

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Reb **Reuvein** ben Reb **Mordechai Yaakov HaKohen** ע"ה **Caplan**

Passed away on 11 Tishrei, 5778

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF HIS WIFE - שתבלחט"א -

Mrs. **Elka** bas **Raizel** שתחי' **Caplan**

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

* * *

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A DEAR FREIND

Reb **Yosef Yisroel** ben Reb **Sholom** ע"ה **Rosner**

Passed away on 7 Menachem-Av, 5777

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HIS FRIENDS

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the

Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Ha'azinu,

&

Sukkot, 5782

(Vol. 58-59)



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VAAD L'HAFOTZAS SICHOS

788 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213

5770 • 2010

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)

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
ה. נ. צ. ג. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתחיל
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y. and Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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"Vaad L'Hafotzas Sichos"

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Moshiach Awareness Center,

a Project of:

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Printed in the U.S.A.

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).

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.

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

•

Volume X: *Devarim*

•

In English rendition

by

Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

HAAZINU

UNDERSTANDING A PASSAGE IN THE SIFRI

On the verse,¹ “Give ear, O heavens and I will speak; listen, O earth to the words of my mouth,” the *Sifri* offers several interpretations, concluding as follows:

Another interpretation: “Give ear, O heavens.” This is stated because the Torah was given from the heavens, as it is written:² “You saw that I spoke to you from the heavens.”

“Listen O earth to the words of my mouth.” [The earth is mentioned, because] the Jews stood upon it when they said:³ “We will do and we will listen to all that G-d has spoken.”

Another interpretation: “Give ear, O heavens”; this is stated because they did not observe the *mitzvos* given them involving the heavens. The *mitzvos* given them involving the heavens are establishing leap years and determining the new months, as it is written:⁴ “They⁵ will serve you as a sign for the festivals, the days and the years.”

“Listen O earth”; this is stated because they did not observe the *mitzvos* given them involving the earth:

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1. *Devarim* 32:1.
 2. *Shmos* 20:19.
 3. *Ibid.*, 24:7.
 4. *Bereishis* 1:14.
 5. The sun, the moon and the stars.

"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.*]

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

leket,⁶ *shichachah*⁷, *peah*,⁸ *terumos*,⁹ tithes, the Sabbatical year, and the Jubilee year."

Another interpretation: "Give ear, O heavens"; this is stated because they did not observe all the *mitzvos* given them involving the heavens, nor did they observe all the *mitzvos* given them involving the earth.

Moshe called two witnesses for the Jewish people that will exist forever. He told [the Jewish people]: "I am a mortal. Tomorrow, I will die. If someone will come and say 'We did not accept the Torah,' who will deny the claim? Therefore, I am calling as witnesses two witnesses who will exist forever."

According to this version of the text, the final statement, that Moshe called the heavens and the earth as witnesses against the Jewish people, appears not as a new interpretation (for it is not prefaced with those words), but rather as a summation of the entire passage. The previous interpretations are not conflicting. Instead, each one reflects a different approach to Divine service, underscoring a perspective that is not highlighted by the other. Then after mentioning all these interpretations, the *Sifri* concludes by stating that Moshe called the heavens and the earth as witnesses.

For this reason, in his commentary on the Torah, *Rashi* — and it is well known the extent to which the Rebbeim lauded *Rashi's* commentary, for it brings out the Torah's inner dimensions — quotes only the final concept, which summarizes and includes all the other interpretations.

6. The prohibition against picking up an individual sheaf which has fallen (*Vayikra* 23:22).

7. The prohibition against returning to take a forgotten sheave (*Devarim* 24:19).

8. The obligation to leave a corner of the field unharvested (*ibid.*).

9. The portion of the crops which must be given to the priests (*Bamidbar* 18:12).

DIFFERENCES IN INTERPRETATION

There are several difficulties with the above passage. Firstly, what is the difference between the second and third interpretations cited above? There are some who claim that the inclusion of the third interpretation is a textual error.¹⁰ But the fact that it is included in ancient manuscripts and early printings of the *Sifri* does not support that contention.

There are slight textual differences between the two interpretations. In the second, the various *mitzvos* that involve the heavens and the earth are singled out. This is not the case in the third interpretation. Moreover, the third interpretation mentions “all the *mitzvos*... involving the heavens,” and “all the *mitzvos*... involving the earth.” Implied is that all the *mitzvos* have a connection to the heavens and the earth.

