LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
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Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** ע״ה
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Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

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Passed away on the second day
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ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

And in honor of
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Dedicated by
Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחיו
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THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REDEMPTION

…And may it be G-d's Will and this is main thing - that at the beginning of the month of Kislev, the month of Redemption, there should come in reality and visibly the true and complete Redemption, the beginning of Redemption and its completion, through our righteous Moshiach. "A king from the house of Dovid will arise..." until "He will perfect the world to serve G-d in unity, as it says[9] 'then I will turn to the nations, etc., to serve Him together.'"[10]

This is also alluded to in the conclusion of the Haftarah of the past week... the Haftarah of the past week concluded with the pronouncement, "**Let my lord King Dovid live forever**."[11] This refers to the eternality of the kingship of Dovid that was continued through the kingship of Shlomo and which will be completed by the king Moshiach who is "from the House of Dovid and the seed of Shlomo."[12] - The content of that declaration is the revelation of **the existence** of the king Moshiach.

And through this and after this comes his revelation to the eyes of everyone through his activities, etc.

(From the talk of Wednesday night, Parshas Toldos, First Day of Rosh Chodesh Kislev, and Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 2 Kislev 5752)

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9. Zephaniah 3:9.
10. Rambam, Hilchos Melachim, end of chapter 11.
11. Melachim Aleph (I Kings) 1:31.
12. *Sefer HaMitzvos* of the Rambam, negative commandment 362. Rambam's *Commentary on the Mishneh Sanhedrin*, beginning of Perek Chelek, principle 12. Iggeres Teiman.

It can be suggested that the "air (spirit) of Moshiach" is even higher than "the light[4] of Moshiach," because **the light** of Moshiach indicates **the revelation** of Moshiach through **his actions** (such as "he will fight the wars of G-d" until "he is victorious,"[5] etc.). However **the air** of Moshiach indicates the essence (the very life) of Moshiach. That is, [this refers to] the revelation of **his existence** (from his earlier status as a leader[6]) as the King Moshiach. And after the revelation of **his existence** (air that is incomparable to the light of Moshiach) begins the revelation that all can see through **his activity** (light of Moshiach).

Accordingly, it can be understood that the main innovation in the coming of Moshiach is the revelation of **his existence** ("**I found** Dovid my servant"[7]), because all the details that follow (his public revelation through his activities to redeem Israel, and everything concerned with the days of Moshiach) come **as a consequence** of the revelation of his existence, **and are included in it**.

…In terms of the practical relevance - "Action is the main thing"[8] - is that every Jew needs to increase with additional strength and vigor the concept that "all the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach." His entire existence, immediately upon awakening from his sleep, is penetrated with the life of Moshiach (for this is the essence of the existence of every Jew, the Moshiach within him).

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4. *Zohar* section 3 34:b. Explained in *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak* on the *Zohar*, section 3, p. 219 ff.

5. *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim*, end of chapter 11.

6. "From those that come from the descendants of Dovid and still have rulership in exile... for example Rabbeinu HaKodesh" *(Chiddushei Aggados of the Maharsha to Sanhedrin 98:b).*

7. *Tehillim* 89:21. *[The Hebrew word for existence - metziyus - and that for found - matzah - have the same three letter root (Mem, Tzadik, Aleph) and are thus etymologically related. Translator's note.]*

8. Avos, chapter 1, Mishneh 17.

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

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

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Volume VI: *Bereishis*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

TOLDOS

FOUR DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS

On the verse:[1] "And these are the chronicles of Yitzchak the son of Avraham; Avraham begat Yitzchak," the commentaries note that one of the phrases, "Yitzchak the son of Avraham" and "Avraham begat Yitzchak," seems redundant. Several explanations are given, among them:

a) The *Talmud* and *Midrash* state[2] that the peoples of the world were gossiping that Avraham was not Yitzchak's father. Therefore G-d caused Yitzchak's countenance to resemble that of Avraham, making it undeniable that it was Avraham who begat him. Not only was "Yitzchak the son of Avraham," but everyone acknowledged that: "Avraham begat Yitzchak."

b) The *Midrash*[3] explains the redundance as follows: "Yitzchak the son of Avraham" indicates that Yitzchak took pride in Avraham. "Avraham begat Yitzchak" indicates that Avraham took pride in Yitzchak.

c) In *Chassidus,*[4] it is explained that the Divine service of Avraham centered on the attributes of kindness and love, while the Divine service of Yitzchak centered on the attributes of might and fear.

