

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg
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 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
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DEDICATED BY
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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

BALAK

FATHERS AND MOTHERS

Our Sages interpret¹ the verse:² “From the top of boulders, I see him. I gaze upon him from the hills,” as an allegory, explaining that “the tops of boulders” refers to the Patriarchs, and “the hills” refer to the Matriarchs.

The significance of this commentary can be understood by comparing the different relationships which a father and a mother share with their child. A father’s connection is general; it does not relate to the child’s body in a specific way.³ For it is through the mother’s nurturing of the fetus for nine months that the limbs and organs that make up a child’s body become defined and develop.⁴

For this reason, even after the child is born, his mother shares a closer relationship with him than his father, for it is she who has shaped the particulars of his existence. And thus, a child has a greater love for his mother than for his father, and a greater degree of awe for his father.⁵ For love depends on closeness, and awe comes about through distance.

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1. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 20:19; *Midrash Tanchuma, Balak*, sec. 12; *Zohar*, Vol. III, p. 210b.
 2. *Bamidbar* 23:9.
 3. Our Sages (*Niddah* 31a) state that the father’s seed is responsible for the child’s sinews, bones, and nails. Nevertheless, the actual existence of even these parts of the body depends on the nurture the fetus receives in its mother’s womb.
 4. See *Tanya*, ch. 2.
 5. See *Kiddushin* 30b, (quoted by *Rashi* in his commentary to *Vayikra* 19:3). The same applies with regard to the *Sefiros* of *Chochmah* and *Binah* which are described with the analogies of a father and a mother. *Chochmah* gives rise to

Similar concepts apply with regard to the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs of the Jewish people. For this reason, when speaking about the Patriarchs, the verse uses the expression “I see him,” which implies gazing from a distance, while with regard to the Matriarchs, it uses the expression, “I gaze upon him” which implies closeness. This is indicated by the *Targum* for the term “I gaze upon him,” (סכיטה) *sichisa*, which is also used as the *Targum* for the word *vitabeit*.⁶ *Habat*, the Hebrew root for the latter term, implies looking closely with intent and concern.⁷

IN THE IMAGE OF G-D

The conception of a child on the physical plane, as does every other material entity, stems from its spiritual source. Our emotions are referred to as “offspring,” because they are brought into being by intellect. Deep understanding and meditation on the greatness of G-d spawns love and fear of G-d.

More particularly, our conceptual process can be divided into two thrusts: *Chochmah* and *Binah*. *Chochmah* is the seminal core of understanding. Therefore it is described with the analogy of a father. *Binah* represents the development of a conceptual framework, and therefore it is referred to with the analogy of a mother.⁸

Our soul powers stem from the supernal *Sefiros*.⁹ And thus a similar pattern exists with regard to these *Sefiros*. They

(and is) a manifestation of awe, while *Binah* gives rise to (and is) a manifestation of love.

6. *Bereishis* 19:26.

7. See also *Rashi*, *Bamidbar* 21:8.

In other sources, it is explained that “I gaze upon him” refers to staring from a distance, and “I see him” to taking a close look. Both concepts have their source in *Eichah Rabbah* 5:1. See also the *maamar* from the *Tzemach Tzedek* entitled *Ki MeiRosh Tzurim (Or HaTorah, Balak, p. 914)*.

8. *Tanya*, ch. 3; *Biurei Zohar*, *Balak* 103b.

9. *Tanya*, *ibid.*

are divided into two fundamental categories which parallel intellect and emotion, it is the supernal intellect, *Chochmah* and *Binah*, which spawn the supernal emotions.¹⁰ And these emotions bring into being the spiritual worlds.¹¹

More particular, the parallel reflects the workings of *Chochmah* and *Binah*. *Chochmah* serves as “the father,” for it is distant from the emotions and certainly from the worlds which they bring into being. *Binah* is considered “the mother” for it is closer to the emotions and also to the worlds.

Because *Binah* is closer to the worlds, the framework of reference which characterizes the worlds is significant for it. Therefore, the influence of *Binah* in the world, the comprehension of G-dliness, does not nullify that framework of reference. Instead, it brings about only *bittul hayesh*, self-nullification that does not entirely banish one’s conception of self. The person devotes himself to a higher purpose, but still retains his individual identity.

Chochmah, by contrast, appreciates that “He alone exists; there is nothing else”;¹² all other existence becomes paled in the light of His presence. This level of awareness is indeed reflected in the name *Chochmah* whose letters can be rearranged to form the words *koach mah*¹³ — which reflect complete and utter *bittul*, *bittul bimetzius*.

