

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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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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602 North Orange Drive.

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Tel.: (323) 934-7095 * Fax: (323) 934-7092

<http://www.torah4blind.org>

e-mail: sys@torah4blind.org

Rabbi Yosef Y. Shagalov,

Executive Director

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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

VAYAKHEL
ADAR

ויקהל
אדר

A

I. Today's *sidrah* begins: 'And Moses assembled all the congregation of the children of Israel and he said to them: These are the words which the Eternal has commanded that (you) do them. Six days work shall be done, and on the seventh day there shall be holiness for you, a *shabbat shabbaton* (a sabbath of strict rest) . . .'^a

In this passage there are a number of nuances and difficulties, some of which are mentioned by the commentators:

a) Why does it say 'Moses assembled'? The usual expression in most instances in the Torah is 'Moses said,' as we find in this *parshah* itself, just a few verses further,^b with regard to the command about the offering for the *mishkan*.

b) It says, 'These are the words which the Eternal has commanded that (you) do them,' but there is no explanation of just what 'these words' are. Most commentators interpret this to refer to the offering for the *mishkan*. This explanation, however, is inadequate, because [later in verse 4] that command is itself introduced with the words 'And Moses said.' The first introductory phrase [verse 1: 'and he said to them'], therefore, must refer to a subject preceding 'And Moses said' [in verse 4, and relating to the *mishkan*-offering], namely the immediately

a. [Exodus 35:1-2. Rashi on Exodus 31:51 defines *shabbat shabbaton* as a reposeful rest, of a perfect character, as opposed to the rest of a casual character — i.e., a rest for the sake of recovering from fatigue, or imposed by the fact that there is no work to be done.]

b. [Exodus 35:4]

following passage of 'Six days . . .' [verse 2]. But this too presents a difficulty: the precept to observe the Sabbath was already proclaimed earlier in Ten Commandments!

c) Why the double expression of *shabbat shabbaton*?

d) Rashi comments (as stated in the *Midrash* and *Zohar*)¹ that 'Moses assembled — on the morrow of *Yom Kippur*, when he came down from Mount Sinai.'^c Thus it follows that there is a relationship between Moses' assembling the whole congregation of Israel and the day of *Yom Kippur* which signifies atonement — for on that day G-d said to Moses: 'I have forgiven according to your request' with reference to the sin of the golden calf.^d What is this relationship?

II. Our Sages note that Scripture states here, 'Six days work *tei'aseh* (shall be done),' as opposed to *ta'aseh* (you shall do).² *Ta'aseh* means an active involvement and

1. *Mechilta*, Yitro, beg. of ch. 2. *Zohar* II:195a

c. [See Rashi on Exodus 31:18, 33:11, and on Deuteronomy 9:18: The incident of the golden calf happened a considerable time before the Jewish people received the command regarding the work of the *mishkan*. On the seventeenth of *Tamuz*, Moses found the people worshipping the calf and punished the offenders, and on the same day (according to other sources on the nineteenth or twentieth) he again ascended the mountain and spent forty days seeking mercy for Israel, after which he returned. Immediately thereafter he was told again to ascend, to receive the second tablets (Exodus 34:1ff.), and he spent there again forty days and forty nights (Deuteronomy 10:10), culminating on *Yom Kippur*, the tenth of *Tishrei*. On that day of *Yom Kippur* G-d became reconciled with Israel, in joy and perfect affection, and said to Moses, 'I have forgiven according to your request,' and He gave him the second tablets. Thereupon Moses went down, and on the morrow after *Yom Kippur* commanded Israel concerning the work of the *mishkan*. Cf. *Tanchuma*, Terumah:8, Ki Tissa:31, and Pekudei:11; *Seder Olam Rabbah*, ch. 6; *Lekach Tov* on Exodus 35:1; and see also the commentary of R. Chaim Vital on *Zohar* II:224a, quoted in *Or Hachamah*, a.l.]

d. [The expression 'I have forgiven according to your request (lit. word)' appears in Numbers 14:20 with reference to the sin of the spies; but Rashi on Deuteronomy 9:18 — following *Tanchuma*, Ki Tissa:31 and *Pirke deR. Eliezer*, ch. 46 — uses this expression in our context.]

2. See the commentaries on this verse.

preoccupation, while *tei'aseh* [the passive 'shall be done'] means that it is done of itself. *Mechilta* (on this verse) thus comments that 'when Israel obeys the Will of the Omnipresent their work shall be done (*tei'aseh*) by others.'^e

This is the blessing from Heaven. Everything is also reflected in man's *avodah*. The principle of *tei'aseh* in *avodah*, therefore, means that the work and mundane actions which one is compelled to do during the six weekdays should be not with engrossing preoccupation but as if it were happening of itself.

