

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

39

A special lesson must be derived from all of the above with respect to the Redemption which -- according to all the signs -- must come imminently and immediately... Since according to all the signs the Redemption should have come long ago, we must apply [the verse that describes the recitation that accompanied the bringing of the first fruits to the Temple] "you shall answer and say before the L-rd your G-d" to the special supplication of "Until when"?! [In conformance with the Talmudic commentary that the recitation must be made in a "loud voice," the supplication "Until when" must also] be made in a loud voice. This request is particularly appropriate in the month of Elul when "anyone who wants has permission to greet Him and He receives them all with a gracious countenance and shows to everyone a smiling face."²... Let the Redemption occur already in actuality!

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Tavo, 21 Elul 5751)

1. Our parsha 26:5.
2. *Likkutei Torah, Parshas Re'eh* 32:1.

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Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo, 21 Elul, 5779

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May they go from strength to strength
in health, happiness, Torah and *mitzvot*.

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** ע"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** ה"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
 Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
 Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** ע"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
 Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** ע"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
 Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
 ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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

DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y. and Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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This anticipates the revelations of the Era of the Redemption, when G-d's desire for a dwelling in the lower worlds will be fulfilled. At that time, G-d's essence, which fuses together the spiritual and the physical, will become manifest: "The glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh will see..."²³ Physical flesh will see G-dliness, and this will be in a settled manner.

This also was alluded to by the *Tzemach Tzedek*, for the Hebrew word he used for predictions was *asidos*, referring to the *asid lavo*, "the future time," the Era of the Redemption.

Through the study of *Chassidus Chabad*, we can perceive the deepest spiritual lights, including even the light which was hidden. Moreover, this can be comprehended by the intellect of the G-dly soul, and even with the intellect of the animal soul. This will lead to the time when "the glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh will see..." with the coming of *Mashiach*; may this be in the immediate future.

(Adapted from the *Sichos of Chai Elul*, 5717)



See also *Sichos Leil Shabbos Parshas Ki Sissa*, 5688, at which time the Previous Rebbe stated:

The revelations of the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid were preparations for the revelations of the essence of *P'nimiyus HaTorah* by the Alter Rebbe. This parallels the manner in which the Divine service of the Patriarchs (which was "ethereal" (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:3[1])) prepared the world for the revelation of G-d's essence at the giving of the Torah.

23. *Yeshayahu* 40:5.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR GRANDMOTHER
 Mrs. **Leah** bas Reb **Michael** ע"ה **Rothman**
 Passed away on 24 Elul, 5736
 ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
 *
 DEDICATED BY HER GRANDCHILDREN שיחי

The light G-d brought into being on the first day of creation was above the limitations of *Seder HaHishtalshelus*, the spiritual cosmos. Indeed, it reflected the light which existed before the *tzimtzum*,¹⁸ and more particularly, the light intended to reveal G-d's essence.¹⁹

“[The Baal Shem Tov] and his disciple, the Maggid, would actually see²⁰ from one end of the world to the other” with this light; i.e., they were able to perceive how this light was reflected within material reality.

And the Alter Rebbe reached an even greater peak;²¹ for him, the light shone in a settled matter, enabling his predications to be fulfilled “in precise detail.” This indicates the influence of G-d's essence itself. For to have an unlimited light revealed within this world in a settled manner requires a manifestation of G-d's essence, which fuses opposites together.²²

18. The *maamar* of *Parshas Noach*, 5670.

19. The *maamar* entitled *Nachamu*, 5672.

20. I.e., this was not merely a prophecy. See the *maamar* entitled *Vihu Omed*, 5663, p. 10; see also the *maamar* entitled *Vishovsa*, 5666.

21. At first glance, the *Tzemach Tzedek's* expression might seem to indicate that the Alter Rebbe's level was lower than that of his predecessors, as implied by the use of the word “also.” The intent, however, is not to imply descent, but rather a downward thrust. Since the Alter Rebbe en clothed the light of *Chassidus* within intellect, it did not shine so powerfully. This was particularly true after his release from prison on *Yud-Tes Kislev*. See *Toras Shalom*, *Sichas Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5668.