To understand the passage correctly, it is necessary to appreciate the implications for our Divine service contained within each of the interpretations. According to the second interpretation: What is the implication of the fact that some *mitzvos* are associated with the heavens and others with the earth? And according to the third interpretation: What is the implication of the concept that all the *mitzvos* share a connection to both the heavens and the earth?

There is another difficulty. According to the second interpretation — that “Hear O heavens” refers to the *mitzvos* involving the heavens, and “Listen O earth” refers to the *mitzvos* involving the earth — it would appear that for these *mitzvos*, there is only one witness — either heaven or earth. This is problematic, for Torah law requires two witnesses.

There is, moreover, a difficulty common to all three interpretations. The Torah and its *mitzvos* were given by G-d, who is incomparably higher than the heavens and the earth. Therefore, when attempting to inspire Jews to observance, it would seemingly have been more appropriate to emphasize

10. Therefore, it is set off by parenthesis in many printings of the *Sifri*.

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 furthestmost 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 Kodosh* of the *Baal Shem Tov - Kesser Shem Tov* at the beginning.

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

that the Torah and its *mitzvos* were given by Him. Indeed, this concept is emphasized in the blessing recited before Torah study, which praises G-d "who gave us *His Torah*," and the blessing recited before the performance of a *mitzvah*, which praises G-d "who gave us *His mitzvos*." These blessings do not mention the fact that the Torah was given from the heavens, or that it was given to the Jews on the earth.

It is true that the verse "Give ear, O heavens... listen O earth..." also implies¹¹ that if the Jewish people observe the Torah and its *mitzvos*, G-d will employ the heavens and the earth to reward them. Is this, however, the appropriate means of encouraging observance?

This question is reinforced by the fact that *Parshas Haazinu* is always read in the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*, or in the days between Yom Kippur and Sukkos. During this time of year, when a Jew's Divine service should emanate from the inner dimensions of his soul, surely he should be concerned with matters above reward.

OF HEAVEN AND OF EARTH

As mentioned on several occasions,¹² the Divine service a Jew is asked to perform involves the fusion of two opposites. We must serve G-d with simple faith and *kabbalas ol*, which stem from the essence of the soul and transcend our understanding. But our Divine service must also involve our conscious powers of intellect and emotion. They too must perceive G-dliness.

The bond which the essence of the soul shares with G-d must be extended into the realm of the conscious powers, so that we will serve G-d with more than simple faith. We will

11. As mentioned in *Rashi's* commentary to the verse.

12. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Mishpatim* in this series, and *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 1216.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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also be able to understand G-dliness, love Him, and hold Him in awe.

This concept applies not only to the Divine service mandated by the Torah and its *mitzvos* at large, but also to our endeavors to turn to G-d in *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* comes from the inner dimensions of our being. It must, however, permeate our conscious powers as well. This is the implication of the Ten Days of *Teshuvah* — that *teshuvah* must permeate all 10 powers of our soul.¹³

The microcosm is reflected in the macrocosm. Just as a person draws down the essence of his soul into his 10 conscious powers of intellect and emotion, so too G-d's essence must be drawn down into His revealed levels, which are associated with the Torah and its *mitzvos*.

This concept is alluded to in the Ten Commandments, which begin:¹⁵ *Anochi Havayah*¹ *E-lohecha* (“I am G-d, your L-rd”). *Anochi* refers to G-d's essence, “which cannot be confined to a name, nor can it be alluded to by a letter or even by the point of a letter.”¹⁶ The essence of a Jew is bound to the level of *Anochi*.

Havayah is one of the names of G-d, and yet it is a name which reflects His essence, and which is at one with that essence. Mankind relates to this level through the conscious powers of intellect and emotion.

E-lohecha is a form of the name *E-lohim*, which indicates how G-d contracts Himself and limits His manifestation

13. See *Likkutei Torah*, *Devarim* 46d. This concept is also reflected in the reading of *Parshas Nitzavim* on the *Shabbos* before Rosh HaShanah. That *parshah* begins: “You are all standing together,” referring to the essence of the soul which includes all the soul's 10 powers. Then it mentions 10 levels, referring to the 10 conscious powers of the soul. The implication is that the essence must permeate all these 10 conscious powers.

14. *Havayah* refers to the name ה-ו-ה-י, which, because of its great holiness, is not pronounced as its letters would ordinarily be sounded.

