

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Reb **Elon Menachem** ben Reb **Zev** ע"ה **Kurtzman**
Passed away on 12 Tamuz, 5778

AND HIS SISTER
Mrs. **Roneete Mona Mina** bas Reb **Zev** ע"ה **Kurtzman**
Passed away on 9 Cheshvan, 5783

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Chukat
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
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 ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
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BESURAS HAGEULO

kings? the rabbis,"³³ and specifically the leader (king) of the generation). [The increase] has made it necessary to enlarge and expand "Beis Rabbeinu" further. The enlargement and expansion must be in a way that breaks through barriers, "Paratzta" (770 in Gematria), as if constructing **a new building**.³⁴

According to what was said previously concerning the pre-eminence of "Beis Rabbeinu Sh'b'Bavel" - that "the Temple traveled and settled there," and "this is the place of the actual Temple in the future," so that there the future Temple will be revealed and from there return to Yerushalayim - the great merit each and every Jew has in becoming a partner, physically and monetarily³⁵ (and all who increase are praiseworthy) in building "Beis Rabbeinu Sh'b'Bavel" is obvious. And this is like a preparation for the actual descent and revelation of the future Temple, imminently and immediately.

(Pamphlet concerning "Mikdash M'at Zeh Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel" - Sefer HaSichos 5752, p. 465)

33. See *Gittin* 62, end of first side. *Zohar*, vol. 3, 253b in *Raya Mehemna*.

34. Including the laying of the corner stone. [*On the eve of 18 Elul 5748 was arranged the laying of the cornerstone for (increasing and expanding) the synagogue and study hall of Lubavitch in Lubavitch. The Rebbe placed the cornerstone with his holy hands. Publisher's note.*]

35. Following the example of the Beis HaMikdash, that "everyone is obligated to build and support it themselves and with their money, etc." (*Rambam, Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*, chapter 1, halacha 12).

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*

•

In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

CHUKAS

THREE KINDS OF MITZVOS

There are three categories of *mitzvos* in the Torah: *mishpatim*, *eidus*, and *chukim*.¹ *Mishpatim* are *mitzvos* whose observance is required even by human intellect. With regard to *eidus*, though logic alone would not mandate their observance, we can understand their rationale once they have been commanded by the Torah. *Chukim*, by contrast, are *mitzvos* which have no intellectual basis. Indeed, they contradict reason, and so must be observed with *kabbalas ol*, acceptance of G-d's yoke.

In *mishpatim* and *eidus*, G-d's will has been confined and encloded in intellect to the extent that our thought processes can appreciate it. With regard to *chukim*, by contrast, G-d's will retains its transcendent nature. Even though they exist within our material framework, the *chukim* reflect the essence of G-d's will, which is connected directly to G-d's essence.² This is why they cannot be grasped by mortal intellect.

Similarly, the observance of *chukim* requires a commitment stemming from the essence of one's will, reflecting the

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

"all sevenths are beloved."²⁷ Through this [extension] is accomplished the completion of our actions and Divine service during the time of exile in all seven continents of the world. Immediately and imminently "the L-rd shall **continue to apply [yoseef]** His hand a second time, etc., and He shall **gather [Asaf]** the lost of Israel, etc." In this way, "**You have broken** (in Gematria, seven hundred and seventy²⁸) barriers for yourself," "The breaker is come up before them."

All this receives added emphasis in this last period:

The Divine service of spreading Torah and Judaism and the wellsprings outward from "Beis Rabbeinu" ("770") has continued and expanded with greater vigor and greater strength, even after (the last ten years of) his life in this world, for more than forty years (5710-5750). It has done so in a way that "G-d has given you a heart to know and eyes to see and ears to hear."²⁹ Thus we find that "Beis Rabbeinu" ("770") is a "fortress," "the mount that all mouths turn to,"³⁰ for more than a Yovel of years (5700-5750) - "Forever."³¹

[That Beis Rabbeinu is a "fortress"] receives further emphasis when we see with our own eyes the many Jewish people, and the increasing numbers of them, that come to "Beis Rabbeinu," with greater vigor and greater strength, - "in the multitude of people is the splendor of the king"³² (which includes also "Who are the

27. *Vayikra Rabba*, ch. 29:11. See the discourse *Basi L'Gani* of the year 5750 at the beginning. Also at length, the same-named discourse of 5751.

28. [The letters of the word "Paratzta" have the numerical value of 770: Peh=80; Reish=200; Tzadik=90; Tuv=400. Translator's note.]

29. *Tavo* 29:3.

30. *Brochos* 30a.

31. *Shmuel I* 1:22 and Rashi's commentary. *Yerushalmi Brochos*, chapter 4, halacha 1. See *Kiddushin* 15a. *Mechilta* and Rashi's commentary on *Mishpatim* 21:6.

32. *Mishlei* 14:28.

1. See the *sichos* to the *parshiyos Yisro*, *Mishpatim*, and *Bechukosai*, in this series where similar concepts are discussed. See also the sources cited there.

2. See the *maamar* entitled *Lech Lecha* 5666, which explains that the *mitzvos* which possess a rationale that can be grasped by mortal intellect relate to the extension of G-d's will. Because this level is removed from the essence of His will, as it were, it is possible for it to become encloded in intellect. *Chukim*, by contrast, relate to the essence of G-d's will. Therefore they cannot be encloded within reason.

