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LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
Horav Schneur Zalman Halevi ה"ע
ben Horav Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi ה"ץ
Shagalov
Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766
Reb Dovid Asniel ben Reb Eliyahu ה"ע
Ekman
Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765
Mrs. Devora Rivka bas Reb Yosef Eliezer ה"ע
Marenburg
Passed away on the second day
of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766
Reb Yitzchok Moshe (Ian)
ben Reb Dovid Asniel ה"ע
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.
AND IN HONOR OF
Mrs. Esther Shaindel bas Fraidel Chedva ש"ה
Shagalov
DEDICATED BY
Rabbi & Mrs. Yosef Y. and Gittel Rochel ש"ה
Shagalov

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER

Mrs. Yenta (Yetta) bas Reb Nochum ה"ע Plotkin

Passed away on 11 Tevet, 5764

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

DEDICATED BY HER CHILDREN & GRANDCHILDREN ש"חיו

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BESURAS HAGEULO

strength from Yosef (of our generation), "you are like Pharaoh,"³ (the pharaoh of holiness), that "through him all the lights are uncovered and revealed."⁴

(From the talk of Shabbos Parshas Vayigash, 7 Teves 5752)

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

3. Our Parsha 44:18.

4. Zohar, vol. 1, p. 210a. [The word Pharaoh can be translated as "revealed." Translator's note.]

VAYIGASH

YOSEF'S MESSAGE

When Yosef revealed his identity to his brothers, he told them:¹

G-d has sent me ahead of you to secure a remnant for you on the earth, and to grant life for you with great deliverance. And now, it was not you who sent me here, but G-d. And He has had me appointed.... a ruler throughout the land of Egypt.

Yosef informed his brothers that he had been brought to Egypt for a Divine purpose: so that Yaakov and his family could endure the famine. And he continued by telling them to inform Yaakov his father that "G-d has made [him] a lord over all of Egypt,"² and to "come down to me, do not delay."²

This sequence indicates that the descent of Yaakov and his family into the Egyptian exile depended on Yosef's position as ruler of the land. Yosef was not merely informing his family that the Divine Providence which had guided him was also the cause of their move to Egypt. He was hinting at the fact that by making him ruler over Egypt, G-d had made it possible for the purpose of the Egyptian exile to be fulfilled. And therefore Yaakov should not hesitate, and should descend to that land quickly.

As mentioned many times recently, according to the announcement of my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation, all the preparations for the Redemption have already been completed, and now the Redemption just requires to be drawn into the material and coarseness of the world (a coarseness that is converted into the material), and revealed to the physical eye.

...Now one need only open the eyes, to see that the whole world demands that every Jew stand in the condition and situation of the true and complete Redemption.

It may be said that this is the reason why we see today that Jews can maintain their Judaism with great strength and mastery also over the nations of the world - for it all depends on their will. We are immediately prior to the Redemption, when it will become actually revealed that "And Dovid my servant will be the leader over them forever,"¹ "And the nations will know that I am the L-rd."² This is reflected in the actual situation of our generation, which is a preparation for the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach.

Further, this is also indicated in "And Yehuda approached him." Together with the assistance from the power of the Divine service of the Yosef of our generation (my sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation) we also possess the power of "And Yehuda approached him," i.e., Moshiach, who will actually come imminently, when "And Dovid my servant will be the leader over them forever." This comes through the support of and infusion of

1. Bereishis 45:7-8.
2. Ibid.:9.

1. Yechezkel 37:25.
2. Ibid, 28.

Redeemer. In the words of David, the Anointed King, "The sweetener of the songs of Israel," in Psalm 89: "I have made a covenant with My chosen one, I have sworn to My servant David,⁵ I have anointed him with My holy oil,"⁶ through the conclusion of the Psalm, "Blessed is G-d forever, Amen v'Amen." [And as commentators explains the reason for King David's gratitude:] "He saw... the coming of Moshiach, he therefore gave thanks to Hashem."⁷

* * *

One of the essential components of the future true and complete Redemption is the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash (the Third Temple which will supersede the *Mishkan* [Tabernacle], as well as the first and second Temples), the "Sanctuary"⁸ of G-d, the workings of Your hands." One should thus intensify those "actions and deeds" which are **analogous** to and a **preparation** for the building of the Holy Temple, by building new **homes** (or, by adding on to and strengthening existing) - **homes** for all three modes of Divine service: Torah, Tefillah (prayer) and acts of loving kindness.

