

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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 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
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AND IN HONOR OF
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתח'ל
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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

PINCHAS

MAKING AND UNMAKING DISTINCTIONS

Parshas Pinchas begins with G-d's statement:¹ "Pinchas, the son of Elazar... turned back My rage... by his zealotness for My sake.... Behold, I am granting him My covenant of peace, an eternal covenant of priesthood."

With the phrase "an eternal covenant of priesthood," G-d implied that Pinchas's descendants would also be priests.

G-d had already given the priesthood to Aharon and his sons Elazar and Isamar as a hereditary distinction. Nevertheless, only the children born to Elazar and Isamar after they had been installed as priests were granted this status. Pinchas was born before the Sanctuary was erected and was not installed as a priest together with Aharon and his sons. Therefore, until he killed Zimri, he was not considered a priest.²

This raises a question. Divine service warrants reward; the greater the service, the greater the reward. But the priesthood is not a reward. Instead, it is a part of the inherent nature of Aharon and his descendants. By having Aharon anointed as a priest, G-d differentiated between them and the rest of the Jewish people, as it is written:³ "And He distinguished Aharon, to sanctify him and his descendants as most sacred forever."

1. *Bamidbar* 25:11-13.

2. *Zevachim* 101b; *Rashi, Bamidbar, op. cit.*

3. *I Divrei HaYomim* 23:13.

If a person does not descend from Aharon, he is not a priest. There is no Divine service which can cause this status to be conveyed upon him. As *Rashi* states:⁴

The Holy One, blessed be He, established distinctions within His world. Just as one cannot turn morning into evening, so too [the priesthood] cannot be nullified. Thus it is written:⁵ “And G-d distinguished between light and darkness....” and it is written:³ “And He distinguished Aharon....”

Just as the differences between night and day are part of the natural structure of the world, so too the priesthood is an inherent element of nature. Accordingly, the question arises: Since Pinchas was not a priest, how could this status be conveyed upon him because of his zealotness?

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PINCHAS AND ERETZ YISRAEL

After this Torah reading completes telling the story of Pinchas, it relates the command to wage war against Midian, and orders a census because of the Jews who died in the plague. It then speaks about the division of *Eretz Yisrael* and the appointment of Yehoshua as the leader who will guide the Jews into the Holy Land. At the conclusion of the Torah reading, the order of sacrificial offerings is described. There is a connection between these offerings and the entry into *Eretz Yisrael*, because certain sacrifices, e.g., the two loaves of bread offered on Shavuot, certain of the communal sacrifices, and the wine libations,⁶ could be performed only in the Holy Land.⁷

4. In his commentary to *Bamidbar* 16:5, based on *Bamidbar Rabbah*.

5. *Bereishis* 1:4.

6. See *Menachos* 45b, *Zevachim* 111a.

7. All the sacrifices mentioned in this Torah reading were offered in the desert (*Menachos, op. cit.*). Nevertheless, the mention of the sacrifices in this reading

Our Sages state⁸ that if the Jews had not sinned, their first entry into *Eretz Yisrael* would have initiated the Era of the Redemption. Even though the Redemption did not actually take place at that time, there are parallels between the entrance into *Eretz Yisrael* and the Future Redemption.⁹

This helps us understand the connection between the entry into *Eretz Yisrael* and Pinchas. For Pinchas is identified with Eliyahu,¹⁰ the prophet who will announce the Redemption.

WHEN THE MASTER IS REVEALED

In the Era of the Redemption, the *Or Ein Sof*, G-d's infinite light, will be revealed in an overt manner, as alluded to in the prophecy:¹¹ "No longer shall your Master conceal Himself."

In the present era, G-d's light is covered in veils which limit its revelation. In the Era of the Redemption, by contrast, the essence of the light will be revealed. This light will transcend the limits of the spiritual cosmos.

Our array of spiritual potentials parallel those which exist on the mystic plane. Just as there is a light that is limited by the spiritual cosmos, and another which transcends those limits, there are two levels within our souls: One refers to the soul as it enclothes itself in our

is associated with the entry of the Jewish people into *Eretz Yisrael*, as emphasized in the *Sifri* and in *Rashi's* commentary (*Bamidbar* 28:2).

