

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.

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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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BESURAS HAGEULO

the time of the Sanctification of the Moon, since we find different customs about this: three days after the Molad¹¹ [New Moon], seven days after the Molad,¹² and the evening after Shabbos [Saturday night],¹³ "If the night after Shabbos is before the tenth of the month... but if it is afterwards one should not wait until after Shabbos, because there might be two, three or four cloudy nights and the moon won't be seen and the time will pass."¹⁴ This applies specifically in those countries where the sky is covered with clouds, particularly in winter time.¹⁵ Each place should follow its custom and according to its situation. In places where there is a question or doubt, one should act according to the instructions of the rabbinic authority of that place.

Further, and this is the main point, the Sanctification of the Moon should be performed with the specific intention to speed and hasten and actualize the immediate arrival of Dovid King Moshiach, through an increased appeal and entreaty for the Redemption, as expressed in the conclusion of the Sanctification of the Moon: "**And they will seek** the L-rd their G-d and Dovid their King, Amen."

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Noach, 4 Mar-Cheshvan 5752)

11. See *Turei Zahav* there, section 3.

12. *Shulchan Aruch* there, par. 4. And in the Prayer Book of the Alter Rebbe, "according to the Kabbalah the Sanctification of the Moon is not recited until seven days after the Molad" (and see at length the glosses of the Rebbe Rashab (in the Prayer Book Torah Or 242:1-2. And in the *Siddur im Dach* (Siddur with Chassidic discourses) 321:1-2). *Shaar HaKolel* chapter 33, section 2. And see there for further cross references.)

13. *Shulchan Aruch* there, par. 2.

14. *Remo* there.

15. See the glosses of the Rebbe Rashab and *Shaar HaKolel* there, that for this reason the Tzemach Tzedek was not particular (in winter time) to wait until after seven days. But obviously it's different for those dwelling in countries where (many of the) winter months are not cloudy.

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

•

Volume I: *Bereishit*

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In English rendition
with Introduction and Notes
by
Jacob Immanuel Schochet

NOACH



A

I. In *Torah Or*, section *Noach*, there is a commentary to the effect that the Flood was not only a punishment but also an act of purification: the Flood purified the world which prior to the deluge was defiled. That is why the Flood lasted forty days, a number corresponding to the forty *seahs* in a *mikveh*, and is referred to as *mey Noach*¹ – *naycha derucha* (gratification of the spirit).²

There is a further, detailed exposition in *Torah Or* (*ad locum*) which states that the same idea applies to worries and troubles in matters of obtaining livelihood – which are symbolically called *mayim rabim* (many waters): “they rinse the undesirable elements off man, and thus effect a state of *naycha derucha*.”

II. The relationship between worries about livelihood, the Flood and *mikveh*, can be seen as follows. The underlying, inner purpose of *mikveh* is the concept of self-negation, as Maimonides writes, ‘he should immerse himself in the waters of pure knowledge.’³ That is why a *mikveh* requires forty *seahs*, an amount sufficient

1. Isaiah 54:9.

2. *Torah Or*, *Noach*, s.v. *Mayim Rabim*. –

[In Isaiah, *mey no'ach* is translated as ‘the waters of Noah’. But the name *Noach* itself is interpreted as signifying *naycha* and *nicho'ach*; see *Bereishit Rabba* 25:2.]

a. [A term derived from Song 8:7 – ‘Many waters cannot quench the love’ (for G-d) – and interpreted to symbolize worldly worries and troubles.]