(From the talks of Shabbos Parshas VaYigash, 5 Teves, 5751)

THE WEALTH OF EGYPT

From this, the following insight is apparent. In the covenant *Beyn Habetarim*,³ G-d told Avraham that his "descendants will be foreigners in a land that is not theirs for 400 years. They will be enslaved and oppressed... and afterwards, they will depart with great wealth."⁴ The promise that the Jews would "leave with great wealth" was not given merely to afford some comfort during the oppression they suffered; it related to the very *purpose* of the exile.

As proof, one of the reasons given⁵ for the plague of darkness was that it enabled the Jews to inspect the homes of the Egyptians, and see where their valuables were kept. Afterwards, this enabled the Jews to fulfill G-d's command⁶ that "A man ask of his friend, and a woman of her friend, silver and golden utensils," so that they could fulfill the promise, "Afterwards, they will depart with great wealth." This was:

So that the righteous man (Avraham) would not say: "[The promise,] 'They will be enslaved and oppressed,' was fulfilled. But [the promise,] 'And afterwards, they will depart with great wealth,' was not fulfilled."⁷

On the surface, there is a difficulty. When in slavery, and in particular, in as difficult and bitter a slavery as was the Egyptian exile, anyone would be willing to forego wealth in order to regain their freedom. Indeed, the *Talmud* relates⁸ that when G-d told the Jews to ask the Egyptians for their val-

3. Literally, "between the halves." It was customary for two people establishing a covenant to slaughter an animal, cut it in half, arrange the halves opposite each other and pass between them together. When G-d wanted to establish a covenant with Avraham, He had him slaughter animals and arrange them in this manner (*Bereishis*, ch. 15). Afterwards, Avraham and a manifestation of heavenly fire passed through the halves.

4. *Ibid.*:13-14.

5. See *Rashi*, *Shmos* 10:22; see also *Shmos Rabbah* 14:3.

6. *Shmos* 11:2.

7. *Berachos* 9a; cited by *Rashi*, *Shmos* 11:2.

8. *Berachos* 9b.

5. Verse 4.

6. Verse 21.

7. *Even Ezra*, loc. cit.

8. *Beshalach*, 15:17.

BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

10

"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt"¹ alludes to the time of exile. Even then, a Jew can be the master of the world, "the lord of the land."² We thus receive governmental assistance in the manner depicted in the Torah: "The best of the land of Egypt is yours."³ Among the explanations why this paradoxical phenomenon is most pronounced in **this generation**, one can offer the following:

Since our generation is the last generation of exile and the first of Redemption, preparing for the transformation of the exile into Redemption is emphasized through a "taste" of what is to come, now in the days of exile. Thus, as we stand at the very **end** of exile, we can experience the state of "And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt." The closer we get to the transformation of the exile - with the advent of the true and complete Redemption - this condition increasingly intensifies.

...This is particularly true in the "Year of Miracles" (5750) and the Year of "I Will Show Him Wonders" (5751). And, indeed, we have vividly beheld miracles and wonders in the most recent period. This includes - and relates specifically - to the change in attitude of a "super power," the former Soviet Union,⁴ inducing it to aid and facilitate the emergence of the Jewish people from distress to freedom, so that even in the Land of Egypt (in the last moments of exile) they should experience the state of "And Jacob lived."

And all this is happening because we are now situated, literally, so close to the true and complete redemption, through our righteous

ables, the Jews answered: "May it be that we *ourselves* leave." And the *Talmud* illustrates this concept with an analogy of a prisoner who is told: "We will free you tomorrow and give you a lot of money." To which the prisoner responds: "Don't give me anything, but free me *today*!"

Since this is the natural human response, why did G-d hold the Jews in exile so that He could fulfill the promise of great wealth? And furthermore, it is difficult to understand the *Midrash*'s statements, "So that the righteous man would not say...." Wouldn't Avraham our Patriarch have been willing to forego the promise of wealth, so that his descendants could leave exile earlier?