"770."²¹ This number in Gematria is "**Paratzta**," derived from "You shall spread out [U'Faratzta] west and east and north and south."²² This indicates that from this house light will go forth to all four corners of the world, in a manner of **breaking through barriers**, so that all four corners of the world will be elevated to the status of the land of Israel. (In the future the land of Israel will extend to all the lands.) This means in particular that all the synagogues and study halls throughout the world will be established in the land of Israel and connected to the Beis HaMikdash in the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach. For about him it says,²³ "**You have broken barriers for yourself**," which our Sages of blessed memory explain²⁴ as follows: "This is Moshiach, about whom it is said,²⁵ "**The breaker** is come up before them."²⁶

...In the completeness of the number seven (seven hundred and seventy) can also be found an allusion to the completeness of the Divine service of our Rebbe during his complete lifetime of **seven** decades, **seventy** years (5640-5710). His Divine service was concluded and completed in the lower hemisphere in the **seventh** decade (from the house whose number is seven hundred seventy). [This completeness] includes as well the extension of his Divine service in the years afterwards, through the **seventh** generation -

so in regard to an established dwelling). This is particularly true in our case, when the number becomes **the name of** the house, as discussed below.

21. Whether in Hebrew, Yiddish or English - "Seven Seventy."

22. *VaYeitze* 28:14.

23. *VaYeshev* 38:29.

24. *Aggados Bereishis*, end of chapter 63. See *Bereishis Rabba*, end of chapter 85 and Rashi's commentary on it.

25. *Micha* 2:13.

26. One should note that "Beis Moshiach" in gematria is "Paratzta" (770). Consider this carefully. [*Gematria is the numerical analysis of words. Translator's note.*]

kabbalas ol and *bittul* which are rooted in the essence of the soul, and which transcend one's conscious powers.

In this light, a connection can also be drawn to the Alter Rebbe's interpretation,³ which associates *chukim* with engraving (*chakikah* in Hebrew). Engraved letters possess an advantage over written letters, for engraved letters are part of the substance on which they are engraved. Written letters, by contrast, are merely added to the surface on which they appear.

This also reflects the advantage of *chukim* over *eidus* and *mishpatim*. *Eidus* and *mishpatim* — from the perspective of both G-d (the Commander) and man (the commanded) — do not represent the expression of will in a pure sense. Instead, will is mixed with intellect. *Chukim*, by contrast, reflect the expression of man's and G-d's essential will, and connect the essence of man's soul to the essence of G-d without the addition of any external factors.

BEYOND THE KEN OF KNOWLEDGE

The fundamental example of a *chok* is the *mitzvah* of the red heifer. With regard to this *mitzvah*, even King Shlomo, who had grasped the most sublime truths and was able to comprehend the rationale for the other *chukim*, said:⁴

I was able to comprehend all [the other difficult passages of the Torah], but with regard to the passage of the red heifer, I asked, I researched and I sought. I said:⁵ "I will become wise," [but I saw] that it was distant from me.

The rationale for this *mitzvah* was revealed to Moshe, our teacher, alone, as the *Midrash* states:⁶ "The Holy One, blessed

3. *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar* 56a; see also *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra* 45a.

4. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 19:3; *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Chukas*, sec. 7.

5. *Koheles* 7:23.

6. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 19:6; *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Chukas*, sec. 8.

be He, told Moshe: ‘To you alone will I reveal the rationale⁷ for the red heifer.’”

This is one of the reasons why the Torah introduces the *chok* of the red heifer with the phrase:⁸ “This is the statute of the Torah.” The Torah uses such wording rather than “This is the statute of the heifer,” or “This is the statute of the sin offering” because the red heifer reflects the Torah in its totality.⁹ For the essence of all the *mitzvos*, even the *mishpatim* and *eidus*, is G-d’s transcendent will. With regard to the other *mitzvos*, however, G-d’s will is en clothed in intellect. Nevertheless, the essence of even those *mitzvos* remains transcendent.¹⁰

In the *mitzvah* of the red heifer, this quality is overtly revealed. For the *mitzvah* of the red heifer is not en clothed within reason. Therefore, this *mitzvah* represents the Torah in its totality.

There are two unique dimensions to the offering of the red heifer:¹¹ a) it makes the pure impure while it purifies the impure, and b) it is offered outside the camp.

7. The word “rationale” in this context must be interpreted figuratively, for the *mitzvah* of the red heifer is above all rationale. For that reason, Shlomo’s inability to comprehend the reasoning behind the red heifer is not considered a deficiency, as reflected in the statement of *Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 19:3)*: “You have acquired knowledge. What are you lacking?”, implying that from an intellectual perspective, he was not lacking anything. See the *maamar* entitled *Zos Chukas*, 5673.

Instead, the revelation of the “rationale” for the red heifer to Moshe reflects how the fundamental *bittul* which he possessed enabled him to overtly perceive G-d’s essential will.

8. *Bamidbar 19:2*.

9. See *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 56a*; see also the traditional commentaries to the above verse.

10. For the attribute of will retains its fundamentally simple quality even when associated with a rationale. See the *maamar* entitled *Va’ani Tefillasi*, 5694. See also *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 19.

11. *Sefer HaChinuch, mitzvah 397*.

mentioned above).