8. *Nedarim* 22b; *Shmos Rabbah* 32:1.
9. This also relates to the sacrifices described at the conclusion of the Torah reading. For the consummate observance of these commandments will come in the Era of the Redemption, as we say in our prayers (*Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 259): "There we will offer to You with love in accordance with the command of Your will." See also the series of discourses entitled *VeKachah* 5637, sec. 17ff.
10. *Targum Yonason*, *Shmos* 6:18; *Zohar*, Vol. II, p. 190a; *Pirkei d'Rebbe Eliezer*, ch. 47; *Yalkut Shimoni* and *Midrash Aggadah*, the beginning of *Parshas Pinchas*; *Rashi*, *Bava Metzia* 114b; *Ralbag*, *I Melachim* 17:1, et al.
11. *Yeshayahu* 30:20.

conscious powers. This level has four mediums of expression (*nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, and *chayah*) which parallel the spiritual worlds of *Asiyah*, *Yetzirah*, *Beriah*, and *Atzilus*.

And then there is a level of soul which *transcends* all our powers, the level of *yechidah*. This level is at one with G-d in His manifestation as *yochid*, “the singular One” — a level that transcends the spiritual cosmos.

To draw down this level into the world, our Divine service must tap that part of the soul which transcends our conscious powers.¹²

This is the intent of our Sages’ statement:¹³ “If Israel turns to G-d in *teshuvah*, she will be redeemed. If not, she will not be redeemed.” By adding the second clause, our Sages emphasized that *teshuvah* alone will spark the coming of the Redemption. The rationale for this is not merely that our sins prevent the Redemption from being manifest. Instead, the intent is to emphasize that the Redemption *requires teshuvah* as a catalyst. In the Era of the Redemption, G-d’s singular Oneness will be manifest throughout existence. In order to draw down this level, *teshuvah* is necessary.

For *teshuvah* has the potential to wash away all the blemishes caused by sin.¹⁴ These blemishes affect the conscious powers of the soul. When a Jew is motivated by *teshuvah*, he taps the level of *yechidah*, and this enables him to transcend his own limitations and rectify all blemishes.

PRECIPITATING THE REDEMPTION

The level of *yechidah* which surpasses our conscious powers is expressed through *mesirus nefesh*, self-sacrifice, a

12. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Bo* in this series, where this concept is explained.
 13. *Sanhedrin* 97b; see the explanation in *Likkutei Torah, Ki Seitze*, p. 40d.
 14. See *Likkutei Torah, Acharei*, p. 26c.

commitment that transcends the bounds of reason. For reason cannot explain true self sacrifice. Some exert themselves because of the promise of reward, but true self-sacrifice is above such thoughts, and indeed cannot be comprehended at all. The potential for such self-sacrifice comes from the level of *yechidah*.

This also explains why in the present era — the time of *ikvesa diMeshicha*, when *Mashiach*'s approaching footsteps can already be heard — our Divine service requires self-sacrifice. For the intent is to tap the power of *yechidah*, and in this manner precipitate the revelation of G-d's singular oneness at the time of the coming of *Mashiach*.

As explained in *Tanya*,¹⁵ *mesirus nefesh* was always a necessary element of our Divine service. Indeed, the totality of our Divine service depends on it. For this reason, the generation that entered *Eretz Yisrael* was commanded to recite the *Shema* (with its commitment to *mesirus nefesh*) twice a day, despite the fact that the nation had already been promised:¹⁶ "G-d will place your fear and your dread upon the entire land."

On a day-to-day level, however, the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* in those days did not require *mesirus nefesh*. The Jews' *mesirus nefesh* represented merely a *potential* commitment. As such, they drew down the level of *yechidah* (*mesirus nefesh*) as it is encloded in the other four levels of the soul, and which are given expression in the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos*.

In the era of *ikvesa diMeshicha*, by contrast, actual *mesirus nefesh* is required to give unveiled expression to the level of *yechidah* within our souls and thus precipitate the unveiled revelation of G-dliness within the world.

15. Ch. 25.

16. *Devarim* 11:25.

SELF-SACRIFICE THAT KNOWS NO BOUNDS

There are also levels within *mesirus nefesh* itself. Sometimes a person makes a commitment of self-sacrifice, but the commitment is limited. He consults the *Shulchan Aruch* to see whether he is obligated to sacrifice himself for any particular matter.