These questions force us to conclude that gathering the wealth of Egypt was one of the *purposes* of the Egyptian exile. Unless this gathering was complete, the intent of the exile would not have been fulfilled.⁹

To enable this objective to be achieved, it was necessary for Yosef to become ruler, and for him to gather all the wealth of the other lands, as it is written:¹⁰ "And Yosef gathered all the silver," and our Sages comment:¹¹ "All the silver and gold in the world." This made it possible for the Jews to "depart with great wealth."

SPIRITUAL WEALTH

The descent into Egypt was thus intended to refine and elevate the sparks of G-dliness that existed in that country. Through their many years of labor, the Jews were able to refine and cull the sparks of holiness enclothed in the land's material substance. And when they left Egypt, they elevated these sparks of G-dliness to their source.

9. See the *sichos* for *Parshas Vayechi* and *Parshas Bo* in this series, where this concept is also expressed.
 10. *Bereishis* 47:14.
 11. *Pesachim* 119a.

1. *VaYechi*, 47:28.
 2. *Miketz*, 42:30,33.
 3. *VaYigash*, 45:20.
 4. ["*That country*" in the original. *Translator's note.*]

be their sole concern; they should not be involved with anything else. Of course, they will also be involved in *gemillus chassadim*, deeds of kindness, for *gemillus chassadim* is a fundamental requirement for Torah study, as our Sages commented:⁵⁷ “Whoever says, ‘For me, there is nothing aside from Torah study,’ will not even possess [the advantage of] Torah study.” Without being coupled with *gemillus chassadim*, the study of Torah is lacking. And thus, as an expression of *gemillus chassadim*, the Rebbeim always charged *yeshivah* students with disseminating the wellsprings of *Chassidus*, and indeed spreading every expression of *Yiddishkeit*.

Nevertheless, these efforts should not disturb a student’s inner bond with the Torah. On the contrary, the intent should be to *enhance* Torah study. For it is through studying the Torah in this manner that the existence of the world will be maintained.

(Adapted from *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz*, 5722)



57. *Yevamos* 109b. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5708, p. 266, note 7.

This process is alluded to in the verse:¹² “A great multitude ascended with them.” For as explained in *Chassidus*,¹³ the Hebrew word for “great,” **בָּרָךְ** is numerically equivalent to 202. 202 of the 288 sparks of holiness that fell with the collapse of the realm of *Tohu* had been enclothed in the material substance of Egypt. These sparks were enclothed in the “great wealth” which the Jews took with them when they left.

This leads to a larger concept. As the Baal Shem Tov taught, a Jew’s material possessions are of spiritual importance. It is in this vein that he interpreted¹⁴ our Sages’ statement:¹⁵ “The Torah shows consideration for the wealth of the Jewish people.” A Jew’s property is very dear, the Baal Shem Tov explained, for in it are enclothed sparks of holiness which the Jew must elevate to their source.

For this reason, on the eve of his confrontation with Esav, Yaakov left his family and went back to his previous camp to find “small containers” which had been forgotten.¹⁶ For these containers held sparks of holiness that he was destined to elevate.

And this was the motive for G-d’s command¹⁷ for “a woman to borrow from her neighbor... articles of silver and gold and garments.” For these articles and garments contained sparks of holiness which the Jews were destined to refine and elevate.

12. *Shmos* 12:38.

13. *Torah Or* 60c. [*Tohu* represents an elevated spiritual level in which powerful G-dly lights were enclothed in vessels which were not substantial. This imbalance caused the vessels to “break,” and their substance, as filtered through the downward chain of the spiritual cosmos, became the basis for material substance in our world.]

14. See *Or Torah* (by the Maggid of Mezeritch), *Rimzei Torah*, entry *HaTorah Chasah*.

15. *Rosh HaShanah* 27a.

16. *Chulin* 91a, cited by *Rashi* in his commentary to *Bereishis* 32:25.

17. *Shmos* 3:22.

SHAPING DESTINY

Achieving this goal is to the benefit of the Jewish people. For this reason, Avraham our patriarch was willing to allow his descendants to linger in exile in order to gather Egypt's wealth. He realized that this endeavor was for their own good.