Scripture says, 'When you eat the toil of your hands you will be happy and it shall be well with you.'³ This means⁴ that toiling to provide physical needs ('when you eat') should involve only the hands and other *external* limbs ('*your hands*'). The head and heart, however, must be involved with Torah and *mitzvot*. When following this procedure of 'eating the toil of your *hands*' then 'you will be happy and it shall be well with you,' as our sages said⁵ 'you are happy in this world and it shall be well with you in the World to Come.'

This is also the meaning of *tei'aseh* — it shall be done of itself: he is not devoted to his business with his mind and heart [intellect and emotion], but only with his faculty of action; and even that faculty of action he exercises only as much as is necessary to provide an instrument for G-d's blessing.

In truth, 'The Eternal your G-d will bless you in all you do.'^f It is not man's action that provides him with his sustenance, but G-d's blessing. To be sure, G-d's blessing needs some instrument to which it may become attached,

e. [See above, *Bo*, note 18.]

3. Psalms 128:2. See *Lik. Sichot*, vol. I, *Vayeitze*, sect. IV.

4. *Likutei Torah*, Shelach, p. 42d.

5. *Avot* 4:1; *Berachot* 8a.

f. [Deuteronomy 15:18]

and thus there is a need for 'all you do';^g but this requires no more than some instrument. One must do only so much as is necessary to establish an instrument. The mind and the heart, however, should not be involved at all — as for devising schemes and so forth. Even the faculty of action is to be used only as much as is essential.

Actually, no form of work should have been permissible. After all, 'I fill the heavens and the earth'^h and 'the whole earth is full of His glory'ⁱ (in other words, the Divine Presence is literally everywhere). Out of respect for the King of all kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, no work should have been permitted, as our sages said that he who converses in signs in the presence of the king [is guilty of a capital offense].⁶ Nonetheless, the Torah permitted and ordained that work be done, as it is written 'in all you do,' and 'six days you shall labor.'

The *Torah* thus permitted to work as much as is necessary, but to go beyond that — a) indicates a lack of realization that the principal thing is the Divine blessing (and as will be explained further on, section V) and b) is in effect a matter of 'gesturing in the presence of the king.'

III. We still need to understand why Scripture specifically uses the term *toil* — 'the *toil* of your hands.' This term appears rather difficult in view of the premise stated that the heart and the mind should not be involved, i.e., that one must not become engrossed.

g. [*Sifre*, and *Lekach Tov*, on this verse: 'I might think that the blessing will come even when man is idle, Scripture therefore says 'in all you do' . . . Cf. *Zohar* I:88a: 'There is not stirring above until there is a stirring below. The blessings from above are to be found only where there is some substance and not mere emptiness . . .']

h. [Jeremiah 23:24]

i. [Isaiah 6:3]

6. See *Chagigah* 5b [cf. *Mayim Rabim* 5636, ch. 86]. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXIV.

j. [Exodus 20:9. See above, *Bo*, note 18.]

Now it is well known⁷ that a task which man *enjoys* doing will not exhaust him so much, even when putting in a great amount of effort. On the other hand, a task which does not offer personal satisfaction will exhaust man even after doing only a little.

It is likewise in our context. He who is not gratified by material pursuits will become involved in these only to the extent of actual necessity.

To be sure, he will use even this minimal involvement for the service of G-d. Indeed, man can be said to fulfill a *mitzvah* by doing this work, as our sages interpret the verse 'Six days you shall labor' to be a positive precept!⁸ Nonetheless, at the time of his labor he is involved with material things while his true interest and enjoyment is in obvious *mitzvot*. The involvement with the material, therefore, is by compulsion.

As it is really by force, even this minimum amount of work involves only his faculty of action and there is no special effort on his part. In that sense, then, it can be said

7. See *Karov Hashem 5690* [*Sefer Hamaamarim—Kuntreissim*, vol. I, p. 210].

8. *Mechilta* on Exodus 20:9, cited in *Derashot R. Yehoshua ibn Shu'iv*, Vayeishev; and in *Minchah Belulah*. Cf. *Mechilta de Rashby* on this verse: 'Just as Israel is enjoined with the positive precept relating to the Sabbath, so they are enjoined to work.' In this context we can readily understand the meaning of *Bereishit Rabba* 16:5 ['And He put him into the Garden of Eden *le'avdah* (to work it)' —i.e., 'Six days you shall work' (Exodus 20:9), '*uleshamrah* (and to keep it)' — i.e., 'Keep the Sabbath-day' (Deuteronomy 5:12)] (an interpretation differing from that in *Sifre* on Deuteronomy 11:13 [where those two words are interpreted to refer to the study of Torah and the keeping of *mitzvot* respectively]). See also *Avot deR. Nathan* 11:1; *Nachmanides* on Leviticus 25:3; and *Kuntres Uma'ayon*, ch. 19.

