

IN HONOR OF

Chaya Mushka שתחיל Muchnik

On the occasion of her birthday, 26 Nissan, 5781

AND IN HONOR OF HER SISTER

Devorah Leah שתחיל Muchnik

On the occasion of her 9th birthday, 29 Nissan, 5781

AND IN HONOR OF THEIR SISTERS AND BROTHERS שיחיו

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community.

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Rabbi & Mrs. **Dov** and **Racheli** שיחיו Muchnik

Shluchim of the Rebbe in Oxnard, California

* * *

IN HONOR OF

Tzipora Simcha שתחיל Zaghi

On the occasion of her 4th birthday

30 Nissan - 1st day of Rosh Chodesh Iyar, 5781

AND IN HONOR OF HER SISTERS AND BROTHER

Daniella Esther, Moshe Natan and **Sophia Sarah** שיחיו Zaghi

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community.

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Mr. & Mrs. **Michael** and **Malka Chana** שיחיו Zaghi

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the

Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Shemini, 5781
(Vol. 28)



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Passed away on 27 Shevat, 5779

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
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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

•

Volume VIII: *Vayikra*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

weekdays) - "Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish." This has been mentioned many times.

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Shmini, the blessing of the month and the eve of the month of Iyar, 5751)

SHEMINI

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE EIGHTH DAY

The *Kli Yakar* explains that the phrase,¹ “On the eighth day,” implies a connection to the preceding seven days of *miluim*, which prepared for the final erection of the Sanctuary, as it is written:² “Your inauguration will last seven days.” During these seven days, the altar was dedicated.

The eighth day, by contrast, served a different purpose; it was for the dedication of Aharon and his sons. Why then was it given a name that implies that it was a continuation of the previous seven?

The *Kli Yakar* explains that the name was intended to highlight the uniqueness of the day on which “G-d will reveal Himself to you.” The eighth day is distinguished with a unique quality of holiness, as the *Kli Yakar* continues: “The number seven always refers to the mundane, while the number eight refers to holiness.”³

This is reflected in the fact that the *mitzvah* of circumcision supersedes the prohibition of forbidden labor on *Shabbos*. Circumcision is associated with the number eight, and *Shabbos* with the number seven, and “the spiritual takes precedence over the material.”

1. *Vayikra* 9:1.

2. *Ibid.*, 8:33.

3. See also the *sichos* to the *parshiyos Lech Lecha* and *Vayeichi* in this series, where these concepts are discussed and other sources are mentioned.

measure or limit during the end of the time of exile.

Simply put:

All Jews, men, women and even children, have the responsibility to increase their efforts to bring our righteous Moshiach in actual reality!

Therefore it's obvious there's no place for relying on others or imposing the work on someone else instead of doing it one's self - but this is the task **of every man and woman**; everyone must themselves do their job, "to serve my Maker"¹⁹ (for the sake of which "I was created"¹⁹), and certainly one has the ability (since "I do not ask except according to their ability"²⁰).

What this duty consists of is also simple: increasing one's Torah and mitzvos. This means learning both the open aspects of the Torah and the inner aspects of the Torah²¹ and performing the mitzvos with distinction... All of this should be done with an intense anticipation and desire for the Redemption²² - "I anxiously await his coming every day."²³ As we say every day in the prayers: "May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in mercy" and (on

19. *Mishneh* and *Baraita*, end of *Kidushin*.

20. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:3.

21. [*Generally speaking, Chassidus teaches that the Torah has two dimensions: an open, revealed part consisting of the laws and customs themselves, and the rules for analyzing, deriving and applying them as, for example, the study of Talmud; and a hidden, inner dimension consisting of the mystical reasons and spiritual meaning of the laws as, for example, the study of Kabbalah and Chassidus. Translator's note.*]

22. In the words of our Sages - "Did you anticipate salvation" (end of Shabbos 31a). See Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, beginning of chapter 11: "Anyone who doesn't believe in him (in the King Moshiach) or anyone who doesn't anxiously anticipate his coming, etc." See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 30, p. 182-3. And see there for cross references.

