

מגולה לגאולה

From Exile to Redemption

Volume I

Chassidic Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

and the preceding Rebbeim of Chabad נ"ע

on the Future Redemption

and the Coming of Mashiach

בס"ד

מגולה לגאולה

From Exile to Redemption

Volume I

Chassidic Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson
and the preceding Rebbeim of Chabad נ"ע
on the Future Redemption
and the Coming of Mashiach



הועתק והוכנס לאינטרנט
www.hebrewbooks.org
ע"י חיים תשס"ז

Kehot Publication Society

770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, New York 11213
5753-1992

ה"י רנה"י שנת נפלאות גדולות

FROM EXILE TO REDEMPTION
Volume I

Published & Copyright © 1992
by

Kehot Publication Society

770 Eastern Parkway

Brooklyn, New York 11213

(718) 778-5436 / (718) 493-9250 / (718) 774-4000

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means, including photo-copying, without permission in writing from the copyright holder or the publisher.

ISBN 0-8266-0485-4

Printed in the United States of America

מגולה לגאולה

From Exile to Redemption

Volume I

Chassidic Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson
and the preceding Rebbeim of Chabad נ"ע
on the Future Redemption
and the Coming of Mashiach

Compiled by **Rabbi Alter Eliyahu Friedman**

Translated by **Uri Kaploun**

Table of Contents

Publisher's Foreword xiii

Introduction xv

PART ONE: EXILE

Prologue: The Anguish of Zion.....3

Ch. 1: The Spiritual Side of Exile5

Pregnancy / Outward Self-Nullification / Divine Energy through Intermediaries (i)-(ii) / The Materiality of Man / Divine Service by Way of War / Divine Service by Way of Awe / Safety Fences and Regulations / The Additional Day of Yom-Tov in the Diaspora / The Distinctive Quality of Israel is Not Evident / A Dream / A Battle between Beasts / The Concept of Exile in Man's Divine Service and in the Torah / The Soul was Not Exiled (i)-(ii) / The Length of the Exile (i)-(iii) / Comparative Chronological Table / The Length of the Exile (iv) / "Lebanon" will be Felled by a Mighty One / With Him In His Distress (i)-(iii) / Yaakov Avinu Planted Cedars in Egypt / The Butchers' Market / G-d Regrets Having Created Exile / "Exile Comes to the World" / Four Reasons for Thanksgiving

Ch. 2: The Aim and Purpose of Exile29

Descent for the Sake of Ultimate Ascent / Seeking Sparks (i)-(iv) / Elevating and Refining the Seventy Nations / Purifying the Lands of the Gentile Nations / A Dwelling Place Among Mortals / A New Light Revealed (i)-(ix) / Uncovering the Inner Dimension of the Torah / Your Taskmasters Will Be Charitable / I Will Raise My Eyes / My Righteousness Will Be Revealed

Ch. 3: Exile has its Merits44

Parched, My Soul Yearns for You (i)-(ii) / Revealing the Potential for Self-Sacrifice (i)-(iii) / Revealing the Soul's Transcendent Potential / A True Union / Loftier Perceptions / The King on his Travels / The Possibility of Repentance / Your Seed Shall Remain / Halachic Regulations / Nostalgia for the Days of Exile (i)-(iii) / G-d Calculated the End of the Exile

Ch. 4: The Approaching Footsteps of Mashiach.....53

A Paradox / Working on the Lower Levels of the Soul / Reason Can Be Misleading / What Counts is the Deed / The Final Beirurim / The Hem of Aaron's Robe / Gathering In All the Camps / A Generation Reincarnated / Moshe Rabbeinu Contemplates Our Generation / The Righteous and the Wicked / The "Lightweight" Mitzvos / A Long Wait / The End of the Tunnel is in Sight! / A Painfully Tight Shoe / Yearning for Those Footsteps

Ch. 5: "With the Advent of the Footsteps of Mashiach..."
63

"Insolence will Increase" (i)-(ii) / "Youths Will Put Old Men to Shame" / "The Face of the Generation will be Like the Face of a Dog" (i)-(ii) / "Upon Whom Can We Rely? — Upon Our Father Who Is In Heaven"

