

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
 Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"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** שתח'ל
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
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 VII: *Shmos*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

VAYAKHEL

TWO TYPES OF DONATIONS

In *Parshas Vayakhel*, the Torah relates how all the Jews — men, women, and children¹ — donated toward the construction of the Sanctuary with unlimited generosity. Indeed, they gave more than what was required.

With regard to the gift of the half-*shekel* used for the *adonim*, the sockets which formed the Sanctuary's base, by contrast, we find the amount was limited to a half-*shekel*, and the people were warned: "The rich should not give more, nor should the poor give less."²

Similarly, there was a limit with regard to the givers. Only men participated.³ Moreover, even with regard to the men, there were restrictions. The donation was required only from those "20 years old and up."³

(Similarly, with regard to the half-*shekel* given every year for the purchase of communal offerings in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, and our commemoration of those half-*shekel* donations today, the obligation is incumbent only on adult males. Adults may also give on behalf of their children, but there is no obligation on the child.⁴)

This differs from donations given to the Sanctuary as a whole. Donations collected for that purpose were not limited;

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1. *Avos d'Rabbi Nosson* 11:1; see also the commentary of the *Or HaChayim* to the beginning of *Parshas Vayakhel*.
 2. *Shmos* 30:15.
 3. As reflected by the exegesis of *Shmos* 30:14, 38:25-26.
 4. *Shekalim* 1:3; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 694)*.

there was no specific entity or amount that had to be given. Instead, everyone gave according to the generosity of his heart. Indeed, there was not even a limitation with regard to the total amount which was to be given. For we see that the Jews gave more than was necessary for the construction of the Sanctuary.⁵

And the donors included the entire Jewish people — men, women, and children. Indeed, as reflected by the verse:⁶ “And the men brought in addition to the women,” the donations of the men were subordinate to those of the women. And the women were first in making their donations, giving before the men did.

Moreover, the women fashioned their gifts with exquisite care, “spinning [the wool while it was] on the goats.”⁷ And this involved a gift of a higher quality, for unlike the men, who gave only inanimate matter, the women also gave live animals.

GIFTS OF ATONEMENT

Why the entire nation participated in donating to the Sanctuary can be explained as follows: The construction of the Sanctuary came in atonement for the Sin of the Golden Calf.⁸ This was a sin of a general nature, which affected even young children.⁹ (Young children are never punished for transgressions they perform, with one exception: communal idolatry. Thus with regard to an *ir hanidachas*, a city con-

5. See *Shmos* 36:5,7.

6. *Shmos* 35:22; see the commentary of the *Ramban* to the verse.

7. *Shmos* 35:26, as interpreted by *Shabbos* 74b, 79a, cited by *Rashi* in his commentary to the verse.

8. See the statements of the *Sheloh*, *Torah SheB'ksav*, *Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei* (p. 334b).

9. For this reason, this sin also had an effect on the spiritual level of the tribe of Levi, although they did not actually sin. Indeed, our Sages (*Berachos* 34a) relate that the sin caused even Moshe to undergo a spiritual descent, although at the time, he was on Mount Sinai and could not possibly have rebuked the Jews. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. 1, *Parshas Terumah*.

demned to be destroyed because of the idol worship of its inhabitants, all those living in the city, even children, are to be put to death.¹⁰) Since the sin of the Golden Calf affected the entire Jewish people, the atonement for it also had to be general in scope, including even children.¹¹

This explanation, however, raises a question: The half-*shekel* was also intended to atone for the Sin of the Golden Calf.¹² Why then was the donation of the half-*shekel* restricted to males above the age of twenty, while the entire nation donated to the Sanctuary as a whole?

We are forced to conclude that there were two elements to the atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf: a) one to be accomplished through the deeds of adult men, and b) one to be accomplished by the Divine service of the entire nation.

OUR RESPONSE TO G-D'S UNITY

The scope of the prohibition against worshipping false divinities involves more than an utter denial of G-d.¹³ On a more subtle level, the worship of false divinities can include thoughts that other powers *exist*, but are subservient to Him. And on an even more subtle level, even when one concedes that there is no source of *power* aside from G-d, if one conceives of *any other independent existence*, one is worshipping other gods, as it were.

The opposite of the worship of false divinities is the appreciation and the feeling that: “there is nothing else aside

10. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Avodas Kochavim* 4:6. See also *Minchas Chinuch, Mitzvah* 464.

11. To draw a parallel to the events of the saga of Purim which is commemorated shortly before or after this Torah reading: The sin of bowing down to Haman's idol caused a decree which threatened to wipe out the entire Jewish people, “from the youth to the elders, children and women in one day” (*Esther* 3:13).

12. *Shekalim* 2:3; *Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Sissa*, sec. 10. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Ki Sissa* in this series.

13. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Avodas Kochavim*, ch. 1.

from Him.”¹⁴ This is reflected in Avraham’s praise of G-d¹⁵ as א-ל עולם. Were the phrase to have read: א-ל העולם, it would be translated as “L-rd of the world,” implying that the world is a separate entity, over which G-d rules. א-ל עולם implies that there is no separation between G-d and the world; the world is nothing more than a radiation of G-d’s power.¹⁶

This appreciation should evoke a response from the Jewish people, a resolve that “all your deeds should be for the sake of Heaven.”¹⁷ Since the person appreciates that G-d is not only the Master of the world, but that the world is no more than an expression of His power, it is natural that each person desire to dedicate himself entirely to G-d’s service. Not only is he willing to give up his personal concerns to fulfill G-d’s will (an approach which would result from the concept of G-d as “L-rd of the world,” i.e., G-d is Master over him and all his concerns), he *has* no personal concerns. From the outset, his entire life is dedicated to G-dliness.