3. See *Hilchot Mikva'ot* XI:12.

Additionally, the letter Beis [meaning "in"] is a preposition that can be used in conjunction with everything. This applies primarily to the "wonders" of the true and final Redemption, "As in the days of your going forth from Egypt I will show them wonders."⁶ Since with absolute certainty all of the appointed times have passed, and we've already done teshuvah, now **it all depends on our righteous Moshiach himself!**

* * *

When we make a just accounting at the conclusion of the first week of Divine service in the world for the year Hey, Tuf, Shin, Nun, Beis, "a year of wonders in all," we come to the conclusion that **it all depends on our righteous Moshiach himself**. This awareness expresses itself in more conscientious and enhanced way of reciting the prayer for the sanctification of the moon, "for they are destined to be renewed like her,"⁷ in the true and complete Redemption through Dovid, the King Moshiach, Dovid, the king of Israel, lives forever."⁸

More specifically:

One should be careful and make an effort to recite the Sanctification of the Moon while dressed in dignified and attractive garments, in the street and "in a multitude of people [wherein] is the glory of the King."⁹ This applies also in those places where people have not been conscientious about this until now (because they lived among non-Jews).¹⁰ One should also be careful in regard to

6. *Michah* 7:15.

7. The text of the blessing of the Sanctification of the Moon (*Sanhedrin* 42a).

8. *Rosh Hashanah* 25a.

9. The details of the laws of the Sanctification of the Moon - see *Tur Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim*, section 427, and in the commentaries there.

10. See *Magen Avraham* there, 14.

righteous Moshiach This is because **the Jewish people's collective** Divine Service over the course of the generations, required during the time of exile to bring the complete Redemption (which depends on our deeds and service during the entire period of exile²) **has been concluded and perfected**. There is absolutely no explanation or reason for the delay of the Redemption. Therefore, even if an individual's Divine service is lacking over the course of time that the Redemption has been delayed, this is a **personal matter** that certainly needs to be corrected and completed. But this does not diminish, G-d Forbid, the completion and perfection of "our actions and service" of the Jewish people as a whole, which stands ready for the Redemption. The very fact that the collective has been perfected allows the individual to correct himself easier and with joy, knowing that the true and complete Redemption is coming imminently.

And if the words said during the lifetime of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, all the more so after many decades have passed, more than forty years when "G-d gives you a heart to understand and eyes to see and ears to hear."³

This is even more true in this year - Hey, Tuf, Shin, Nun, Beis⁴ - which is an acronym for (and follows and adds to that of the previous year, Hey, Tuf, Shin, Nun, Aleph, a year in which I will show them wonders) "it will be a year of wonders within it," and "miracles in everything," "inclusive of everything."⁵ This [acronym] includes all aspects [of the year will be wondrous].

2. *Tanya*, beginning of chapter 37.

3. *Tavo*, 29:3.

4. [Each Hebrew letter has a numeric equivalent, which can be used to designate the years. The year 5752, in which this talk was delivered, can be rendered alphabetically with the letters enumerated above. Translator's note.]

5. "In all, for all, all" - see *Bava Basra* 15b at the end and ff. [The three phrases have the numerical value of the word *kabetz* - gather. See *Chiddush Chasam Sofer* there. Translator's note.]

to cover the whole body of man.⁴ Also, the letters of the word *tevilah* (immersion) are identical to those of the word *habitul* (the negation).⁵ This means that the act of self-negation, of stepping out of one's ego, elevates man so that he may become a 'receptacle' for holiness.

This, indeed, is the intended purpose for anxieties about livelihood befalling man. Though they temporarily disturb and confuse, they cause man to be crushed within himself — thus stepping out of his ego — and thereby render him a vessel for holiness.

III. The ultimate intent, thus, is not, Heaven forbid, to punish him, but to rinse and cleanse him of all impure matters. Now, obviously, this can be achieved very quickly, even instantaneously as one perceives this inner meaning and intent — thus effecting within himself that which the events seek to accomplish. One then achieves the purpose, and the *naycha* is with him both materially and spiritually. (From the *Sicha* of Shabbat Parshat Bereishit 5713)

B

IV. The 'evil waters' of the Flood consist of two parts: *tehom rabba* (the great abyss) and *arubot hashamayim* (windows of the Heavens).^b Likewise, the disturbances and anxieties which trouble man are also divisible into these same two parts.

Tehom rabba refers to the anxieties of lowly, physical matters — e.g., anxieties about livelihood etc. *Arubot hashamayim* refers to anxieties caused by sublime, spiritual matters — e.g., communal activities etc.,

4. *Chagigah* 11a.