**PART TWO: ON THE WAY TO THE
REDEMPTION**

Prologue: A Daily Entreaty69

Ch. 1: The Light of Mashiach.....71

"When Your Wellsprings Will Be Disseminated Outward" / The Revelation of Chassidus in Recent Generations / "Those Who Savor It Will Merit Eternal Life" / The Torah at All Its Levels / Dressing Up for the Wedding / Serving G-d Tranquilly / To the Corners of the Earth / An Easy

Task / Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (i)-(viii) /
 Déjà Vu / Mashiach will Come to Wherever Chassidus is
 Being Studied

Ch. 2: The Festive Meal of Mashiach85

The Revelation of the Radiance of Mashiach / Thirteen
 Questions and Answers about the Festive Meal of Mashiach
 / The Four Cups of Mashiach / The Dance of Mashiach

Ch. 3: The Sefer Torah of Mashiach94

A Sefer Torah with which to Greet Mashiach / Excerpts
 from Letters of the Rebbe Rayatz / The Sefer Torah is
 Completed

Ch. 4: As the Redemption Draws Near98

Grant Salvation to Your People / Clapping on Shabbos and
 Yom-Tov / Elijah's Cup / The Twelfth of Tammuz / The
 Advance of Scientific Discovery / The Exile Transformed: A
 Foretaste

**PART THREE: ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE
 REDEMPTION**

Prologue: A Prayer for Compassion.....105

Ch. 1: Here He Stands Behind Our Wall107

Mashiach is Waiting for Us / It's Our Wall that is
 Obstructing / A Glance by Mashiach / The Afternoon of
 Erev Shabbos (i)-(iii) / To Polish the Buttons (i)-(iii) / We
 Are Nearing the Summit / Rousing Fellow Jews to
 Repentance / The Birthpangs of Mashiach / All the
 Appointed Times have Passed / Immediate Redemption (i)-
 (iv) / The Time for Your Redemption has Arrived! / Every
 Minute is Precious (i)-(iv) / The Weak will Say: I am Strong
 (i)-(ii) / The Bottom of the Wheel / Build till the Last

Minute (i)-(ii) / Golah and Geulah: Exile and Redemption /
 G-d's Salvation Comes in a Blink / A Special Time / How
 Things Will Look / A Desperate Last Struggle

Ch. 2: Our Generation will Generate the Redemption .122

At Twilight on Sabbath Eve / The Redemption will be
 Credited to Whoever Completes It (i)-(ii) / "Is the
 Generation Worthy?!" (i)-(v) / A Dwarf on the Shoulders of
 a Giant / The Jewish People Will Ultimately Repent / The
 Lowest Edges of the Tabernacle / The First Red Heifer and
 the Tenth

Ch. 3: Signs of the Redemption133

The Signs in Tractate Sotah / Quiet Revolutions (i)-(iii) /
 The Collapse of the Iron Curtain / The Gulf War / The
 Nations of the World are Helping / The Nations of the
 World Opt for Benevolence / Not Yet the Beginning

**PART FOUR: YEARNING FOR THE
 REDEMPTION**

Prologue: My Soul is Lovesick for G-d141

Ch. 1: I Await His Coming Every Day143

G-d Will Act for Him Who Waits for Him / With Hope
 Like This, We Deserve to be Redeemed (i)-(ii) / "Did You
 Yearn for the Redemption?" / "To Bring the Days of
 Mashiach" / Cosmic Repercussions (i)-(iii) / Living with
 the Concept of Mashiach / "All One's Days in Repentance"
 / Awaiting His Coming / The Effect of Anticipating /
 Speaking About Mashiach / Peering Out of the Ark /
 Getting Ready for Shabbos / "The Beis HaMikdash will be
 Speedily Rebuilt" / "A Nazirite on the Day that Mashiach
 Comes" / No Hard Feelings / This, Too, Has an Answer /
 Waiting Every Day (i)-(ii) / "Next Year in Jerusalem!" / A

Redemption that is Tangible (i)-(ii) / The Shofar of Mashiach / Jewish Style / A Poor Businessman

Ch. 2: We Want Mashiach Now!.....160

“Because They Did Not Demand It” / The Answer to a Prayer / Birthpangs / Father: Enough! / Mashiach Now (i)-(ii) / But Why in English? / How Much Longer? (i)-(ii) / Brain vs. Heart (i)-(ii) / “Carry Me Out of Egypt” / “They Groaned and Cried Out” / “Why Have You Mistreated This People?” / “Why Should We Be Deprived?” / The Subject of the Request / Thirsting for Dear Life / “Be Not Silent!” / “Even the Bird has Found a Home” / Self-Sacrifice for Mashiach / A Life-Threatening Danger / A Jewish Bondman / Striking One’s Son