A true commitment of *mesirus nefesh*, however, involves devotion to G-d without any restraints — a commitment that transcends all reason and logic.

This level of *mesirus nefesh* was revealed by Pinchas. He was not required to risk his life in this instance. If he had asked a court, it would not have commanded him to take action.¹⁷ For in such a situation, the court does not give the directive:¹⁸ “The zealous may strike him.”¹⁹ By acting, Pinchas thus expressed true *mesirus nefesh*.

This reflects the connection between Pinchas and the future Redemption. For the future Redemption will be brought about through this type of self-sacrifice, a commitment that is unlimited in any form, one which expresses the level of *yechidah* which in turn will reveal *yochid*, G-d’s singular oneness.

17. *Sanhedrin* 82a. In particular, this is true according to the *Jerusalem Talmud* (*Sanhedrin* 9:7), which emphasizes that “a zealous person striking [the sinner]” did not find favor in the eyes of the Sages.

18. The above enables us to answer the question raised by the *Chelkas Mechokek* in his gloss to *Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer* 16:4, who asks why the *Shulchan Aruch* does not mention the law that the zealous have permission to slay a person caught in sexual relations with a gentile woman, but merely refers to this law in passing: “If the zealous did not strike [such a person]....”

There are those who maintain that the *Shulchan Aruch* does not mention this directive because there is no *obligation* for the zealous to kill; they are merely given this option. This answer, however, is incomplete, for the very fact that an option is given to kill a Jewish person is a unique concept deserving mention (although a parallel is found in *Makkos* 11b).

19. *Sanhedrin* 81b; *Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat* 25:4.

FUSING OPPOSITES

With regard to the prophecy of the Redemption:²⁰ “I will make your windows²¹ of gems,” The *Talmud* states:²² “One²³ interpreted this as referring to rubies, and one to jasper. The Holy One, blessed be He, says: ‘I will satisfy both views.’”

A ruby is a red jewel, indicative of energy drawn down from Above. Jasper is a sparkling gem which reflects light so brightly that it can blind,²⁴ alluding to the rebounding light (*or chozer*) generated by our efforts to refine worldly existence.

This is the core of the difference of opinion as to whether the revelations of the future Redemption will follow the pattern of drawing down energy from above or will be precipitated by the refinement and elevation of the world. G-d says: “I will satisfy both views,” for the future Redemption will combine both thrusts.²⁵

The difference between these two thrusts can be explained as follows. Light which is drawn down from above has no constraints, while the light which is generated by the refinement of the material plane is proportionate to our Divine service, and is thus limited.

But there is an advantage to the light generated by our own efforts. When light is drawn down from above, independent of the efforts of man, it will not necessarily be internalized within the world, for the world has not been made ready to accept it. Instead, the light shines in an encompassing manner.

20. *Yeshayahu* 54:12.

21. [Alternatively, “walls” (*Rashi, Yeshayahu, ibid.*.)]

22. *Bava Basra* 75a.

23. [The *Talmud* brings two views: one that the difference of opinion was between the angels in the spiritual realm, and the other that it was between sages on this earthly plane.]

24. See *Likkutei Torah, Re'eh* 27d.

25. See the *maamarim* in *Likkutei Torah, Re'eh*, entitled *ViSamti Kodked*.

When, however, the light is generated by man's efforts to elevate the world, material reality will have become a medium in which G-dly light can be internalized.

The uniqueness of the Era of the Redemption is that it will combine both qualities. G-dly light will be revealed as it is, with no constraints. Indeed, the light will be so transcendent that it cannot be drawn down through the Divine service of mortals. And yet this light will be internalized by the world.

There has never been such a revelation, nor will there be until the coming of the Redemption. Although the Alter Rebbe writes that a semblance to this event occurred at the giving of the Torah,²⁶ this refers only to the fact of revelation. At the giving of the Torah, as will happen in the Era of the Redemption, an unbounded, transcendent light was revealed. But at that time the world was not refined, and did not become a medium for the light. Therefore, after the revelation at Mount Sinai was complete, the world remained unchanged. The most clear indication of this fact is that directly afterwards, the Jews worshipped the Golden Calf.²⁷

In the Era of the Redemption, however, both thrusts will come to fulfillment. The world will be refined and will therefore be able to internalize the infinite revelations of that era.