22. See the *maamar* entitled *Padah B'Sholom*, 5685, which is based on the statements of the Rebbe Rashab, *Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5679:

The revelation of the Baal Shem Tov was for the sake of the revelation of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. [At the time of the Baal Shem Tov, however,] these revelations were not en clothed within intellect. This is indicated by the fact that before delivering his teachings, the Baal Shem Tov's disciple, the Maggid of Mezeritch, who was granted “a double measure of his spirit” (*II Melachim* 2:9), as in the relationship between Elisha and Elyahu, would say “Hear secrets of Torah.” And yet the world could not contain this level.

Even though it was a very high level, it did not represent the revelation of the essence of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*. That was effected by the [Alter] Rebbe, who en clothed *Chassidus* within intellect.

LIKKUTEI SICHOT

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

RELATING TO THE WEEKLY SECTIONS OF THE TORAH AND
SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

by the

Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Volume X: *Devarim*

•

In English rendition

by

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

KI SAVO

ONE OF THE 613

Parshas Ki Savo contains the command:¹ “And you shall walk in His ways.” The *Rambam* counts this as one of the 613 *mitzvos*,² and explains that it charges us “to resemble Him according to our capacity,” and to follow His ways, as our Sages state:³

Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is gracious, so too you should be gracious. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is called merciful, so too you should be merciful. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, is pious, so too you should be pious.

When outlining the general principles that govern his reckoning of the 613 *mitzvos*, the *Rambam* states⁴ that he does not include charges of a general nature, such as “you shall keep My statutes”⁵ or “be holy,”⁶ because they do not involve a specific activity, but instead refer to general patterns of conduct. Seemingly, the *mitzvah* of emulating G-d’s ways also seems to be general in nature. Although it contains several particulars — to be gracious, merciful and pious — these particulars are seemingly included in the *mitzvah* to perform

1. *Devarim* 28:9.
2. *Sefer HaMitzvos*, positive *mitzvah* 8; *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos De’os* 1:5, based on *Sotah* 14a; quoted by the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 154:3.
3. *Sifri, Eikev* 11:22, quoted with slightly different wording by the *Rambam, loc. cit.*:6, *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, loc. cit.* See also *Mechilta, Beshallah* 15:2; *Shabbos* 133b.
4. *Sefer HaMitzvos, Shoresh* 4.
5. *Vayikra* 19:19.
6. *Ibid.*, 19:2.

ability to perform wonders.¹⁵ Is this an appropriate expression of praise for the Alter Rebbe?¹⁶

The *Tzemach Tzedek*’s statements can be better understood in context. He began by saying: “[The Baal Shem Tov] and his disciple, the Maggid, would actually see from one end of the world to the other with their eyes... for the light which G-d brought into being on the first day of creation was revealed for them. This light was hidden in the Torah.”¹⁷

After making these statements, the *Tzemach Tzedek* said: “Also from my grandfather, we heard prophecies that were fulfilled in precise detail.” The implication is that the Alter Rebbe’s prophecies were of the same nature as the miracles performed by the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid; they too reflected the light which G-d brought into being on the first day of creation. Therefore they were fulfilled in precise detail.

15. See the *Rambam*’s statements (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Yesodai HaTorah* 8:1): “The Jewish people did not believe in Moshe our teacher because of the miracles he performed. For a person who believes because of miracles has doubt in his heart.” See also *HaTamim*, Vol. II, p. 30, which states: “In the eyes of the masters of *Chabad*, wonders are almost an insult to the honor of *Chassidus*. They are low and insignificant matters, not worthy of attention.”
16. On the contrary, the Alter Rebbe expressed an essential light, and an essential light does not require miracles (*Toras Shalom*, p. 167).
This can be compared to the difference between Moshe our teacher and the other prophets (*Mishneh Torah, loc. cit.*:7:6). Moshe could stand erect at the time he received prophecy, while the other prophets would “be in awe, terrified and bewildered.”
Similarly, the Alter Rebbe did not require miracles — a departure from the natural order — because all the higher spiritual realms were revealed to him in a settled matter (see the concluding note to the *sichah* of *Parshas Shoftim* in this series). See also the *maamar* entitled *Padah B’Sholom*, 5685, which states: “Wonders represent a departure from the natural order. G-d’s essential intent is that nature itself be [revealed] as G-dliness.... The catalyst for this was the [Alter] Rebbe’s enclothing [of *Chassidus*] within the realm of intellectual comprehension.”
17. *Bereishis Rabbah* 3:6 and the *Jerusalem Talmud, Berachos* 8:6 speak of the hiding of this light “for the righteous until the Era of the Redemption.” The concept that the light was “hidden in the Torah” is based on *Midrash Rus, Zohar Chadosh*, p. 85a. See also *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 264a; Vol. II, p. 149a; *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 18d; *Degel Machneh Efraim, Parshas Bereishis*, in the name of the Baal Shem Tov.

grandfather, but he also complements his grandfather. Thus on the verse:¹¹ “This Torah scroll will not depart from your children, and your grandchildren,” our Sages comment:¹² “The Torah returns to its [familiar] abode.” And it is written:¹³ “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged.”