STRIVING FOR A PURPOSE

The Patriarchs and the Matriarchs share a connection with every Jew, endowing every member of people with their

10. In this, there is also a parallel to the powers of the soul. For intellect is inwardly directed, while the emotions are pointed to others.

11. For this reason, the emotions are referred to as “the days of creation” (*Tanya*, ch. 3).

12. *Tanya*, ch. 35 in the note

13. *Tikkunei Zohar, Hakdamah 4a; Tanya*, chs. 3 and 18.

spiritual legacy.¹⁴ Implied is that every Jew possesses two general spiritual thrusts. The Patriarchs endow him with the quality of *Chochmah*, the potential for complete and utter self-nullification, reflecting the sublime unity, while the Matriarchs endow him with the quality of *Binah*, self-nullification that allows a person to retain his identity, reflecting the lower plane of unity.

The ultimate purpose of existence is that the world be transformed into a dwelling for G-d. Thus our Divine service should not be removed from the world, but should focus on making the world a medium for G-dliness as it exists within its own context. For this reason, the Matriarchs whose Divine service reflects closer involvement with the world possess an advantage over the Patriarchs (despite the fact that *Binah*, the

14. For that reason, there are only three Patriarchs (*Berachos* 16b). For every individual does not possess the spiritual potentials identified with each of the tribes. With regard to the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs, by contrast, their spiritual legacy is endowed to each and every one of their descendants (*Torah Or, Parshas Va'eira* 55a).

Based on the above, we can explain why certain *Rishonim* (see *Ritva, Yevamos* 46a) state that the concept that there are only three Patriarchs and four Matriarchs applies only with regard to prayer. On the surface, since the *Talmud* uses the terms, Patriarchs and Matriarchs, to refer to the entire generation which left Egypt, the term is certainly being used appropriately. Why then is it inappropriate to describe these others as Patriarchs also with regard to prayer?

This question can be resolved based on the concept that the term Patriarchs and Matriarchs implies that their legacy is conveyed to every member of the Jewish people. Therefore, with regard to a certain quality, others may also be referred to as Patriarchs and Matriarchs if the quality they endowed was granted to our people as a collective.

For this reason, the passage in *Yevamos* uses these terms with regard to the process through which our ancestors accepted Judaism after the exodus. For indeed, this process has a lasting effect on all their descendants, causing each one of them to be considered as part of the Jewish people. Similarly, in the *Haggadah* the term *avoseinu*, which means "our Patriarchs," is used with regard to all the people who left Egypt, for the exodus is a matter of general relevance.

With regard to prayer, the process of connection between the Jews and G-d, this connection includes only seven fundamental qualities. And these qualities are the spiritual legacies of the three Patriarchs and the four Matriarchs (*Sichos* 2nd Night of *Pesach*, 5723).

quality they personify, merely receives influence from *Chochmah*, the quality personified by the Patriarchs). And therefore, Avraham was instructed:¹⁵ “Listen to everything Sarah tells you.”

Both these thrusts, the striving towards the sublime unity and the lower unity, which come from the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs (the “tops of the boulders” and the “hills”) empower the Jewish people, enabling them to achieve the state described in the continuation of the verse:¹⁶ “It is a nation dwelling alone secure, not being counted among the nations.”

Even during exile, this prophecy continues to be fulfilled. For the identity of the Jews has remained intact; they have not assimilated among the nations. Indeed, the exile lifts the Jews to a higher level, as indicated by the interpretation of this verse by the *Targum* as foreshadowing the Era of the Redemption when: “in the future, this nation will take possession of the earth,” with the coming of the true and ultimate Redemption, led by *Mashiach*; may it take place in the immediate future.

A WOMAN IN HER HOME

Every Jewish home is a world of its own in which is manifest all the Ten *Sefiros*.¹⁷ Just as within the supernal *Sefi-*

15. *Bereishis* 21:12.

The Alter Rebbe (*Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim* 15c) explains the reason that the Matriarchs possessed an advantage over the Patriarchs as follows: The Patriarchs had a foretaste of the World to Come (*Bava Basra* 16b) and in that future era, the advantage of the feminine dimension will be revealed as alluded by the prophecy (*Yirmeyahu* 31:21): “The female will surround the male.”

There is no contradiction between that concept and the explanation above, for the concept of a dwelling in the lower world, and that this dwelling must be fashioned within the context of the world itself, will not be revealed until the Era of the Redemption.