This will also explain the expression '[Craftsmen are not] *reshain* (allowed) [to rise before scholars whilst they are engaged in their work]' (*Chulin* 54b; see there Rashi and Tossafot [discussing the meaning of this word because it is important to determine the context of that ruling].)

that his work is done of itself. Even so, the very idea of material involvement is not to his liking and he awaits the moment of completing the task so that he can become involved with Torah and *mitzvot*. Thus even that minimum amount of work exhausts him (is *toil*).

IV. This then is the simple meaning of 'Six days work shall be done (*tei'aseh*), and the seventh day shall be . . . *shabbat shabbaton*': in order for the Sabbath to be as it should, there must first be six weekdays during which the work is done 'of itself.'^k

The law stipulates that every Sabbath a person must consider all his work as though completed.⁹ A person engrossed in his work throughout the week may still want to tear himself away from all his involvement on the Sabbath-day to immerse himself in Torah and prayer, 'to perceive the glory of the King.'^l His entanglement, however, will cause all kinds of alien thoughts to disturb him even on the Sabbath, thoughts related to his activities throughout the week as well as thoughts altogether alien to him.^m 'The wicked are compelled to be perturbed (by improper thoughts);'¹⁰ for as he 'opened a door' he is

k. [Cf. *Avodah Zarah* 3a: 'He who took the trouble to prepare on the eve of the Sabbath can eat on the Sabbath; but he who has not prepared on the eve of the Sabbath, what shall he eat on the Sabbath?']

9. *Shulchan Aruch* of the *Alter Rebbe*, *Orach Chayim*, 306:21.

[See *Mechilta* and Rashi on Exodus 20:9.]

l. [See *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XXIV]

m. [See *Mechilta* and Rashi on Exodus 20:9 — cited above, note 9: When the Sabbath comes it should be in your eyes as though all your work were completed, so that you will not think at all about work.]

10. See *Derech Chayim*, ch. 3.

['It is stated in the *Zohar* that the thoughts of the wicked are compelled to be perturbed . . . This refers not only to those that are wicked because of actually committing sins, but also to those who consciously cast off the yoke of Heaven . . . for the principal meaning of the term *rasha* (wicked) relates to one who does not care about the yoke of G-d's sovereignty . . .'] Cf. *Zohar* II:245b and its interpretation in *Keter Shem Tov*, sect. 227 and 387, and in the *Maggid's Likutei Amarim*, sect. 4, 47 and 84.]

moved in that direction.ⁿ Thus he is unable to properly experience the Sabbath.^o

If, however, there is the 'Six days your work shall be done' (*tei'aseh* — of itself), then 'on the seventh day shall be . . . *shabbat shabbaton*.' The light of the Sabbath will illuminate him. Moreover, it will be *shabbat shabbaton* — a double expression of *shabbat*: as his attitude throughout the week is one of '*tei'aseh* — of itself,' the whole week is on a level of *shabbat*.¹¹ The additional sanctity of the actual Sabbath, therefore, makes it into a *shabbat shabbaton* (which resolves the third question posed above).

This resolves also the second question: the command ('These are the words . . .') does not refer to the Sabbath but to the procedure of how to achieve the Sabbath.

V. We can now understand the relationship between 'And Moses assembled . . . Six days work shall be done' and the morrow after Yom Kippur, namely in terms of signifying a rectification for the sin of the golden calf.^p

Maimonides explains¹² that idolatry developed because the Supernal influence emanates by way of the 'stars and planets,' as it is written, 'the delightful fruits, brought forth by the sun and the delightful fruits brought forth by the moon.'¹³ The idolaters conceded that the stars and planets are mere intermediaries; nonetheless, they referred to the Almighty as the 'G-d of gods,'^q that is,

n. [Cf. *Sifre* and Rashi on Deuteronomy 22:23: 'A breach in the wall invites the thief . . .' He exposed himself to that danger and thus he is moved in that direction.]

o. [See note k above.]

11. See *Shabbat* 119a. *Zohar* III:29a. *Tikunei Zohar* XXI:46a.

p. [See *Midrash Aggadah*, and *Lekach Tov*, on Exodus 35:1.]

12. *Hilchot Avodah Zarah*, ch. 1. [See above, *Ki Tissa*, sect. XII.]

13. Deuteronomy 33:14.

[See Rashi there, that some fruits are sweetened by their exposure to the sun and others are brought to maturity by their exposure to the moon.]

q. [*Menachot* 110a. See above, *Ki Tissa*, note gg.]

they esteemed the intermediaries, too, as something to be reckoned with. In truth, however, they may not be worshipped, for they are but 'like an axe in the hand of the hewer.'^r

Chassidut¹⁴ explains that on a subtle level the mundane preoccupation with effort and all kinds of schemes in earning a livelihood is also a form of idolatry. For this kind of attitude implies that one esteems the mundane involvement, which is like an intermediary, as if it had a value of its own. He may believe in all sincerity that 'the Eternal your G-d will bless you . . .', yet he esteems also the mundane occupation and thus throws himself into his work with his intellect — which is analogous to the act of prostration, bowing the head. Moreover, in effect this is even worse: bowing the head is a mere physical act,^s while here his head is involved even on the internal, spiritual level, submitting his intellect to the intermediary because he esteems it as something significant.¹⁵

In other words, the idea of 'Six days *ta'aseh* — you shall do work' with effort, is rooted in his esteeming that work. If he were to accept the truth that it is no more than 'an axe in the hand of the hewer' he would not immerse his head and being in the work but would conduct himself according to the principle of '*tei'aseh* — the work is done of itself.'