**Ch. 3: Bringing the Redemption —
An Individual Obligation173**

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (i)-(viii) / The Key to the Redemption is in Everyone’s Hand (i)-(vi) / Particular Redemption and Universal Redemption / Why Should They Have to Suffer? / A Leading Question / Thinking and Doing / The Gematria of Shaliach and Mashiach / Do Everything You Can!

Ch. 4: Catalysts of the Redemption.....183

Unearned Love / A Letter in a Sefer Torah / Unity / Faith / By Virtue of Pious Women / Printing the Tanya / Directives for the Three Weeks / The Dissemination of Yiddishkeit (i)-(iv) / Ufaratzta: Bursting All Bounds / Early Impressions / A Time to be Innovative / Education (i)-(ii) / Conquering the World / Kashrus and Family Purity / Torah Study (i)-(ii) / The Study of Mishnayos / Studying About the Redemption (i)-(ii) / Rejoicing in the Redemption / Speed / Letters about the Redemption / Action is Superior / Until All the Souls are Born (i)-(iii) / Halachic Decisions on the Redemption / Tzedakah: Charity (i)-(ii) / Self-Sanctification / The Seven Noachide Laws /

The Power of Joy / The Observance of Shabbos / The
Tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam // Teshuvah: Repentance

Founders of Chassidism & Leaders of Chabad-Lubavitch....205

Glossary207

Publisher's Foreword

At the *farbrengen* of *Shabbos Tazria-Metzora*, 5751 [1991], the Rebbe *Shlita* said: “*Mashiach* is about to come imminently, but has not yet come in fact. This calls for a final effort on the part of every single Jew to bring *Mashiach*...by studying subjects involving the King *Mashiach* and the Ultimate Redemption in both the Written and the Oral Torah, and also (indeed, especially) in the inner, mystical dimension of the Torah, beginning with the *Zohar*, and particularly in *Chassidus* — in the teachings of our Rebbeim, especially in the teachings of the *Nasi* of our generation.”

The present volume is a masterly translation by Uri Kaploun of a skillfully constructed work that was compiled in Hebrew by Rabbi Alter Eliyahu Friedman in response to the above call. The expanded edition of the complete work comprises six parts: I. Exile; II. On the Way to the Redemption; III. On the Threshold of the Redemption; IV. Yearning for the Redemption; V. The Redemption; VI. Studies of Scriptural and Rabbinic Sources. Each part includes several chapters, and the passages they furnish on their particular subjects are either quotations or slight adaptations of the sources indicated. The present volume covers Parts I-IV; the longer Parts V and VI are translated in the following volume. A detailed Table of Contents in each volume enables the reader to quickly locate any particular favorite passage which he may wish to reread. In addition, each volume is equipped with a comprehensive Glossary, as well as a chronological table of the founders of Chassidism and the leaders of *Chabad-Lubavitch*.

The manuscript was closely read and prepared for the press by Rabbi Yonah Avtzon, Director of *Sichos In English*. The book owes its user-friendly layout and typography to the meticulous efforts of Yosef Yitzchok Turner, and *Sichos In English* is gratified once again to have secured the services of Avrohom Weg for the cover design.

It is the hope of the publisher that the translation of this outstanding compilation, which has been sped on its way by the active encouragement of the Rebbe *Sblita*, will enable ever-widening circles of people to join in the historic “final effort” of which the Rebbe speaks.

* * *

Every Rosh HaShanah, as the Alter Rebbe teaches in Epistle XIV of *Iggeres HaKodesh*,¹ the world is irradiated with a new light, a light more sublime than any that has ever shone down on the world since the beginning of time. This is obviously true too of the Rosh HaShanah which we recently observed. Significantly, some months before Rosh HaShanah, when calendars for the present year תשנ"ג (5753) were being prepared for the press, the words that the Rebbe *Sblita* chose to be represented by its Hebrew initials were: תהא שנת נפלאות גדולות — “This will surely be a year of great wonders.” And indeed, after the long months that elapsed since the events of 27 Adar Alef, it was on the Second Day of Rosh HaShanah that thousands of grateful chassidim caught their first elated glimpse of the Rebbe *Sblita*. As to the weeks that followed, probably no one reading these lines needs to be told of the visible and rapid progress that marked the many prolonged and energetic public appearances of the Rebbe *Sblita* during the solemn and exuberant occasions of the month of Tishrei.

