

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FRIEND
Horav **Shimon** ben Reb **Yehuda HaKohen** ע"ה **Cohen**
Passed away on Yom Kippur - 10 Tishrei, 5773

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF OUR DEAR FRIEND
Mrs. **Chavah Sosha** bas **Sarah Chana** שתח"ל **Cohen**
May she go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

*

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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LIKKUTEI SICHOT

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 X: *Devarim*

•

In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

VAYEILECH

PLURALISM AND INDIVIDUALITY

On the verse:¹ “Take this Torah scroll,” our Sages comment² that on the last day of his life, Moshe our teacher wrote 13 Torah scrolls. Twelve were given to the Jewish people, one for each tribe, and the thirteenth was placed in the Holy Ark. “Were anyone to try to falsify any [portion of] the Torah, [this scroll] could be taken out from the Ark, [to disprove the claim].”

The Torah is eternal. This applies even to the stories of the Torah, for they provide lessons for the Jewish people in every generation. Although there is room for variation with regard to some customs, there is a general uniformity in Torah practice.

To explain: There may be differences in local customs, and at times the view of one *Halachic* authority is accepted over that of another, for “these and these are the words of the living G-d.”³ This is possible because the Torah was given to be studied “as a general set of rules, with particular — and even the most detailed — applications.”⁴ Every Jewish soul has its roots in one particular element of the Torah, and must conduct itself as directed by that particular element.⁴

1. *Devarim* 31:26.

2. *Devarim Rabbah* 9:9; *Midrash Sochar Tov* 90; see the Rambam’s introduction to the *Mishneh Torah*.

3. *Eruvin* 13b.

4. The Alter Rebbe’s Introduction to *Tanya*.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

servant David, I have anointed him with My holy oil.”⁸

...Added emphasis should be placed on all of the above this year, for two reasons. First, this year it is customary to recite the Psalm, which makes reference to the coming of *Moshiach*, when it states: “I have found my servant David, I have anointed him with my holy oil.” In addition, this year we have reached the milestone of forty years since the passing of the Previous Rebbe, at which time “G-d has given you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear.”⁹ These [being a “*shaliach*” to announce “Behold he comes” and hearing Eliyahu’s pronouncement because “I await him every day”] become even more significant since seven days have already passed since we entered into the year [57]51 - תשא”י - אראנו נפלאות - Avenu Niflaos - I will show him wonders, following the initials of the year.

(From the talk of Wednesday, Parshas Beracha, 7 Tishrei 5751)

well the Psalm corresponding to the Rebbe’s age. This sicha was said during the Rebbe’s 89th year. Translator’s note.]

8. 89:21.

9. *Tavo* 29:3.

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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May it be G-d's Will - and this is the essential point - that each and every one of us should become a "shaliach" (a messenger) to inform oneself, one's family, and all the Jews around him or her that: "**Here he [Moshiach] comes.**"¹ and "Behold, this is our G-d... this is the L-rd for whom we hoped."²

(Note that the word "this" [indicating a clear recognition] is mentioned twice.)³ and "Behold, David the Anointed King" [is here] - and therefore *Eliyahu HaNavi* [the prophet] already appeared a day earlier in T'verya [Tiberius]⁴ to announce the arrival of our righteous Moshiach.

It may be suggested that, since Moshiach can come any day - "I await his coming **every day**"⁵ - and since *Eliyahu HaNavi* must announce Moshiach's arrival the day before, that therefore *Eliyahu HaNavi* **actually comes every day** to T'verya and announces the coming of Moshiach. The announcement is directed particularly to those who put themselves in a position of "I await his coming every day," even though (as is the custom of *Chabad*)⁶ they do not actually articulate this verbally, but only think about it. [The announcement is made specifically to us] when we recite [this year],⁷ from the well-known Psalm, the verse: "I have found My

A parallel applies to "the duties of the heart," the inner dimension of our Divine service, and its expression in the emotions of love and fear. Here, there is room for plurality, for each person has his gate, the medium through which he is elevated and establishes a connection with G-dliness.⁴ This individuality applies, however, only with regard to particular elements of our Torah heritage.

To cite an example: There are various versions of the prayer services. These differences have their source in the fact that "there were 13 prostrations in the [*Beis*] *HaMikdash* paralleling the 13 gates which will be in [the *Beis HaMikdash* of] the Future Era."⁵

Twelve of the 13 gates are for the 12 tribes, one gate for each tribe. The thirteenth gate is "the general gate," for the entire Jewish people without distinction. In the analog, this refers to a version of the prayer service which is applicable to all Jews.