23. The text of "Ani Maamin". See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 23, p. 394.

TWO LEVELS OF HOLINESS

The expression that "seven... refers to the mundane" must not be taken in a strictly literal sense, for the seventh day is also holy. Nevertheless, since *Shabbos* is one of the seven days of creation, it shares a connection with the world which is mundane. In contrast, the number eight is above creation, and is "set aside for Him, blessed be He." In comparison to this level, even *Shabbos* is considered mundane.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the example cited by the *Kli Yakar* to illustrate the unique level of holiness associated with the number eight: the fact that the harp in the Era of the Redemption will have eight strands.⁴ Certainly, the harp used in the *Beis HaMikdash* in previous eras, which had seven strands, was holy. Nevertheless, when compared to the transcendent holiness of the Era of the Redemption, the earlier harps can be considered mundane.

A similar pattern can be seen with regard to the Torah. The Torah (even as it is studied in this world) is holy. Nevertheless our Sages state:⁵ "The Torah of the present era is vaporous when compared to the Torah [to be studied] in the Era of the Redemption."

LEARNING WHAT IT MEANS TO COUNT

The *Kli Yakar's* explanation does not, however, appear to answer the question he raised. Indeed, it reinforces the question. Since the number eight is associated with a rung "set aside for Him, blessed be He," above the natural order, it seems to have no connection with a creation that is structured on a pattern of seven. Why then does the Torah use the term

4. *Erchin* 13b.

5. *Koheles Rabbah* 11:8.

“the eighth day,” implying a connection with the previous seven?

The problem can be resolved as follows: All the revelations of the Era of the Redemption are dependent on our Divine service in the present era.⁶ The revelations are connected with the rung of eight, a rung so elevated that it cannot be reached by the Divine service of mortals. Instead, these revelations must come from G-d.⁷ Nevertheless, they can be considered dependent on our Divine service. After we have perfected our Divine service and have drawn down the revelations associated with it, the revelations which transcend that service will come from above.

To cite an example: There are two levels of *Shabbos*: One level is associated with the seven days of creation. In comparison to the previous six days, it is holy. Nevertheless, its holiness is within the natural order and therefore is drawn down through the Divine service of the Jewish people, who are commanded to “make the *Shabbos* holy.”⁸

6. *Tanya*, ch. 37.

7. This is also reflected in the ruling (based on *Shmos Rabbah* 15:11) that the Future Redemption will come in the month of Nissan. For Nissan is associated with an arousal from above, a revelation of G-dliness on His initiative. See the *maamar* entitled *HaChodesh HaZeh*, 5654, and *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. I, p. 235.

8. *Shmos* 31:16. More particularly, this level subdivides into two rungs: a) the dimension of *Shabbos*, which is sacred on its own accord. This is an arousal from above. This arousal from above precedes man’s Divine service. Hence it draws down only the external dimension of the light. In contrast, the aspect of *Shabbos* which is “a present” comes after man’s Divine service, and thus reveals the inner dimension of the light. (See the discussion of this concept in *Likkutei Torah*, *Shir HaShirim* 24:1-2, and the *maamar* entitled *Es Shabsosai*, 5700.) With regard to this rung, it is said (*Shmos*, *loc. cit.*): “And the children of Israel shall keep the *Shabbos*,” i.e., this level of holiness is revealed from above. It is, however, necessary for the Jewish people to “keep it,” i.e., to protect it and make it their own.

b) a level which is drawn down through the Jews’ Divine service. With regard to this level, we are told to “make the *Shabbos*.”

becomes the immediate preparation - without any interruption at all - for the tenth generation which is holy in the true and complete Redemption.

In all of this¹⁴ everyone receives further strength from the extension of Moshe¹⁵ in our generation, my sainted father-in-law, the Rebbe, the leader of our generation, particularly since today we read Torah in his synagogue... From this house of prayer the strength will also reach those outside this house, until the whole world, including the farthest corner (physically and spiritually) of the world. There will then be a fulfillment of "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations,"¹⁶ together with "gather the dispersed of Israel, I will yet gather others to him [Israel] beside those of him that are gathered."¹⁷

A reflection of this has been fulfilled in these times (the year of miracles and the year I will show him wonders), namely "the gathering of the dispersed of Israel" from that country¹⁸ without limitations (not as it was previously, when in order to leave one needed a special connection and a special request), and they are coming to the land of Israel, also without limitations (not as it was previously, as is well-known). This is one of the revelations beyond

fact been spread - has triple the strength. Translator's note]

14. *[The Rebbe has just explained that the increasing strength of the wellsprings of Chassidus means that in fact we have reached a generation (the ninth) that makes the imminence of Redemption a certainty. The additional strength referred to in this paragraph is the strength to prepare for the coming Redemption through the activities of and association with the Previous Rebbe. Translator's note]*

15. *Zohar Chadash* III: 273a. *Tikunei Zohar* 469. And see *Tanya* chapter 44 (63:1). *[A reference to the concept that the leader of each generation has a spark of the soul of Moses. Therefore the leader of each generation is also considered the Moses of that generation. Translator's note.]*

16. *Yeshayahu* (Isaiah) 56:7.