This offers an additional reason for a conduct of '*tei'aseh* — of itself.' For this conduct indicates that he understands that his efforts do not supply him with his

r. [See above, *Ki Tissa*, note *ee.*]

14. See *Likutei Torah*, Acharei, p. 27c. *Mayim Rabim* 5717 [ch. 4; *Kuntres Maamarim*, p. 55.]

s. [Yet even this external, physical prostration to idolatry is prohibited under all circumstances, even if that is not the normal way of worshipping that particular idol. See *Sanhedrin* 60b; Maimonides, *Hilchot Avodah Zarah* 3:3.]

15. Cf. above, *Ki Tissa*, sect. XII.

sustenance but merely facilitate his sustenance from 'the Eternal your G-d who will bless you' — of itself.

Here we see the relationship between 'Moses assembled' and the date of the morrow of *Yom Kippur*: the rectification and uprooting of the sin of idolatry is by way of 'Six days work shall be done — of itself.'

VI. The principle of 'effort in a manner of "of itself"' is found also on a higher level, that is, not only in involvement of a material nature but also in the service of G-d. There too the '*tei'aseh* — of itself' is a correction for the sin of the golden calf.

This means:

The *Mishnah*¹⁶ states: 'Do not be like the servants who serve their master for the sake of receiving a reward.' One may serve G-d by learning Torah and observing *mitzvot*, motivated by personal enjoyment, because he gets pleasure from Torah and *mitzvot*. This type of service falls into the category of serving 'for the sake of receiving a reward.' The ideal *avodah* is 'without the intent of receiving a reward,' that is, to act not because of any enjoyment but by virtue of *kabalat ol*, of accepting the yoke of G-d's sovereignty, for wanting to fulfill the Divine Will.

The latter is called 'effort in a mode of 'of itself.' ' It is an *effort*: as this *avodah* is not based on personal enjoyment, it requires effort on the part of man, as stated above.

It is a mode of 'of itself': an *avodah* based on personal feeling and enjoyment may lead one into error. He may think that his achievements are by virtue of 'his own strength and the might of his hand' — i.e., he has fine abilities and noble character-traits, and that is why he studies Torah and gives *tzedakah* (the general principle of

16. *Avot* 1:3

mitzvot^s),* and so forth. In other words, he sees his doings as a case of *ta'aseh*, you shall do. If, however, he is motivated by *kabalat ol*, then he realizes the truth that his achievement is not by virtue of his own strength but because of Divine assistance — *tei'aseh*, it is done 'of itself.'

There is a saying in the writings of our sages,¹⁷ 'Open for Me like the point of a needle and I will open for you like the entrance to a large hall.' Whatever man does is no more than the point of a needle, and the principal effect comes from Above — 'and I will open.'

In fact, even the preparation to the fulfillment of *mitzvot* comes from G-d, as expressed in the comment of our sages on the verse:¹⁸ 'Who has given Me anything beforehand and I shall repay him . . . Who has made a parapet' for My sake before I gave him a roof? . . . Who has made *tzitzit* for My sake before I gave him a *talit*? . . .'^{18*}

In that sense, then, this *avodah* can be called 'te'aseh — of itself' (as stated above, in the physical context, according to the second explanation). He realizes that nothing was achieved by virtue of *his* work, that his work

s*. [All *mitzvot* are compounded in the term *tzedakah*, as in Deuteronomy 6:25. See *Moreh Nevuchim* III:53; *Mayim Rabim* 5636, ch. 110 and 201.]

17. Many Chassidic texts quote this in the name of the sages, though in the sources available to us it is not in the same version. *Likutei Torah*, Korach (p. 55a), cites different versions — to be found in *Shir Rabba* on Song 5:2; *Yalkut Shimoni* on that verse; and *Zohar* III:95a — and concludes: 'Elsewhere (the sages) said 'and I will open for you like the entrance to a large hall;'' and proceeds to interpret specifically that version. Note also *Pessikta Rabaty*, ch. 15; *Pessikta deR. Kahana*, parshat Hachodesh.

18. Job 41:3

t. [Referring to the *mitzvah* of putting up a fence around the roof, Deuteronomy 22:8.]

18*. *Vayikra Rabba* 27:2

was no more than an instrument and channel for 'I will open for you,' and everything comes 'of itself.'

VII. It was said above that the 'effort in a mode of "of itself"' in the spiritual realm is also a rectification for the sin of the golden calf.

