

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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“5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL”

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
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Shagalov

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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,
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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 IX: *Bamidbar*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

NASO

FLAWS IN A MARRIAGE

Parshas Naso contains the laws governing a *sotah*, a woman suspected of immodest conduct. When a man issues a warning to his wife, forbidding her to be alone with a certain man, and she disobeys this warning, she is classified as a *sotah*.¹ Even though she may not have committed adultery, the very fact that she was alone with that man after being warned obliges her to undergo the test described in this Torah reading.

The relationship between a mortal husband and wife mirrors the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people.² Accordingly, it follows that the laws regarding a *sotah* have parallels with regard to the relationship between G-d and the Jews.³

The commandment:⁴ “You shall have no other gods in My presence” can be interpreted as G-d’s warning to the Jewish nation not to seek intimacy with others. Nevertheless, when considering our relationship with G-d, it is difficult to conceive of something equivalent to being alone with another

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1. *Rashi* (*Bamidbar* 5:12) interprets the term *sotah* as referring to a deviation from the paths of modesty. Similarly, our Sages (*Sotah* 3a) associate it with being possessed by a spirit of folly.
 2. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Metzora* in this series, which also focuses on the marriage analogy.
 3. In addition to the parallel to the husband and wife relationship in general, the *sotah* also reflects a particular connection to the concept of the Jews’ fidelity to G-d. Thus with reference to *Bamidbar* 5:12 our Sages (*Yalkut Shimoni*, sec. 705) speak of a woman’s infidelity to G-d and to her husband.
 4. *Shmos* 20:3.

man. How is it possible to hide from G-d?; “there is no place where He is not.”⁵ We are always being watched by G-d, as it is written:⁶ “If a person will conceal himself in hidden places, will I not see him?” declares G-d.”

How then, can the Jews seclude themselves, unseen by G-d, as it were?

The answer depends on the following concept: Our Sages state⁷ that with regard to a proud person, G-d says: “He and I cannot dwell in the same place.” Thus pride brings about concealment from G-d.⁸ G-d is not to be found where a proud person is; it is as if G-d does not see him. This is alluded to in the extended interpretation of the above verse offered by the Baal Shem Tov: “If a person will conceal himself in hidden places, because of his ‘I,’ I will not see him.”

WHEN A HUSBAND CAN WITHDRAW A WARNING

Our Sages teach:⁹ “When a husband withdraws his warning [to his wife], the warning is withdrawn.” It is as if he never issued the warning to begin with.

Our Sages explain,¹⁰ however, that a husband has the right to withdraw his warning only before his wife enters into privacy with the man regarding whom she was warned. Once she is alone with him, the warning can no longer be withdrawn, and the woman must drink the bitter waters [if she is discovered together with the man in question].

The rationale is that as long as she has not entered into privacy with the other man, the husband’s warning has not

5. *Tikkunei Zohar*, *Tikkun* 57 (p. 91b); cited in *Tanya*, *Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah*, ch. 7.

6. *Yirmeyahu* 23:24. See also *Tehillim* 139:7-12.

7. *Sotah* 5a.

8. On this basis, we can appreciate why the tractate of *Sotah* concludes with the subject of humility. For by acquiring humility, the Jews negate the possibility of concealment from G-d, as it were. This precludes the possibility for the spiritual parallel to a *sotah* (*Sichos Erev Shavuot*, 5719).

9. *Sotah* 25a.

been reinforced by her conduct. Accordingly, since he has authority over his warning, he can withdraw it. When, however, she has already secluded herself with the other man, she is required *by the Torah* to drink the bitter waters. Her husband has no authority over the Torah's requirement.

The *Jerusalem Talmud*¹⁰ seems to differ, stating that a husband can withdraw his warning up until the moment the scroll bearing the *sotah's* curse is blotted out in the water.

The Rogatchover *Gaon*¹¹ explains that there is really no difference of opinion between the *Jerusalem Talmud* and the *Babylonian Talmud*. The *Jerusalem Talmud* is talking about a meeting which would not be forbidden if not for the husband's warning, e.g., he warned her not to be alone with her father, or with 100 men at the same time. Since such a prohibition is entirely the husband's,¹² if he withdraws his warning, there is no longer any reason for the meeting to have been forbidden.¹³

A parallel exists with regard to the bond between G-d and the Jewish people. Since there is no place apart from G-d, there is, in truth, no possibility for a private relationship apart from Him. When does G-d allow a person to be "alone," without Him? When that person's pride banishes G-d's presence, as it is written:¹⁴ "All those with haughty hearts are an abomination to G-d."

Since the possibility of being apart from G-d is thus dependent solely on His will, G-d can always "withdraw His warning" even if it has been transgressed.

10. *Sanhedrin* 8:6.

11. *Tzofnas Paneach* to Rambam, *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Sotah* 1:7.