5. *Sidur*, end of 'Kavanat Hamikveh.' — [טבילה — הביטל]

b. [For these two terms, both appearing in the context of the Flood, see *Genesis* 7:11.]

BESURAS HAGEULO The Announcement Of The Redemption

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which in spite of their sublime purpose still interfere with the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvot*.

Indeed, one must become involved in communal activities, but this should not interfere with the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvot*. For *mitzvot* bring about the 'You who cleave to the Eternal, your G-d, are alive, all of you, this day'.⁶ *Mitzvot* bind those who observe them to G-d,⁷ thereby drawing forth upon them a Divine vitality. But if their observance is deficient, what good are all communal involvements when one does not follow what is prescribed in the *Shulchan Aruch*!

The self-justification of being occupied with the 'windows of the Heavens,' i.e., with spiritual affairs, is altogether fallacious. This argument does not originate in the Divine soul but in the animal soul.⁸ The fact that this involvement is an obstacle to the study of Torah and the observance of *mitzvot* as prescribed by the *Shulchan Aruch*, clearly shows that it is contrary to holiness. Granted that at the moment he is occupied with the 'windows of the Heavens'; but as the involvement is from the opposite of holiness, he will ultimately fall and continue to fall, Heaven forbid, until the *arubot hashamayim* become *tehom rabba* – the 'windows of Heaven' become a 'great abyss.'

V. The way to counter the 'waters of the Flood,' whether they be of the *tehom rabba* or of the *arubot hashamayim*, is by 'Come . . . into the *teyvah* (ark).'⁸ The

6. Deuteronomy 4:4.

7. *Tanya*, chapter 23. See also *ibid.*, chapter 46; *Likutei Torah*, Bechukotay, p. 45c, and the subsequent exposition. See also the letter of the Rebbe [R. Yossef Yitzchak] published in *Hatamim* VI, p. 25.

c. [Every Jew is possessed of two souls: *nefesh habahamit* – animal soul, or basic life-force relating to the physical life of man; and *nefesh ha'elokit* – Divine soul, relating to the spiritual life and fulfillment of man. See *Tanya*, chapters 1 and 2, for an exposition of these terms.]

8. [Genesis 7:1.] – *Torah Or*, p. 9a.

Special emphasis should be placed this year in all that was said previously in relation to the "just accounting"¹ of Parshas Noach:

The reason for a special emphasis this year can be understood from the following. My sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, has testified that all aspects of our Divine Service have already been completed, including the polishing of the buttons, and we stand ready ("stand all of you ready") to receive our righteous Moshiach. Therefore, the goal of the "just accounting" (emphasizing that a just accounting must be a true one) performed in these days is the immediate need for the true and final Redemption to come in actual reality!

More specifically:

Even though a person recognizes his own personal deficiencies that need correction, this doesn't contradict, G-d Forbid, the testimony of the leader of our generation that we have already completed the Divine Service and stand ready to greet our

1. [The term "Cheshbon Tzedek," here translated at "just accounting," refers to the process of self-analysis and self-judgment incumbent upon every Jew (indeed, every human being). It is the "taking stock" of where one stands spiritually and honestly assessing one's faults and deficiencies, with the intent of improving and correcting them. This analysis takes place, on different levels, at regular intervals, i.e., once a day (before retiring), once a week (Shabbos), once a month (Rosh Chodesh), once a year (Yom Kippur). In the full text of the sicha, the Rebbe discusses the significance of Parshas Noach as the first full week of the post-Holiday season. Accordingly, this is the time for an honest self-appraisal and correction of all that needs correction in a manner that is consistent with the rest and joy that is characterized by Noach. In this excerpt, the Rebbe speaks of the special self-appraisal that has to be made because of the uniqueness of this year. Translator's note.]

amah is an acronym of *elokeynu melech ha'olam* (our G-d, King of the Universe, signifying that the profound perception of G-d in terms of) *Elokeynu* (our G-d; G-d of Israel) leads to (a manifestation of G-d as) King of the Universe.²⁷ The words *techalenah milema'alah* signify that even the instruments (for our sustenance) come from Above,²⁸ as it is said 'And He shall provide you (*yechalkalecha*),'²⁹ even to the point of 'My bow (*kashti*) I have set in the cloud'^l — i.e., (My likeness [(*kishuti*)], something that is comparable to Me³⁰ — for the rainbow is compared, as it were, to the Most High. The whole world is thus transformed into fitting a dwelling-place for G-d.