This will be understood in the context of the premise that the sin of the golden calf is related to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. Thus our sages said that the sin of the Tree of Knowledge brought moral impurity into the world which was removed at the time of *matan Torah*, but it returned through the sin of the golden calf.¹⁹

The sin of the Tree of Knowledge signifies a sensing of ego, as it is written 'And the woman saw that the tree was good for food and that it was a delight to the eyes' — i.e., a sensing of personal delight.²⁰ The correction for this, therefore, is the 'effort in a mode of "of itself"': instead of 'sensing' [satisfaction, achievement or enjoyment as a motivation], there must be effort of *kabalat ol*; and instead of thinking that 'his strength and the might of his hand caused him all that prosperity' there must be the attitude of 'of itself.'

VIII. This explains why Scripture states, 'And Moses assembled all the congregation,' as opposed to 'And Moses said.'

The assembly was 'on the morrow after *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement,' for it served as an atonement for the sin of the golden calf. That sin had brought back the impurity of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, and it was necessary to restore the world to its state prior to sin, — the state of 'the world was created in its fullness.'^u The intent is that there be 'one nation on earth,'^v that is, to con-

19. *Shabbat* 146a. *Zohar* I:52b. See above, *Terumah*, sect. III.

20. Genesis 3:6. See *Bati Legani* 5710, ch. 5.

u. [*Bereishit Rabba* 14:7; see also there 12:6.]

v. [II Samuel 7:23; I Chronicles 17:21. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. IX.]

vert the world into a *reshut hayachid* (private domain), a universe,^w thus establishing an abode for Divinity in this lowly, material world, that physical beings become an abode for G-d's Unity and Essence. Thus it says 'Moses assembled,' that is, he assembled and gathered together all entities to establish the ultimate unity.

Everything is categorized in terms of world, year, and soul.^x All these categories are enumerated in our text: 'These are the words' alludes to the 39 types of labor²¹ [prohibited on the Sabbath] (which compound all worldly affairs) '... throughout your habitations'^y — the general principle of 'soul'; and 'six days work shall be done and on the seventh day . . . *shabbat shabbaton*' — the general principle of 'time.'

Moses had the ability to assemble everything in order to establish the ultimate unity, for Moses was of the first *shemitah*,²² beyond *hishtalshelut*.^z Every Jew, too, has

w. [The physical world is a realm of pluralism, of a multiplicity of things which appear and behave as if they are separate from Divinity and from one another. In that sense it is a *reshut harabim*, a domain of many entities. It is man's task to realize, and to establish in a concrete way, the intrinsic unity or monism of the universe on all levels — to transmute the world into a *reshut hayachid*, a 'private domain,' the domain of the One. See *Tanya*, end of ch. 33. Cf. *Tikunei Zohar* 24:69a and (*Kisse Melech* there, note 5); *ibid.*, 30:73a (and *Kisse Melech* there, notes 4-5).]

x. ['World,' 'year,' 'soul' are key-concepts in *Sefer Yetzirah* (see there 3:3ff; *et passim*). Generally speaking they signify the three fundamental concepts in the universe of space ('world'), time ('year'), and life or vital force ('soul'). See *Likutei Torah*, Chukat, p. 64a; *ibid.*, Haazinu, p. 74d, and Shir, p. 7b.]

21. *Shabbat* 70a. [See note cc further on.]

y. [Exodus 35:3]

22. *Torah Or*, Shemot, p. 51d. [See next note]

z. [The soul of Moses has its root in the primordial 'world of *tohu*,' also called 'first *shemitah* (septennial),' which preceded the process of *hishtalshelut*, the creative process and development culminating in the creation of our material world. The process of *hishtalshelut* is the 'world of *tikun*' or the 'second *shemitah*.' The soul of Moses was 'pulled out of the waters' (Exodus 2:10), i.e., the 'world of *tohu*,' and deposited in the 'world of *tikun*' in order to help perfect the latter by means of the unique qualities he

this power, by way of the element of Moses inherent in him (as explained in *Tanya*,²³ in the context of 'Yes, relative to Moses it is a small thing.')

When acting upon this potential, the ultimate intent of creation will be realized: the universe will be restored to its state prior to sin, the state of 'the world was created in its fullness' — a perfection which will become manifest in the future to come.^{2*} Our sages thus note that the precept of the Sabbath is put next to the command to construct the *mishkan*;^{aa} that is, this type of *avodah* will lead to the building of the Third Sanctuary, speedily in our own days. (Excerpts from Maamar Vayakhel 5712)

B

IX. 'These are the words . . . ;'^{bb} from this verse the *Gemara* derives that there are 39 kinds of labor which are forbidden on the Sabbath.^{cc} The *Gemara*²⁴ also states that

possessed because of his source of origin. See above, *Tetzaveh*, note *dd*, and also end of note 11 there.]

23. *Tanya*, ch. 42.