16. *Bamidbar* 23:9; see *Rashi's* commentary.

17. In this context, the *AriZal* (*Likkutei HaShas, Yevamos*) explains why the *mitzvah* of being fruitful and multiplying is fulfilled when one gives birth to one boy and one girl, because this completes the structure of G-d's name נ-י-ו

ros and within the powers of our soul, there is an advantage to *Binah* over *Chochmah* (despite the fact that *Binah* receives influence from *Chochmah*), so too, within the Jewish home, there is a dimension of supremacy to the woman's position.

And the woman's position in the home reflects the functioning of these *Sefiros*. The *Sefirah* of *Binah* receives influence from *Chochmah*, and conveys that influence to the emotional attributes. So too, a woman receives direction from her husband, as indicated by our Sages' statement:¹⁸ "Who is a proper wife? One that fulfills her husband's will." Nevertheless, the actual functioning of the home including the education of the children, hospitality to guests, generous gifts to *tzedakah* and the like are all the women's province.

A man is not at home during the major part of the day. He is busy with Torah study and prayer, or earning a livelihood. For his will to be "fulfilled," manifest in actual life, he must rely on his "proper wife."

Moreover, the Hebrew word translated as "fulfilled" עשה also means "make." At times, a "proper wife" "makes her husband's will."¹⁹ For there are times when the pressures and difficulties he faces drain him, and hinder him from desiring the correct things. At that time, "his proper wife" should in a gentle and pleasant manner mold her husband's will, coaxing to the surface the desire to fulfill G-d's will that lies within the heart of every Jew.²⁰

"When a husband and wife are worthy, the Divine Presence rests among them."²¹ When a Jewish home is conducted

(which reflects all the Ten *Sefiros*). The father represents the *yud*, the quality of *Chochmah*, the mother the first *hay*, the quality of *Binah*, the son, the *vav*, the *midos* of *Za'er Anpin*, and the daughter, the second *hay*, the quality of *Malchus*.

18. *Tanna d'Bei Eliyahu Rabbah*, ch. 9 (using slightly different wording).

19. See the interpretation of *osin ratzono shel Makom*, "fulfilling (or making) G-d's will" in *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, p. 32d.

20. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Gerushin 2:20*.

21. *Sotah 17a*.

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as “a Sanctuary in microcosm,”²² the Divine Presence rests within. And since the “Divine Presence rests within,” “no evil will dwell among you.”²³ On the contrary, He will grant only good, overt and apparent good, as manifest in abundant blessings for children, health, and prosperity.

(Adapted from the *maamar* and *Sichos* of *Yud-Gimmel Tammuz*, 5722)



22. Cf. *Yechezkel* 11:6.

23. *Tehillim* 5:5.

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The Announcement Of The Redemption

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All the signs mentioned by our sages concerning the generation of "the heels of Moshiach" indicate that our generation is the last generation of exile and consequently the first generation of Redemption. This realization has been greatly increased through the enhancement of efforts to disseminate the Torah, Judaism and the wellsprings of Torah to the most remote reaches of the world, extending even to this "lower hemisphere," i.e. the Western Hemisphere, (as a result of the liberation of the 12th and 13th of Tammuz) over the course of the last 50 years

Consider this: If **at the beginning** of this epoch, my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, issued a proclamation that "Teshuvah now, Redemption now!" and testified that we have already completed all of our Divine service, and all that remains for us to do is to "polish the buttons" and "All of you, stand ready to greet our righteous Moshiach." How much more so, **at the end** of this epoch, there is absolutely no shred of doubt that the time of Redemption has arrived. To borrow a Talmudic expression: "All of the deadlines have passed."¹ Even Teshuvah (which the Talmud there states is a prerequisite for Redemption ("Redemption depends solely on Teshuvah")) has already been fully realized.

...Within our generation itself, there is an added innovation this year:

Besides that we find ourselves in literal proximity to the true and complete Redemption, in this year of "It shall be a year of miracles I shall show him," when the prediction of "As in the days you have departed from Egypt, I shall show him wonders,"² will be realized.

1. *Sanhedrin* 97b.
2. *Michah* 7:15.

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And we have, in fact, witnessed "wonders" that testify that this is **"the year that the King Moshiach shall be revealed,"** and the **"time when the King Moshiach will come... and announce to Israel, 'Humble ones, the time for your Redemption has arrived.'"**³ Further, these wonders and the announcement that "Behold, he (the King Moshiach) is coming,"⁴ allowing for the translation that **"he has already come,"** mean that we already stand on the threshold of the beginning of the Messianic Era as well as on the threshold of the beginning of the Redemption, the continuation and culmination of which shall occur imminently.