17. *Ibid* 56:8.

18. *[i.e., the Soviet Union. Translator's note.]*

Shabbos Parshas Shemini⁴... which is particularly connected with our righteous Moshiach - since the "kinor⁵ of the days of Moshiach" is made of "eight strings."⁶ This leads directly to nine and then ten, which is holy⁷ - that is, the perfection of ten achieved in the true and complete Redemption ("upon a ten-stringed instrument"⁸), "a kinor of ten strings"⁹ (which is higher than a kinor of eight strings).

The connection should be further emphasized since the birthday of the Rebbe MaHaRash¹⁰ occurs right at the beginning of the month of Iyar, on the second of Iyar. It is well known that his directive and inspiration was *m'l'chatchila ariber* [Literally, "from the start, go above."].¹¹ The Rebbe MaHaRash was the sixth generation (from the Baal Shem Tov), "double the force of three which represents a well-grounded and established idea";¹² that leads to the seventh generation, the eighth generation, until this generation - the ninth generation (a tripled presumption),¹³ which

4. ["Shemini" means eight. Translator's note.]

5. [A "kinor" is a stringed instrument. It usually has seven strings. Translator's note.]

6. *Arachin* 13:2. And note there.

7. [See *Vayikra* 27:32. Translator's note.]

8. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 92:4.

9. *Mishneh* and *Baraita*, end of *Kidushin*.

10. [The Rebbe MaHaRash (Moreinu HaRav Shmuel) was the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe. Translator's note.]

11. *Igros Kodesh of the Previous Rebbe*, volume 1, letter 617.

12. [In Jewish law, something that occurs three times establishes its claim and is thereafter presumed to be the status quo. When the Baal Shem Tov introduced Chassidism, many questioned its legitimacy as well as its claim to be the teachings that would bring Redemption. As the Rebbe MaHaRash was the sixth generation from the Baal Shem Tov, and in each generation Chassidism flourished and grew stronger, its validity and the truth of its claim regarding Redemption were doubly established. Translator's note]

13. [That is, having doubly established the truth of Chassidism, what follows are three more generations. Since every three generations validates the claim, as it were, after nine generations the presumption that the "spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus" will bring Moshiach - and that the wellsprings have in

Another dimension of *Shabbos* is its role as a microcosm⁹ of the Era of the Redemption, which is described¹⁰ as "the day which is all *Shabbos* and rest for eternity." As mentioned previously, this level cannot be drawn down through our Divine service, but requires Divine initiative. In this context, our Sages quote¹¹ G-d as saying: "I have a superb present in My treasure store. It is called *Shabbos*." For this higher level of the *Shabbos* is a present from above, and like a present, it is not earned, but dependent on the donor's generosity. (For when a gift is given because of a person's efforts, it is something which has been earned; the term present is not appropriate.)

Nevertheless, even this higher level of *Shabbos* is granted because it was preceded by Divine service, as implied by our Sages' statement:¹² "Whoever works before *Shabbos*, eats on *Shabbos*." The intent is not to imply that the level of *Shabbos* described as a present is precipitated by human service. Rather it reflects our Sages' statement:¹³ "If a person did not generate pleasure for him, he would not have given him a present." Although a present is given because the recipient generated pleasure for the donor, what is given is worth far more than the pleasure generated, and for that reason it is considered a present.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the revelations of the eighth day of the dedication of the Sanctuary. Although

9. Although this level gives us a foretaste of the Era of the Redemption, it is not on the same rung. Therefore *Shabbos* as a whole, even the level given as a present, is associated with the number seven and is superseded by the *mitzvah* of circumcision, which is associated with the number eight.

10. The conclusion of tractate *Tamid*.

11. *Shabbos* 10b.

12. *Avodah Zarah* 3a. This statement refers even to the level of *Shabbos* which is described as a present, as stated in *Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim* 24b.

13. See *Megillah* 26b, *Gittin* 50b, and *Bava Basra* 156a. The text translated above reflects how this quote is cited in several texts of *Chassidus*, although the actual wording of the *Talmud* is slightly different.