With ardent gratitude to G-d for His favors of the past, we and our readers join hundreds of thousands of Jews in every corner of the globe in an optimistic prayer: May the Compassionate One, in the very near future, enable the Rebbe *Sblita* to resume his historic mission — to prepare the entire House of Israel for the imminent arrival of *Mashiach*.

Sichos In English

Rosh Chodesh Kislev, 5753 [1992]

1. See *Lessons In Tanya* (by Rabbi Yosef Wineberg; Kehot, N.Y., 1992), Vol. IV, p. 236ff.

Introduction

Exile and Redemption in the Light of the Teachings of Chabad Chassidus

Exile (*Galus*)

In chassidic literature, *Galus* is defined as the exile of the Divine Presence within our world — the exile of the Divine light within the material world that darkens and obscures it. As foreshadowed in the words of Scripture,² “I will surely hide My face on that day.”

In the times when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood in Jerusalem, the indwelling of the Divine Presence in this lowly world of ours was manifest and palpable. Thus it was that ten overt miracles occurred in the *Beis HaMikdash* every day.³ In this way, every Jew who went up to Jerusalem for the thrice-yearly Pilgrim Festivals experienced Divinity revealed. Accordingly, expounding the verse⁴ that speaks of the obligation of every male to appear there, the Sages teach,⁵ “Just as he would come in order to see [the Divine Presence], so too would he come in order to be seen [by the Divine Presence].” The revealed light that radiated from the *Beis HaMikdash* also affected the outside world, alleviating its darkness, and making it less of an obstacle to man’s service of his Creator.

In the period of exile, by contrast, the Divine light is seemingly removed, and the Divine Countenance is masked: Divine revelation is not readily seen and experienced, and the miracles of the *Beis HaMikdash* are no longer with us. And within the

2. *Devarim* 31:18.

3. *Pirkei Avos* 5:6; *Siddur Tehillat HaShem* (with English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 1979), p. 225.

4. *Shmos* 23:17.

5. *Chagigah* 2a.

workings of the created world, the Divine truth and light are imperceptibly hidden, as if in the darkness of night.

* * *

The eclipse of the Divine light within the material world brings about the eclipse of the Divine soul within the animal soul: *the individual Jew is in exile within himself.*

In this state, he is unable to attain the level of divine service that was possible when the *Beis HaMikdash* stood. The revelation of Divinity at that time enabled every Jew to palpably experience the Divine reality, and hence to devote his entire self to his Creator, effacing himself before Him — utterly and earnestly, yet lovingly and pleurably. In the time of exile, by contrast, when Divinity is hidden, one has to coerce himself to serve his Maker, by undertaking to accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, his self-effacement is merely outward, not penetrating his inward essence.

* * *

This distinction in the spiritual standing of the Jewish people — between the time of the *Beis HaMikdash* and the time of exile — brings about a corresponding distinction in their material standing. In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, when the Divine Presence was manifest, and the Jewish people were at a lofty level of spiritual attainment, their material status was proportionately strong. Thus, in the days when⁶ “Solomon sat on the throne of G-d,” we learn that he⁷ “reigned over all the kingdoms from the River [Euphrates] to the Land of the Philistines, and until the border of Egypt.” By contrast, the sorry spiritual state of our people in this era of exile is reflected on a national scale.

* * *

This observation raises a question: What is the ultimate goal and intent of this exile?

6. *I Divrei HaYamim* 29:23.

7. *I Kings* 5:1.

It is clear, for a start, that the exile is a process of atonement; in the words of the prayers,⁸ “Because of our sins we were exiled from our land.” In addition to this, *Chassidus* points out that exile has a positive side to it: indeed, there is a certain kind of divine service that can be carried out *only* in the conditions of exile. This task, which is no less than the goal and intent of exile, is the task of sifting and refining the materiality of this world, and elevating the sparks of holiness that are embedded within it.⁹

As explained in the works of *Kabbalah* and *Chassidus*, lofty sparks are scattered throughout the material world. Just as the stones at the top of a crumbling wall fall furthest, so too do these sparks plunge from their sublime heights to the very depths of exile. There they are obscured by *kelippos*, by the forces of impurity. Hence derives the task of the Jewish people in exile — to uncover and elevate these sparks, by means of Torah study and other forms of divine service, and by engaging in the things of this world for the sake of heaven.