Since the Alter Rebbe considered himself the Baal Shem Tov’s grandchild, it follows that a) he received the Baal Shem Tov’s essence; and b) he complements the Baal Shem Tov. For the intent of the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings was brought to consummate perfection by the teachings of *Chabad*. The intellectual teachings of *Chabad* elevate the emotional qualities. Thus *Chabad Chassidus* propels even simple people, unable to appreciate its intellectual sophistication, to spiritual levels higher than those reached by followers of the general Chassidic approach.

The Alter Rebbe and the *nesi'im* who followed him drew down the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov and en clothed them in the framework of reason. This allows everyone to comprehend these spiritual concepts with mortal wisdom.

This brought the *Baal Shem Tov*’s teachings to perfection. For to draw the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, which transcend mortal intellect, into the realm of mortal intellect requires the tapping of a deep-rooted source, and this draws down a higher light.

MORE THAN MIRACLES

On this basis, we can appreciate a statement of the *Tzemach Tzedek* concerning the Alter Rebbe:¹⁴ “Also from my grandfather, we heard prophecies that were fulfilled in precise detail.” On the surface, it appears that the *Tzemach Tzedek* was praising the Alter Rebbe for a superficial matter: the

11. *Yeshayahu* 59:21.

12. *Bava Metzia* 85a.

13. *Mishlei* 17:6; see *Avos* 6:9; *Bereishis Rabbah* 43:1.

14. *Derech Emunah, Mitzvas Eidus* 65a.

deeds of kindness.⁷ Were one to interpret the charge to emulate His ways as a more general command, it would encompass all the *mitzvos*, for they are all G-d’s ways, and He observes them all.⁸ Thus the *mitzvah* to emulate G-d’s ways does not appear to be a particular command. Why then does the *Rambam* include it in his reckoning of the *mitzvos*?

We are forced to conclude that there is a particular dimension to this *mitzvah* which does not exist in other *mitzvos*, and that this causes the *Rambam* to include it as one of the 613.⁹ For example, the commandment:¹⁰ “And you shall serve G-d,” is general in nature, for every commandment involves a deed of service. Nevertheless, this charge is interpreted as referring specifically to prayer, and therefore is included as one of the 613 *mitzvos*.¹¹

NOT TO STAND IN ONE PLACE

The unique dimension of the *mitzvah* to “walk in G-d’s ways” is contained in the word “walk,” which indicates progression. A person may observe the Torah and its *mitzvos* without making any progress. He is merely standing in one place; his spiritual status is no different than it was before he observed the *mitzvos*.

This *mitzvah* teaches that a person should observe the *mitzvos* in a manner that moves him forward. The spur for this spiritual progress is the fact that the *mitzvos* are “G-d’s ways,” and so by “walking in them,” one emulates Him. This invests the *mitzvos* with the potential to lift a person to a higher level of Divine service.

7. See *Sefer HaMitzvos, Shoresh* 2.

8. See *Shmos Rabbah* 30:9. This is also implied by the verse (*Bereishis* 18:19): “And you shall keep to the path of G-d.”

9. See *Sefer HaMitzvos, Shoresh* 4, which states that these general charges are not reckoned as *mitzvos*; with them, “He did not command us anything that we did not know before.”

10. *Shmos* 23:25.

11. *Sefer HaMitzvos, positive mitzvah* 5; *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Tefillah* 1:1.

Mitzvos always elevate and refine the person who observes them, even when he does not observe them in a manner that leads to spiritual progress. Indeed, even when a person observes *mitzvos* without the proper intent, his spiritual state changes. But these changes are not openly revealed. When a person observes the *mitzvah* of “walking in G-d’s ways,” his Divine service brings overt spiritual progress.

UNLIMITED PROGRESS

It is written:¹² “I will make you one who goes among those who stand.” *Chassidus*¹³ explains that the phrase “those who stand” refers to the angels, and also to souls before their descent into this material world. It is our observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* on the material plane which distinguishes us from them and gives us the ability to progress.