1. *Bereishis* 25:19.
2. *Bava Metzia* 87a; *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Toldos,* sec. 1, quoted by *Rashi* in his commentary to the above verse. Note the explanation given in *Or HaTorah, Parshas Toldos.*
3. *Midrash Tanchuma, loc. cit.*:4; *Midrash Rabbah* at the beginning of *Parshas Toldos.*
4. *Or HaTorah, loc. cit.* Note different explanations given in *Torah Or* and *Toras Chayim, Parshas Toldos.*

BESURAS HAGEULO
The Announcement Of The Redemption

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The essential point in the life of every Jew and that of the Jewish people as a whole throughout all the generations has been: "**All the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach**."[1] This requires extra emphasis in this generation and in our times, as mentioned frequently of late, that all aspects have been completed and we need only **greet** our righteous Moshiach in actuality.

…"All the days of your life" means every moment of a person's life, day or night, awake or asleep, for he is still alive then through his breathing ("All that breathes praises G-d," and "with each and every breath a person breathes..."[2]), which is necessary every moment (unlike eating and drinking). And "all the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach" means that his life (every instant of it) is bringing the days of Moshiach. That is, a Jew does not limit himself only to those times when he thinks or speaks or does something to bring Moshiach. Rather the essence of his life ("your life") is to bring the days of Moshiach.

…In more detail:

The concept of "All the days of your life to bring about the days of Moshiach" expresses that immediately when the essence of the soul awakens (thus revealing the essence, and only the essence, of its existence), it feels in the very air it **breathes** the concept of Moshiach, **the air of Moshiach**, or in the words of our Sages of blessed memory, "**the spirit** of King Moshiach."[3]

1. *Brochos* 12, end of second side - in the Mishneh.
2. *Tehillim* at the end. *Bereishis Rabba* chapter 14:9. *Devarim Rabba* chapter 2:37.
3. *Bereishis Rabba* chapter 2:4. Chapter 8:1.

Redemption will also partake of the sublime pleasure generated by its Divine service with the body.[43]

On this basis, we can appreciate the connection between the interpretation of the *Zohar,* which deals with the reward we will receive for our Divine service, and the other three interpretations, which focus on the Divine service itself. Our Divine service centers on the achievements of the soul within the body, lifting the body above the limitations of nature. And through this service, the soul generates pleasure which transcends the body — "Avraham begat Yitzchak."

For this service, the soul will receive a reward in the Era of the Redemption. It will partake of the sublime pleasure which it generated, as reflected in the phrase "Yitzchak the son of Avraham."

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Mevorchim Kislev,* 5721)

43. We find a parallel with regard to the Divine service of joy in the present age (which resembles and leads to the sublime pleasure of the Era of the Redemption). Pleasure is experienced by the body, but is the product of the soul. As *Tanya* (ch. 32) states: "The body should be despised and loathed, and [a person's] happiness should be solely the happiness of the soul." And from the soul, happiness is drawn to the body.

More particularly, the paths of both love and fear each contain a lower and a higher level. The lower level of fear involves the fear of transgressing G-d's will because of the punishment one will receive for sinning. On a deeper level, it means fearing the negative consequences of sin.

The higher level of fear is the awe of G-d's majesty; a person is ashamed to commit a sin because of his awareness of G-d's majesty. On this level, one fears sin itself, for all sin is against G-d's will.[5]

Similarly, with regard to the two levels of love. The lower level, referred to as "diminutive love," refers to the love a person feels for G-d as a result of his personal satisfaction, either with material things or, on a more refined level, with spiritual blessings. The higher level of love, "abundant love," refers to a love for G-d which motivates one to fulfill His will without *thought* of reward, and without consideration for one's own good.

"The deeds of the Patriarchs are a sign for their descendants."[6] With the verse cited above, the Torah thus indicates that every Jew's Divine service involves two dimensions resulting from Avraham, i.e., two levels of love, and two dimensions resulting from Yitzchak, two levels of fear.