It is true that there is an advantage for every tribe to follow the prayer service appropriate for it, entering through its individual gate. Indeed, "at the time when every individual knew the tribe to which he belonged, it was preferable that every individual enter through his [tribe's] gate.... At present, however, when [by and large] we do not know to which tribe we belong, it is preferable to enter via the general gate. [This applies] even to select individuals such as priests and Levites, who know the identity of their tribe. This general gate refers to the version of the prayers authored by the *AriZal*."⁵

The same holds true with regard to Torah study. There are individuals whose souls share a connection to *Nigleh*, the revealed dimension of Torah law, and others who share a connection to *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, the Torah's mystic heritage. When one does not know where one's soul is rooted, however, one should use "the general gate."

1. Expression used in *Shir HaShirim* [Song of Songs], 2:8.

2. *Yeshayahu [Isaiah]*, 25:9. See end of [tractate] *Ta'anis*.

3. *Shemos Rabbah*, end of chapter 23.

4. See *Eiruvin* 43b: Eliyahu has arrived yesterday... to the Great Court." In turn, the Great Court will first be restored in T'verya [Tiberius]" Rambam, *Hilchos Sanhedrin*, end of chapter 14.

5. Twelfth of the "Thirteen Principles of Faith."

6. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. IX, p. 282 ff.

7. [It is a Chassidic custom to recite Psalms corresponding to one's age as

5. *Likkutei Torah* of the Maggid of Mezeritch, as quoted in the Introduction of *Shaar HaKollel*.

The Alter Rebbe was chosen to compose his *Shulchan Aruch*.⁶ In this text, he carefully selected rules of conduct as prescribed by *Nigleh*. He also founded *Chabad Chassidus*, setting up an approach for the study of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* and for our Divine service. And he developed a version of the prayer service which is appropriate for every Jew.⁷

These three contributions are appropriate for the Jewish people as a whole, and for every individual. Using them, a Jew can negotiate his ascent to all levels through prayer, and draw down influence through the medium of the Torah.

May it be G-d's will that we follow the paved path prepared for us, and spread the wellsprings of the Alter Rebbe's teachings (this includes the rulings of his *Shulchan Aruch* and his version of the *Siddur*) to all Jews. And through spreading these wellsprings outward, we will merit the fulfillment of the promise of *Mashiach's* coming. May it be in the immediate future.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech*, 5715)



6. See his sons' Introduction to his *Shulchan Aruch*.
7. See *Beis Rebbe*, Vol. I, ch. 10: "When he structured his *Siddur*, he had 60 different versions before him, and he conceived a version most appropriate than all of them."

prayers take the place of the sacrifices. As such, it is our prayers which today express this connection.

To explain: Yom Kippur is the only day of the year on which we are obligated to recite five different prayer services. These five services reflect the five levels of the soul: *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, *chayah*, and *yechidah*.²⁹ *Neilah*, the fifth prayer service, which is recited only on Yom Kippur, thus reflects the level of *yechidah*, the aspect of the soul which is bound to G-d with singular oneness. At this level, nothing besides G-d and the souls of Israel is of concern.

This is the meaning of the word *neilah* — that the gates are locked; no one else is allowed in. The Jewish people are alone with G-d.

This degree of connection is revealed in the *Neilah* prayer.³⁰ In a more general sense, however, it applies throughout the day of Yom Kippur,³¹ for Yom Kippur is "a day on which five prayer services are required." Although each service has its time (the evening service, the morning service, etc.), the entire day is "a day on which five prayer services are required," i.e., the fifth level, the level of *yechidah* shines throughout the day.

(Adapted from the *maamar* entitled *Vichol Adam*, 5723, and *Sichos Simchas Beis HaShoevah*, 5723)



29. *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 86b.
30. For that reason, the fundamental aspect of the atonement of Yom Kippur is granted at the conclusion of the day (See *Taanis* 26b; *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 39d). See also *Kuntres HaAvodah*, sec. 5, which speaks about "special times, e.g., the time of sounding the *shofar*, and *Neilah* on Yom Kippur."
31. We find a parallel to this phenomenon with regard to *Shabbos* — this is indeed fitting, because Yom Kippur is described (*Vayikra* 23:32) as *Shabbos Shabbason*. *Shabbos* is characterized by the quality of *oneg*, "delight." This applies to *Shabbos* as a whole. Nevertheless, the ultimate level of *oneg*, the level described as *raaveh dichol raavin*, is revealed at the conclusion of the day. See the *Siddur Im Dach, Derushei Seudos Shabbos*.

est level of angels.²⁵ When the High Priest enters the Holy of Holies, not even the angels may be present.