12. See the *Jerusalem Talmud, Sotah* 1:2.

13. [The *Babylonian Talmud*, by contrast, speaks of an instance in which her act is forbidden because of the prohibition against *yichud*. In such an instance, the *Jerusalem Talmud* would also agree that the warning cannot be withdrawn once it has been violated.]

14. *Mishlei* 16:5.

MAKING TORAH A PART OF ONE'S BEING

Until what time can the husband's warning be withdrawn (even in those instances when the prohibition is dependent solely on him)? Until the scroll bearing the *sotah's* curse is blotted out.

To blot out the letters on the scroll implies that even before they were washed away, the letters and the parchment were not an integral whole. For if they had been an integral whole, it would not be possible to erase them. For example, when letters are engraved in stone, the letters and stone become a single entity. It is impossible to destroy the letters without destroying the stone itself.

There is a parallel in our Divine service. There are Jews who study Torah in a manner resembling engraving, i.e., it is impossible to erase the letters of the Torah from their being; they and the Torah become a single entity.¹⁵

In such an instance, even if a Jew becomes separate from G-d because his pride causes G-d to seclude Himself, this affects only the external dimensions of the situation. G-d's forgiveness can negate these — and indeed all possible — obstacles, and G-d is “abundant in forgiveness.”¹⁶

When, however, the “letters are rubbed out” (i.e., it becomes apparent that the person and the Torah were always two separate entities), it is possible that his self-concern will

15. See *Sotah* 21a.

16. Cf. *Yeshayahu* 55:7.

This applies with regard to all sins, because all are rooted in pride. For it is pride that causes a person to see himself as an independent entity, separate from G-d's will. This in turn stems from the spirit of folly associated with a *sotah*.

There is one exception to the above: the sin of idolatry. Idolatry affects the level of *Chochmah* (wisdom) within the soul. *Chochmah* is associated with the awareness that “G-d is distinct,” as explained in *Tanya*, ch. 19, and in the note to ch. 35. Accordingly, the sin of idol worship affects even “engraved letters.” For this reason, at the time of the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe broke the tablets of the Ten Commandments, although the letters of the Torah were engraved therein.

have permeated his being, and the laws of a *sotah* will apply to him.

What is required of a *sotah*? To bring a meal offering of barley, which is referred to by our Sages¹⁷ as “animal fodder.” This meal offering is a tenth of an *ephah* in measure, the size of offering brought by the most indigent.¹⁸ In the spiritual context, this means that a person realizes that he is “impoverished with regard to knowledge,”¹⁹ like an animal²⁰ which has no knowledge at all.

When a person wipes away his self-consciousness to such an extent, he becomes pure, able to resume his relationship with G-d. Indeed, he reaches a higher level than that attained previously, as implied by the promise:²¹ “And she will be acquitted, and will bear offspring.” Our Sages²² interpret this to mean: “If she would have given birth with difficulty, she will give birth with ease.”

Implied is also a spiritual parallel, for “the offspring of the righteous” — and ‘Your nation are all righteous’²³ — “are *mitzvos* and good deeds.”²⁴

Indeed, the person will proceed to the highest levels, for “In the place where *baalei teshuvah* stand, perfectly righteous men are not able to stand.”²⁵

(Adapted from *Sichos Yud-Beis Tammuz*, 5717)



17. *Sotah* 14a.

18. See *Vayikra* 5:11.

19. See *Nedarim* 41a.

20. See *Chulin* 5b, which speaks of those who are “sagacious in wisdom and yet conduct themselves as beasts.”

21. *Bamidbar* 5:28.

22. *Sotah* 26a, *Berachos* 31b.

23. *Yeshayahu* 60:21.

24. *Bereishis Rabbah* 30:6.

25. *Berachos* 34b. See the note on p. 183 of *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5709.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

25

We have already mentioned many times that according to all the signs of our Sages regarding the end of days (in addition to the general statement in the times of the Gemara that "all the appointed times have passed"¹), this generation is the last of exile and the first generation of Redemption. My sainted father-in-law, the Rebbe, the leader of our generation, testified accordingly - in connection with his well-known announcement "immediate Teshuvah, immediate Redemption"² - that in his days, (decades ago) all the aspects of service were completed, the only requirement being to "polish the buttons"³ and to stand ready to greet our righteous Moshiach.⁴ How much more must this be the case after the increased efforts to spread Torah and Judaism and the wellsprings of Chassidus outward from then until now; especially since after forty years (from his elevation⁵) "a person reaches the level of understanding of his teacher,"⁶ "A heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."⁷ Thus it is absolutely certain that the service of "polishing the buttons" has also been concluded, and we are standing ready to

1. *Sanhedrin* 97:2

2. "Kol Koray" in the *HaKriah VeHaKedusha* [Reading and Holiness] of the years 5701-03 [1940-1943] (his *Igros Kodesh* volume 5, page 361 and following, 377 and following, 408 and following, Volume 6, page 430 and following). And elsewhere. [*The phrase literally means, "Immediately to Return (or Repentance), immediately to Redemption. Translator's note.*]

3. See the talks of Simchas Torah 5689 [1929].

4. See *HaYom Yom* 15 Teves, And in several places.

5. [*The Rebbe is writing in the fortieth year after the passing of the Previous Rebbe. Traditionally, the departure of a tzadik from this world is referred to as an "elevation," meaning that he has reached a higher level of spirituality and inferring that his physical life in this world was also essentially spiritual. Translator's note.*]

6. *Avodah Zarah* 5, beginning of side b.