The lower levels of love and fear are revealed before the higher levels, as reflected in our Sages' statement:[7] "A person should always involve himself in the Torah and its *mitzvos* for an improper intent" — i.e., seeking his own benefit (the motivation for the lower levels of love and fear) — "for from

5. The fundamental difference between these two levels is that the primary concern of the lower level is the consequences one will suffer personally, while the primary concern of the higher level is the dissatisfaction this will cause G-d.
6. See the sources mentioned in the *sichah* of *Parshas Lech Lecha* of this series, note 8.
7. *Nazir* 23b, *et al.* See *Rambam, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 3:5, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 10:5; *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Hilchos Talmud Torah* 4:3; and *Tanya,* the conclusion of ch. 39.

[Divine service] for an improper intent comes [Divine service] for the proper intent" — the higher levels of love and fear.

Moreover, as explained in *Chassidus*,[8] the order of the names in the verse alludes to the sequence in which these rungs of Divine service are usually reached. The initial level is associated with Yitzchak — the lower level of fear — and then one proceeds to Avraham, the lower level of love. Afterwards, Avraham is mentioned a second time, alluding to the higher level of love, and then a second mention is made of Yitzchak, alluding to the higher level of fear.

This serves as a directive for every Jew. We must serve G-d with both love and fear.[9] This is also reflected in our Sages' statement:[10] "Only three are referred to as Patriarchs: Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov." They are cosidered the ancestors of the entire Jewish people, because each imparts the attribute which is his spiritual heritage to every one of his descendants.

The 12 tribes also reflect fundamental paths in Divine service, but it is not necessary for every Jew to express each of these paths. Every Jew follows the path that characterizes the tribe from which he descends, and does not necessarily share in the Divine service of the other tribes. With regard to the Patriarchs, by contrast, every Jew must embrace the attributes passed on by each of the Patriarchs.

If a person follows only one path — either love without fear, or fear without love — this is not service. By nature, every person has a tendency towards either kindness or might;[11] by following that one path, he is merely expressing

8. See *Tanya,* ch. 43 and other sources.
9. *Tanya,* ch. 41.
10. *Berachos* 16b. See *Torah Or,* the beginning of *Parshas Va'eira.* See also the *sichah* for *Parshas Balak.*
11. See *Torah Or, Pashas Toldos* 19c.

alluded to in the verse:[38] "As the sun and its shield, are הויי (*Havayah*) and אלקים," i.e., the two names *Havayah* and *Elokim* are compared to the sun and its shield. *Havayah,* like the sun, serves as a source of energy. And *Elokim* resembles the shield which covers that light. For *Elokim* is numerically equivalent to the word *HaTevah* (הטבע),[39] and nature conceals G-dliness.

Nevertheless, through refining and elevating the different elements of nature that conceal G-dliness, one fulfills the Divine intent of transforming this world into a dwelling for Him. And thus, "אלקים has created laughter for me"; this Divine service arouses pleasure above.

Man is created in the image of G-d.[40] Thus he possesses a body and soul which parallel *Havayah* and *Elokim*.[41] The *neshamah* parallels the name *Havayah,* and the body which conceals the soul parallels the name *Elokim*. Here as well, it is the refinement of the body, that resembles *Elokim,* which arouses pleasure in the spiritual realms. For it is through these efforts that G-d's intent in creation is fulfilled.

Since G-d's intent lies in the refinement of the body, in the Era of the Redemption the body will be on a higher level than the soul. Moreover, in contrast to the present situation, in which the body receives its life-energy from the soul, in that era, the soul will derive its life-energy from the body.[42]

Nevertheless, since it is the soul which refines the body, the soul will also receive its reward, and in the Era of the

38. *Tehillim* 86:12. The translation reflects the mystical implications of the verse, and not its simple meaning.
39. *Pardes,* sec. 12, ch, 2. See also *Shelah, Shaar HaOsios, Os Kedushah* (89a), which appears to indicate that this concept has its source in the *Zohar.*
40. *Bereishis* 1:27.
41. See *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehaEmunah,* ch. 6.
42. See the *maamar* entitled *L'kol Tichleh,* 5659; *Toras Shalom,* p. 127; the *maamar* entitled *Mayim Rabbim,* 5717, end of ch. 6. *Sefer HaMaamarim Meluket,* Vol. I, p. 57.

levels (which relates to the interpretation of the *Midrash*) and also with regard to one's material affairs (as reflected in the interpretation of the *Talmud*).