15. *Shmos* 20:2.

16. *Likkutei Torah*, *Bamidbar*, p. 80b.

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

lead to the coming of *Mashiach*, of whom it is said:⁴⁸ “I found David, My servant.”

At that time, we will grasp the inner dimension of all the Torah concepts which we have labored to understand; we will perceive the motivating principles behind Torah law.⁴⁹ May this take place in the immediate future.



according to the structure of creation. Mankind relates to this level through deeds of observance.

Similarly, in the world at large, the level of *Havayah* relates to the heavens, while the level of *E-lohim* relates to the earth.

On this basis, we can understand why Moshe wanted to inspire the Jews to the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* by calling to the heavens and the earth. By calling to the heavens, Moshe wanted to spur the Jews to serve G-d with their “heavenly powers” of intellect and thought, and by calling to the earth, he sought to evoke Divine service on the level of speech and deed.¹⁷

THREE DIFFERENT APPROACHES

The three levels of soul mentioned above: the essence, “the heavens,” and “the earth,” are reflected in three different modes of observance. “The earth” is given expression in the actual deeds of the *mitzvos*, “the heavens,” in the study of Torah, and the essence of the soul in the thrust to *teshuvah*. (Because these three modes of observance are expressions of holiness, however, each one includes the others.)

On this basis, we can comprehend the passage from the *Sifri* cited at the outset. Each of the three interpretations in the *Sifri* refers to one of these paths. The first interpretation, stating that the Torah was given from the heavens, reflects primarily the importance of “the heavens,” our intellectual comprehension¹⁸ of G-dliness. Nevertheless, the Torah also

17. *Ibid.*, *Devarim* 64c.

18. This is why the first interpretation mentions “the Torah [which] was given from the heavens,” while the second interpretation highlights “the *mitzvos*... involving the heavens.” Through intellectual comprehension, one can grasp merely a ray.

Conversely, with regard to the *mitzvos*, even the intent which “the heavens” contain exists solely so that the deed will be carried out with vitality. It is the actual deed that draws down G-d’s essence. The intent of the *mitzvah* is only for this essential influence to be expressed in a revealed manner.

48. *Tehillim* 89:21.

49. See *Rashi*, *Shir HaShirim* 1:2.

has an element that relates to deed — the study of Torah in speech, as reflected in the mention of “the earth.” Similarly, it also relates to the commitment of simple faith and *kabbalas ol*, as reflected in the mention of the Jews’ commitment “We will do and we will listen.”

The second interpretation focuses on the *mitzvos*, for “deed is most essential.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, the *mitzvos* also include an element which relates to “the heavens,”²⁰ as reflected in the *mitzvos* of calculating leap years²¹ and the like.

Moreover, in each *mitzvah* there is an aspect of “heaven” (the intent of the *mitzvos*) and an aspect of “earth” (the actual deed).²² Needless to say, the influence of the soul’s essence is also present, for all *mitzvos* must be fulfilled with *kabbalas ol*.

Thus the two witnesses, the heavens and the earth, are present with regard to every *mitzvah*, for the performance of every *mitzvah* involves both “the heavens,” the intent motivating the *mitzvah*, and “the earth,” the actual deed. Moreover, the two are not divorced from each other, or there would be only one witness for each. Instead, within the deed is the intent, and the intent is deeply felt, so that it will surely be expressed in deed.

The third interpretation emphasizes the thrust of *teshuvah*. For that reason, it speaks about “not observing all the *mitzvos*” that involve the heavens and the earth — a lack in both intent (“the heavens”) and deed (“the earth”). *Teshuvah*, which stems from the inner dimensions of the soul, expresses the inherent virtue of the Jewish people — a quality that

19. Cf. *Avos* 1:17.

20. This refers to also to *mitzvos* that involve deed, not only to the “duties of the heart,” such as the love of G-d and the awe of Him.

21. Even the deed of these *mitzvos* involves “the heavens.” Nevertheless, this involves “the heavens” as they are included in the realm of *mitzvos*, which as a whole is considered “the earth.”

22. Therefore the deed generates garments for the soul in the lower *Gan Eden* (“the earth”), while the intent generates garments in the higher *Gan Eden* (“the heavens”).

humble,” the *halachah* was decided according to their opinion.