The Alter Rebbe adds¹⁸ a further dimension, citing the verse:¹⁹ “G-d is the L-rd...; there is nothing else (אין עוד).” The world has no independent existence; it cannot even be referred to as עוד, which implies a subsidiary entity, as indicated by our Sages’ rhetorical question:²⁰ “יהודה ועוד לקרא” “Does a verse [from the Torah require] any secondary support from [the custom of the Land of] *Yehudah*?” Having such an appreciation of G-d’s oneness evokes a consummate commitment to Divine service, spurring a person to “Know Him in all your ways.”²¹ Even his involvement in worldly

14. *Devarim* 4:35.

15. *Bereishis* 21:33.

16. See *Likkutei Torah, Parshas Ki Savo*, p. 42d, which draws a parallel to the produce which grows from the earth’s power of vegetation. See also p. 43c.

17. *Avos* 2:12. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Terumah* in this series, where this concept is discussed.

18. See *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah*, ch. 6.

19. *Devarim* 4:39.

20. *Kiddushin* 6a.

21. *Mishlei* 3:6.

matters becomes an expression of his Divine service. Not only will he perform an act for the sake of heaven (this implies that he is performing a secondary act for the sake of a greater purpose; in such an instance, the secondary act, though negligible when compared to the total picture, still holds some importance), his personal matters will *themselves* be expressions of holiness.²²

For this reason, the construction of the Sanctuary serves to atone for the Sin of the Golden Calf. The construction of the Sanctuary brought about the indwelling of the Divine Presence within each and every individual, as it is written:²³ “And you shall make Me a Sanctuary, and I will dwell within” — “within each and every individual.”²⁴ G-d dwells within every individual through his efforts to make his personal environment a Sanctuary for G-d.

This atones for the sin of the Golden Calf, for these efforts manifest G-d’s unity in a manner which negates the possibility that other divinities even exist.

THE NEED FOR PREPARATION

In our Divine service, our progress moves from less difficult rungs to more accomplished ones. Thus we must proceed from acting “for the sake of Heaven” to “know[ing] Him in all

22. To explain the above concepts: Divine service “for the sake of heaven” springs from an awareness of the unity between the names of G-d, *Havayah* and *E-lohim*, which reflects how *tzimtzum*, the Divine process of self-confinement, is for the sake of revelation.

The Divine service of “know[ing] Him in all your ways” stems from an awareness that the *tzimtzum* itself reveals G-d’s perfection, showing that He is not limited to infinite expressions, and can manifest Himself in limitation as well (the *maamar* entitled *Vihayah Shearis Yaakov*, 5718).

The advantage of “Know[ing] Him in all your ways” over performing “all your deeds for the sake of Heaven” is explained at length in the *sichah* of *Parshas Terumah* in this series.

23. *Shmos* 25:8.

24. See *Likkutei Torah*, the beginning of *Parshas Naso*; *Reishis Chochmah* (*Shaar HaAhavah*, ch. 6) and the *Sheloh*, *Shaar HaOsios*, *Os Lamed*, *Maseches Taanis*, entry *Meilnyan HaAvodah*; *Parshas Terumah*, *Torah Or*, pgs. 325b, 326b.

our ways,” making it possible for the Divine Presence to dwell within each of us.

Just as in an individual sense these phases of Divine service follow a sequence, so too there was a sequence in the construction of the Sanctuary. The *adonim* served as a foundation and a starting point for the construction. To cite the parallel in our daily Divine service: The *kabbalas ol*, the acceptance of G-d’s yoke, expressed through *Modeh Ani*, begins our Divine service every day. But this does not represent the true depth of our appreciation of the oneness of G-d. As such, it does not serve as complete atonement for the Sin of the Golden Calf, for it does not entirely negate the concept of existence outside G-dliness.

Before beginning these two phases of Divine service (“All your deeds shall be for the sake of Heaven” and “Know Him in all your ways”), one must ready oneself. A person must direct all his energies to the service of G-d with these two goals in mind. Moreover, he must always remember the ultimate goal: that G-d’s essence dwell within the essence of every Jew.

These preparatory efforts must stem from the essence of our souls, the point of our being which we all share equally. And it must pervade all our powers. This implies that the service must be performed by a person whose every potential is revealed, for only then can he direct them to these goals.

On this basis, it is possible to resolve the question posed at the outset: The erection of the Sanctuary began with the placement of the *adonim*. These *adonim* were made from: a) the donations given by those who were twenty²⁵ and above, who have all their potentials revealed, and b) all the donations toward the *adonim* were of an equal size.

25. This age represents a full blossoming of adulthood, at which point a man becomes obligated for military service. See *Bava Basra* 155a; *Likkutei Torah, Parshas Bamidbar* p. 2a.

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

After this preparatory stage of service was performed by the 600,000 adult males²⁶ — a number inclusive of the entire Jewish people²⁷ — it was possible for the nation as a whole: men below the age of twenty, women, and children, to bring their donations to the Sanctuary according to the generosity of their hearts.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Shemini*, 5722)



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26. We see a parallel with regard to an *ir hanidachas*, a condemned city, the counterpart to the Sanctuary in the sphere of unholiness. Although as mentioned above, in such an instance punishment is exacted from men, women, and children, the individuals who lure the city to idol worship must be adult men. If this is not the case, the city is not judged according to that paradigm (*Sanhedrin* 101b).
27. See *Tanya*, ch. 37.

For this reason, as stated in *Parshas Pekudei* (*Shmos* 38:28), those half-*shekalim* in excess of 600,000 were not used for the *adonim*.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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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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