The *Zohar,* the mystical dimension of the Torah, shares a connection with — and reveals what will take place in — the Era of the Redemption. Thus it relates that through the Divine service implied by "And these are the chronicles of Yitzchak the son of Avraham; Avraham begat Yitzchak" as reflected in each of the three interpretations mentioned previously, a Jew merits the revelation of sublime pleasure.

THE ULTIMATE REWARD

In *Chassidus,*[34] the *Mishnah's* teaching:[35] "The reward for a *mitzvah* is the *mitzvah,*" is interpreted simply. The reward for a *mitzvah* is not an element added to the *mitzvah*; it is the *mitzvah itself*. This dimension of the *mitzvos* will be revealed in the Era of the Redemption.

This amplifies the connection between the interpretation of the *Zohar*, which focuses on the reward we will receive for our Divine service, and the other three interpretations, which focus on the performance of that service. For "the reward for the *mitzvos*" is not a separate entity, but rather "the *mitzvah* itself."

THE SUBLIME PLEASURE OF THE ERA OF THE REDEMPTION

At the naming of Yitzchak, Sarah exclaimed:[36] "G-d has created laughter for me." *Chassidus*[37] focuses on the fact that the name of G-d employed by this verse is אלקים (*Elokim*), which refers to the Divine attribute of concealment, as

34. *Tanya,* ch. 39; *HaYom Yom,* entry 25 Iyar, 8 Cheshvan.
35. *Avos* 4:2.
36. *Bereishis* 21:6.
37. See *Torah Or, Parshas Toldos,* the *maamar* entitled *Mayim Rabbim*.

his natural disposition. Service means going *beyond* one's natural tendencies,[12] and involving both emotional thrusts.

A fourth interpretation of the above verse stems from the *Midrash Nealam* in the *Zohar,*[13] which states that Avraham alludes to the soul. {In this context, the *Zohar*[14] explains that Sarah's death alludes to the decomposition of the body into the four elements of existence. Thus in the verse:[15] "And Sarah died in Kiryas Arba, which is Chebron, in the land of Canaan," Sarah serves an allusion to the body, and Kiryas Arba (lit. "the village of the four") is a reference to the four elements. While Sarah lived in "the land of Canaan," i.e., our material world, these four elements are joined together (*chibur,* joining together, shares the same root as Chebron). Afterwards,[16] when "Avraham rose from beside his dead," the soul, which is above death and decomposition, ascends.}

In this context, Yitzchak stands for laughter and pleasure, which in the ultimate sense refers to the pleasure which the soul will experience in the Era of the Redemption. On this basis, we can understand the above verse: "Yitzchak, the son of Avraham" teaches us that the soul (Avraham) will merit pleasure (Yitzchak) in the Era of the Redemption. Why will the soul merit such revelations? Because "Avraham begat Yitzchak"; through its Divine service in this world, the soul has generated the pleasure which it will experience in the Era of the Redemption.

SEEKING A COMMON FACTOR

As explained on a previous occasion, whenever our Sages have offered several interpretations of a verse, these varying

12. See *Tanya,* ch. 15.
13. Vol. I, p. 135a.
14. Vol. I, p. 122b. See also the Responsa of the *Rashba,* Vol. I, responsum 418; and the *maamar* entitled *Rabbi Bana'eh (Or HaTorah, Kuntres Maamarei Ha-Tzamech Tzedek, l'Bava Basra). Or HaTorah, Bereishis*, Vol. II, 442a ff.
15. *Bereishis* 23:2.
16. *Ibid.*:3.

understandings all share a point of connection. To cite an allusion to this concept: Our Sages[17] interpret the word *shaatnez* as a conglomerate of three terms: *shua* (straightened, combed), *tevei* (spun), and *nuz* (woven). And they explain that because the Torah combines all three terms in one word, they share a connection. As such, according to Scriptural law,[18] the prohibition against *shaatnez* (the combination of wool and linen) involves all three of these phases: spinning these fabrics into thread together, weaving a garment from this combined thread, and then combing it out so that its surface is flat. A person is not liable for transgressing this prohibition if he wears a garment which was made by performing only one or two of these activities. It is only when all three activities were involved in making the garment that Scriptural law holds him liable.

Thus we see that the combination of different letters in one word — although each has a different meaning — points to a connection between them. Similarly — and to a greater extent, when considering the verse above — since all four interpretations are derived from the same letters, there is surely a connection between them.