These concepts are alluded to in the person of Pinchas, who is identified with Eliyahu, the messenger of redemption. As mentioned above, priesthood is not a quality that can be earned through Divine service. Instead, it is granted from above, defining the nature of a person's

26. *Tanya*, ch. 35.

27. At the time of the Giving of the Torah, the Jews' impurity ceased (*Shabbos* 146a). This temporary respite can, however, be compared to a *benoni* in the midst of prayer, at which time the evil within his heart is asleep, as it were (see *Tanya*, ch. 13). It can, however, awaken after prayer (the *maamar* entitled *VaYeired Havayah*, 5643).

existence. We are thus forced to conclude that even before Pinchas slew Zimri, he was fit for the priesthood. Nevertheless, that characteristic was not expressed until he revealed his zealousness.

Why? Because the intent was that Pinchas reveal his potential through his own Divine service.

This fusion of opposite tendencies is alluded to by G-d's statement: "Behold, I am granting him My covenant of peace," for peace involves the resolution of conflict. Similarly, Pinchas combined revelation from above and his own efforts of refinement, demonstrating within his person a microcosm of the future Redemption. For this reason, Pinchas is identified with Eliyahu.

A FORETASTE OF THE REDEMPTION

A similar fusion of opposites can be expressed in our own Divine service. We must fuse the level of *yechidah* with our conscious powers, empowering them to internalize the transcendent.²⁸

The intent is not merely to observe the Torah and its *mitzvos* as they are inspired by the recitation of the *Shema*, for then a person's Divine service is carried out with only his conscious powers, and the intensity of *mesirus nefesh* that stems from the *yechidah* is concealed within these powers.

Instead, the intent is that throughout the day, a person's Divine service should pulsate with *mesirus nefesh*. His *yechidah* should be manifest, shining as an internalized light and redefining the workings of his conscious powers.

Then both advantages will be attained, for the revelation of the *yechidah* will be internalized. This is both a foretaste

28. See the *sichos* to the *Parshiyos Yisro* and *Mishpatim* in this series, where this concept is explained.

and a preparation for the revelations of the Era of the Redemption.

FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION

In years when the *parshiyos Matos* and *Masei* are read together, *Parshas Pinchas* is the first of the *Shabbosos* of *beyn hameitzarim*, the period of mourning for the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Since all matters are defined by Divine Providence, this indicates that *Parshas Pinchas* shares a connection to the period of *beyn hameitzarim*.²⁹

To explain: Directly after the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, “the redeemer of Israel was born.”³⁰ This shows that the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* began the process leading to the Redemption.³¹ And as explained above, the revelations of that era will be associated with the Divine service of Pinchas — the revelation of the *yechidah* within one’s conscious powers.

This concept is also alluded to at the end of the first of the *haftoros* read during *beyn hameitzarim*:³² “Israel is sanctified unto G-d, the first fruits of His yield. All that devour her will be held guilty. Evil will come upon them.”

When translating literally, the subject of the latter phrases are the gentile nations. For “devouring Israel” they will “be held guilty,” and “evil will come upon them.”

Since the Torah was given to the Jewish people, in addition to its simple meaning, the verse must also contain a

29. See the *Sheloh*, *Cheilek Torah Shebichsav*, *Parshas Vayeishev*, which states: “Throughout the year, the festivals have a connection to the Torah portions read at that time.”

30. *Eichah Rabbah* 1:51.

31. See the notes of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to *Eichah*, on the verse: *Golsa Yehudah* (*Or HaTorah, Nach*, Vol. II, p. 1035ff.).

32. *Yirmeyahu* 2:3.

directive for our Divine service.³³ This directive can be explained as follows: When the Jews sin, those sins devour the spiritual potential of Israel. This can be rectified through a guilt offering, for a guilt offering is associated with the revelation of *yechidah*.³⁴

This is deduced in the following manner: With regard to the guilt offering, it is written:³⁵ “And one will add its fifth to it.” In terms of our Divine service, this means that the efforts of our four potentials *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, and *chayah* are not sufficient; one must also activate the fifth level: *yechidah*.³⁶

And attention must be paid to the fact that the verse calls for the fifth to be added “to it,” i.e., *yechidah* is not revealed as an independent quality, but is fused with the other attributes. This empowers the *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, and *chayah*, charging them with the energy of *yechidah*.