Chassidus further explains¹⁴ that both angels and souls are also constantly ascending from level to level. They are, nevertheless, considered to be “standing,” because their progress is gradual; all the levels are related to each other. No matter how high they reach, they have still not gone entirely beyond their original level.

The potential for progress which souls are granted through their descent to this physical plane, by contrast, is unlimited. This concept also applies to the command to “walk in G-d’s ways.” Our observance of the *mitzvos* must enable not only measured spiritual progress, but an infinite advance.

Two questions arise:

a) Every created being is by nature limited. How can a person’s limited Divine service bring about unlimited progress?

12. Zechariah 3:7.

13. *Torah Or, Vayeishev* 30a; *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 38d.

14. *Likkutei Torah, ibid.* See also the *maamarim* entitled *Tzi’ena U’Reena*, 5660, and *Shuvah*, 5666.

dimension of the Baal Shem Tov, a link deeper than that conveyed through birth.

To explain: The word *Anochi* is an acronym for the Aramaic phrase meaning: “I wrote down and gave over My soul,”⁶ for by giving the Torah, G-d communicated His very essence. “The righteous resemble their Creator,”⁷ and communicate their essence in their teachings. Thus in the *Chassidus* which he taught, the Baal Shem Tov gave over his essence, investing more of himself than he did in fathering children. The Alter Rebbe absorbed the inner dimensions of the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings,⁸ and in so doing absorbed the inner dimension of the Baal Shem Tov himself.⁹ He was thus his true grandson.

The essential connection between the Alter Rebbe and the Baal Shem Tov is expressed in the fact that their birthday, the date their bodies descended to this earth — and the body reflects the essence of one’s being¹⁰ — is the same, *Chai Elul*.

REACHING PERFECTION

The relationship between a grandfather and a grandson is two-sided. For on one hand, a grandson receives from his

6. *Shabbos* 105a; as cited in the *Ein Yaakov*.

7. *Rus Rabbah* 4:3. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 4:3. See also *Bereishis Rabbah* 16:8; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 10:5; and *Esther Rabbah* 6:8.

8. As the Berditchever Rebbe said, “We all ate from one plate, but the Lithuanian (the Alter Rebbe) took the cream” (*Toras Shalom*, p. 47). See also the letter of the Rebbe Rashab published *Yud-Tes Kislev (Kuntres U’Mayon*, p. 17) which states that the Alter Rebbe’s teachings are “those of the Baal Shem Tov.” (See the explanation of this letter in *Sichos Yud-Tes Kislev, 5720*, published in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 1252).

9. This connection is also reflected in the *Sefiros* with which each of the Rebbeim are identified. The *Baal Shem Tov* is identified with the level of *Atik Yomim*, while the Alter Rebbe is identified with the *Sefirah* of *Chochmah* (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5709, p. 76). And it is said (See *Pri Eitz Chayim, Shaar HaKerias Shema*, ch. 16; *Likkutei Torah, Nitzavim*, p. 49d and sources cited there): “The inner dimension of the Supernal Father (*Chochmah*) is one with the inner dimension of *Atik*” — *Sichos Chag HaSukkos, 5720*.

10. See *Toras Shalom*, pgs. 12, 120.

CHAI ELUL

WHERE THE ESSENCE LIES

Chai Elul (the 18th of Elul) is the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov in the year 5458, and the Alter Rebbe in the year 5505.¹ It is well known that the Alter Rebbe would call the Baal Shem Tov *zeide* (grandfather), for he was a student of the Baal Shem Tov's student. As our Sages say:² "Whoever teaches Torah to the son of another person is considered as if he fathered him."

Our Sages say "is considered as if," for a teacher is not a child's actual father. As *Chassidus* teaches,³ intellect reflects only a ray of the teacher, and not his essential influence, as is conveyed from father to child.

Yet the Alter Rebbe called the Baal Shem Tov his grandfather; he did not say "he is as if he is my grandfather." Moreover, he told⁴ R. Baruch of Mezibush, who was the Baal Shem Tov's actual grandson (the son of his daughter, which is a closer connection than a son's son⁵), that R. Baruch may have been a grandson in the material sense, but that he — the Alter Rebbe — was the Baal Shem Tov's grandson in a spiritual sense. He thus implied that he had received an inner

1. *HaTamim*, Vol. II, p. 56; *HaYom Yom*, entry Iyar 27. Similarly, the Alter Rebbe's children would refer to the Maggid as *zeide*, "grandfather" and the Baal Shem Tov as *der elter zeide*, "the great-grandfather" (*Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 82).