[*Tanya* quotes there *Berachot* 33b: 'And now Israel, what does the Eternal your G-d require of you, but to fear the Eternal your G-d' (Deuteronomy 10:12). Is fear then such a small thing? Yes, in the case of Moses it was a small thing.

The reply of the *Gemara* raises an obvious question: Scripture speaks of 'what does He request of *you*,' and not 'of *Moses*'. The *Rebbe* explains: each and every soul of the house of Israel contains within it something of the qualities of Moses, and is nurtured from the root of the soul of Moses. This fact makes the fear of G-d a readily accessible quality to every Jew. See also *Tanya*, ch. 44; and above, *Tetzaveh*, note 11.]

z*. [*Bereishit Rabba* 12:6; see also there 14:7.]

aa. [Cf. *Mechilta* and Rashi on Exodus 31:13 and 35:2.]

bb. [Exodus 35:1]

cc. [See *Shabbat* 70a and 97b: *Eileh hadevarim* (these are the words); the numerical value of *eileh* is 36; *devarim* (plural form) signifies two, and *ha-devarim* is an extension, making three from two. Together, therefore, these two words allude to the number of 39 labors prohibited on the Sabbath

all forms of work involved in the construction of the *mishkan* are regarded as labor and forbidden on the Sabbath.

As the 39 kinds of labor are derived from the work of the *mishkan*, it is clear that the two are related. It is an established premise that derivative teachings in Torah are not coincidental, but that the subject which establishes a teaching and the derived teaching are in essence the same.

The relationship [between the 39 kinds of labor of the Sabbath and the work of the *mishkan*] is twofold: a) the 39 kinds of labor are *rooted* in the labors of the *mishkan*, that is, all types of work evolve from the labors of the *mishkan*; and b) by implication all types of labor, [not only *mitzvot*, but] even the optional ones, have for their goal and purpose facilitating the establishment of a dwelling (*mishkan*) and abode for G-d, as it is written 'Acknowledge Him in all your ways.'²⁵

X. This explains the principle that on days when work is permitted, we minimize a number of things — like the reading of the Torah and *additional* prayers — in order not to diminish the time available for work.²⁶

Moreover, our sages state that the verse 'Six days you shall work' sets down a positive precept.²⁷

How is that possible?

This becomes clear in light of the premise stated: as all forms of work serve the purpose to establish a *mishkan*, working is evidently a *mitzvah*, and man must con-

as taught to Moses at Sinai. *Yerushalmi, Shabbat* 7:2 (cited and explained above, *Bo*, section XI; see there) derives the same tradition just from the word *eileh*, by changing the *hey* to a *chet* — the word thus assuming a numerical value of 39.]

24. *Shabbat* 96b. *Baba Kama* 2a.

25. Proverbs 3:6. [Cf. above, *Yitro* note y.]

26. See *Berachot* 16a; *Megilah* 22b; *Kidushin* 33a.

27. See note 8 above.

tinuously exert himself accordingly — ‘for man is born to toil.’²⁸

The basic difference between the world at large and the *mishkan* is merely the difference between potentiality and actuality: *the mishkan is an abode [for Divinity] in actuality, while the world at large is a mishkan in potentiality.*

Every moment, therefore, must be utilized for proper work, which, as said, will bring the potential to actuality. The instruction of ‘Acknowledge Him in all your ways’ applies to every single moment. (Purim 5718)

C

Adar

XI. ‘With the beginning of Adar rejoicing is increased.’

The Mishnah²⁹ states: ‘With the beginning of *Av* rejoicing is curtailed.’ The *Gemara*³⁰ comments on this that ‘just as with the beginning of *Av* rejoicing is curtailed, so with the beginning of *Adar* rejoicing is increased.’

This comment entails two premises which seem to contradict one another:

a) The expression ‘*Just as . . .*’ implies that the ruling ‘with the beginning of *Av* rejoicing is curtailed’ is the

28. Job 5:7

29. *Ta’anit* 26b

[In *Av* ‘rejoicing is curtailed’ in view of the calamities that occurred in that month, on *Tisha beAv* (ninth of *Av*), including the destruction of both the First and the Second Sanctuaries; see here in the *Mishnah*.]

30. *Ibid.*, 29a.

[Just as the month of *Av* proved unfortunate to Israel, so the month of *Adar* proved to be a month of good fortune and happiness to Israel in view of the miracle of *Purim*.]

basic, principal ruling; in fact it is the ruling stated explicitly in the *Mishnah*. The ruling 'with the beginning of *Adar* rejoicing is increased' is taught by analogy — 'just as,' thus merely derived from the original principle relating to the month of *Av*.

b) In practice, however, we note that the curtailment of rejoicing in *Av* is limited. Not everything is curtailed; some forms of rejoicing are permitted even in *Av*.³¹ The increase in rejoicing with the beginning of *Adar*, however, is unrestricted, even to the extent of 'losing the ability of differentiation.'^{dd} This presents a difficulty. After all, the principle of increasing rejoicing with the beginning of *Adar* is derived from the principle relating to the beginning of *Av* — as the *Gemara* says 'Just as . . .'; how then can the derivative be in greater measure than the original?