(From the Sicha of Shabbat Parshat Bereishit 5713)

27. *Likutei Torah*, Massey, p. 91d.

28. *Tzohar Ta'aseh* 5691. — [*Techalenah* is interpreted as an idiom of *keli* (vessel; instrument), thus signifying that the instruments for our sustenance are *milema'alah* — from Above.]

29. Psalms 55:23.

l. [Genesis 9:13]

30. *Bereishit Rabba* 35:3. — [The Midrash explains *kashti* to be an idiom of *kishuti*.]

Baal Shem Tov interpreted the term *teyvah* to refer to the words of Torah and prayer.^d 'Come into the *teyvah*,' thus means to 'enter' the letters of Torah and prayer, to be surrounded by them, for then one can be confident that nothing will inundate him, and 'Noah, the righteous man'^e will remain intact along with the members of his household.

That is why the order of the day requires that the first thing upon awakening, before one enters the world — i.e., the 'evil waters' — is to say "*modeh ani lefanecha* — I am grateful before You . . . that You have restored to me my soul,"⁹ acknowledging' that the life of the soul is completely from G-d. Thereafter one recites the Benedictions of the Morning, thanking G-d for every detail in particular: 'Who clothes the naked' and so forth.

Offhand, some of these benedictions need explanation. After all, man already has clothes to wear; why then the benediction of 'Who clothes the naked' — and the other, similar benedictions?

However, our sages say that 'Who is a wise man? He who discerns what is about to come to pass,'¹⁰ i.e., what is being created every moment out of nothingness.¹¹ In other words, he knows that all that exists is constantly brought into being from Divinity.

Thus the *Zohar* relates¹² that R. Yesse the Elder would pray that G-d provide him with food; that is, even

d. [See *Tzava'at Harivash*, section 75, and the notes *ad loc.* — *Teyvah*, means 'ark,' but may also mean 'word.']

e. [Genesis 6:9.]

9. *Seder Hayom. Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe*, revised edition, I:6.

f. [*Modeh ani* means both 'I thank' and 'I acknowledge.']

10. *Tamid* 32a.

11. *Tanya*, chapter 43. *Likutei Torah*, Nasso, p. 26d. — [Cf. above, *Bereishit* — A.]

12. *Zohar* I:199b; *ibid.*, II: 62b. — [Cf. *Magen Avraham*, and *Ba'er Heitev*, on *Orach Chayim*, sect. 166.]

when his meal was before him he would not eat until after reciting that prayer. This raises the question: what purpose is served by such a prayer when the food is already there, all prepared?

However, it is of the very nature of every created substance always to revert to the nothingness it was prior to its creation. The fact, for example, that the food, continues to exist, is because G-d in His goodness constantly renews it, as it is written, 'Who renews the work of creation constantly, every day.'¹² The prayer for food thus remains relevant even when the meal already stands on the table, and similarly with all other needs. For the food which was there a moment earlier, already reverted (by its very nature) to nothingness, thus necessitating the prayer for G-d to renew it in order to provide man with his needs.

To start off with prayer means to be aware that the physical object has no subsistence of its own and that the very existence of the universe is but to carry out the Divine intent of 'I created it for my Glory' etc.¹³ This kind of awareness enables man to deal with all matters of this physical world without any fear of the 'evil waters.'

Before prayer, however, the natural assumption is that the world is an end in itself,¹⁴ that it has an independent existence. Thus one takes for granted that all such things which the Torah permits are unquestionably permitted. As for those things about which one is not certain whether they are forbidden — they, too, are assumed to be permitted; for everything may be based on its *chazakah* (supposition of *status quo*), and after all, prior to prayer the general supposition is 'worldliness.'