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these revelations have their source in a level which cannot be drawn down through man's Divine service, they were nevertheless granted after the seven days of dedication; after man's service had been perfected.

For this reason, the day is referred to as "the eighth day." For the revelations of this day come after — and are dependent upon — the Divine service of the seven preceding days.

A PARALLEL TO THE COUNTING OF THE OMER

Often *Parshas Shemini* is read on the first *Shabbos* after Pesach, the beginning of the counting of the *omer*. Based on the above, it is possible to explain the connection between *Parshas Shemini* and this period.¹⁴

The Torah commands us to count the *omer* with the charge: "Count 50 days."¹⁵ And yet, as our Sages note,¹⁶ our practice is to count only 49 days. The fiftieth day is the holiday of Shavuos, which is not counted as a day of the *Omer*.

This difficulty is resolved as follows: The Jews' Divine service follows the pattern: "You shall count seven weeks."¹⁷ These parallel the seven days of creation, and invoke the spiritual heights associated with the 49 (7x7) Gates of Understanding (*Binah*). The fiftieth level is above mortal grasp.

[This talk was given on Parshas Shemini. The year in which this sicha (talk) was delivered, the Parshas Shemini was read a total of eight (Shemini) times. There is a well-known Chassidic adage, which the Rebbe quotes, that a year in which Shemini is read shemini (eight) times will be a fat (shemini) year. (The word for 'fat,' shemen, has the same root as the word for 'eight,' shemini.) The Rebbe then proceeded in this vein, that, indeed the year 5751 was a distinguished and a fat year. Translator's note.]

The principle accomplishment of this year - which the Jewish people have designated and named "It will be a year of miracles I will show him"¹ - is that it is a year distinguished for being "fat" and filled with wonders and miracles from G-d, visible to everyone. This accomplishment also serves as a preparation for the wonders and miracles of the complete and true Redemption, coming imminently, "as in the days of your going forth from the land of Egypt I will show you miracles"² - as mentioned and emphasized many times during the year.

* * *

This *Shabbos* is the Sefirah of *Malchus sh'b'Gvurah*,³ a revelation of King Moshiach within the severity of exile, and also

1. [see Number 14 of this volume, note 2a, for an explanation of the acronym. Translator's note.]

2. *Michah* 7:15.

3. [There are seven "emotional" Sefiros (emanations of G-dliness). These "character traits" such as kindness, severity or discipline, harmony, etc. are reflected in the individual's personality. Each of these also includes all the others. (There is a kindness within kindness, a discipline within kindness, etc.) The forty-nine days of the *Omer* counted between Passover and Shavuos reflect the forty-nine "combinations." Accordingly, the *Shabbos* when this talk was given was the day of "Kingship in Severity." Translator's note.]

14. See the *Sheloh*, *Cheilek Torah SheBiksav*, *Parshas Vayeishev*, which states that the holidays share a connection to the portions of the Torah which are read at the time they fall.

15. *Vayikra* 23:16. See the explanation of this concept in *Likkutei Torah*, *Bamidbar* 10d, *Shir HaShirim* 35c.

16. See the comments of *Toras Kohanim* to the above verse; *Tosafos*, *Menachos* 65b; *Rabbeinu Asher*, the conclusion of the tractate of *Pesachim*.

17. *Devarim* 16:9.

And may it be His will that ultimately ten Jews will be found who are "obstinate" enough to obligate themselves to move G-d, and certainly G-d will be moved - as it is written,² "Because it is a stiff-necked people (to their benefit,³ and therefore) You will pardon our iniquity and our sin and take us for Your inheritance" - to actually bring the true and complete Redemption immediately, instantly, in reality.

In order to hasten and speed the Redemption even more through my actions - I will increase and give to each and every one of you shlichus-mitzvah⁴ to give to tzedekah [charity], for "great is tzedekah since it draws near the Redemption."⁵

I have done my part; from now on, you do all that you can.

And may it be G-d's Will that there will be found among you one, two, three that will devise a plan what to do and how to do it, and most essentially - that it will produce the true and complete Redemption in actual reality, with joy and a glad heart.