This connection can be explained by focusing on the mandate for our conduct which results from each interpretation, for indeed every narrative of the Torah provides us with lessons to be applied in our lives.[19] According to *Chassidus,* the directive is obvious: as stated above, every person must carry out his Divine service inspired by feelings of both love and fear. And moreover, this interpretation points out the stages of progress to the desired levels of love and fear.

Similarly, from the interpretation of the *Zohar,* one can appreciate why the Torah tells us: "And these are the chroni-

17. *Kelayim* 9:8.
18. According to Rabbinic law, any combination of wool and linen in the same garment is forbidden.
19. *Zohar,* Vol. III, p. 53b.

The *Midrash* (the realm of *Aggadah*)[31] is an intermediary between the revealed dimensions of the Torah and its inner, mystic dimensions. Therefore, the *Midrash* speaks about the same concept — that a Jew is not bound by the limitations of nature — on a higher level, indicating that a Jew stands above the limitations that characterize *Seder Hahishtalshelus,* the chainlike progression of spiritual realms.

The fact that every subsequent generation represents a further spiritual descent reflects the natural order of spiritual existence. The Jewish people, however, are not bound by this pattern. On the contrary, "Grandchildren are the crown of the elders."[32] A crown rests above the head. For Jews, children are able to elevate their parents and grandparents. This reflects a level above the limitations of *Seder HaHishtalshelus.*

(This explains why the *Midrash* does not address itself to the assertions of the mockers and others who stem from the forces of evil. The *Midrash* is speaking about a level of spiritual reality at which there is no place for such assertions, and no need to respond to them.)

Chassidus places an emphasis on showing us paths to follow in our Divine service. As such, it clarifies the pattern of spiritual growth which will enable a person to rise above the limitations of nature and *Seder HaHishtalshelus.* When a Jew serves G-d with two emotions, love and fear, and combines them, he alters the natural tendency of these emotions. For it is only in one's Divine service that such a fusion is possible;[33] otherwise, love and fear tend to remain separate.

When a person follows the teachings of *Chassidus,* and rises above his natural emotional tendencies, G-d responds by showering the person with spiritual influence that transcends the limits of nature. This applies with regard to one's spiritual

31. See *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh,* the conclusion of Epistle 23; *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra* 5d; *Or HaTorah, Parshas Bo,* p. 320.
32. *Mishlei* 17:6, quoted by the *Midrash Tanchuma, loc. cit.*
33. See *Sifri,* commenting on *Devarim* 6:5.

> We must proclaim openly, so that all will know: When it comes to matters involving our faith, the Torah, its *mitzvos,* and Jewish custom, there is no [worldly] authority controlling us. And no means of compulsion will be [successfully] used against us.

The Rebbe's statements seemingly require explanation: The soul is enclothed in a body and must observe the Torah and its *mitzvos* with the material entities of this world. Since our bodies are in exile, of what avail is it that "our souls are not in exile"?

The resolution of this question depends on the concept explained above: that the arousal of the soul also affects the body and the material concerns with which it is involved, causing them as well to be above exile and the dominion of other nations.

This concept must be publicized in a manner that causes "All the nations which are on the face of the earth [to] know." Indeed, even the "mockers of the generation" must be brought to the realization that they have no control over even the material influences which affect a Jew's life.

THE INTERRELATION OF THE FOUR INTERPRETATIONS

On the basis of the above concepts, we can comprehend the connection shared by the interpretations mentioned in the *Talmud,* the *Midrash,* the *Zohar,* and *Chassidus.*

The *Talmud,* the fundamental text of *Nigleh,* the revealed dimensions of Torah law, interprets the verse in a way which relates to affairs as they exist in our world. On that level, there exist "the mockers of the generation," and to refute their claims, the Torah teaches us that even a Jew's material affairs are not bound by the limits of nature.

cles of Yitzchak the son of Avraham; Avraham begat Yitzchak." For it is important for us to know that through Divine service, a soul can draw down pleasure, and that the pleasure which is drawn down will be revealed in the Era of the Redemption. Awareness of the reward generated by the performance of a *mitzvah* facilitates the *mitzvah's* observance, and infuses our Divine service with vitality.

With regard to the first two interpretations mentioned above, however, the implication for our Divine service is not as apparent. What is the relevance of the fact that Avraham's contemporaries gossiped that Yitzchak was not Avraham's son (and therefore G-d caused Yitzchak's countenance to resemble Avraham's)? And what can we learn from the fact that Yitzchak took pride in Avraham and Avraham took pride in Yitzchak?