2. *Sanhedrin* 19b.

3. *Likkutei Torah*, *Shir HaShirim*, p. 39d; the *maamar* entitled *Zos Chukas HaTorah*, 5666.

4. See *HaTamim*, *loc. cit.*

5. See *HaTamim*, Vol. III, p. 23; *HaYom Yom*, entry 28.

b) Once a person taps an unlimited level, how can he return to his limited Divine service? Seemingly, this should take him above the mortal plane entirely.

The definition of this commandment as "walking in G-d's ways" resolves both these questions, for G-d represents ultimate transcendence; absolutely nothing is beyond His power,¹⁵ and He fuses together opposites, joining limitation and infinity. Therefore a mortal can tap an unlimited potential for progress, yet that unlimited progress will not prevent him from continuing his mortal existence.

NOT BREAD OF SHAME

G-d desires that all of a person's spiritual peaks come as a result of his own efforts. Giving a person influence from above that is not dependent on his own work is not a complete expression of good. On the contrary, a person will regard it as "bread of shame."¹⁶ It thus follows that the peaks which a person can reach by "walking in G-d's ways" must also be attainable through our Divine service. Yet the explanation given above — that our limited Divine service can enable us to reach unlimited peaks — appears to depend on G-d's beneficence.

Our spiritual progress does not follow a two-stage pattern. It is not that a person proceeds to the limit of his mortal powers and then G-d lifts him to unlimited plateaus. Instead, the intent is that because G-d can fuse opposites, He makes it possible for the limited Divine service of a mortal to reach unlimited heights. Nevertheless, since the unlimited progress which man thus attains does not come about as a result of his own labor, this appears to run contrary to G-d's intent that all of man's spiritual achievements be attained through his own

15. See the Responsa of the *Rashba*, Vol. I, Responsum 418; *Derech Emunah* of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, p. 68.

16. See *Tanna d'Bei Eliyahu Rabbah*, ch. 20; *Likkutei Torah*, *Vayikra* 7d. See also the *sichah* to *Parshas Behar* in this series.

effort.¹⁷ This forces us to redefine the concepts stated above so that it is clear that the infinite progress achieved by man comes as a result of his own initiative.

UNCOVERING OUR G-DLY CORE

To explain: The *mitzvos* become G-d's ways, invested with His unlimited power, when their observance is motivated by

strength,”²⁹ until they reach the ultimate peak — “the day which is all *Shabbos* and rest for life everlasting.”³⁰

(Adapted from *Sichos Yud Shvat*. 5721)



17. The fact that an arousal from below (the Divine service of the Jewish people) evokes an arousal from above (Divine beneficence) is dependent on His initiative, and is not predicated on the positive qualities of the Jews' service, for there is no comparison between a created being and its Creator. (See *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 83b; *Shir HaShirim*, p. 12a; note the extensive explanation in the *maamar* entitled *Adon Olam*, 5703, sec. 6.) This motif also applies to the heights attained by the soul in the spiritual realms as a reward for its Divine service. [The fact that G-d rewards man according to his deeds is a kindness from Him.]

Nevertheless, once G-d decided that the Divine service of created beings would be considered significant, this desire created a framework in which this is in fact true. (To cite a parallel: In *Derech Mitzvosecha* 54b, it is explained that because G-d desired the *tzimtzum*, the *tzimtzum* became a significant factor, and it is appropriate that the ray of Divine light which exists after the *tzimtzum* be affected by the Divine service of the Jewish people. Although this ray of light is attached to G-d, the One who brings about the *tzimtzum* and who is above all connection to created beings, because of the *tzimtzum*, this ray of light is affected by the Divine service of the Jews.)

Therefore the Divine influence depends on the service of the Jewish people. For this reason, the Jews' Divine service must be of the same nature as the desired influence from above, *Derech Mitzvosecha* p. 123a, 160a.

It may appear that this does not apply to the Jews' potential for unlimited ascent, for anything that is unlimited relates to the light that existed before the *tzimtzum*. One would not expect this light to respond to created beings as significant entities. (G-d's will causes the *tzimtzum* to be considered a significant factor, and therefore the ray of Divine light that exists after the *tzimtzum* will be affected by the Divine service of the Jewish people, as explained using the analogy of a son and his father. This motif, however, does not appear to apply with regard to His unlimited light.)