Since we are standing on the threshold of Redemption which will arrive imminently, it follows that the study of the Laws of building the Temple this year must be **of an entirely different order.** First and foremost, this study must be permeated with the certain awareness and full recognition that this study is not merely an "academic exercise," but it is **relevant for practical use for the very next moment.** For indeed, the "Future Sanctuary that we are anticipating has already been built and is fully developed (above and will thus imminently) be revealed and arrive from Heaven"⁵ **instantaneously!**

The attitude towards the study of these laws should be analogous to what was discussed in the recent past,⁶ that the special increase in the study of the teachings of Torah concerning Redemption and Moshiach should not simply serve as a catalyst to hasten the coming of Moshiach and the Redemption. Rather this study should enable us to live with and thrive on matters of Moshiach and Redemption. We should "live with the time" of the Messianic Era. This can be attained when one's intellect is filled with the

3. *Yalkut Shimoni, Yeshayahu* 499.

4. *Shir HaShirim* 2:8 and *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* on this verse.

5. *Rashi* and *Tosphos* commentaries to *Sukkah*, 41, end side a and in other sources.

6. Above, p. 49 and in other places.

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comprehension of the Torah concepts of Moshiach and Redemption. This intellectual awareness then extends to and permeates one's emotions, and then translates into thought, speech and action consistent with this very auspicious period of time when we stand on the threshold of Redemption and we are able to point with our finger "Behold he (he King Moshiach) has come."

One might suggest an additional rationale for the need and the virtue of studying the Torah's teachings concerning Moshiach, Redemption and the building of the third Temple; as an entrance into the Messianic Era:

Although our Sages⁷ have declared that Moshiach will come "when we are distracted from his coming," this does not contradict, G-d forbid, **the need for thought and reflection of the most powerful order**⁸ on matters of Moshiach and Redemption. This means primarily thought and reflection that we are now standing at the very entrance of the Messianic Era, that "Behold he is coming," since all the deadlines have since passed, teshuvah has been done and all of the different aspects of our Divine service have been completed in accordance with the details mentioned above. The resolution of this apparent contradiction is that the term for distraction, "Hesech HaDa'as" (literally "removing one's knowledge") actually means "**transcending** one's knowledge."⁹ This implies that after one has allowed this matter of Moshiach to permeate one's intellect (by applying one's thought and constant reflection, etc.) one then reaches the level where this then transcends one's knowledge.

7. *Sanhedrin* 97a.

8. *Da'as*, the type of knowledge where "one binds his mind with an extremely powerful and strong bond; firmly attaching one's thought." - Tanya, end of ch. 3.

9. Tanya, *Igeres HaKodesh* (105b).

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Translating the above into practical terms.

Despite the "uproar" associated with this matter in recent times within this year, the year of "I shall show him wonders," and after witnessing the wonders which testify that this is "The year that the King Moshiach will be revealed," we see how difficult it is to inculcate the awareness and the feeling that we are literally standing on the threshold of the Messianic Era, to the point that one begins to "thrive" on matters of Moshiach and Redemption...

The solution to this dilemma is **Torah study** concerning Moshiach and Redemption. For Torah - which is G-d's wisdom, and thus transcends the natural order of the universe - has the capacity **to alter** the nature of man.¹⁰ Even when one's emotions are still **outside** the parameters of Redemption - G-d forbid - (because he has not yet emerged from his internal exile), he can nevertheless learn the Torah's teachings concerning Redemption, and thereby be one elevated to the state of Redemption. One then begins to thrive on matters of Redemption, borne of the knowledge, awareness and feeling that "Behold he is coming."

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Balak,
17 (numerically equivalent to "tov-good") Tammuz, 5751)*

10. See the comments of our sages on the verse "*Lo'keil gomer oh'lye*" (*Talmud Yerushlami, Kesubos, 1:2*. See there for cross references. Cited in Halacha by the *Shach* (and *Shulchan Aruch* of the *Alter Rebbe*), *Yoreh Deah*, sec. 189:13(23)).

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ת' נ' צ' ב' ה'

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Mrs. Bracha Leah Chava bas Reb Shmuel ע"ה Finkelstein
Passed away, on 18 Tamuz, 5773

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

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Reb Yechiel (Edward) ben Reb Chaim ע"ה Grayson

Passed away on 19 Tamuz, 5767

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