BEYOND NATURE'S BOUNDARIES

The latter two questions can be resolved by focusing on the fact that both the interpretation offered by the *Talmud* and that offered by the *Midrash* reflect transcendent influences. According to the laws of nature, Avraham was physically incapable of fathering children.[20] Moreover, even the sources of influence in the spiritual realms (the *mazalos*) reflected this incapacity. Thus our Sages interpret[21] the verse:[22] "And He took him outside," to mean that G-d told Avraham: "Go out from your astrological predictions." And indeed, for Avraham to father children required that G-d take him beyond the limits of ordinary spiritual influences.

Similarly, the fact that Avraham could take pride in Yitzchak reflects an influence which surpasses nature. For according to the natural pattern of entropy, there is an inherent motive toward spiritual decline; each successive genera-

20. *Yevamos* 64a.
21. *Shabbos* 156a.
22. *Bereishis* 15:5.

tion descends in spiritual level. Thus our Sages comment:[23] "If the men of the earlier generations were like angels, we can be considered as men."

For Avraham to take pride in Yitzchak's greatness is therefore unnatural. Since Yitzchak was born into a later generation, the fact that he had positive qualities which enhanced the perfection of Avraham reflects a transcendent influence. (This concept is amplified by the literal meaning of the *Midrash's* words: "Avraham was crowned by Yitzchak." For a crown makes the person who wears it appear more attractive. In the same way, Yitzchak's spiritual qualities complemented and enhanced those possessed by Avraham.)

On this basis, we can appreciate the lesson derived from these passages. Every Jew must realize that he is not bound by the limitations of nature. And this does not apply only to spiritual matters, but to material existence as well.

Even before Yitzchak was born, Avraham had left a spiritual posterity. As our Sages comment:[24] "Good deeds are the progeny of righteous men." And this is particularly true according to the teachings of the *Kabbalah*[25] which explain that a marital union in the spirit of the Torah *always* conceives spiritual progeny.

With the birth of Yitzchak, it became manifest that, even with regard to leaving material progeny, Avraham was not bound by the limitations of nature.

The "mockers of the generation,"[26] will come and say: "Sarah conceived with Avimelech," i.e., in every era, those who counter the forces of holiness[27] will come to a Jew with a complaint: "When it comes to spiritual things, you have room for accomplishment, for these matters are not controlled by

23. *Shabbos* 112b.
24. *Bereishis Rabbah* 30:6; *Rashi* in his gloss to *Bereishis* 6:9.
25. See *Or HaChamah* to *Zohar,* Vol. III, 90a; *Shaar HaMitzvos, Parshas Bereishis.*
26. *Rashi* in his gloss to *Bereishis* 25:19.
27. *Yoma* 38b.

the rules of nature. But when it comes to material affairs such as the fathering of actual children, this is possible only through the medium of Avimelech. You have to accept the jurisdiction of the king or the ruling authority[28] of the nation, for all material influence is dependent on him. It's true that he is only a medium, but still, he is the medium through which this influence passes."[29]

G-d works a special miracle to refute this argument. He causes Yitzchak's countenance to resemble that of Avraham, so that it is obvious to all that "Avraham begat Yitzchak." This proves that even a Jew's material posterity does not come from Avimelech, but from Avraham.

And this concept is enhanced by the interpretation of the *Zohar,* which explains that Avraham refers to the soul. When a Jew arouses the powers of his soul and does not allow himself to be hindered by the body and his animal soul, his future — even in a physical and material sense — is not dependent on the laws of nature.

EVEN OUR MATERIAL CONCERNS ARE ABOVE THE CONTROL OF NATURAL FORCES

On this basis, we can comprehend the words of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe:[30]

> All the nations which are on the face of the earth must know that it is only our bodies which have been placed in exile, and under the dominion of other nations. Our souls have never been driven into exile, nor have they been placed under the dominion of other nations.

28 The use of the word ruling authority, שר in Hebrew, has two implications: a ruling authority in a material sense, and a master of influence in the spiritual realms.
29. See *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh,* the conclusion of Epistle 25 which discusses the medium through which influence is dispersed in our world.
30. *Sichas Gimmel Tammuz,* 5687, printed in *Likkutei Dibburim,* p. 692.