It may be added, that this concept is also alluded to in the name¹⁵ of "Beis Rabbeinu" in our generation:

"Rabbeinu" [our Rebbe] - His two names alluded to the Redemption: His first name - Yosef - "And it shall come to pass that on that day, the L-rd shall **continue to apply [yoseef]** His hand a second time to acquire the rest of His people that will remain from Assyria and Egypt, etc. and from the islands of the sea, etc, and He shall **gather [Asaf]** the lost of Israel and the scattered ones of Judah He shall gather from the four corners of the earth."¹⁶ His second name - Yitzchak - refers to the laughter and rejoicing that will be complete in the future Redemption, and which will be completed through our righteous Moshiach. Thus it is written,¹⁷ "Then our mouths will be filled with laughter [**S'chok**]. It specifies "then," in the future,¹⁸ when they will say to Yitzchak (specifically), "Because you are our father."¹⁹

And **Beis (Rabbeinu) [The House of our Rebbe]** - its number is seven hundred seventy.²⁰ The name by which "Beis Rabbeinu" is called by all Jews has been universally accepted to be this number,

15. As is well-known, the name indicates the content and nature of the thing called with that name (*Tanya, "Shaar HaYichud v'HaEmunah,"* end of chapter 1. See at length *Teshuvos u'Be'urim* (Kehos, 5734), section 1 and the cross references there).

16. *Yeshayahu 11:11-12*.

17. *Tehillim 126:2*.

18. Which is not the case during the time of exile, when "it is forbidden for an individual to be completely joyful [literally, fill his mouth with laughter] in this world, since it is written that "Then our mouths will be filled with laughter [we will be completely joyful]" (*Brochos 31a*).

19. *Yeshayahu 63:16*. Shabbos 89b.

20. One should note the customs of the leaders of the Jewish people, who learned allusions and lessons in Divine service from secular matters as well (for example, the number of wagons in the train, which is incidental, and all the more

and completed. Through the elevation of the lowest possible place all the other lands of the nations are also elevated.¹¹ This [objective] is achieved through "**Beis Rabbeinu**" [Our Rebbe's House] in the lower hemisphere, from which light goes out to all the world, to make the whole world (until the furthest corner of the world) into the land of Israel. This is the concept that "In the future the land of Israel will extend into all the lands,"¹² and "In the future, Yerushalayim will extend over all the land of Israel."¹² For then there will be established a connection between all the synagogues and study halls throughout the entire world and the Beis HaMikdash. [This will occur] in the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach, the leader of the generation, who is the Moshiach (the Redeemer of Israel) of the generation. Further, and this is also essential, he is the leader of the Torah of Chassidus,¹³ since through the spreading outward ("when your wellsprings spread forth," until there is nothing beyond, to all corners of the world) is achieved the coming of the king Moshiach.¹⁴

Therefore the greatness of "Beis Rabbeinu" can be understood. It is the essential "Temple in microcosm" of the final exile, "that the Temple traveled and settled there." Therefore, it is the actual place of the Temple of the future; not only that, but the future Temple will be revealed there, and from there return to Yerushalayim (as

cross-references.

11. "As in raising the walls of a house, it is necessary to raise the lower beam and then the upper beams will be raised automatically; this is not the case if one begins in the middle of the wall, one does not raise the lower beams" (*Torah Or Bereishis* 4, beginning of side a).

12. See *Sifrei Devarim* at the beginning, *Pesikta Rabbasi*, *Parshas Shabbos v'Rosh Chodesh*. *Yalkus Shimoni*, *Yeshayahu*, *remez* 503.

13. One should note that the Torah of Chassidus is the aspect of the Yechida in Torah (See the pamphlet concerning "On the essence of Chassidus), which is connected with the aspect of Yechida in Israel - the soul of our righteous Moshiach (*RaMaZ on Zohar* vol. 2, 40b and other sources).

14. *Igros Kodesh of the Baal Shem Tov - Kesser Shem Tov* at the beginning.

We can assume that these unique dimensions reveal a quality associated with the essence of the soul, and relate to the Torah in its totality.

The impetus which spurs the essence of the soul to this service is sparked by Moshe, for only to him was the motivating principle revealed. And it is Moshe who conveys inspiration to all Jews.

To underscore this dynamic, G-d commanded Moshe:⁸ "Speak to the children of Israel, that they shall bring you a red heifer." It was Elazar the priest who offered the red heifer and carried out all the preparations for the sacrifice. Nevertheless, the Torah emphasizes that the heifer was to be brought to Moshe, for it was he who inspired the Divine service that represents the spiritual counterpart of this offering. For this reason, the sacrifice is always referred to as the red heifer offered by Moshe.¹² Moreover, each of the eight red heifers offered during the era of the Second *Beis HaMikdash*, and even the final one to be offered by *Mashiach* used — or will use — the ashes of red heifer offered by Moshe in the desert.¹³

PURE, IMPURE

The *Midrash* states¹⁴ that when G-d told Moshe *Rabbeinu* about the impurity resulting from contact with a human corpse, Moshe's face turned color. "How will such a person regain ritual purity?" he wondered.

(Moshe was not as bewildered when G-d taught him about other kinds of ritual impurity, for they are limited in nature. But the impurity stemming from contact with a corpse

12. See Rashi's commentary to the beginning of *Parshas Chukas*.

13. See *Parah* 3:5 (and the commentary to 3:11); *Rambam*, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Parah Adumah* 2:6. See also the commentary of *Yedei Mishneh* and R. Zaeve Einhorn to *Bamidbar Rabbah* 19:6; *Gur Aryeh* and *Sifsei Chachamim* (to Rashi, *Bamidbar* 19:2); *Sheloh*, *Cheilek Torah Shebichsav*, *Parshas Parah*, p. 359b.

14. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 19:4, *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Parshas Chukas*, sec. 6.

is the direct opposite of holiness. Holiness is associated with vitality; as long as one clings to “the living G-d,” there is no possibility of death.¹⁵ Death reflects separation from G-dliness, and therefore Moshe was bewildered.)

