not to destroy; and (b) for generations after generations no one used that technique, and thus he refuses to listen to those new doctors with their new cures. He is conventional and will follow the traditional way. Surely everyone can see the self-evident fallacy of these arguments.

Strengthening and expanding applies only to the healthy parts of the body, but not to the growth which must be destroyed as it is altogether extraneous and harmful to it.

In the past this disease was not as known and prevalent as it is now. Thus there was little research in that field and, most significantly, Providence did not furnish the appropriate cure. Lately, however, as this disease

has become more pronounced, may the Merciful spare us, the Holy One, blessed be He, 'created a healing before the disease'^m and provided the cure.

IX. All physical entities derive from their roots and counterparts in the spiritual realm. This applies also to the disease and cure discussed above. The fact of its greater prevalence in these later generations is related to the spiritual counterparts in these later generations.

We are now on the very heels of the advent of the Messiah. Very soon will be the time of 'He sets an end to darkness.'ⁿ But this means also that there is presently a strengthening and increase of the *kelipah* of Amalek, i.e., of impudence and arrogance without sense or reason.^o

Haughtiness and arrogance have always been around, but never were they so crass as today.

This reflects itself on the physical level in a substance devoid of sense and reason, a substance which drains the vitality of the body as if it were the only reality of significance.

The Almighty thus anticipated this disease with a cure and revealed the doctrines of Chassidut which effects a destruction and ruination of the diseased component (arrogance).

X. It is clearly seen that the analogy breaks down in one respect. In the example, over-exposure to the cure may prove harmful to the healthy parts of the body. In

m. [Megilah 13b; Zohar I:196a]

n. [Job 28:3]

o. [See *Sotah* 49b (also *Sanhedrin* 97a): 'In the footsteps — i.e., just before the advent — of the Messiah, impudence will increase.' Amalek represents the *kelipah* (category of evil) signifying impudence and arrogance. "'A man's pride . . ." (Proverbs 29:3) relates to Amalek who displayed haughtiness towards the Holy One, blessed be he, by his revilings and blasphemies . . ."; *Bamidbar Rabba* 13:3. Amalek *knows* the Master of the Universe, and yet intentionally, brazenfaced and with impudence, rebels against Him without sense or reason. Cf. above, *Beshalach*, sect. XIII.]

the spiritual realm, however, one can forever continue learning Chassidut and this will destroy only the component of arrogance and self-esteem. Moreover, it will even strengthen and expand the healthy parts, as it is said that the Torah is called *oz* (strength) and *tashiyah* (from the root *tashash*, thus meaning the one that weakens): it is *toshiyah* for weakening the animal soul, and *oz* for strengthening the Divine soul.⁹

(Adapted from the Sichot of 12th of Tammuz 5712)

9. *Mechilta* on Exodus 15:2; *Vayikra Rabba* 31:5; *Sanhedrin* 26b. See also *Torah Or*, Yitro, p. 67a, and *ibid.*, Hossafot, p. 109a.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

15

"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)

64

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.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

"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.

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. *[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.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

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

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

BESURAS HAGEULO

"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).*

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