This kind of divine service has undergone successive stages. At first the Jewish people had to deal with the lesser sparks, those which had not fallen so far, and for this, it sufficed that they study the Torah and observe the commandments in *Eretz Yisrael*. When the Divine Will ordained that the time had come to liberate the loftier sparks, those that had fallen under the remote dominion of the various nations of the earth, G-d exiled His people to their lands for the sake of those sparks.

Moreover, within the era of exile itself there are successive stages. While the darkness of earlier periods demanded less effort, the darkness of our days — the generation which can hear the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach* — is growing deeper and

8. From the *Mussaf* prayer for the Three Pilgrim Festivals; *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 258.

9. In the original, this task is called *beirur nitzotzos*. See the four passages below entitled “Seeking Sparks” (p. 29ff.).

denser. For the sublime and evasive sparks that still await retrieval can be redeemed only by the redoubled exertions that redoubled darkness elicits. Indeed, the all-pervasive darkness is a reassurance that the last traces of these sparks are now being rescued from the clutches of the forces of impurity. The end of our generation's task is already within sight. *Mashiach* can now appear.

Adopting the above-outlined attitude to exile enables one to relate to it in quite a new way. Before our very eyes we can behold the goal of this long exile, and can witness its darkest and most formidable stages. For this is a descent for the sake of an ultimate ascent, and the steeper the present descent, the loftier the subsequent ascent. Or, to view the same dynamic from its innermost perspective, there is no real descent at all, only an ascent. Only to the superficial observer is there a descent. From the perspective of the Divine intent hidden within, every descent is part of the ascent; every apparent additional descent is part of the ever more exalted ascent which it generates.

Redemption (Geulah)

Every created being, whether meteor or molecule, exists only by virtue of the Divine energy that flows within it. In the words of the prayers,¹⁰ "In His goodness He renews each day, continuously, the work of Creation." Not even for an instant can the world be disconnected from the Divine life-force which pulsates within it, from the life-giving Divine light which permeates the entire universe, and which is the very existence of every being.

Though this concept can be grasped intellectually, it cannot be palpably sensed. The universe is not conscious that its very existence is constantly dependent on the ongoing will of its Creator, because the Divine life-force, which is the true "I" of all of creation, conceals itself behind numerous screens.

10. From the morning prayers; *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 44.

This concealment is an integral component of the intent of Creation, viz., that¹¹ “The Holy One, blessed be He, desired to have a dwelling place among mortals.” In order to materialize this intent, G-d created a world in which the Divine light is so imperceptible that the world appears to enjoy an existence separate and independent of its Creator. And precisely in the midst of such a seemingly lowly world, He seeks to find a dwelling place.

The task of building this dwelling G-d entrusted to the Jewish people; He created a world of darkness, and commanded His people to illuminate it. Accordingly, when a Jew studies Torah and fulfills its commandments, “for a *mitzvah* is a lamp and the Torah is light,”¹² he lights up the world and reveals the truth which it hides — viz., that everything is Divinity. And by so doing, he builds the dwelling place that G-d desires.

True enough, in these times we do not perceive the effects of every good deed that an individual Jew might do. Only when *Mashiach* comes will G-d’s Will be realized that He have “a dwelling place among mortals,” for only then will the effects of the Torah and *mitzvos* of the entire era of exile be visible to all; only then will it be apparent to all that the entire universe exists only because of the word of G-d. In the words of the prophet,¹³ “The glory of G-d shall be revealed, and together all flesh shall see that the mouth of G-d has spoken.”

This, in fact, is the true and inner significance of the coming of *Mashiach*. The accumulated good deeds of all the ages will then join forces to generate a mighty beacon that will banish the screen of evil, and allow all eyes to plainly see that¹⁴ “there is nothing else apart from Him.” At that time nothing will obscure the visible truth — that the reality of all existence is its Divine life-force.

11. *Tanya*, ch. 36, citing *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Naso* 7:1.