G-d resolved this question for Moshe by teaching him the laws of the red heifer, for the ashes of the red heifer overturn even this type of impurity. The sprinkling of its ashes draws down the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, which transcend all limitations and remove all blemishes.¹⁶

For this reason, the red heifer is referred to as a *chok*. For within the ordinary limits of the spiritual cosmos (i.e., within both the private world of each human being, and within the world at large), it is impossible to bring purity to such a level. For “who can render the impure, pure? Only the One,”¹⁷ for He is not bound by any limits.

On this basis, we can also understand why the red heifer is offered outside the camp, in contrast to all other sacrifices,

15. On this basis, we can understand the custom (*Toras Kohanim, Bechukosai* commenting on verse 26:25; *B. Kamma* 82b) that a corpse is never left unburied overnight in Jerusalem. Jerusalem (ירושלים in Hebrew) relates to the level of complete fear [(שלימות היראה) in Hebrew], *Tosafos*, entry, *Har, Taanis* 16a]. On that level, there is no connection with death. On the contrary, “the fear of G-d [leads to] life” (*Mishlei* 19:23).

16. *Tanya, Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 8. The intent is that *teshuvah* removes even those blemishes which are caused by willful sins — blemishes for which sacrifices cannot atone. Such complete restoration is possible because *teshuvah* draws down the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

For this reason, when the Alter Rebbe quotes the verse (*Shmos* 34:7): “forgiving iniquity, transgression,... and He cleanses,” he omits the word “sin.” For sin, *chata* in Hebrew, refers to unintentional sins that can be atoned for by sacrifices. For the atonement for such sins does not require the influence of the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy.

The verse itself mentions “sins” because of its conclusion (which translates literally as): “and He cleanses, but does not cleanse,” interpreted by our Sages (*Yoma* 6:1) as: “He cleanses’ those who repent; ‘but does not cleanse’ those who do not repent.” Sins are mentioned in this context to show that even “sins” will not be forgiven unless the person repents. For even a sin committed unintentionally requires *teshuvah*.

17. *Iyov* 14:4; [the translation is based on the *Targum*]. See also *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar* 59d.

settling serves] as a preparation for the future Temple, which will be revealed there first, and from there return (with G-d and the Jewish people) to Yerushalayim.

...Perhaps it can be said that the statement in the Midrash,⁷ that “at the time when the king Moshiach comes, **he will stand on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash** [Temple] and announce to the Jewish people, saying, Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived,” refers to the roof of the Beis HaMikdash which is **the Temple in microcosm** outside the land,⁸ which takes the place of the Temple in Yerushalayim (“The Temple traveled and settled there”). [This may be said] because after the future Temple is revealed and descends to the earth below, there is no need **to announce** to the Jewish people that “the time for your Redemption has arrived.”

...The above can be applied to “The House of our Rebbe in Bavel” **of our generation**, the house (the synagogue and study hall) of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation:

...In this generation, the last generation of exile and the first generation of Redemption, “our actions and Divine service during the time of exile”⁹ to make the lands of the nations into the land of Israel even in **the lowest possible place**, that is, **the lower hemisphere** (where the Torah was not given¹⁰) has been concluded

settled in Bavel. Translator's note.]

7. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu, remez* 499.

8. Accordingly, the expression “He stands on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash” becomes clarified; that “roofs... do not become sanctified” (Rambam, *Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*, chapter 6, halacha 7). Hence this alludes to the lands outside of Israel in comparison to the holiness of the land of Israel.

9. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.

10. See *Igros Kodesh of the Rebbe RaYaTZ*, vol. 2, p. 492 ff. See there for

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It may be suggested that the Temple of the future ("it will be revealed and come from heaven already built and perfected"¹) will first be revealed in the place "That the Temple traveled and settled there"² in the time of exile ("The House of our Rebbe in Bavel"³); from there it will be transported to its place in Yerushalayim.

...Perhaps it can be said that this is alluded to in the Rambam's choice of words (in *Hilchos Melech HaMoshiach*⁴) "And build the Temple **in its place**." For apparently [there is a question]: what is the need to inform us here that the building of the Temple will be **in its place**? On the other hand, why isn't the place specified: "And build the Temple in **Yerushalayim**?" [It must be] that "in its place" alludes as well to the place of the king Moshiach in the time of exile (**before** [the status of] "behold he is certainly Moshiach"). Therefore, while he is still **in exile** (for there he sits⁵ and waits and anxiously looks forward to redeeming the Jewish people, and the Divine Presence with them in exile) the king Moshiach builds a Temple (in microcosm). This is an illustration and example of the Temple in Yerushalayim (like "the synagogue of He slipped and settled,"⁶ "that the Temple traveled and settled there."). [This

1. Rashi's commentary and Tosfos on Sukkah 41, end of side a and in other sources.

2. *Aruch*, entry Shaf (brought in the *Chiddushei Aggada MaHaRaSHA*, on *Megillah* 29a).

3. *Megillah* 29a. [In Hebrew, "Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel". Translator's note.]

4. End of chapter 11.

5. See *Sanhedrin* 98a: "He is dwelling at the gate of Rome." [In the referenced passage, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi asks Eliyahu HaNavi where Moshiach can be found. The quotation actually combines the end of the question ("Where is Moshiach dwelling?") and the answer ("At the gate of Rome"). Translator's note.]