On the other hand, when the premise is that there is

Thus we are told of the Baal Shem Tov^{24*} that before prayer he would wonder whether he would retain his physical life after prayer. He was not sure because of the *kelot hanefesh* (yearning or expiring of the soul) which possessed him during prayer.

In order for Torah and prayer to be as they should be, one needs that 'The Eternal shut him in,' i.e., help and assistance from Above. This Divine assistance is achieved by concerning oneself with another. For such a concern effects that which our sages commented²⁵ on the verse 'The Eternal enlightens the eyes of both of them'²⁶ — that he, too, will be enlightened, and thus his coming into the ark will be as it should be.

IX. Moreover, G-d instructed Noah to bring into the ark all such mundane things as might become lost in the Flood — 'From all the living beings' etc.' This teaches each of us the following:

All worldly things which may be destroyed or lost for lack of some effort on our part, must be brought into the ark in order to save and sublimate them for G-d's purposes. To think that they are no concern of his is to violate the principle of Divine Providence. For G-d causes one to be aware of the fact that these things exist and that they may be destroyed or lost without human intervention. There can be no doubt that this is for the purpose of his personally bringing them closer, and sublimating them to Divinity. He who does so receives the Divine help and assistance to 'Come into the ark' — even to the point of achieving *ve'el amah techalenah milema'alah* ('and you shall finish it above to be amah' — one cubit).^k The word

24*. See *Tzavaat Harivash*, sect. 35 and 42.

25. *Temurah* 16a.

26. Proverbs 29:13 — ['Both of them' — i.e., the influencer and the influenced.]

j. [Genesis 6:19]

k. [Genesis 6:16]

g. [Liturgy, Daily Morning-Prayers.]

13. Isaiah 43:7. *Avot*, end of chapter VI.

14. *Likutei Torah*, Pinchas, p. 79d.

the *teyvah*, then he can be confident that he, too, will remain intact.

VIII. The reason for this is as follows:

Everything requires Divine assistance. Even after Noah had already entered the ark there still was a need for 'And the Eternal shut him in'ⁱ — i.e., assistance from Above. To enter the ark — the words of Torah and prayer — with nothing but reliance on one's own resources allows the possibility for complete error.

Our sages thus stated, '[Why is it not common for scholars to have sons who are scholars? . . .] Because they did not first pronounce a blessing over the Torah.'²⁴ This means: In the blessing for the Torah we say 'Who . . . gave us His Torah' and conclude 'Who gives the Torah' — *gives*, in the present tense. That is, he who recites this blessing is conscious that even now he receives the Torah from G-d. Not to 'pronounce a blessing over the Torah first' means to forget, Heaven forbid, about the Giver of the Torah even while actually studying Torah.

The very same applies to the prayer. It is conceivable that one may pray without the prayer stirring him and influencing his daily affairs to be as they should be.

This, then, is the principle meaning of 'Come into the ark': not to remain there, but ultimately to come out and step back into the world in order to transform it into a 'dwelling' for G-d.

But in order for prayer to influence the whole day it must be in such a way that during prayer one is not aware of the world. One must be altogether divested of worldly matters, cognizant of G-d alone, so that later, after prayer, when stepping into the world, he will discover an altogether new world, just as it was with Noah.

no reality except for G-d, and that He renews the world out of absolute nothingness for the purpose of 'The Holy One, blessed is He, wished to have an abode, as it were, among the lowly,'¹⁵ — 'reality' is then defined as that which leads to the realization of that purpose.

This, in turn, will lead to an altogether different conclusion: that which is forbidden — and thus stands in contradiction to the Divine purpose — is absolutely forbidden. Moreover, superfluous luxuries, too, are forbidden. Should the *yetzer hara* argue that 'this is essential,' one must answer him, 'Demonstrate that it is essential!' For the ultimate supposition is that there is only Divinity, and hence 'the *onus probandi* (the burden of proof) falls on him who claims from another.'¹⁶

A Chassidic aphorism observes: whatever is forbidden is forbidden; even what is allowed is unnecessary!