XII. There is a simple explanation. There must always be joy, even in the month of *Av*, because of the imperative 'Serve the Eternal with joy'^{ee} which applies to all times. If there is an additional requirement then of *increasing* joy, that joy is extended beyond restrictions. The 'curtailment of rejoicing,' however is limited, for some forms of rejoicing apply even then, and especially in view of the imperative to serve the Eternal with joy.

The deeper meaning of this principle accords with the premise discussed in the *maamar*:³² our ultimate purpose is to make real the intent of 'the Holy One, blessed be

31. See *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chayim, 551:2; *Bayit Chadash* (Bach) on *Tur*, beginning of sect. 551, *s.v. aval* [in the middle of his first note]. The comment of *Magen Avraham*, *ad loc.*, note 1 [speaking of 'no rejoicing at all . . .'] requires further consideration.

dd. [See *Megilah* 7b; *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chayim, 695:2: 'Man is obligated to become exhilarated on *Purim* to the point of not knowing the difference between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordecai.']

ee. [Psalms 100:2. Cf. *Zohar* I:216b.]

32. *Ki Tissa* 5716 [delivered just before this *sichah*].

He, desired to have an abode in the lower worlds,^{ff} i.e., in our physical world here below. When a human being lives in his dwelling he is there with his total being. This is also the meaning of an 'abode in the lower worlds' — that the Almighty be there in His very essence, blessed be He.

Scripture states: 'Strength and gladness are in His place.'^{gg} In the presence of G-d there is joy.^{hh} An abode in the lower worlds therefore calls for 'strength and gladness' — for only then it can be truly His place and His dwelling.³³

This explains why man must always be filled with joy. To be sure, there are times for which curtailment is prescribed, but even then there must be a measure of joy because one must establish an abode for G-d at *all* times, every single moment. That indeed is the whole purpose of man — 'I was created (only) to serve my Maker.'³⁴ Thus there is a duty to be continuously in a state of joy, truly every moment.

ff. [*Tanchuma*, Nasso:16. See *Tanya*, ch. 36.]

gg. [I Chronicles 16:27. Cf. *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XI.]

hh. [See *Zohar* I:180b: 'The Shechinah does not dwell in a place of sadness, but only in a place of joy.' See also *Nitzutzei Orot* on *Zohar* I:216b, note 2; and cf. *Shabbat* 30b. See also *Tanya*, ch. 31, and next note.]

33. Cf. *Chagigah* 5b ['Is there any weeping in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He? Did not R. Papa say, There is no sadness in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, for it is said "Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and gladness are in His place"! There is no contradiction: the one case (of weeping) refers to the *inner* chambers, the other case (of gladness) refers to the *outer* chambers. And in the *outer* chambers there is none (sadness? . . .), where some sources read 'And in the *inner* chambers there is none (gladness)?', a version cited in *Avodat Hakodesh*, III:ch. 57.]

[*Avodat Hakodesh* insists that this is the correct version, and in accord with the mystical tradition, as in the inner chambers there is no sadness or grief but only gladness. Cf. *Zohar* III:15b, and *Nitzutzei Zohar* note 6 a.l. and also *Nitzutzei Zohar* on *Zohar* I:163a, note 2.]

The version in our text of the *Gemara*, though, is explained in the *Tzemach Tzedek's Reshimot al Eichah*, pp. 22-23; but this is not the place to dwell upon this further.

34. *Kidushin* 82a

XIII. The fact that man's *avodah* must sometimes be in a different way, not that of joy, can be understood according to the same premise explained in the *maamar*. The abode for G-d is established similarly to building a dwelling for a mortal king: first of all one must remove all traces of dirt and so forth, and then the house is decorated with beautiful objects to make it fit as a dwelling for the king.

It is the same with the spiritual service. First one must remove all dirt, and one does so by means of *merirut* (bitterness).ⁱⁱ This is the *avodah* of the month of *Av* — 'rejoicing is curtailed' — in order to remove the faults indicated in 'because of our sins we were exiled from our land.' Nonetheless, this is no more than a preparation for a dwelling; the dwelling itself is established by means of joy.

XIV. The *Gemara* states that the increase of rejoicing with the beginning of *Adar* is 'just as.' The implication, as said, is that this increase follows from the curtailment of joy with the beginning of *Av*. This is understood in view of the premise, explained in *Chassidut*,³⁵ that the excellence of light emerges from the darkness itself. In that context, the unrestricted joy of *Adar* — to the point of 'losing the ability of differentiation' — derives from darkness; that is, the suppression of the *sitra achara*^{jj} by

ii. [Note that the term used is *merirut* (bitterness), as opposed to *atzvut* (sadness; dejection, or melancholy). *Merirut* has a positive connotation; it is a mood generated by a critical self-evaluation which is motivated by, and leads to, self-improvement. *Atzvut*, on the other hand, is negative and passive, causing deterioration rather than improvement. See *Tanya*, ch. 31 on this distinction, and see also there ch. 1, 26 and 27 for a critique of *atzvut*. Cf. also *Igeret Hakodesh*, sect. XI, and my notes there in the English translation.]