7. *Tavo* 29:3.

BESURAS HAGEULO

greet our righteous Moshiach.

This matter receives the utmost emphasis in this year - 5751, whose mnemonic⁸ is hinted at in the verse⁹ "his kingship **will be exalted**" (referring to Dovid and Shlomo,¹⁰ since King Moshiach will be from their offspring¹¹) over the entire world. The importance of this year is also alluded to in the year's acronym, "It will be a year in which **I will show him wonders**,"¹² as in the verse "as in the days of your going forth from the land of Egypt I will show him wonders."¹³ The year began with the "wonders" which were actually seen (in addition to those which will be seen in the future, "I will show you") and revealed to the eyes of the whole world. These wonders **fulfilled** the words of the *Yalkut Shimoni*:¹⁴ "In the year the King Moshiach will be revealed, the kings of all the nations of the world will struggle with each other... the king of Persia etc., the Arabian king, etc.; And (G-d) will say to them (Israel), "My children, do not be afraid, all that I have done I have done only for your sake... The time for your Redemption has arrived!" From that time on (particularly in the month of Nissan,

8. *[As every Hebrew letter has a numerical equivalent, the alphabetic designation of a year may yield abbreviations or words that have special significance. The process of discovering these numerical meanings and correspondences between words is called "gematria." Here, for instance, the Hebrew letters א, ש, ג, ת numerically equal 5751 (א = 1, ש = 300, ג = 50, ת = 400; 5000, sometimes designated with a preceding ה, is often omitted, it being understood we are in the sixth millennia (5000-5999) of Creation). The word תנשא, formed from the letters means "will be exalted." Translator's note.]*

9. Balak 24:7.

10. The explanation of Rashi on the verse.

11. *Sefer HaMitzvos* of the Rambam, negative commandment 362. *Perush HaMishnayos*, beginning of chapter Chelek, principle 12. *Igeres Teiman*.

12. *[See 6a. תנשא שנת אראנו נפלאות is the translated phrase in Hebrew. Translator's note.]*

13. Micah 7:15.

14. Yeshayahu, remez 499.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

the month of Redemption) we are already standing at the time "When the King Moshiach comes ("behold he comes")... and will proclaim to Israel, 'Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived!'"

...But action is the main thing:¹⁵

Since this is the Shabbos after the giving of the Torah, Parshas Naso, in the year of I will show him wonders, it is a time particularly ready and appropriate for the revelation of "a new Torah will proceed from me."¹⁶ This means that the practical lesson is that this is the set time **to prepare** (a sample and example of) the new dimensions of Torah to be revealed that will ultimately lead to the actual fulfillment of the promise "a new Torah will proceed from me."

Simply put, there should be a renewal and increase in learning Torah with vigor and delight, until one originates new insights, whether for one's self or to have an effect on others, "Raise up many disciples."¹⁷ For it is known that "Every one of Israel is able to reveal secrets of wisdom and to discover a new insight in Torah, whether in homiletics or in the revealed or in the esoteric parts of Torah, according to the level of his soul's root. **Indeed, one is obligated to do so.**"¹⁸ This includes particularly a renewal and intensification in learning and spreading the inner teachings of the Torah that are revealed in Toras Chassidus, a sample, example and

15. Avos, Chapter 1, Mishneh 17 (in gematria, "good") - that is learned on this Shabbos. [The number 17 in Hebrew can be formed from the letters of the word "good." See also note 6a. Translator's note.]

16. See Yeshayahu 51:4: "For Torah will proceed from me." And in Vayikra Rabba 13:3: "A new Torah will proceed from me, a renewal of Torah from me will proceed." This is explained at length in the talk of the second day of Shavuot (Sefer HaSichos 5751, p. 566 and following).

17. Avos Chapter 1, Mishneh 1.

18. *Tanya, Igeres HaKodesh*, section 26 (p. 145a).

BESURAS HAGEULO

"taste" of the Torah of Moshiach ("those who taste it shall merit life"¹⁹). Through this we will quicken, hasten and achieve the coming of Dovid, the King Moshiach.²⁰

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Naso, 12 Sivan 5751)

19. See *Likkutei Sichos*, volume 20, page 173. And see there for cross references.

20. *Igeres HaKodesh of the Baal Shem Tov* - section 309 at the beginning.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FRIEND

Horav **Avrohom Aharon** ben Reb **Yitzchok** ע"ה **Plotkin**

Passed away on Shabbat Parshat Nasso, 14 Sivan, 5780

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