LEARNING FROM THE LULAV

We must all devote ourselves solely to the Torah, in a manner which reflects the *lulav*.

This directive applies not only to *yeshivah* students and those whose primary occupation is Torah study, but to the entire Jewish people. For as mentioned above, the four types of Jews represented by the four species must be united as one, and each type must appreciate — and adopt to a certain degree — the qualities of the other. Thus even a “willow” Jew must at certain times reflect the behavior of a *lulav* and study Torah in a complete bond of unity.

When a person studies Torah in such a manner, his efforts lift him to a higher spiritual plane, allowing him to progress in all his affairs. As mentioned above, the shaking of the *lulav* also causes the other three species to be moved, i.e., it affects a person’s observance of the *mitzvos*, and even his Divine service in mundane matters, enabling him to “know Him in all your ways”⁴⁵ and be characterized by progress.

This process begins with laboring in Torah study, increasing one’s knowledge every day, advancing higher and higher. And we have the promise⁴⁶ “If you toil, you will find;” we will discover new insights immeasurably beyond the effort invested.

We are told:⁴⁷ “A discovery comes when one’s attention is diverted.” Our Sages add that *Mashiach* will also come “when our attention is diverted.” For laboring in Torah study will

45. Cf. *Mishlei* 3:6.

46. *Megillah* 6b.

47. *Sanhedrin* 97a.

By nature, a person does not derive satisfaction from an intellectual idea until he reaches a conclusion. While he is in the middle of the intellectual give and take (the leaves), before he has clarified all the questions, contradictions and doubts, he does not feel pleasure. On the contrary, he feels want and lack, for he has not yet defined the idea. In such a state, there is no room for pride or self-concern.

This is the allusion to the *lulav*. By using the leaves rather than the fruit of the date palm, we imply that we are always involved only with the leaves of the Torah. For however high we reach, we must understand that we have grasped only “a drop in the sea.”⁴⁰ For about the Torah, it is said:⁴¹ “Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.” And the Torah’s ultimate truth is “hidden from all living beings.”⁴²

The emphasis on leaves implies that we are still at the beginning. And this precludes the possibility of self-involvement and pride which could result from Torah study. For the understanding that one can never grasp the Torah’s ultimate truth produces *bittul* and humility.

This concept is also alluded to by the phrase: “A closed palm branch.” By using the word *kapos* (literally “bound up”⁴³), the Torah indicates that a person is not a separate entity, concerned with himself. Instead, he is “bound up,” united with G-d.

Indeed, the *bittul* of the *lulav* causes it to reach its ultimate fulfillment. For the greater a person’s *bittul*, the higher he is able to reach and the closer he is to appreciating the true meaning of the *halachah*. This is reflected in our Sages’ statement⁴⁴ that because the School of Hillel were “patient and

40. Cf. Rambam, *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 2:11.

41. *Iyov* 11:9.

42. *Ibid.*, 28:21. See *Tanya*, *Kuntres Acharon*, the section entitled *David Zemiros*.

43. See *Sukkos* 32a.

44. *Eruvin* 13b; see the explanation in the *maamar* entitled *Vayidaber E-lohim*, 5627.

stands above the Torah and its *mitzvos*.²³ For this reason, *teshuvah* has the power to wipe away all blemishes caused by lack of observance.

Although *teshuvah* primarily involves the inner dimension of the soul, it also relates to “the heavens and the earth,” the lower aspects of our spiritual makeup. Nevertheless, in this motif, the “the heavens and the earth” are not seen as distinct entities, for through *teshuvah*, the essence of the soul shines, and on that level, all the soul’s powers are as one.

DRAWING DOWN G-D’S INFLUENCE

By making the heavens and the earth witnesses for the Jewish people, Moshe prevented them from sinning (as Rabbi Yochanan teaches:²⁴ A person will never sin when he knows that someone is watching). Moreover, it encourages all three thrusts: Torah study, the observance of *mitzvos*, and *teshuvah*.

The month of Tishrei gives us the strength for our Divine service in the year to come. Since all influence is conveyed through the Torah, it is in this month that we read *Parshas Haazinu*, which draws down²⁵ this spiritual influence. And this in turn assures us of G-d’s blessings as conveyed by the heavens and the earth throughout the year.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Haazinu*, 5723)



23. This is reflected in our Sages’ statements (*Bereishis Rabbah* 1:4) that G-d’s thoughts for the Jewish people preceded His thoughts of the Torah and its *mitzvos*.