What does this imply? That Yom Kippur involves the essential bond between G-d and the Jewish people, as represented by the High Priest who serves as their agent; “Israel is alone with G-d.”²⁶

Moreover, the High Priest would enter the Holy of Holies in the era of the Second *Beis HaMikdash* as well, when the Holy Ark was not there. Implied is that the High Priest entered into a bond with G-d that is above even the level of engraved letters in the Torah.²⁷

There is a level of *teshuvah* mandated by the Torah and a level of *teshuvah* above the Torah.¹⁶ The difference between the two is that the *teshuvah* mandated by the Torah reflects a revealed level of the soul and of G-d. It is true that even the level of *teshuvah* mandated by the Torah is above the level of the Torah itself. For that reason, *teshuvah* can atone for blemishes in the observance of the Torah’s *mitzvos* — including even the *mitzvah* of Torah study.

Nevertheless, the *teshuvah* mandated by the Torah reflects dimensions of the soul and of G-d which are revealed. The *teshuvah* which transcends the Torah, by contrast, points to how the soul is bound up with G-d’s essence, and is above all revelation.

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the Jews’ essential bond with G-d was revealed through the entry of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies. Our Sages teach²⁸ that our

25. *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 2:7. See, however, *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 43a. See also *Tanya*, ch. 39. (Note also the *Raya Mehemna* cited there; (this apparently refers to the *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 225a) and the *Eitz Chayim* (apparently, *Shaar* 50, ch. 7).)

26. *Zohar* III, p. 32a.

27. [In the Holy Ark, were contained the Tablets on which the the Ten Commandments were engraved.]

28. *Berachos* 26b.

YOM KIPPUR

THE ESSENCE OF THE DAY

The *Talmud* relates¹ the following difference of opinion with regard to G-d’s pardoning of our sins on Yom Kippur:

Our Sages maintain that “Yom Kippur atones only for those who repent,” while Rebbe [Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi] states: “Whether or not one repents, Yom Kippur atones,” because “the essence of the day brings atonement.” The *Halachah* is decided according to our Sages.²

It is not that the Sages differ with Rebbe [Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi] and feel that “the essence of the day” is not powerful enough in its own right to bring about atonement. On the contrary, they also maintain that it is “the essence of the day” which atones.³ For with *teshuvah* alone, a person cannot reach the level of atonement attained by virtue of “the essence of the day.”

The difference between Rebbe and our Sages is one of mechanics: how is it possible for the atonement brought about by the essence of the day to be achieved? Rebbe maintains that when Yom Kippur comes, the power of “the essence of the day” is so great that even when a Jew does not repent, his sins are washed away.

1. *Shavuos* 13a.

2. *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 1:3; *Hilchos Shegagos* 3:10; cited by the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 607:16.

3. This is reflected in the fact that the *Rambam* (*loc. cit.*:3-4) uses the expression “the essence of Yom Kippur atones,” although he accepts the position of our Sages.

Our Sages, by contrast, maintain⁴ that for the atonement brought about by the essence of the day to be effective, it must be accompanied by *teshuvah*. This *teshuvah*, however, is no more than a preparatory step, for the atonement brought about by the essence of the day is far more encompassing than that brought about by *teshuvah*.

On this basis, we can also understand our Sages' comment⁵ on the verse:⁶ "Seek G-d when He is to be found": "These are the 10 days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur."⁷ On one hand, Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are included in the sum of these 10 days, for without them there would not be "Ten Days of Repentance." Simultaneously, Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur stand above the 10 days, which are described as being "between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur." For the essential aspects of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur transcend the Divine service of *teshuvah*.

The essence of Rosh HaShanah is the crowning of G-d as King.⁷ The essence of Yom Kippur is the atonement brought about by the essence of the day — an endowment granted every Jew from above, independent of his striving to do *teshuvah*.

THREE LEVELS OF CONNECTION

Atonement means more than withholding punishment for a person's sins. The implication is that all blemishes and scars brought about by the sins are washed away from the person's soul.⁸ And in a consummate sense, *teshuvah* means not only

4. Note *Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Eglah Arufah*, which explains our Sages' position slightly differently.
 5. *Rosh HaShanah* 18a.
 6. *Yeshayahu* 55:6.
 7. See the *sichah* for Rosh HaShanah in this series, where this concept is explained.
 8. *Tanya, Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 1.

observed: fasting,²⁰ refraining from work, and celebrating the holy day.