(From the talk of Friday evening and the eve of the holy Shabbos Parshas Shmini, 28 Nissan, 5751)

2. Tissa 34:9.

3. See *Shmos Rabba*, end of chapter 42.

4. [Shlichus-mitzvah literally means the mission or assignment which performs a mitzvah. It is customary to give someone who is leaving on a journey tzedekah for an institution (of his choice) at his destination. He thus becomes a "shliach" or emissary with the assignment of delivering tzedekah elsewhere. The Talmud states that an individual who travels to perform a mitzvah (as opposed to reasons of business or pleasure) is protected by the merit of that mitzvah. Translator's note]

5. *Bava Basra* 10:1. And see *Tanya* chapter 37.

Nevertheless, after we draw down these 49 levels through our Divine service, we are granted the fiftieth level from above. This also explains why this level is drawn down on Shavuot, which commemorates the giving of the Torah. For the giving of the Torah provided a foretaste of the Era of the Redemption.¹⁸

For this reason, the verse states "Count 50 days." For even the fiftieth level is granted to the Jewish people as a result of their Divine service.¹⁹

FIRST STRIDES TOWARD REDEMPTION

The counting of the *omer* does more than prepare us for the giving of the Torah. The counting is itself a preparation for the Era of the Redemption.

This can be explained by considering the verse referring to the Future Redemption:²⁰ "As in the days of your exodus from the land of Egypt..." The use of the term "days" (plural) raises a difficulty, for the Jews left Egypt on *one* day, the Fifteenth of Nissan.

The Previous Rebbe explained²¹ that the exodus from Egypt will not be truly complete until the Future Redemption. For Egypt (*Mitzrayim* in Hebrew) refers to spiritual boundaries and limitations (*meitzarim*). Therefore from the Fifteenth of Nissan in the year of the exodus until the present date, we are in the midst of our departure from

18. See *Tanya*, ch. 36.

19. See also the *sichah* to *Parshas Emor* in this series, where this concept is discussed.

20. *Michah* 7:15.

21. See the *maamar* entitled *Kimei Tzeisecho*, 5708.

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Egypt, striving higher and higher²² until we reach the Future Redemption, at which time our journey will be complete.

22. This process of exodus involves periods of ascent and others of apparent descent. (See *Chesed LiAvraham* and sec. 4 of the *maamar* entitled *VeYadaata* in *Likkutei Torah*.) To this sequence can be applied the verse (*Mishlei* 24:16): “For a *tzaddik* falls seven times and rises again” which implies that the falls are for the sake of the ascent which follows.

This “fall” is necessary (see the conclusion of the introduction to *Shaar HaYichud VebaEmunah* in *Tanya*, and the explanation of the *maamar* entitled *ViShavti BeShalom* in *Torah Or*), for as explained in other sources, a phase of *bittul* (self-nullification) must come between one level and the next.

A similar pattern exists with regard to the descent of G-dly light. It is necessary for a state of nothingness to be interposed between one level of light and a lower realm, as explained in *Shaarei Orah*, in the *maamar* entitled *Yaviu Levush Malchus*, ch. 24ff, the series of *maamarim* published in 5711 (and delivered in 5694), ch. 2ff.]

With regard to man’s Divine service, since a descent is necessary in order to ascend to a higher rung, this cannot be considered a true descent, but rather a phase in the ascent.

It is possible to say that this concept is a logical imperative. For the intent of the creation (which involves a descent of G-dly light through the chainlike progression of spiritual realms*) comes in order for there to be an ascent afterwards. Since this is G-d’s intent, we are forced to the conclusion that as soon as the descent was concluded, the phase of ascent began, for there is no power that can, heaven forbid, prevent His will from being done. This is particularly true since the intent of the creation — the ascent — preceded the creation itself, and there is no ultimate source for evil.

Thus although man has been granted free choice, this choice involves only the status of particular elements of the creation, and cannot change the path of the creation as a whole — a path of constant ascent.

On a deeper level, it can be explained that this concept is reflected within the microcosm, for every individual’s path is also one of ascent. Man’s free choice determines only the rate of ascent.

To cite a parallel: On the verse (*Yeshayahu* 60:22): “In its time, I will hasten it [the Redemption],” our Sages (*Sanhedrin* 98a) explain: “If [mankind] merits, ‘I will hasten it’; if not, it will come ‘in its time.’”

* In particular, there are two phases: a chainlike progression downward from the *Sefirah* of *Chochmah* to the lower levels, and a pattern of drastic descent from the *Or Ein Sof* (G-d’s Infinite Light) to *Chochmah*.