24. *Berachos* 28b.

25. See *Tanya*, the conclusion of ch. 37.

SUKKOS

FOUR SPECIES, FOUR TYPES OF PEOPLE

Chassidus interprets¹ the phrase² *bakeseh liyom chageinu*, “on the day [the moon] is hidden, for our festival,” as meaning that all matters that are concealed on Rosh HaShanah — “the day [the moon] is hidden” — are revealed on “our festival,” on Sukkos.

This also applies with regard to Yom Kippur. The hidden aspects of its Divine service are also revealed on Sukkos. For Yom Kippur is also referred to as Rosh HaShanah,³ and expresses the inner dimensions of that holy day.⁴

One of the fundamental aspects of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur is the unity of the Jewish people.⁵ For our Divine service on these holy days expresses the inner dimension of our souls. This dimension is the same for all Jews,⁶ from “your heads and your tribes...” to “your hewers of wood” and “drawers of water.”⁷ On Sukkos, this unity — like all the other dimensions of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur — becomes manifest.

1. *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 48b.

2. *Tehillim* 81:4.

3. *Yechezkel* 40:1.

4. See *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 58b, 54d.

5. See the *sichos* to *Parshas Nitzavim* in this series.

6. See *Tanya*, ch. 32.

7. *Devarim* 29:9-10.

to be forewarned against such feelings.³⁶ For this reason, the *esrog* — which reflects distinction in both the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvos* — alludes to the concept of humility in its very name. For the Hebrew word *esrog* (אתרוג) serves as an acronym for the verse:³⁷ אל תבואני רגל גאווה “Let not the foot of pride come against me.”

As mentioned above, the *lulav* possesses an advantage even over the *esrog*, for it refers to an individual who is totally devoted to the study of Torah. Therefore the *lulav* must also contain an allusion to the quality of *bittul*. This is reflected in the fact that instead of performing the *mitzvah* with the fruit of the date palm, we use its leaves.

AT THE HEART OF UNDERSTANDING

We often find a comparison between a man and a tree.³⁸ Developing that analogy, intellect, man’s finest quality, can be compared to fruit, the prime element of a tree. In other sources, intellect is compared to a date palm, which is characterized by a sweet taste but no fragrance. And as stated in the *Midrash* mentioned above, the date refers to the Torah.

The leaves of a tree protect its fruit. So too, our Sages compare³⁹ the leaves of a vine to the common people who protect the wise. Developing the comparison further, the give and take of question and answer can be seen as the leaves which protect the fruit, the idea itself.

36. For this reason, after a king bows during the *Shemoneh Esreh*, he does not stand erect again until after he completes his prayers (*Berachos* 34b). Such an expression of humility is not required of any other person.

37. *Tehillim* 36:12. The acronym is cited in *Panim Yafos (Parshas Emor)*. As mentioned in *Meorie Or, Os Alef*, sec. 177, with regard to the intentions one should have when fulfilling this *mitzvah*, the word *esrog* is sometimes spelled with a *vav* אתרוג. According to that spelling, the next word in the verse, וי יד *viyad* (“and the hand”), should also be included in the acronym.

38. See *Devarim* 20:19 and the *sichah* to *Parshas Shoftim* in this series, where the comparison is developed.

39. *Chulin* 92a.

b) Our Sages state:³² “A person will never comprehend the words of Torah unless he stumbles over them.” One of the interpretations of this statement is that Torah study requires an intellectual give and take, a process of question and answer. At first, a person has one understanding of an idea. Later, his thinking shifts, and he sees it from a different vantage point. And then he adopts a third perspective; thus he “moves” back and forth. It is only after seeing an idea from all six sides,³³ that one can truly grasp it.

FOREWARNING AGAINST PRIDE

Based on the above, we can appreciate a unique concept. Since according to the *Midrash*, the advantage of the date palm is its flavor, it would appear fitting to use the date itself for the *mitzvah*, and not the branches of the date palm.

The resolution of this difficulty can be explained as follows: As mentioned, the *mitzvah* of the four species involves joining all types of Jews together. For one Jew to come together with another, *bittul*, selflessness, is necessary. For self-concern and pride keep people apart.³⁴

These spiritual concepts are reflected in the material realm. Each one of the four species reflects *bittul*,³⁵ and this makes unity with the other species possible.