12. *Mishlei* 6:23.

13. *Yeshayahu* 40:5.

14. *Devarim* 4:35.

Accordingly, the coming of *Mashiach* is not a peripheral addendum to the Jewish people's service of G-d through the Torah and its commandments; rather, the coming of *Mashiach* is its core, the goal to which all else leads. So long as *Mashiach* has not yet come, the intent of creation has not been realized, and the universe has not fulfilled its destiny.

No Jew who realizes that the goal of all divine service is to create "a dwelling place among mortals," to bring the entire world under the dominion of G-d so that all will see the word of G-d that animates it, — no Jew with this realization is able to remain indifferent to the time at which this goal will finally be realized. Indeed, he looks forward to it with all his heart and soul, to the point that he does everything in his power to hasten its coming. Firm in his faith in the coming of *Mashiach*, his Torah study and his fulfillment of the *mitzvos* are fired with zest, as he joyously does his utmost to speed the coming of that momentous day of which it is written,¹⁵ "G-d shall be King over the entire earth; on that day G-d shall be One and His Name One."

Rabbi Alter Eliyahu Friedman

15. *Zechariah* 14:9.

**Part One:
Exile**

Prologue: The Anguish of Zion

The headstone [Jerusalem] has been turned into ruins, into a plowing ground, and the inheritors of the Heritage [Torah] have become an object of scorn among the nations. My heart aches within me, pained and anguished, for we are left as without a father and have become as orphans. [Israel,] tender and delicate, who was surrounded by a hedge of roses, is now in distress [and] is handed over into the hand of her adversaries. [Jerusalem] the faithful city has become as a widow, and the children [of Israel of whom it is said,] “Who can count them?” have been sold without money. The delicate and tender one who prospered [and achieved] royalty, her suffering has now lasted for too many years. The House of Jacob has become an object of scorn, contempt and derision; the jubilant city, a site for the planting of vineyards. Overfilled with bitter misery by the hand of wicked people is [the nation] who was favored as a burnt-offering and as an incense-offering. She was loath to forsake the Torah of Moses, [and therefore] she finds no rest either day or night. Awesome, exalted G-d, may it be Your will, to bring about a year of retribution for the abuse of Zion. Renew our days as of old, Eternal G-d whose abode is in the heavens; whiten the redness as wool and the stains as snow. Strengthen us in the fear of You and in the fulfillment of Your Torah, and remember us with Your deliverance, King who is full of mercy.

From the *Selichos* for Asarah BeTeves, *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 356

Chapter 1: The Spiritual Side of Exile

Pregnancy¹

Exile is likened to pregnancy, and the Redemption is likened to birth; as it is written, *כי חלה גם ילדה ציון את בני-ה* — “For Zion has been in labor, and has given birth to her children.”²

Our Sages teach³ that when an infant is in his mother’s womb, (a) “his head is between his knees,” not carrying out its function: it does not think, and though he has eyes they do not see; (b) “his mouth is closed and his navel is open”; i.e., his nourishment (for he eats what his mother eats) passes through his navel into his stomach and makes his body grow, rather than passing through his mouth, from which it would animate the heart and brain.

These two situations also characterize the Jewish people during the period of exile: (a) Since the Holy One, blessed be He, removed the revelation of His Presence from This World, the Children of Israel do not behold the Divine light. Moreover, (b) the life-giving flow that wells from one’s performance of *mitzvos* and good deeds does not enter through the mouth, from which it would animate the heart and brain, giving rise to a knowledge and love of G-d; rather, divine service is carried out frigidly,⁴ *מצוות אנשים מלומדה* — “a commandment which men perform by rote.”

This is the essence of the spiritual meaning of exile.

Accordingly, the ultimate perfection of the days of *Mashiach* is a kind of birth — a revelation of the light of G-d within the deepest recesses of a man’s heart. As it is written,⁵

-
1. In the original, *עיבור*.
 2. *Yeshayahu* 66:8.
 3. *Niddah* 30b.
 4. *Yeshayahu* 29:13.
 5. *Ibid.* 40:5.

ונגלה כבוד ה' וראו כל בשר — “The glory of G-d will be revealed, and all flesh [together] will see [that the mouth of G-d has spoken]”; and likewise too it is written,⁶ כי עין בעין יראו — “For they shall see eye to eye [when G-d returns to Zion].”