On a larger scale, it can be explained that the chainlike progression characterizes the pattern after the *tzimtzum*, while the *tzimtzum* reflects drastic descent. See *Likkutei Torah*, *Devarim* 98b, *Shir HaShirim* 42b. See also *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 20.

From what has been said previously about emphasizing the subject of Redemption (especially) at this time - emerges the absolutely incredible: **how is it possible that notwithstanding all these things - we have not yet accomplished the coming of our righteous Moshiach in actual reality?!... something completely beyond comprehension!**

Equally incredible - that when ten (and many times ten) Jews gather together, and in a worthy time with regard to Redemption, and nevertheless, they don't create an uproar to cause the coming of Moshiach immediately and instantly, and it's not inconceivable to them, G-d forbid, that Moshiach won't come this night, and also tomorrow our righteous Moshiach won't come and also the day after tomorrow our righteous Moshiach won't come, G-d forbid!

Also, when they cry, "Ad Mosai" [Until when will we remain in exile] - it's because they were told to. If they meant it and desired it and cried **sincerely**, with absolute certainty Moshiach would have already come!

What more can I do so that all the children of Israel should create an uproar and cry sincerely and cause Moshiach to come in reality, since all that was done until now, **has had no effect**, and the proof is, that we find ourselves still in exile, and most essentially - an inner exile in Divine service.

The only thing I am able to do - is to turn the matter [over] to you: **do everything in your ability** - things that are in the nature of lights of Tohu, but, in vessels of Tikun¹ - **to actually bring our righteous Moshiach immediately, instantly, in reality.**

1. [Tohu is the primordial world of chaos; Tikun is the world of order that follows it. Translator's note.]

Particularly since we have already been more than "forty years,"¹³ in the desert of the nations (of exile), in a situation of "(forty years) I quarreled with the generation,"¹⁴ and we are ready to come to "they shall enter my resting place,"¹⁵ in the Holy Land and Jerusalem,¹⁶ to the extent of Shalem, a complete rest - with the true and complete Redemption.

It is understood that the Jewish people are already prepared and already have "a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear" (just as it was in the fortieth year after the exodus from Egypt, and that as in the days of your going forth from the land of Egypt I will show him miracles).

(From the talk of Tuesday evening, Parshas Shimini, 26 Nissan 5751)

13. It should be noted that forty years have passed since the departure of His Honored Holiness, My sainted father-in-law, the Rebbe, in the year 5710, as mentioned many times.

14. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 95:10.

15. *Ibid*, 11.

16. The explanation of *Rashi* there.

The first service performed by the Jews after the physical departure from Egypt was counting the days until the giving of the Torah — a counting which parallels the counting of the *Omer*.²³ Thus the counting of the *Omer* echoes man's first strides toward the Era of the Redemption, an era associated with the number eight.

TWO CONTRASTING THRUSTS

The above concept also lets us understand why the counting of the *Omer* is carried out at night. This is atypical, for the *omer* was considered a sacrifice,²⁴ and with regard to sacrifices, the night follows the day.²⁵ Moreover, counting the *omer* involves counting the number of *days* since the offering

Similarly, man's choice can determine the pattern of ascent: Will it follow a course that initially gives evil a foothold, and afterwards destroys it entirely? Or will it follow a course that does not involve any backward steps at all?

(See the discussion of a parallel to the first course in *Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Issur Avodas Baal Mum*. When this course is chosen, although the evil will ultimately be vanquished, a person will be punished for committing a sin, since his goal at that time was not the ascent which comes about through the sin.)

To give an analogy which illustrates the difference between the two courses of ascent, consider the study of the *Jerusalem Talmud* (which involves statements of laws without the give-and-take of didactic reasoning) and the study of the *Babylonian Talmud* (in which concepts are analyzed through a series of questions). Although questions have their source in the powers of evil (*Zohar, Raya Mehemna*, Vol. III, p. 124b), the law is clarified through this process (adapted from the *Sichos of Iyar 19, 5712*).

23. See the comments of Rabbeinu Nissim at the conclusion of *Pesachim*. See also the *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 97a, and the *Raya Mehemna* there.

24. *Menachos* 66a, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 489:3.

25. *Chullin* 83a, *Temurah* 14a.

of the *omer*.²⁶ Since the *omer* is offered during the day, why does the counting take place at night?²⁷

These questions can be resolved by comparing the Era of the Redemption, the exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah. The exodus from Egypt, and even the giving of the Torah, was characterized by revelation from above, and not by the Divine service of the Jewish people. Although they did count 49 days until the giving of the Torah, it was impossible for them to raise themselves from the 49 levels of impurity in such a short time.