Where is *bittul* most necessary? In the most developed species. For the more developed a person is, the more likely he is to be self-conscious, and the more important it becomes

32. *Gittin* 43a.

33. The six sides of an intellectual concept are discussed in *Imrei Binah, Pesach HaShaar*, secs. 3-8.

34. See the *maamarim* entitled *Heichaltzu*, 5659, ch. 4 [In English translation: *On Ahavas Yisrael*].

35. As explained in the series of *maamarim* entitled *VeKachah*, 5637, sec. 87, each one of the four species individually reflects the concept of unity. This tendency to oneness makes it possible for each of these species to unite with the others.

This concept is expressed by the *Midrash*,⁸ which states that the four species used for the *mitzvah* of *lulav* and *esrog* refer to four categories of Jews:

“The fruit of a beautiful tree”⁹ [the Torah’s term for the *esrog*] — This refers to the Jewish people. Just as the *esrog* has both a [pleasant] taste and a [pleasant] fragrance, so too, among the Jewish people, there are those who possess [the virtues of] both Torah study and good deeds.

[A pleasant taste is used as an analogy for Torah study. Since Torah study involves intellectual comprehension, the satisfaction it produces is substantial, comparable to the satisfaction derived from food. A pleasant fragrance is used as an analogy for good deeds, because observance of the *mitzvos* must stem from *kabbalas ol*, the acceptance of G-d’s yoke, a commitment which, like a fragrance, produces less tangible satisfaction.]

“A closed palm branch”⁹ — This refers to the Jewish people. Just as the [fruit of the] date palm has a [pleasant] taste, but not a [pleasant] fragrance, so too, among the Jewish people, there are those who possess [the virtues of] Torah study, but not of good deeds.

“Myrtle branches”⁹ — This refers to the Jewish people. Just as the myrtle has a [pleasant] fragrance but not a [pleasant] taste, so too, among the Jewish people, there are those who possess [the virtues of] good deeds, but not of Torah study.

“Willows of the brook”⁹ — This refers to the Jewish people. Just as the willow has neither a [pleasant] taste nor a [pleasant] fragrance, so too, among the

8. *Vayikra Rabbah* 30:12.

9. *Vayikra* 23:40.

Jewish people, there are those who possess neither [the virtues of] Torah study, nor of good deeds.

The Holy One, blessed be He, says: “Tie them all together in one bond, so that each will atone for the other.”¹⁰

Moreover, the oneness expressed on Sukkos is greater than that experienced on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. On Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, the unity does not relate to the different natures within the Jewish people. Yes, everyone joins together in the sounding of the *shofar* and the *teshuvah* of Yom Kippur. But this oneness is merely a general feeling, expressing the essential G-dliness that lies at the core of every Jew’s soul. It does not, however, relate to the differences between one Jew and another. On the contrary, on Rosh HaShanah, these differences are “hidden,” covered up by the revelation of higher lights.

On Sukkos, however, these individual differences receive expression. Each of the four species — the *lulav*, the *esrog*, the myrtle and the willow — stands for a different kind of personality. Nevertheless, they are all united in a single bond.¹¹

10. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Nitzavim* in this series, which outlines two dimensions of the unity between the Jewish people: “joined in unity,” that each one complements the other, and “as one,” that they are all part of a single organic oneness.

Both concepts are reflected in the wording of the *Midrash*: “Tie them all together” reflects the inner unity which permeates our people, while “each will atone for the other” reflects how the different dimensions of the nation complement each other.

The latter dimension receives greater emphasis on Sukkos (as reflected in the following note). Therefore it is mentioned at the conclusion of the *Midrash*, indicating that it is the highest level possible.

11. This reflects the advantage that the level on which the Jews are “joined in unity” possesses over the oneness of “at one.” On Rosh HaShanah, the 10 different categories of Jews are all joined together, but their differences are not appreciated. Instead, they join a singular oneness. What is appreciated in a revealed manner is the object of their search: G-d’s inner dimension.

Torah, for this indicates that even as the Torah is encloded in an intellectual framework, it remains G-d’s wisdom. And when a person is involved in the comprehension of the Torah, it must be evident that the inner dimension of his activity is a clinging to G-d.

This clinging generates the potential for unbounded progress, for G-d is the essence of infinity.²⁹ Since the ultimate clinging to G-d is achieved through Torah study, it is Torah study that generates the potential for unbounded progress. For this reason, the *lulav*, which is identified with the study of the Torah, is shaken.