To explain: Every spark of holiness is destined to be refined by a particular soul, and conversely, every soul has certain sparks of holiness which it is destined to refine, for these souls and these sparks share an inherent connection to each other.

This is the inner meaning of our Sages' statement:¹⁸ "A person will never take a portion designated for a colleague." This is true with regard to physical matters, because of the spiritual dynamic described previously. The spiritual profit — the Divine sparks enclothed in the material property — is destined to be elevated by only one person. For every soul has certain sparks of G-dliness it must elevate; the fate of these sparks is tied to a particular soul because of that soul's nature.

My revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, once explained at length¹⁹ that with Divine Providence, G-d structures the events of the natural world to enable a Jew to encounter the sparks he is to refine. As long as the person does not elevate the sparks destined for him, they remain in exile. And since the sparks connected with a person's soul are found in exile, the soul itself is in exile.

Moreover, the refinement of these sparks of holiness involves the essence of a person's soul. Since "an essence cannot be divided," any portion of it, however small, encompasses the whole. As the Baal Shem Tov said:²⁰ "with regard to the essence, if you grasp a portion of it, you are attached to it in its entirety." Thus when even a few of the sparks related to

18. *Yoma* 38b.

19. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. IV, *Likkut 32*, p. 1167ff.

20. As quoted at the conclusion of the series of *maamarim* entitled *Yom Tov Shel Rosh HaShanah*, 5666.

cerns.... This applies not only to the tribe of Levi, but to each and every one of the inhabitants of the earth who, with a generous spirit, has decided... to stand before G-d and serve Him.

WHY YEHUDAH AND NOT YOSEF

Based on these concepts, we can understand why Yaakov had to send Yehudah to establish a Torah center in Egypt, and could not rely on Yosef to accomplish this task. Although Yosef was always at one with G-d, clinging to Him in a complete bond, this bond was a reflection of the higher plane on which his soul functioned. With regard to the study of Torah, however, since he was the viceroy of Egypt, and had to attend to all the business concerns of the land, he was not able to devote himself to study with the commitment of one "whose Torah was his livelihood."

Thus although with regard to his own personal mission, there was nothing lacking in Yosef's Divine service, he could not serve as a paradigm for Torah study. To maintain the world at large — for Torah study is one of the "three pillars on which the world stands"⁵⁵ — it was necessary for Yaakov to send Yehudah. For Yehudah was a shepherd, living apart from worldly concerns. His was the personality necessary to establish a *yeshivah* and Torah center in Egypt, where students would not be distracted by any other concerns, even if they involved becoming a chariot for G-d.⁵⁶

NOT ONLY A STORY OF THE PAST

The Torah and its directives are relevant in every generation. *Yeshivah* students must know that Torah study should

55. *Avos* 1:2.

56. See note 52. See also *Tanya*, ch. 23, which speaks of the advantage which thoughts and words of Torah have over the performance of the *mitzvos*, that through performance of the *mitzvos*, one becomes "a chariot" for G-d's will, but through Torah study, one establishes a deeper bond.

(and in the first two or three years afterwards, before many children have been born when one can still study without financial worries) and one's Torah study afterwards, when one must bear the yoke of financial concerns. He explains that those concerns detract from the possibility of fully committing oneself to the study of Torah.

It is possible to conceive of instances where supporting of a family would not present a great difficulty, i.e., an extremely wealthy person who does not need to earn a livelihood. But the Alter Rebbe does not make such a distinction; for the very fact that a person has financial responsibilities detracts from the wholeness of his commitment to the study of Torah. When a person takes on a yoke of financial responsibility, his Torah study does not possess the same quality as before.

For this reason, the Levites who were responsible for the service in the *Beis HaMikdash* and the Torah instruction of the Jewish people were not given a portion of land in *Eretz Yisrael*.⁵³ Were they to have been given a tribal portion, the responsibility of caring for it would have detracted from their spiritual service.