This is also reflected in the Alter Rebbe’s interpretation³³ of the verse:³⁷ “Who can number the seed of Israel?” The Hebrew word for number, *mispār*, relates to the Hebrew

33. Indeed, the two concepts are interrelated. The ability of the gentile nations to “devour” Israel stems from Israel’s sins, which devour her spiritual potential. In this vein, it is written (*Yeshayahu* 49:17): “Those who destroy you and those who lay waste to you will emanate from you.”

34. *Likkutei Torah*, *Pinchas* 80d.

35. *Vayikra* 5:16.

36. This refers to the fusion of the level of *yechidah* with the attributes of the G-dly soul, and also those of the animal soul.

These concepts shed light on the explanations offered by the *Targum* and *Rashi* to the verse in *Yirmeyahu* that equate Israel with *terumah* and with the first harvest before the offering of the *omer*.

On the surface, mentioning the harvest before the *omer* is unnecessary. What does it add to the example of *terumah*? Indeed, *terumah* appears to be a more appropriate example, for its consumption by a person forbidden to eat it is a sin worthy of capital punishment.

When one considers the spiritual dimensions of this concept, however, the need for two examples becomes clear. For the revelation of *yechidah* must permeate not only the G-dly soul (alluded to by the example of *terumah*), but also the animal soul (alluded to by the first harvest before the *omer*).

37. *Bamidbar* 23:10.

sapir, meaning “brightness” and the word *rovah*, translated as “seed,” relates to the number four, *arbeh* in Hebrew. The implication is that the level of *yechidah* must shine on the four attributes of Israel, the *nefesh*, *ruach*, *neshamah*, and *chayah*, and be internalized within them, thus heralding the revelations of the Era of the Redemption. May it come soon.



BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

31

All the signs for Redemption indicate that we are literally at the Redemption. As my sainted father-in-law publicized and declared, we have completed everything necessary for Redemption. Even the "polishing of the buttons"¹ and "stand, all of you ready,"² have also been achieved. This means that "all is prepared and ready for the banquet"³ and we are ready to approach the table and partake of the feast of Livyoson and the Shor HaBor, because "Behold he (the King Moshiach) is coming"⁴ - imminently!

* * *

As we stand in such close proximity to the Redemption, every Jew must accustom himself to this reality. Everyone must internalize a state and feeling of Redemption, by making his personal day a "personal day of Redemption," and transforming

1. See talk of Simchas Torah, 5689.

2. See *Igros Kodesh, Admor MaHaRayatz*, vol. 4, p. 279. See *Hayom Yom 15 Teves*.

3. Mishnaic expression, *Avos* 3:16.

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

BESURAS HAGEULO

one's private space into "the land of Israel." One achieves this by doing, at each moment and in every place, one's service in thought, speech and action to utter perfection.

Also, the result of perfecting one's service (in thought, speech and action) must be expressed in one's speech. That is, just as the "the lots themselves spoke,"⁵ so too when one has internalized one's Divine service to "make Israel here,"⁶ to the point of penetration of one's very core, one speaks to others about it with enthusiasm. At that point one will eagerly publicize the directive of "make Israel here" to one's family and acquaintances, and certainly to one's students, and ultimately to all those he can reach. Because this message comes from within, one's words are words which come from the heart, which are guaranteed to enter the heart⁷ and will have their intended effect. When one actually becomes a living example of this ideal in his own efforts, he can certainly have the effect on others. This is true to such an extent that the listeners themselves become speakers - "the lots themselves begin to speak."

*(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Pinchos,
Mevorchim HaChodesh Menachem Av, 24 Tammuz, 5751)*

5. [When the land of Israel was divided among the 12 tribes, the lots that were used to determine the division miraculously spoke, declaring out loud which territory belonged to which tribe. Translator's note.]

6. See *Igros Kodesh, Admor MaHaRayatz*, vol. 1, p. 485 ff.

7. *Sefer HaYashar* by Rabeinu Tam 13, cited in *Shaloh*, 69a.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER

Mrs. Chaika (Iyla) bas Reb Yosef ע"ה Gross

Passed away on 28 Tamuz, 5741

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