Of course, the potential for progress generated by the Torah also has an effect on a person’s observance of the *mitzvos*. And thus when the *lulav* is shaken, the other species are also moved.³⁰

GROWTH IN TORAH

Not only does Torah study produce the potential for unlimited progress, this potential is also reflected within Torah study itself. There are two manifestations of this concept:

a) A person must study Torah in a manner that leads to an increase every day.³¹ Every day, a person must gain new knowledge. This is the difference between the study of Torah and prayer. With regard to prayer, one repeats the same prayers every day. With regard to Torah study, by contrast, each day must bring an increase.

29. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Ki Savo* in this series, where this concept is developed.

30. Note the expression used by *Rashi* (*Sukkos* 32b), cited by the Alter Rebbe in his *Shulchan Aruch*, sec. 650, that the added handbreadth of the *lulav* is “that which brings about the shaking,” i.e. the shaking of the other species.

31. *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 12b. See the explanation in *Torah, Bereishis*, p. 38c, 39d.

mitzvah involves moving all four species to the four directions, above, and below, but only the *lulav* is shaken. This dimension is further underscored by the custom of the *Chabad* Rebbeim, who would shake the *lulav* after moving the species in each of the four directions and before returning it to their chest. Indeed, Torah law requires a *lulav* to be four handbreadths tall, one handbreadth taller than the other species. Why? So that it can be shaken.²³

What is the analog? Souls in the spiritual realms are described as “standing,”²⁴ for they are rooted to a single level. Although they ascend, they are considered as being on one plane because these ascents are measured. By descending to this physical plane, and devoting itself to the observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos*, a soul attains the potential to proceed, and indeed, to do so in an unlimited manner. This potential is manifest in a Jew’s shaking back and forth during prayer and Torah study.

To cite a parallel: The *Zohar*²⁵ states that a Jew shakes during prayer because “the soul of man is the candle of G-d.”²⁶ Just as a candle flickers back and forth because it is drawn to its source,²⁷ so too the soul shakes during Torah study. For Torah study inspires a soul and connects it to its spiritual source.

On the surface, this shaking runs contrary to the intellectual thrust necessary for Torah study.²⁸ For the Torah must be comprehended thoroughly, and its study involves making fine distinctions, and this necessitates a state of contemplative reserve. Nevertheless, it is necessary to shake while studying

23. *Sukkah* 32b; *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, sec. 650.

24. See *Zechariah* 3:7 as explained by *Torah Or, Vayeishev*, p. 30a; *Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 38d. See also the *sichah* to *Parshas Ki Savo* in this series, where this concept is explained.

25. Vol. III, p. 218b.

26. *Mishlei* 20:27

27. *Tanya*, ch. 19.

28. See, however, the continuation of the text.

THE LULAV’S DISTINCTION

From the comments of the *Midrash* cited above, it would appear that the *esrog* is the most distinguished of the four species, for it possesses both the advantages of taste and smell. In the analog, this refers to Jews who possess both the virtues of Torah study and observance of the *mitzvos*. The question then arises: Why in the blessing is the *mitzvah* referred to as “the *mitzvah* of *lulav*”?

The answer is given¹² that the *lulav* is taller than the other species. This answer, however, is itself problematic. The existence of every entity in the material realm, and in particular those objects that are associated with *mitzvos*, reflect their spiritual source. Thus the fact that the *lulav* is taller than the other four species indicates that spiritually also, it possesses a quality which surpasses them.

What advantage does the *lulav* possess over the *esrog*? Seemingly, it represents a lower level, for the *lulav* possesses only a pleasant flavor (the virtue of Torah study), while the *esrog* possesses both flavor and fragrance (both Torah study and the observance of *mitzvos*).

This question can be resolved by comparing the study of Torah to the observance of *mitzvos*.¹³ *Mitzvos* are referred to as “limbs of the King,”¹⁴ while it is said:¹⁵ “The Torah, and the Holy One, blessed be He, are all one.”

After Divine service of this nature, it is possible for the unity all four types of Jews to be expressed on Sukkos. (To cite a parallel: the inner oneness that the Jews experienced in the desert made possible the complementary unity expressed upon their entry into *Eretz Yisrael*. See the *sichah* to *Parshas Nitzavim*, mentioned previously.)