For this reason, the *Talmud* states¹ that even Rebbe, who maintains that the essence of the day atones even without the influence of *teshuvah*, agrees that this does not apply with regard to transgressions of the commandments applying to Yom Kippur itself. If a person does not fast on Yom Kippur, the essence of the day does not bring about atonement for him. Since it is the essence of the day which causes the person's failure to fast to be considered a sin, that same factor cannot serve as the agent of atonement.²¹

WITHIN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

The above concepts are also reflected in the service of the High Priest on Yom Kippur. One of the fundamental elements of the service was his entry into the Holy of Holies. Concerning this entry, it is written:²² "No man shall be in the Tent of Meeting." The *Jerusalem Talmud* states²³ that this applies even to those about whom it is said:²⁴ "the likeness of their face is like the face of a man," i.e., the Holy *Chayos*, the high-

20. See the *maamar* entitled *Vihu KiChasan*, 5657, sec. 17, which states that the self-mortification of Yom Kippur taps a higher level of G-dliness than *teshuvah*.
 21. To cite a parallel concept: "An accuser cannot itself become a defender." See the comments of the *Tzofnas Paneach* to the *Rambam, Hilchos Yibbum* 4:20.
 A question may, however, be raised from the interpretation (*Tanya, Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 11) of our Sages' statement (*Yoma* 85a): "One who says: 'I will sin and then repent,' is never given the opportunity of repenting." Although he is not "given the opportunity," if he presses the matter and *creates* an opportunity, his *teshuvah* is accepted.
 It is possible to say that this differs from the present situation, because the *teshuvah* of a person who "presses the matter" is on a higher level. This, however, is not the place for extended discussion of this matter.
 22. *Vayikra* 16:17.
 23. *Yoma* 1:5. See also the *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 15b and Vol. I, p. 208b, and the conclusion of the *maamar* entitled *VeChol Adam* cited above.
 24. *Yechezkel* 1:10.

Rosh HaShanah, this is expressed through our coronation of G-d and His choosing of us, and on Yom Kippur it is expressed in the atonement brought about by “the essence of the day.”¹⁷

Rosh HaShanah is a three-dimensional holiday, because in addition to this essential quality, the day is also characterized by *teshuvah* and a specific *mitzvah*, the sounding of the *shofar*. Similarly, Yom Kippur possesses these three dimensions: the expression of the essence of the soul, as evidenced by the fact that the essence of the soul brings about atonement, the *teshuvah* of Yom Kippur, for Yom Kippur is also one of the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*, and the *mitzvos* performed on Yom Kippur: the fast and also the *mitzvah* to repent and confess.¹⁸

NOT TO DISTURB THE CONNECTION

There is another parallel between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. As mentioned with regard to Rosh HaShanah,⁷ the “mitzvah of the day,” sounding the *shofar*, also gives expression to the Divine service of *teshuvah* and of crowning G-d.¹⁹ So too with regard to Yom Kippur, the expression of the essence of the soul in the atonement brought about by “the essence of the day” finds an echo in the *mitzvos*

17. The connection between the Divine service of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur is expressed by the conclusion of the middle blessing of the *Shemoneh Esreh* on Yom Kippur, which praises G-d as “the King who pardons and forgives,” implying that the pardon granted on Yom Kippur follows the acceptance of G-d’s Kingship on Rosh HaShanah.

18. See the *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah 2:7*, which states: “Everyone is obligated to repent and confess on Yom Kippur.” Significantly, the *Rambam* states this law in *Hilchos Teshuvah*, and not in *Hilchos Sh’visas Asor*, which records the laws we must fulfill on Yom Kippur. For this obligation, though one of the laws of Yom Kippur, is above the level of *mitzvos*. It thus parallels the aspect of *teshuvah* associated with the sounding of the *shofar*, which is mentioned in *Hilchos Teshuvah*, and not in *Hilchos Shofar*.

19. See the communal letter for Rosh HaShanah, 5724, printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 1354ff.

that no trace of sin is left, but that the sin itself is transformed and considered a merit.⁹

When a Jew returns to G-d with remorse over the sins he has committed, we can understand how this dynamic operates. His feelings of regret tear away the pleasure he experienced at the time of sin, and this purifies and washes away the traces of evil from his soul.¹⁰

What’s more, the distance created by sin spurs the soul to a greater thirst for G-dliness. For this reason, after *teshuvah*, the sin can be considered a merit.¹¹

But when atonement is brought about by “the essence of the day,” how can it result in such a process of purification? It is possible to understand that such atonement will prevent punishment, but how can it purify our souls?

This question applies even according to our Sages, for they postulate that the atonement of Yom Kippur has a more encompassing effect than the Divine service of *teshuvah*. Surely, this question applies according to Rebbe, who maintains that Yom Kippur brings about atonement even without *teshuvah*.