Now this is the meaning of 'Come into the *teyvah*': enter the *teyvot* (words) of Torah and prayer so as always to be surrounded by them. When man accepts that Torah and prayer are the principal reality, and that all other matters are subservient to these, then even the involvement with the physical concerns etc., is itself a form of *avodah*, or at least conducive to *avodah*. After all, man does need a healthy body to function properly.

The only way to rid oneself of the flood-waters, be they of *tehom rabba* or of the *arubot hashamayim*, is by way of 'Come into the *teyvah*.' For then one is divested of those things which are not of holiness, and one sets all needs and affairs in the context of 'In all your ways you are to acknowledge Him.'¹⁷

VI. This does not mean that one should lock himself away in a *teyvah* — i.e., words of Torah and prayer, and to

i. [Genesis 7:16]

24. *Nedarim* 81a.

15. See *Tanchuma*, Nasso, par. 16.

16. *Baba Kama* 46b.

17. *Proverbs* 3:6.

ignore all others by claiming 'I have saved my own soul.

On the contrary. The Torah states emphatically 'Come into the *teyvah*, you, and your sons, and your wife, and the wives of your sons;^h that is, not just you by yourself, but also all the members of your household, and also 'your sons' — i.e., your students.'¹⁸ In effect this means all Jews, for all of them are included in the principle of 'your wife' or 'your sons.' The term 'wife' symbolizes the concept of a recipient.^{18*} Since all Jews in unison form one singular structure,¹⁹ it follows that every one receives something from another and thus is a recipient.

Every one, therefore, must be taken into the ark. One must persuade and influence all Jews to enter the words of Torah and prayer.

Before Torah was given, a person was more likely to err by thinking that 'someone else is of no concern to me; all that matters is that I have saved my own soul.' Yet even then, G-d had already commanded Noah 'Come, you . . . and your wife' etc. How much more so, then, after *matan Torah*, after a mutual responsibility was enjoined upon us in the plains of Moab to the effect that 'All of Israel are responsible one for another'²⁰ No longer can anyone suffice with concern for his own self alone. The state and condition of another must affect each one most profoundly.

It was stated above that all Jews are a singular structure. In the human body we note that the health of any

h. [Genesis 6:18.]

18. *Sifre* on Deuteronomy 6:7.

18.* *Biurei Hazohar*, Noach, in comment on the *Zohar's* discourse on *venahar yotze me'eden*.

19. *Likutei Torah*, beg. of *Nitzavim*; *et passim*. — [See *Kuntres Ahavat Yisrael*.]

20. *Shevu'ot* 39a. [Cf. *Sotah* 37b].

one organ affects the health of the others. So, too, it is with the total structure of the community of Israel. The spiritual health of any one Jew affects the others. Thus it follows that if one does not become involved with another then there is something missing in himself.

VII. The obligation to influence others, and especially the members of one's household, is not to be fulfilled for the mere sake of discharging one's duty, but demands a real involvement.

There is a well-known aphorism of the *Rebbe ReShaB*:²¹ just as there is a Scriptural commandment to don *Tefillin* every day, regardless whether one is a greater *talmid chacham* or a simple person, so, too, there is an absolute obligation incumbent upon every Jew to devote at least half an hour every day to serious thought about the education of his children, and to do all one is capable of doing — and even beyond that — to persuade the children to follow in the path they are taught.

Offhand, why did the *Rebbe* refer specifically to the *mitzvah* of *Tefillin* when there are so many other *mitzvot*? One of the allusions may be found in the fact that the *mitzvah* of *Tefillin* is not just a precept of physical performance; it also has the inner significance of effecting the subservience of man's heart and brain to G-d, as stated in *Shulchan Aruch*²² and in *Tanya*.²³ That is precisely how one must seek to influence the members of his household: not just in a perfunctory manner of discharging one's duty, but with the full concentration of mind and heart.

When one is not content only with self-concern, but strives with complete submission to save another Jew from the evil waters of the Flood, and to bring him into

21. *Hayom Yom*, s.v. 22 Tevet 5703.

22. *Shulchan Aruch* of the *Alter Rebbe*, *Orach Chayim* XXV:11.

23. Chapter 41.