Similarly, in the present age, when after the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* "the Holy One, blessed be He, is manifest in this world only in the four cubits of Torah law,"⁵⁴ those who desire to serve in the *Beis HaMikdash* — i.e., who commit themselves to the study of Torah law (the contemporary alternative to the *Beis HaMikdash*) — must have no other concerns.

This indeed is implied by the expression: "his Torah is his livelihood." This is also alluded to by the *Rambam*,⁵⁵ who states:

[The tribe of] Levi... was set aside for G-d's service.... Therefore they were set aside from worldly con-

53. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah*, the conclusion of *Hilchos Shemita ViYovel*.

54. *Berachos* 8a.

the essence of a person's soul remain in exile, the essence of that soul is also in exile.

For this reason, taking the "great wealth" of Egypt was important, not only for the world at large, but for every individual Jew. For by elevating the sparks of holiness present within that land, they were able to have their souls released from exile there.

The ultimate fulfillment of every created being is to accomplish the will of its Creator. This is the purpose of its creation.²¹ Since it is G-d's will that all the sparks of holiness in Egypt be elevated, doing so represents the greatest possible good for each individual, for it brings the most complete level of fulfillment.

PURPOSE WITHIN EXILE

Since Egypt is the prototype of all subsequent exiles,²² the concept explained above provides guidelines for us in this final exile. The intent of exile is not merely to punish us for our sins. Instead, the ultimate purpose is the elevation of sparks of holiness. In this vein, *Chassidus*²³ offers an extended interpretation of our Sages' statement:²⁴ "The Holy One, blessed be He, exiled the Jews among the nations only so that converts would join them," explaining that "converts" also refer to the sparks of holiness within material entities.

Hence we must also follow the pattern that "A woman should borrow from her neighbor and she who lives in her home."¹⁷ "A woman" is an analogy for the soul,²⁵ which is commanded by G-d to be concerned with another objective

21. The conclusion of *Kiddushin*, ch. 4. See *Sichos Yud-Gimmel Shvat*, 5711, where this concept is explained at length.

22. See *Vayikra Rabbah* 13:5: "All the ruling kingdoms are referred to with the name Egypt...."

23. *Torah Or* 6a.

24. *Pesachim* 87b.

25. *Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 6* (22b).

besides leaving exile. It must “borrow... articles of silver and gold,” taking with it the sparks of holiness which are found within the body, the animal soul, and one’s portion in the world.

Continuing the analogy, a “neighbor” refers to material concerns which we deal with from time to time (like a neighbor whom we do not necessarily meet everyday). “She who lives in her home” refers to material matters which are constantly before us (and which one must relate to as frequently as to a person with whom one shares a dwelling).

G-d’s command is that we must take out of exile not only those sparks of holiness with which we are constantly in contact, but also those which we encounter less often. (The fact that a person encounters the vessel containing such sparks is no accident. On the contrary, the meeting was pre-arranged by Divine Providence — for there is “One who controls this edifice”²⁶ — with the intent that the person refine these entities and elevate them to their source.)

From these material concerns should be fashioned “articles of silver and gold.” Silver refers to love, and gold to fear.²⁷ One’s efforts to refine one’s environment should enhance and be encompassed by one’s Divine service of love and fear.

NO ROOM FOR NEARSIGHTEDNESS

There are those who protest: “Why must I be concerned with exile? I want nothing to do with it. I am willing to forego the ‘great wealth.’ And I am even willing to forego the spiritual fulfillment which refining the exiled sparks of holiness would bring my soul. What I *don’t* want is to have to struggle against the two-fold darkness of exile, and concern

26. *Bereishis Rabbah* 39:1.

27. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. VI, p. 159 and sources cited there.

SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION

Yosef’s elevated spiritual plane — which enabled him to remain at one with G-d while being concerned with such worldly matters as account books — reflected the nature of his soul. With regard to Torah study, by contrast, different principles apply. For with regard to Torah study, what is most important is that a person be one with the Torah he studies.⁴⁷ As such, it is a person “whose Torah is his livelihood,”⁴⁸ one who has no concern other than the study of Torah, who gives the most complete expression to this thrust in Divine service.