6. *Megillah* 29a. [The phrase is a reference to the Divine Presence going into exile with the Jewish people: G-d's Presence slipped away from Jerusalem and

which were offered within the *Beis HaMikdash*. The Alter Rebbe explains¹⁸ that all the other sacrifices atone for unintentional sins, these being a result of the "intensification [of the influence] of the animal soul [rooted in *kelipas*] *nogah*."¹⁹ Therefore they are offered within the *Beis HaMikdash*.

The red heifer, by contrast, atones for the ritual impurity stemming from a corpse, the very lowest form of impurity, below even *kelipas nogah*. Accordingly, it is offered outside the camp, for it purifies even those levels outside the realm of holiness by revealing a light that transcends the limits of the spiritual cosmos.

BEYOND SELF-CONCERN

To draw down a light which is above the limits of the spiritual cosmos, one must tap a level of the soul which goes beyond all limits, the level of *yechidah*, which is expressed through *bittul*. To put it simply: *mesirus nefesh*, self-sacrifice, is necessary. A person must put his own concerns aside, go outside the camp, take a cow (indeed, one which is red²⁰) and prepare it as a sacrifice, knowing that he himself will thereby become impure. All this to enable other Jews to become pure.

A person has to be willing to ignore his own concerns to do a favor for another Jew. Moreover, the help which he offers must be given freely, without thought of personal benefit. Our Sages teach:²¹ "More than the donor gives to the recipient, the recipient gives to the donor." But when a person gives with such thoughts in mind, he has not transcended his limits, and so it is impossible for him to draw down G-d's essence.

18. *Tanya*, *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 28; see also *Likkutei Torah*, *Bamidbar* 58c.

19. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Vayikra* in this series, where this concept is explained.

20. Red reflects excitement, the direct opposite of the calm which characterizes intellect.

21. *Vayikra Rabbah* 34:8.

When does a person draw down G-d's essence? When he does a favor for another person despite the knowledge that he will thereby become impure.²²

(G-d will certainly repay him several times over for his troubles, but this is not his concern. He should be willing to make the effort despite the fact that he thereby becomes impure.)

This lack of self-concern is the *chok* engraved in the very core of his being, and it draws down the transcendent dimensions of G-dliness. For only the essence of the soul can draw down G-d's essence.

The above concepts enable us to appreciate the ramifications of the two unique dimensions of the laws regarding the red heifer: that it makes the impure pure while making the pure impure, and that it is offered outside the camp.

To explain:

a) Through the Divine service associated with the *chukim*, we reveal the essence of the soul. For the *bittul* involved in enabling another Jew to purify himself even though it requires leaving the camp and becoming impure oneself expresses the essence of the soul.

b) This relates to the Torah in its totality, for the purpose of the Torah is to take humanity above all limits, enabling us to subdue our personal "I." This includes not only the "I" of the body, but also the "I" of the soul. This self-sacrifice is expressed through *ahavas Yisrael* (the love for a fellow Jew), which is the totality of the Torah.²³

22. Indeed, even before the priest begins the rites involved with the sacrifice of the red heifer, he is rendered impure. For in the era of the Second *Beis HaMikdash*, before the priest began the rites, the court would *make* him impure through contact with a dead creeping animal. He would then immerse and begin the rites connected with the sacrifice (*Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Parah Adumah* 1:14).

23. See *Tanya*, ch. 32; *Derech Mitzvosecha, mitzvas ahavas Yisrael*.

of Redemption. And then "the children of Israel will depart with an upraised arm," and with "heads held high." May this take place in the immediate future.

(Adapted from *Sichos Yud-Gimmel Tammuz*, 5722)



manuscripts. From Moscow, they were instructed to defer to all the Rebbe's wishes.

And so the Russian authorities were forced to stamp every carton of the Rebbe's books so that they could be taken across the border. The north, identified with evil, became an agent of freedom and liberation.

This was a foretaste of the prophecy: "I will tell the north: 'Give up.'" It reflects not only a miracle that transcends the bounds of nature, but a miracle of transformation.

WHEN THE DAWN BREAKS

The miracles performed on behalf of the righteous, particularly in this, the final generation before the Redemption, anticipate and precipitate the miracles of the Redemption itself, showing us what those miracles will be like.

In the Era of the Redemption, nothing will stand in the way of the Jewish people — we will not have to ask permission from anyone, as alluded to in this week's *Haftorah*:¹⁷ "The remnant of Yaakov will be in the midst of many peoples.... They will not place their hope in men, nor wait upon mortals."

Moreover, G-d will command the compass directions themselves to help the Jews. G-d will address the world, and transform it into a vehicle of redemption.

Yet the world will continue to exist, as indicated by the verse which speaks about "many peoples," and the following verse,¹⁸ which speaks about "the beasts of the forest." Nevertheless, although the natural tendency of these nations is to resist the redemption of the Jews, "The remnant of Yaakov... will not place their hope in men, nor wait upon mortals." For G-d will tell the north; "Give," transforming it into an agent

17. *Michah* 5:6.

18. *Ibid.*:7.

The potential for such a commitment stems from Moshe *Rabbeinu*. He was the epitome of selflessness, and inspired all Jews to manifest *bittul*.

POSITIVE SELF-CONCERN

On several occasions, it has been explained²⁴ that the Torah fuses opposites. A similar concept applies in the present context: one's efforts to reach out to another Jew must be coupled with a concern for one's own refinement.

It is written:²⁵ "When you see a naked person, you should cover him, but you should not turn away from your own flesh." *Mitzvos* are described with the analogy of garments.²⁶ Thus the verse can be interpreted as meaning "When you see a naked person — one who has no *mitzvos* in which to clothe himself — you should clothe him. Inspire him to observe the *mitzvos*, to wear *tefillin* and *tzitzis*." At the same time, however, one cannot "turn away from one's own flesh."