12. *Sukkah* 37b; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, the conclusion of sec. 651.

13. See the discussion of this concept in *Tanya*, ch. 23 and the notes of the *Tzemach Tzedek*. See also the *maamar* entitled *Lehavin Shoresh Hefraish bein Torah liMitzvos* (*Kuntres Maamarei Elul*, 5723).

14. *Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun* 30. A slightly different wording is used.

15. *Tanya*, chs. 4 and 23, quote this statement in the name of the *Zohar*. In the *maamar* entitled *Ki Karov* (*Likkutei Torah, Parshas Nitzavim*), reference is

To explain: The limbs of the body are not totally at one with the soul. They are given over to the soul, and as soon as the soul desires, they respond.¹⁶ Nevertheless, they are material entities, and remain distinct from the soul, which is spiritual.

Similar concepts apply with regard to the observance of the *mitzvos*. They express the nullification of a Jew before G-d, that he carries out G-d's will. And yet the very statement that a Jew carries out G-d's will implies that he remains an independent entity.

The study of Torah, by contrast, involves a different type of relationship. When a Jew contemplates the Torah, he is grasping G-d's wisdom, as it were, and his mind becomes one with G-d's wisdom, of which it is said:¹⁷ "He and His wisdom are one."

Moreover, this oneness with G-d is an active dynamic. The more a Jew gives himself over to the comprehension of the Torah, the more encompassing his oneness with G-d becomes. This highlights the advantage of the *lulav* — those individuals who are totally given over to Torah study, even to the exclusion of good deeds.

Certainly, such individuals perform good deeds, for if the person did not, he would not be carrying out the directives of his study, and would thus be deserving of the reproach:¹⁸ "And to the wicked, G-d says: 'For what reason do you pronounce My statutes?'"¹⁹ Moreover, we are compelled to say

made to the *Zohar*, *Parshas Beshallah*, p. 60a as the source for this statement. See also *Tikkunei Zohar*, *Tikkun 6* and *Tikkun 22*.

16. This reflects the advantage of the nullification of the limbs to the soul over the nullification of a chariot to the will of its driver (see the *maamar* entitled, *Kol Machlokes*, 5671).

17. *Tanya*, ch. 5. For this reason, through Torah study, a person becomes like a king, as it is said (*Gittin* 62a): "Who are our kings? Our Rabbis." Moreover, he attains dominion over creation, as our Sages (*Yerushalmi*, *Kesubos* 2:2) commented on the verse (*Tehillim* 57:3): "G-d who completes [all things] for me."

18. *Tehillim* 50:16.

19. See *Shulchan Aruch Harav*, *Hilchos Talmud Torah* 4:3.

that the person observes *mitzvos*, for even if the person's lack of observance is condoned by Torah law, and does not involve transgression, he is still lacking good deeds, and of such a person it is said:²⁰ "Anyone who says: 'All I seek is the Torah,' will not possess even the Torah."

Instead, we are speaking about a person who does observe the *mitzvos*. His observance, however, is secondary to his Torah study. He commits himself to good deeds only to the extent required by Torah law. For the primary thrust of his efforts is in Torah study.

Such individuals enjoy a deeper bond with G-d than those in the category of the *esrog*, who study Torah and perform good deeds. For since the latter individuals are not devoted to Torah study alone — even if the matter which diverts their attention is the performance of G-d's will — the intensity of their bond with G-d is weaker. For a certain time, their connection to G-d is on the level of *mitzvos*, and does not reach the all-encompassing bond achieved through Torah study.²¹

Therefore, the *mitzvah* of the four species emphasizes the advantage of the *lulav*, for it expresses the ultimate unity with G-d established by total devotion to the study of Torah. This is central to the *mitzvah* of the four species, for the intent of this *mitzvah* is to establish unity among the Jewish people. And that unity is dependent on the unity between the Jews and G-d,²² who is simple oneness.

MAKING PROGRESS

Based on the above, we can appreciate a dimension that applies to the *lulav*, but not to the other three species — *nannuim*, the shaking of the *lulav*. The fulfillment of the

20. *Yevamos* 109b.

21. This concept, like all the themes of *Chassidus*, is also reflected in Torah law. Such a person is not included in the category of those "whose Torah study is their profession." See also the *sichah* to *Parshas Vayigash* in this series.

22. See *Tanya*, ch. 32.