It was, nevertheless, His desire that the Divine service of the Jewish people should draw down the light that existed before the *tzimtzum*. This light is, however, dependent on His initiative and not predicated on the service of the Jews. He thus desired that their Divine service draw down a light above all connection to their efforts.

29. The conclusion of tractate *Berachos*. See also *Sheloh*; the Introduction to *Beis Chochmah* 17a; *Emek HaMelech, Shaar Diknah Kadishah*, ch. 8 (p. 61c); *Torah Or, Megillas Esther*, p. 98b. See *Torah Or, Shmos* 49a.

30. The conclusion of tractate *Tamid*.

The commandment to cling to G-d is of a general nature, implying that one should attach oneself to Him by clinging to the sages and their students. This gives one the ability to follow G-d's infinite ways. Nevertheless, "walking in G-d's ways" means observing the *mitzvos*, for the *mitzvos* draw down G-d's essence.

By observing the *mitzvos* because they are G-d's ways, and underscoring that this is the manner in which we can resemble Him, the essential G-dliness vested in the *mitzvos* is revealed. "Clinging to G-d" leads to "walking in His ways," making this an ongoing process, for "the righteous have no rest... as it is written:²⁸ 'And they shall go from strength to

the essence of the soul, which is "an actual part of G-d."¹⁸ A Jew's Divine service draws the essence of his soul into a particular *mitzvah*. This is the intent of the words of the *Midrash*: "so too, you should be gracious... so too, you should be merciful... so too, you should be pious." "You" refers to the essence of the soul, expressed in the simple faith and self-sacrifice which transcend intellectual understanding.

When a person's Divine service is motivated by these qualities, it causes G-d's essence to be drawn down and be manifested as graciousness, mercy, and piety. Thus it is man's efforts that bring about the potential for unlimited progress.¹⁹

BODY AND SOUL TOGETHER

As mentioned above with regard to our walking in G-d's ways, there are two expressions of His unbounded potential:

- a) The limited service of a mortal will elevate him to unlimited peaks;
- b) Despite being elevated to these peaks, man will retain his mortal frame of reference.

To explain: The union of finite and infinite is a byproduct of G-d's essence, the source for any fusion of opposites. This level is alluded to by the term "on high." It does not refer to a specific level, as do the terms "heaven" or "the firmament," but alludes to a level beyond which there is no other.

Conversely, we find the expression (*Tanya*, ch. 36): "a dwelling in the lower worlds," referring to a realm so low that none is lower.

The essence of G-d which fuses together opposites was revealed in the *Beis HaMikdash*, where the dimensions of the Holy Ark were not included in the measurements of the Holy of Holies. Thus the phrase "on high," is also employed with regard to the *Beis HaMikdash*, as *Yirmeyahu* 17:12 states: "On high, above the first, is the place of our Sanctuary." See the *Reshimos* of the *Tzemach Tzedek* to *Eichah* 1:13 [*Or HaTorah, Nach*, Vol. II, p. 1067ff.].

The level that is "on high," G-d's essence, is drawn down by the essence of the soul, which is expressed through the *bittul* of *Modeh Ani*, as reflected in the verse (*Yeshayahu* 57:15): "I dwell on high, in holiness, yet [also] with [a person of] contrite and humble spirit."

This, however, reflects merely the ascent to these peaks, an arousal of the essence. For the essence to be drawn down into the Divine service of every individual, "war" is necessary. The veils and concealments must be torn away, allowing one to refine the body, the animal soul, and one's portion of the world. This enables one to "take" the Divine sparks that have fallen and raise them to their source; "to take captives."

Although the arousal of the essence of the soul and its particular powers is reflected in the Divine service of "walking in His ways," it is also reflected in the command to cling to G-d, because the ultimate clinging to Him is "walking in His ways" as will be explained.

28. *Tehillim* 84:8.

18. *Iyov* 31:2, as cited by *Tanya*, ch. 2, which adds the word *mamash* ("actual"). See the introduction to *Shefa Tal*.

19. Effort is necessary. Through the Jews' Divine service, they draw down the essence of their souls into the particular qualities mentioned. This in turn causes G-d to emanate influence from His essence to His particular qualities. This is possible, however, only after He decided to contract Himself.