The implication is that one must realize that one's makeup is materialistically inclined. And one must carry out a process of refinement that includes spiritual counterparts to each of the three steps involved in preparing flesh to be eaten: soaking, salting, and washing.²⁷

In *Tanya, op. cit.*, frequent reference is made to the terms body and soul. In this context, the term "body" also includes the vitalizing force that the body requires. "Soul" refers to the very source of the soul, the level described with the words: "With regard to the soul and the spirit, who can know their greatness and stature in their root and source, the living G-d." For it is this level alone which is the source of true love and brotherhood. When, by contrast, a person retains self-concern, even the spiritual self-concern that stems from his soul, true brotherhood is not possible.

24. See the *sichah* to *Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah* in this series.

25. *Yeshayahu* 58:7. See the *maamar* entitled *Oz Yibaka*, 5694.

26. *Tanya*, ch. 4.

27. Soaking the meat refers to "immersing oneself in the waters of knowledge" (cf. *Rambam, Mishneh Torah*, the conclusion of *Hilchos Mikvaos*), i.e., the study of the Torah. It also refers to prayer, for prayer is associated with the analogy of water, as it is written (*Eichah* 2:19): "Pour out your heart like water."

Since the *mitzvah* of the red heifer represents “the totality of the Torah,” it also alludes to this concept. This is reflected in the fact that the ashes of the red heifer offered by Moshe were divided into three portions:²⁸ One was used to purify the impure. One portion was set aside to purify the priests who would offer subsequent red heifers. And a third portion was set aside as “a testimonial.”

One might ask: What is the purpose of a testimonial?

In terms of our Divine service, this question can be answered as follows: Because of the many rigors involved in communal work and outreach efforts, one may forget about oneself. Therefore a testimonial is necessary to remind us that the impurity associated with death should not be allowed to penetrate into our own lives, and require us to use of the ashes of the red heifer.²⁹

SUMMING UP

To summarize:

a) When one sees a Jew who does not appear to be clinging to the living G-d, and who looks spiritually lifeless, one might think that the person is beyond hope. The red heifer teaches us that this is not so. Moshe *Rabbeinu* endowed us

Salting refers to the purging of the excitement derived from worldly pleasure. Washing the salt and blood off the meat implies that no trace of the salting process should remain, i.e., this spiritual endeavor should not encourage pride (*Sichos Shabbos Parshas Pinchas*, 5710).

28. *Tosefta*, the conclusion of *Parah*, ch. 3.

29. This lesson is emphasized through the *mitzvah* of the red heifer, which centers primarily on purifying others, since: a) As a result of the effort necessary to purify others, the person is likely to forget about himself. For indeed, when comparing himself to the people to whom he is reaching out, he may come to the conclusion that he is on a very high level. b) To reach out to others, one must be on the highest levels of purity oneself. This is why the Sages imposed many stringencies with regard to the purity of those involved in the offering of the red heifer (see *Rambam*, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Parah* 2:1).

And this, the *Targum* emphasizes, will come in the merit of the Patriarchs for whom miracles — similar to the miracles of the Redemption — were performed.

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE NORTH

Among the miracles performed on behalf of “our righteous forefathers,” and in particular the miracles performed for the *tzaddikim* of the last generation before the coming of *Mashiach*, are those that anticipate and precipitate the miracles of the Redemption. In this vein, it can be explained that the miracles of *Yud-Beis* and *Yud-Gimmel* Tammuz were a foretaste of the fulfillment of the prophecy: “I will tell the north: ‘Give up.’”

As mentioned previously, after the Russians decided to send the Rebbe to Kostrama, he refused to go if his journey involved any compromise of the *Shabbos* laws. And the Russians agreed and kept him in prison until Sunday. This was a radical departure from the usual practice. For just as a prisoner cannot be released if the authorities want to hold him, so too, when the authorities desire to release him, he ordinarily has no option to remain in prison. The Rebbe, however, achieved exactly what he desired.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the Rebbe’s departure from Russia. Not only did the Russians “not prevent” him from leaving, they actually *assisted* him, foreshadowing the fulfillment of the prophecy: “I will tell the north: ‘Give up.’”

For example, the Rebbe said that he would not leave Russia unless he was able to take all his manuscripts and books. When the inspectors wished to prevent him from taking certain rare and valuable texts, the Rebbe said that if so, he would not leave the land. The inspectors telegraphed the higher authorities in Moscow, reporting that Rabbi Schneersohn refused to leave without all his books and

consummation of creation, the era of *Mashiach*, will come in the merit of the Patriarchs.

Thus the verse:¹⁴ “All that is called by My Name and by My honor....” is rendered by the *Targum* as: “All this is for the sake of your righteous forefathers who are called by My name, and whom I created for My honor. I prepared an exile for them, but I also performed miracles on their behalf.”

This verse follows the conceptual flow of the previous verses, which speak of the Future Redemption, as it is written:¹⁵ “From the east I will bring your descendants, and from the west I will gather you together. I will tell the north: ‘Give up [the Jews in your lands],’ and the south: ‘Do not prevent them [from leaving].’”

These verses proclaim that in the Future Redemption, the Jewish people will be taken out of every land in which they are to be found. There is, however, a difference in the manner in which the verse refers to the four compass directions. With regard to the east and west it uses the expressions: “I will bring...” and “I will gather...,” i.e., G-d is addressing the Jewish people and telling them what He will do. With regard to the north and south, however, G-d addresses the compass directions themselves, telling them “Give up,” and “Do not prevent them.”