Therefore when the Divine Presence retreated after the giving of the Torah, the world remained in its material state.²⁸ And the absence of permanent development was reflected in the Sin of the Golden Calf, the source of all subsequent sins.²⁹

The Future Redemption, by contrast, will be brought about by the Divine service of the Jewish people, which began when we left Egypt. This service has as its object that every person refine, not only himself, but his portion of the world,³⁰ making it possible for nature to encompass Divine revelation. As it is written:³¹ "And the glory of G-d will be revealed, and

26. [One cannot argue that the counting is from the harvesting of the *omer*, because as] reflected in the *Mishnah*, the conclusion of ch. 6 of *Menachos*, and the *Rambam*, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Tamidim UMusafim* 7:7, if the *omer* was harvested on the 15th of Nissan, it is acceptable.

27. The obligation to count the *omer* at night is derived (*Menachos*, *loc. cit.*) from the Torah's description of the seven weeks of the counting as "perfect." Nevertheless, the necessity for such a requirement may itself be questioned.

28. See the *maamar* entitled *A-donai Sifasei Tiftach* in the *Siddur Im Dach* (238c), and the *maamar* entitled *Vichol HaAm Roim*, 5704.

29. For this reason, it is written (*Shmos* 32:34): "On the day I visit retribution upon you [for other sins], I will visit retribution upon you [for the Sin of the Golden Calf]." And our Sages (*Sanhedrin* 102a) state: "There is no [Divine] retribution that does not contain a certain measure of [retribution for the Sin of the Golden] Calf."

30. See *Tanya*, ch. 37.

31. *Yeshayahu* 40:5.

in which Jews were not allowed to leave - specifically in this year and in the previous year did the country open its gates to let out the Jews [so that] they should go to the Holy Land (and even if, for whatever reason there may be, some of them are detained in another country for a short while (in the United States or Australia, etc.) soon they will move (with a complete desire and with joy and a glad heart) to the Holy Land, together with their families).

And the miracle has increased until the country itself assists them to leave, as was the case in the Exodus from Egypt, whose goal was to go to the Holy Land (And I shall bring you to the land, etc.⁶). This miracle also includes assistance from the treasures of "Egypt" (as mentioned above); these treasures have been used to such an extent that a portion of them - and also money from other nations - comes to the Jewish people, our brothers the children of Israel who just went out (and are going out now), in the "exodus from Mitzrayim." Their departure from "Mitzrayim" (a name derived from the word for distress and confinement⁷), from that country is similar to how it was in the Exodus from Egypt the first time, for then "they despoiled Egypt,"⁸ until even what they didn't ask for they gave them,⁹ including treasured items.¹⁰

...And may it be His will that G-d should help every Jew that he should have "eyes to see and (automatically) ears to hear," and "a heart to know,"¹¹ to see "the great trials that **your eyes** saw, the signs and those great wonders,"¹² the revealed miracles that occur every day.

6. *Vaeira* 6:8.

7. See *Torah Or*, *Vaeira* 57:2 and further. *Beshallah* 64:1-2. *Yisro* 71:3 and further. And in many places.

8. *Bo* 12:36.

9. The explanation of *Rashi* there, from the *Mechilta* on the verse.

10. See *Shmos Rabba* chapter 14:3. And other sources.

11. *Tavo* 29:3.

12. *Ibid*, 2.

commands, instructions and requirements that were given to him by "their first born": to free some of the prisoners of war and also to comply with the other things they demanded of him.

And afterwards, the continuation was - in the month of Nissan, and within it - in the days of Pesach, "the time of our freedom" - that their "first born" in the United Nations prolonged his censure and disgrace.

During the days of Purim and immediately afterwards it still wasn't known what the continuation would be, how far he would be shamed and penalized, how strong he would remain, how much he would have to acknowledge and repay, and if he would accept all this or if it would be done through others. Afterwards, in the days of the month of Nissan, in the days of Pesach - their "first born" came out with a strong reprimand, a conclusive resolution and strong demands (in addition to the previous instructions) how Saddam should conduct himself, and also, to show and assure he would fulfill them: he should free the captives, return what he took, and pay for the losses and damages that he had caused until now (and also for what he did earlier).