It is, however, His will that the desire for *tzimtzum* itself come about through the Divine service of the Jewish people; it is as if they are the ones who bring about this desire.

Derech Mitzvosecha, p. 123b, 160b explains that G-d's infinite light is drawn down by "lov[ing] G-d with all your might" (*Devarim* 6:5). *Meodecha* (the Hebrew for "your might") is interpreted as referring to the unlimited G-dly potential that each Jew possesses.

This sequence is possible because the created beings relate to levels before the *tzimtzum*, as explained above. This point of connection is not, however, sufficient in and of itself to draw down this light; Divine service is necessary. Moreover, just as with the levels after *tzimtzum*, our Divine service must resemble the light it seeks to draw down; to draw down G-d's infinite light, it is necessary to tap our own infinite potential.

As mentioned above, all of a Jew's attainments must come about because of his Divine service. It is also man's efforts that enable him to remain within his limited framework of reference despite being elevated to these peaks.

In truth, the life-energy of a Jew stems from his G-dly soul;²⁰ it is just that this energy passes through the animal soul in order to give life to the body.

Although the body is a limited physical entity stemming from *kelipas nogah*, while the soul is "an actual part of G-d," the two should ultimately work in harmony. Not only will the body not be negated by the soul, the soul should endow it with life.

Nevertheless, this G-dly life-energy is hidden, and it is the responsibility of each person to realize and reveal this potential through his Divine service. He should come to the awareness that every one of his limb derives its life-energy from the G-dly soul.

This will lead to a heightened spiritual consciousness. We see that the body responds immediately to the will of the soul; as soon as a person decides to do something, his body performs that activity.²¹ Similarly, when a Jew removes the veils that conceal his soul and appreciates the true source of his life-energy, he will spontaneously respond to the soul's desires. To refer to a passage from the *Jerusalem Talmud*:²² "When one reaches the prayer *modim*, one bows as a reflex action."

20. For this reason, all the elements of a person's life are significant, because through his activities, he introduces G-dly energy into each and every act (the *maamar* entitled *BeShaah SheHikdimu*, 5672).

21. See *Tanya*, ch. 23.

22. *Berachos* 2:6. See also *Chanoch LeNaar*, p. 8, *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 284 (English trans. Vol. I, p. 315). This applies not only to the body, but to one's portion in the world. See the narrative stated in *Sefer HaSichos Kayitz* 5700, p. 104, concerning Rabbi Hillel of Paritch.

When a Jew, through his Divine service, reveals the connection between body and soul, and realizes that his physical body derives its life-energy from the G-dly soul, he draws down G-d's essence. He ascends to the highest peaks, and experiences these spiritual heights while living in a material body.

TO CLING TO HIM

Not everyone is able to give himself over to G-d in such a complete fashion as to cause all the limbs of his body to spontaneously respond to the desires of the G-dly soul. For this reason, the command to "walk in G-d's ways" is prefaced (— and the sequence is important —) by the command:²³ "And you shall cling to Him," interpreted²⁴ to mean "cling to the sages and their students." The Hebrew term for "sages," *chachamim*, indicates self-transcendence, for *chochmah*, חכמה, can be divided into the words כח מה, the potential for *bittul*.²⁵ This makes a person a chariot for G-dliness, an instrument of G-d's will with no independent desires.

When a person clings to the sages, they serve as his head,²⁶ as it were. By clinging to them it is considered as if he clings to the Divine Presence itself,²⁶ and his body becomes a medium for the light of the soul, as explained above.²⁷

23. *Devarim* 10:20, cited by the *Rambam* as positive mitzvah 7 in his *Sefer HaMitzvos*.

24. *Sifri* (cited by the *Rambam*, *loc. cit.*, and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 154:4).

25. *Tanya*, ch. 18, ch. 35, in the note.

26. *Tanya*, ch. 2; see the *sichah* to *Parshas Korach* in this series.

27. Based on the above, we can appreciate the continuation of the *Sifri* text:

I consider it is as if you ascended on high and took the Torah. Not that you would ascend and take it peacefully, but even if you waged war and took it, as it is written (*Tehillim* 68:19): "You ascended on high; you took captives; you took presents to give to man."

The passage is problematic. Why does it use the term "on high," rather than "heaven," "the firmament," or the like? And what is meant by using the analogies of war and captivity?