35. *Tanya*, ch. 26; *Bati Legani* 5710, ch. 1.

See also *Tanya*, ch. 33. All these sources deal with Ecclesiastes 2:13: 'I saw that wisdom excells folly as light excells darkness.'

jj. [The 'other side' as opposed to holiness; the side of evil. See *Mystical Concepts in Chassidism*, ch. X.]

means of *merirut* brings about an immensely great rejoicing without limitation.

This is also the reason why there is unlimited joy in the month of *Adar*, for the joy then [on the occasion of Purim] emerged from darkness.^{kk} Thus it is written, 'and many of the people of the land became Jews':^{ll} the 'people of the land,' signifying the three impure *kelipot*, became *yehudim* (Jews) — they repudiated idolatry and affirmed the whole Torah.³⁶

This *avodah* brings out the excellence of light, that on *Purim* there is a duty to rejoice to the extent of 'losing the ability of differentiation'; and this increase in rejoicing is ordained for the whole month of *Adar*, as it is said, 'and the month was changed [for them from sorrow to joy . . .],'^{mm} i.e., the whole month of *Adar*.

(Shabbat mevarchim Adar 5716)



kk. [Cf. *Esther Rabba* 10:14, commenting on Micah 7:8 'Though I sit in darkness, the Eternal is a light unto me': "At first 'Mordecai sat in the king's gate' (Esther 2:21); then 'Mordecai returned to the king's gate' (*ibid.* 6:12); then 'Mordecai went forth from the presence of the king' (*ibid.* 8:15); and finally 'The Jews had light and joy, exultation and honor' (*ibid.*, 16).'] See also *Ibn Ezra* on Esther 8:16.]

ll. [Esther 8:17]

36. *Nedarim* 25a

['He who repudiates idolatry affirms the whole Torah.' Note also *Megilah* 13a: 'Anyone who repudiates idolatry is called *yehudi* — a Jew.']

mm. [Esther 9:22]

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

17

As we come from the days of Purim - days of miracles which G-d performed "in those days at this time," and as we approach the holiday of Passover - when we celebrate the holiday of "the time of our freedom" and we thank G-d for the wonders and miracles which He performed for us at the Exodus from Egypt - now is an appropriate time to turn our complete attention to the wonders and miracles which occurred close to this year's Purim.

These were **open miracles**, not just for the Jewish people, but also for all peoples, until "all the ends of the earth saw"; everyone saw the great miracles that occurred at that time.

...According to the natural conditions of the world, in such a situation there should have been not only a declaration of war, etc., but the conflict should have involved many countries and ignited into a world war, G-d forbid; what actually happened was beyond the familiar natural order, for not only was a world war avoided, but the war that did break out ended quietly.

At the time, all the signs indicated it would be a difficult war, and therefore a huge army was mobilized, well equipped with huge caches of the most sophisticated weapons. After all the arrangements, which is the procedure when preparing oneself for a long war which must last weeks, months - the victory came in a very short time!

The victory was so remarkable that it not only avoided a blood bath between the nations of the world (as was feared at first), but it also reached the point that the enemy freed, in a fitting manner, some of the prisoners of war and even some of those captured earlier.

BESURAS HAGEULO

...And still more: those who "know what is done behind the scenes" - and are acquainted with a great many unpublicized details - realize much more the amazing wonders and miracles which occurred at this time in these days.

* * *

During the course of this year - to which the Jewish people gave the name and sign: "It will be a year of miracles [that] I will show him,"¹ and even before this, at the conclusion of the past year, designated by the Jewish people with the sign, "It will be a year of miracles"¹ - it has been emphasized many times what our Sages of blessed memory have foretold (in *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Yeshayahu*, *Remez* 499) regarding the war which would come in that part of the world, namely that thy are among the signs that the complete and true redemption through our righteous Moshiach is imminent.

And in light of the above mentioned events and miracles, one needs to strengthen awareness that this is the time to prepare immediately for the fulfillment of the promise "For sovereignty is the L-rd's"² when all people will be convinced that "there is a master to this world."³ This acknowledgment will bring them "to call all of them on the Name of G-d to serve Him together."⁴

(General letter, 25 Adar 5751)

1. [An acronym formed from the Hebrew letters used to designate the year. Translator's note.]

2. *Ovadiah* 1:21.

3. See *Bereishis Rabba*, beginning of chapter 39.

4. *Zephaniah* 3:9. And see Rambam *Hilchos Melachim* end of chapter 11.

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