And in the course of the month, through the last days of the month, the miracle increased even further - that he agreed to everything without any resistance or war, until he revealed money and property which he had hidden (and until now it wasn't known he had).

...Another example of the events of these final times in which we see wonders and miracles - is the exodus of many Jews from that country,⁵ which is like the Exodus from Egypt:

After many years of a completely opposite manner of conduct,

5. [That is, Russia. Translator's note.]

all flesh shall see." Even physical flesh will perceive "the glory of G-d."

As stated above, created beings are not fit to receive the revelations of the Era of the Redemption. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, after our Divine service has reached perfection, G-d will grant higher revelations on His own initiative.

As such, there are two seemingly contradictory elements to the revelations of the Era of the Redemption:

a) The light will be incomparably higher than our powers of conception. Indeed, it is impossible to tap this light today, even through Divine service.

b) This light will nevertheless be internalized within the world.

As mentioned above, the counting of the *omer* was the first element of Divine service undertaken by mankind on the road to Redemption. Our Rabbis teach:³² "From the reward given [for Divine service], it is possible to determine the nature [of that Divine service]." Similarly, the reward which will be granted as a present in the Era of the Redemption demonstrates that our service must also parallel the two thrusts mentioned above. They are reflected in the counting of the *omer* in the following manner:

a) The counting of the *omer* begins with the offering of the *omer*, indicating an ongoing connection with the holiness of the service in the *Beis HaMikdash*;

b) The intent in counting the *omer* is to refine the world and prepare it for revelation. Therefore the counting follows the order of creation³³: "First darkness and then light."³⁴

32. *Tanya*, ch. 39.

33. See the beginning of tractate *Berachos*.

34. *Shabbos* 77b.

THE NATURAL ORDER AND REVELATION

To explain the above: With regard to the sacrifices, night follows day, as opposed to the order of creation, concerning which it is written:³⁵ “And it was evening, and it was morning....”

The rationale is that generally our Divine service works in ascending order. We begin with darkness and, through our efforts, the world is refined and made fit to receive Divine light. The service in the *Beis HaMikdash*, by contrast, had a different intent: to reveal G-dly light from above. This activity begins with the day, and night follows day. And this brings about an approach to the refining of material entities that is associated with light, for revelation empowers one to descend into darkness and refine it.³⁶

The counting of the *omer* is intended to refine the world and make it fit for Redemption. As such, it follows the pattern “first darkness and then light,” refining the world through an ascending pattern.

Nevertheless, the counting is dependent on the *omer*. This implies that this *mitzvah* has the power of the sacrifices — a revelation from above. Ultimately, this *mitzvah* will lead to the time when revelations will be internalized. This will happen with the coming of the true and ultimate Redemption, to be led by *Mashiach*. May it come speedily.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Shemini*, 5720)



35. *Bereishis* 1:5.

36. Moreover, the fundamental dimension of the service in the *Beis HaMikdash* was carried out during the day. The service carried out at night was merely to prevent the transgression of the prohibition against *nosar*, as explained in the *sichah* of *Parshas Tzav* in this series.

BESURAS HAGEULO
The Announcement Of The Redemption

19

"As in the days of your going forth from Egypt I will show him miracles."¹

Everyone can clearly see how the miracles of the Exodus from Egypt are reflected now in the victory of these days - both in the substance of the victory and in the time when it came, specifically - in the auspicious days of the month of Nissan.

...Still before the holiday of Pesach - was the "striking of Egypt through their firstborn."² That is, the "first born" of the nations of the world³ (including the country of Egypt and her neighboring Arab countries) - according to the resolution of their representatives in the "United Nations" - waged war and struck "Mitzrayim" [Egypt], an enemy of the Jews. The name "Mitzrayim" comes from the word for⁴ an "oppressor" of Israel, G-d forbid.

And on the day of Purim this year - "a year when I will show him wonders" - was the victory (as the nations of the world announced) and his downfall, in a manner of "to strike," etc., (not "to kill") and specifically through non-Jews ("their first born") who reprimanded and humiliated him, forcing him to regret his actions until then.

He was forced to acknowledge and accept and fulfill all the

1. *Michah* 7:15
 2. *Tehillim* (Psalms) 136:10. And see *Midrash Tehillim* there. *Rashi* and *Metzudos Dovid* there.
 3. And all the kingdoms are designated by the name *Mitzrayim* (*Bereishis Rabba* chapter 16:4).
 4. *Bereishis Rabba* there.