Therefore, when a person combines Torah study with any other concern — even though while involved in those concerns he remains “a chariot for G-dliness”⁴⁹ — he is diminishing his bond with the Torah. A connection to Torah can be established only by one “whose Torah is his livelihood,” who has no other concern in life, not even a concern which the Torah encourages.⁵⁰ And thus when Abbaye had to perform even a light task for his foster-mother, he stated that this disturbed his dedication to the study of Torah.⁵¹

To illustrate this concept, and indeed, to provide a more telling argument: In *Hilchos Talmud Torah*,⁵² the Alter Rebbe differentiates between the study of Torah before marriage

47. See *Tanya*, chs. 5 and 23.

48. See *Shabbos* 11a, where this concept is discussed.

49. I.e., just as a chariot is totally subordinate to the will of its driver, so too the person has subordinated his nature to G-d’s will (see *Tanya*, ch. 34).

50. See *Sichos Simchas Beis HaShoevah*, 5723, (adapted as the *sichah* for the holiday of *Sukkos* in this series), which explains the advantage which the *lulav* possesses over the *esrog*. Although an *esrog* has a pleasant taste and a pleasant fragrance, representing a person who excels in both the study of Torah (taste) and the performance of *mitzvos* (fragrance), in a certain way, it is surpassed by the *lulav*, although the *lulav*[’s fruit] possesses merely a pleasant taste (Torah study), but no fragrance. For involvement in any other concern, even the observance of the *mitzvos* (fragrance) minimizes one’s connection with the Torah.

51. *Eruvin* 65a.

52. Chapter 3, Law 1.

the verse:⁴⁵ “And he came to the house to perform his tasks,” as “to check the account books.”

Caring for these accounts was surely taxing, but these duties paled next to the responsibilities he was given later as viceroy, when Pharaoh told him:⁴⁶ “By your word will my people be sustained.... Without a statement from you, no man will lift a hand or a foot in all the land of Egypt.” He had to concern himself with all the affairs of the land. Nevertheless, these activities did not prevent him from clinging firmly to G-dliness.

The dimension of G-dliness which is too uplifted to serve as a source for material existence illuminated Yosef’s life. As such, worldly concerns were of no significance to him, and therefore it was impossible for worldly matters to affect his bond with G-d.

This represented a higher level of connection than that experienced by the Patriarchs or Yosef’s brothers. They also experienced an overt revelation of G-dliness, but they were exposed only to those dimensions of G-dliness which enclothe themselves in the world. For that reason, they had to serve as shepherds — divorced from the concerns of this world — lest material involvement disrupt their bond with G-d.

In Yosef’s instance, by contrast, a higher level of G-dliness was revealed. This level transcended the world, as is explained with regard to the light which is *sovev kol almin*, “encompassing all the worlds.” As a result of this light, Yosef was able to involve himself with worldly concerns while remaining totally at one with G-d.

45. *Bereishis* 39:11.

46. *Ibid.* 41:40, 44.

myself with material matters. I would rather sequester myself in a world of Torah study and prayer.”

Such a person must know:

a) If he does not complete the task assigned him, his soul remains in exile. Moreover, his hope of sequestering himself in Torah study and prayer can be realized only with regard to his revealed powers of intellect and emotion. The essence of his soul, however, will remain in exile together with the sparks of holiness which he was to have elevated. For the fact that one’s revealed powers are involved only with holiness gives no indication about the state of the soul’s essence.²⁸

When a person gives this even a little thought, he will be motivated to shoulder the portion of the task of refinement allotted to him, for “A person will give everything he has for the sake of his soul.” How much more so does this apply when the *essence* of the soul is involved!

b) Even were a person able to leave exile himself and attain high peaks of spirituality without participating in the task of refinement, of what value would these peaks be? And how can they be considered as “peaks of spirituality” if they are attained by resisting G-d’s will? For He and His will are one.

This is one of the lessons to be learned from the exile and the exodus from Egypt. Our Divine service must involve our worldly environment, refining the sparks of holiness that exist within exile. And then “they will empty Egypt,”²⁹ leaving it “like a silo devoid of grain and a net devoid of fish,”³⁰ elevating all the good which exists within our environment and taking it with us as we go to greet *Mashiach* here, in this material world. May it be in the immediate future.