Particular emphasis is placed on the north — the source of evil, as it is written:¹⁶ “From the north, evil will venture forth.” That direction is told to “Give.” Unlike the south (*Teiman*) which is merely instructed, “Do not prevent,” the north is commanded to become a giver, i.e., a force contributing to the Redemption.

This reflects the uniqueness of the Future Redemption: even the north will be transformed into a positive influence.

14. *Yeshayahu* 43:7.
15. *Ibid.*:5-6.
16. *Yirmeyahu* 1:14.

with the power to purify every Jew, even one who has come into contact with death.³⁰

b) The *yetzer hora* can argue: “It’s true that the potential has been granted for such service, but why must *you* perform it? Why lower yourself to such a level? After all, our Sages teach that³¹ a person is never told to sin in order to enable a colleague to benefit.

In reply, we are told that this is “the statute of the Torah,” i.e., a principle upon which the entire Torah revolves. One must be willing to sacrifice oneself for a colleague. Until one is willing to make such a sacrifice, one is lacking a connection to the Torah in its totality.

c) A person can err and think that the success of his outreach efforts is due to his personal talents. To counter such thoughts, he is reminded that before offering a red heifer, one must be purified with the ashes of the red heifer which Moshe offered. Each person must realize that he is only an agent, and that his potential for success is generated by Moshe.

d) One might wish to devote oneself entirely to the purification of others, without concentrating on oneself. To prevent such an error, the Torah teaches us to keep a portion of the ashes of the red heifer as a testimonial, reminding us to focus energies inward as well as outward.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Chukas*, 5710,
Shabbos Parshas Chukas-Balak, 5712)



30. This is implied by *Rashi* (*Bamidbar* 19:2) who speaks of “the red heifer which Moshe offered in the desert.” Why the reference to the desert? Everyone knows that Moshe’s entire term of leadership was spent in the desert!

The intent is to teach that Moshe offered the red heifer in “the desert,” a place of snakes and scorpions, indicating that this offering has the potential to purify even such low levels. And it is from the ashes of this red heifer that the priests are purified before offering other red heifers.

31. *Shabbos* 4a.

YUD-BAIS-YUD-GIMMEL TAMMUZ

THE POWER OF RESOLUTION

Among the stories which my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, the master of happiness and redemption, related concerning his imprisonment and liberation are several which concern the actual imprisonment.¹

He told how, upon being brought to prison, he resolved not to lose his self-control, not to be unnerved by the GPO. He decided that, not only with regard to those matters which concern the fear of heaven, but with regard to all things, he would not consider them as having no importance whatsoever. In his eyes, they were — to quote — “utter nothingness and void.”

He did not alter this approach even after being placed in solitary confinement for refusing to answer questions. Where was he confined? In a cell full of mud with nothing to lean on, which was infested with rats and other vermin. Even after spending an entire day in such conditions, he maintained his resolve to view both his interrogators and their questions as “utter nothingness and void.”

(In this cell, it was impossible to differentiate between day and night, for there was only a small window near the ceiling, and that was blocked by a wall. It was only by noting the changing of the guards, when hot water was brought and the

1. See *Sichos Gimmel Tammuz*, 5701.

mission and extend the scope of the Torah. When he makes such a decision, and remains unphased by all the challenges he faces, he will *surely* be successful.

These efforts to spread the teachings of the Torah — *Nigleh* (the revealed dimensions of Torah law), *Chassidus*, and the observance of *mitzvos behiddur*, in a beautiful and conscientious manner — will lead to the era when “the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed.”⁹ May it take place in the immediate future.

THE MERIT OF THE PATRIARCHS

On the verse in this week’s Torah¹⁰ reading:¹¹ “From the top of boulders, I see him. I gaze upon him from the hills,” the *Midrash* comments:¹²

“From the top of boulders, I see him,” these are the Patriarchs.... To explain with an analogy: A king endeavored to construct a city.... He sought to lay the foundation... but waters rose from the depths and prevented him from doing so... until he came to one place and saw a great boulder. “On this boulder, I will build my city,” he declared.

So too, the world was originally filled with water, and G-d wanted to establish the world.... When the Patriarchs came and [showed that] they were worthy, G-d said: “I will establish the world on them.”

The ultimate intent of creation will be manifest at the time of the coming of *Mashiach*.¹³ Just as creation began in the merit of the Patriarchs (as the *Midrash* indicates), so too the

9. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

10. See the *Sheloh*, *Cheilek Torah Shebichsav*, *Parshas Vayeishev*, which states: “The festivals throughout the year... all share a connection to the Torah readings [of the weeks] in which they are celebrated.”

11. *Bamidbar* 23:9.

12. *Shmos Rabbah* 15:7.

13. See *Tanya*, ch. 36.

FOLLOWING THE REBBE'S PATH

The events which happen to a *Nassi*, and in particular those which he publicly relates, serve as lessons for us in our Divine service. One of the lessons to be learned from this story is that we can all tread the path which the Rebbe opened.⁴ For when a Jew makes a firm decision to disregard any concealment his G-dly soul confronts and to overcome all the hurdles and obstacles that lie in the way of spreading *Yiddishkeit*, G-d will sustain his resolution. Although he may be beaten three times — and according to Jewish law, the recurrence of an event three times is sufficient for us to view it as factor to be considered⁵ — these blows will not affect his decision. On the contrary, his resolution will stir another Jew who is under the influence of the forces of evil to recognize the existence of *Yiddishkeit*, *Chassidus*, and a Rebbe. And indeed, this other Jew will call out with the latter title.