The above question can be resolved by coming to appreciate the various levels of connection our souls share with G-d. There is one level which is dependent on our observance of G-d’s commandments. It is established by a person’s acceptance of the yoke of heaven, and his willingness to do what G-d asks of him.

There is a second and deeper level of connection, one which is reflected by the fact that even a Jew who has broken G-d’s commandments and cast off the yoke of heaven will feel

9. *Yoma* 86b.

10. See *Derech Mitzvosecha*, p. 38b, which describes this as the process of purging “the soul of the *kelipah*”, and the act of confession as “destroying the body of the *kelipah*.”

11. *Tanya*, ch. 7.

remorse and turn to G-d in *teshuvah*. Because *teshuvah* comes from a level of connection which is deeper than that established through the observance of the *mitzvos*, it has the power to correct and wash away the spiritual blemishes caused by sin.¹² Sin weakens the soul's connection to G-d, and *teshuvah* restores it.

Nevertheless, even this inner connection has a certain limit, as it is manifest in the process of *teshuvah*.

There is a third, and even deeper level: the bond shared between the essence of the soul and G-d's essence. This bond knows no measure at all, nor is there any process through which it is manifest. It is therefore above even *teshuvah*.

This level of connection cannot be established through our activities and Divine service, for all mortal activities, however lofty, have a limit. Instead, it is an innate, natural connection stemming from the fact that every Jew possesses a soul which is "an actual part of G-d from above,"¹³ and even while enclined in the body, it "clings and cleaves to You, its oneness affirming Your oneness."¹⁴

Since this level of connection is above all measure and form, it cannot be established through our Divine service, and cannot be weakened by a lack of service or even by sin.

This is the meaning of the phrase "the essence of the day brings about atonement." On Yom Kippur, the Jews' essential bond with G-d is revealed, and this washes away all blemishes.

(As mentioned above, the difference between the views of Rebbe and the Sages hinges on whether or not *teshuvah* is necessary for this level to be revealed. They both agree that it

12. Similarly, in the spiritual realms, *teshuvah* reaches a level above G-d's desire for the observance of the *mitzvos* (*Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, p. 26c, *Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Vidui U'Teshuvah*.)
 13. *Tanya*, ch. 2.
 14. *Sukkos liturgy, Seder Tehillat HaShem*, p. 327.

is not *teshuvah* which effects the atonement of Yom Kippur, but rather that atonement stems from the essence of the day.)

On that level of the soul where sins have an effect and can cause a blemish, atonement must be achieved through man's conscious turning to G-d in *teshuvah*.¹⁵ This arouses a deeper connection with G-d, which breaks through any obstacles that might prevent such a bond. The atonement brought about by Yom Kippur, by contrast, comes through the revelation of a bond which never allowed for the *possibility* of a blemish.¹⁶

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

It thus follows that the beginning of the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*, Rosh HaShanah, and the conclusion of these days, Yom Kippur, both relate to the connection of the essence of the soul to G-d, which transcends the service of *teshuvah*. On

15. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Vaes'chanan* in this series, which states that because the soul of a person who repents reaches a level higher than that of a perfect *tzaddik*, one might conclude that the blemish brought about by sin also brings the soul to a level higher than that realized by a *tzaddik*.
 16. These two levels of *teshuvah* and Yom Kippur reflect the differences between the Torah's response to a sinner (*Yalkut Shimoni, Tehillim, Remez 702; Yerushalmi, Makkos 2:6*): "Let him bring a guilt offering, and thus receive atonement," and that given by the Holy One, blessed be He: "Let him turn in *teshuvah* and receive atonement." (See also the letter of Tishrei 8, 5712 printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 135a.)

Although the course of action suggested by the Torah also involves *teshuvah*, the agent of atonement is the sacrifice. The *teshuvah* causes the willful sins to be considered unintentional, and a sacrifice can bring about atonement for unintentional sins. (See the *maamar* entitled *VeChol Adam*, delivered by the *Tzemach Tzedek*, sec. 4 — *Or HaTorah, Devarim*, p. 1557ff.)

Moreover, such atonement is not complete, for the *teshuvah* mandated by the Torah relates to the will of the Torah, but reflects "the depth of the will," or "the master of the will" (see the *sichah* for Rosh HaShanah in this series). This is possible because the Torah relates to the middle vector, which reveals levels which transcend the spiritual cosmos. It does, however, relate to those limits, and thus has a measure. The *teshuvah* prompted by the Holy One, blessed be He, stems from an essential delight which is above the will entirely, like the *teshuvah* of Yom Kippur. This level has no limits. It atones for even purposeful transgressions, and indeed, transforms them into merits.