(Adapted from *Sichos Acharon Shel Pesach*, 5721)

28. See *Likkutei Torah*, *Vayikra* 3d, and also the *maamar* entitled *Ashreinu*, 5696 (*Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, Vol. II, p. 732).

29. *Shmos* 12:36.

30. *Berachos* 9b.

ESTABLISHING A TORAH CENTER

On the verse,³¹ “And he sent Yehudah before him to Yosef to show the way to Goshen,” *Rashi* comments in the name of the *Midrash*³² that the implication³³ is that he sent Yehudah “to establish a house of study from which *halachic* judgments would be issued,” i.e., before Yaakov travelled to Egypt, he sent Yehudah to found a *yeshivah*.

This teaches us that before a Jew arrives in a new country, he must first see to it that the land will be a center for Torah. For the Torah is the source of life and posterity for the Jewish people, and for every individual Jew.

Nevertheless, the question arises: Why was it necessary for Yaakov to send a special agent, Yehudah? Yosef was already in Egypt; why couldn’t he establish this center?

Moreover, our Sages state:³⁴ “Throughout the days of our Patriarchs, the maintenance of a house of study did not cease. Avraham... Yitzchak... and Yaakov [all attended a house of study].” Accordingly, it is safe to assume that Yosef followed this pattern. This is particularly so in light of the interpretation of the verse,³⁵ “he was the child of his old age,” which is understood to imply³⁶ that Yaakov taught Yosef all the knowledge which he had gained. And on the verse,³⁷ “And he saw the wagons,” our Sages comment³⁸ that Yosef was allud-

ing to the fact that the ordinances of *eglah arufah*³⁹ were the last laws which Yaakov had taught him.

Moreover, Yosef’s conduct was on such a high spiritual level that Yaakov exclaimed:⁴⁰ “It’s too much! My son Yosef is still alive!” That is, even to Yaakov’s lofty conception, Yosef was still alive, filled with vibrant energy.⁴¹ Indeed, this knowledge caused “Yaakov’s spirit to be revived,”⁴² and the Divine Presence to rest upon him.⁴³

Why then couldn’t Yosef have established the Torah center for his father?

TWO PLAINS OF CONNECTION

This question can be answered by differentiating between the spiritual levels of Yaakov, Yosef, and the other brothers.⁴⁴ Yaakov (and similarly his forebears, Avraham and Yitzchak) and his other children lived out of contact with the day-to-day realities of this world. They were shepherds, choosing this occupation in order to minimize their contact with the material world, so not to be distracted from Torah study and Divine service.

Yosef, by contrast, from his youth onward did not work as a shepherd. After being sold as a slave in Egypt, he was occupied with running Potifar’s affairs. Thus *Onkelos* renders

31. *Bereishis* 46:28.

32. *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Vayigash*, sec. 12; *Yalkut Shimoni*, sec. 152.

33. For the word *lihoros*, translated as “to show the way” can also mean to deliver a *halachic* judgment.

34. *Yoma* 28b. See also *Lekach Tov*, *Shmos* 3:15, which quotes a similar teaching that specifically mentions Yosef.

35. *Bereishis* 37:3.

36. See the interpretations of *Rashi* and *Bereishis Rabbah* of this verse.

37. *Bereishis* 45:27.

38. *Bereishis Rabbah* 94:3; *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 210b, cited by *Rashi* in his commentary.

39. The calf decapitated as penitence for an unsolved murder (*Devarim*, ch. 21). Wagons (*מַלְכָּי*) are an appropriate allusion, because of the similarity between that word and the Hebrew for calf, *עַלְמָה*.

40. *Bereishis* 45:28.

41. See *Bereishis Rabbah*, loc. cit., and the comments of *Chiddushei HaRadal*; see also *Zohar*, Vol. I, p. 164a.

42. *Bereishis* 45:27.

43. *Rashi*, in his commentary to the above verse, based on *Targum Onkelos*, and *Avos d’Rabbi Nossan*, the conclusion of ch. 30.

44. See *Toras Chayim*, the *maamar* entitled *Ben Poras Yosef*; *Derech Mitzvosecho*, p. 81a; the *maamar* entitled *UMikneh Rav*, 5629.