Ultimately, such resolution will lead to success — indeed, miraculous success — not only in matters of essential importance, but also in those matters which in comparison can be considered secondary. To refer to an expression of the Rebbe Rashab:⁶ “One remains sound, not only in essence, but in the entire scope of one’s affairs.” And with all one’s concerns, one proceeds to freedom “with an upraised arm,”⁷ and with “heads held high.”⁸

Certainly, when a Jew enjoys circumstances which allow him to spread *Yiddishkeit* freely, — indeed, he is assisted, receiving reward not only in the World to Come, but in this world — he should make a firm resolution to carry out G-d’s

4. Once the path is opened by a man of great spiritual stature, it becomes possible for even a person of ordinary attainments (see the *Maamar* entitled *Ki Ka’asher HaShomayim*, 5678).

5. [See *Bava Metzia* 106b.]

6. *Toras Shalom*, p. 246, 248.

7. *Shmos* 14:8.

8. The translation of the *Targum* of the previous phrase. See the *sichah* to *Yud Shvat* in this series, where the significance of this phrase is discussed.

like that the Rebbe was able to determine when it was day and when it was night.²)

At 11 o’clock Thursday morning, *Rosh Chodesh Tammuz*, guards entered the Rebbe’s cell and ordered him to stand. (When telling this story, the Rebbe emphasized that in prison, he would spend more time in prayer than usual.)

The guards spoke Russian, but the Rebbe — as was his practice throughout his imprisonment — answered in Yiddish, saying that he would not stand.

What was the crux of his refusal? The rules were that whenever information was to be conveyed to a prisoner, he was required to stand. This was to impress upon him that he was under the prison’s authority. And the Rebbe recognized no such authority.

It appears that one of the guards was Jewish, for he understood the Rebbe’s answer and replied in Russian: “If you do not obey, we will beat you.” To which the Rebbe replied, “*Nu.*”

The guards carried out their threat, and then left the cell.

Shortly afterwards, a second group entered. With them was Lulav, a Jew who had been among those who had arrested the Rebbe. Lulav came from Chassidic stock. He addressed the Rebbe with his title. “Rebbe,” he told him, “Why are you opposing them? Why make this a struggle? They are coming to inform you that your sentence will be lightened. When they tell you to stand, you must stand.”

The Rebbe did not answer.

“Do you *want* them to beat you?” Lulav asked.

When the Rebbe again refused to answer, the guards beat him again. One of them gave him such a blow below the chin

2. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. IV, p. 1317.

that the Rebbe felt pain for a long time afterwards. Then they also left.

In time, a third group of guards entered the room. Among them was a Jew named Kavalov. They also told the Rebbe to stand, and again the Rebbe answered that he would not. Kavalov attacked the Rebbe with murderous anger, muttering (in Russian): “We’ll teach you a lesson.” To which the Rebbe responded (in Yiddish): “The question is, who will teach who?”

A short while afterwards, yet another group of guards came and told the Rebbe (who remained seated) to go to the prison office. There he was informed that he was to be released from prison and sent into exile for three years in the city of Kostrama.

When the Rebbe approached the table, he saw all the papers from his file. He noticed that one line was crossed out. (This line stated that the Rebbe had been condemned to death. When the Rebbe told the story himself, he did not include this detail, for he did not even want to mention such a possibility. He said merely that a line had been written and then crossed out.)

Further down on the document a line stated that the Rebbe had been sentenced to ten years of hard labor at Solovki (an island near the North Pole). Next to that was written *Nyet* (no).

At the bottom of the page appeared the terse order: “Three years in Kostrama.”

The officials told the Rebbe that he was sentenced to exile, and asked him what class of train ticket he desired. He responded: “First class” (in which only the wealthy or high government officials traveled). When they asked whether he had the money to pay for it, the Rebbe replied that if the money they had confiscated from him upon his arrest was not sufficient, his household would make up the difference.

The officials agreed to this, and told him they would free him from prison at 2 p.m. that afternoon. He would then have six hours to spend with the members of his household before having to leave the city for Kostrama.

As mentioned above, this all took place on a Thursday. With *Shabbos* in mind, the Rebbe asked when he would arrive in Kostrama. When they answered that he would arrive on *Shabbos*, the Rebbe declared that under no circumstances would he travel on *Shabbos*.

When telling this story, the Rebbe would conclude: “Thank G-d, I did not have to travel on *Shabbos*! I remained in prison until Sunday.”

The reason he was not freed immediately was that the Communists would not allow him to remain at home any longer than they had stipulated. Therefore they held him in prison until Sunday afternoon, at which time they let him go home. On Sunday night, he departed for Kostrama.

When telling the story, the Rebbe would always add that he had already dispatched Reb Michael Dvorkin to Kostrama. There this trusted elder chassid gathered Jewish children and began a *cheder*. He also checked the local *mikveh*, and gave instructions for it to be made *halachically* faultless.

In other words, precisely the same activities for which the Rebbe had been sentenced to death — and only through diplomatic intervention was that sentence miraculously commuted to three years of exile — were being carried out under his direction. For even before he himself arrived in Kostrama, he sent an emissary to establish a *cheder*³ and make a *mikveh* fit for communal use.

3. This can be compared to Yaakov sending Yehudah before him to Goshen (*Bereishis* 46:28) to establish a house of study (*Rashi*).