Torah Or, Va'eira, p. 55a

Outward Self-Nullification⁷

In the *Mussaf* prayer on the festivals, speaking of our present exile from the Holy Land and from the House of G-d's Choice, we say:⁸ ואין אנו יכולים לעלות וליראות ולהשתחוות לפניך — “We are unable to go up, to appear, and to bow down before You.”

Now it is obvious that in the absence of the *Beis HaMikdash* we cannot “go up and appear.” But why can we not “bow down before You” in any other place? Why does this require the *Beis HaMikdash*?

This we can understand as follows. Prostrating oneself indicates self-nullification, humble submission, and it can be done in either of two ways. A person might *bow down outwardly*: he subjugates his body so that it will not rebel, but in essence his innermost will does not submit. As an alternative, he might *bow down inwardly*, to the point that he now has no other will or desire of his own. And it was the latter degree of self-prostration that was possible only in the *Beis HaMikdash*, for there the Divine Presence was revealed, and the Jewish people were receptive to this revelation when they went up there for the pilgrim festivals.

Even now, however, in the time of exile, a reflection of the sanctity of the *Beis HaMikdash* radiates during the time of prayer, in every synagogue and in every House of Torah Study, for these are called⁹ מקדש מעט — “a miniature sanctuary.”¹⁰

Likkutei Torah, Berachah, p. 98b

6. *Ibid.* 52:8.

7. In the original, התבטלות חיצונית.

8. *Siddur*, p. 258.

9. *Megillah* 29b on *Yechezkel* 11:16.

10. See also the passage below entitled “The ‘Lightweight’ Mitzvos” (p. 59).

Divine Energy through Intermediaries (i)¹¹

When the *Beis HaMikdash* stood, the Divine Presence was revealed to the Jewish people directly, neither through intermediaries nor by being garbed in any other way. (This was also the case at the time of the first revelation to all of Israel at the time of the Giving of the Torah, as it is written,¹² פנים בפנים — “G-d spoke with you face to face.”) At that time the Children of Israel were at such a lofty spiritual level that they were able to receive the revelation of the divine light without the interposition of any agent.

In the time of exile, however, the life-giving divine energy flows to the Jewish people by means of the angels. This is why Yechezkel beheld the celestial Chariot as if en clothed in “the face of a lion” (i.e., the angelic hosts of Michael) and “the face of an ox” (i.e., the angelic hosts of Gavriel), and so on — for at that time Yechezkel was¹³ “in the midst of the exile.”

Likkutei Torah, Haazinu, p. 77c

Divine Energy through Intermediaries (ii)

In the time of exile, too, there are prophets among the Jewish people, namely, the towering *tzaddikim* of every generation who are endowed with divine inspiration and who know future events, and likewise the sages who teach Torah publicly, filling the hearts of Israel with the knowledge of Torah and the awe of heaven.

Nevertheless, prophecy is not granted in the time of exile in the same way that it was granted in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*. At that time a prophet was not allowed to reveal his prophecy without being commanded from Above to do so. Thus Yirmeyahu, for example, was commanded,¹⁴ “Go and cry out in

11. In the original, השפעה על ידי ממוצעים.

12. *Devarim* 5:4.

13. *Yechezkel* 1:1.

14. *Yirmeyahu* 2:2.

the ears of Jerusalem as follows.....” In the time of exile, by contrast, sages are employed in their holy work at a fixed rate, and hence teaching Torah and the awe of heaven is their obligation, even when they are not so commanded from Above.

In truth, however, just as in Temple times the command which a prophet received from Above was the divine cause for the flow of prophecy, so too there is a command from Above that tells a sage that he should teach and rebuke. This command, too, is absolutely an expression of the word of G-d, except that it has become encloded in a natural cause. For this is the current pattern: Every flow of divine energy that is directed to the Jewish people in the time of exile, is lowered and encloded in a garment of sackcloth. This is why the flow of prophetic inspiration in the time of exile is encloded in a natural circumstance.

The Short *Maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, p. 149

The Materiality of Man¹⁵

In the days of the *Beis HaMikdash* the Children of Israel were by their very nature drawn by a genuine yearning towards the service of G-d; for them the demands of This World were a matter of necessity, to be dispensed with offhandedly, and without ardor. In the time of exile the opposite is true: A man is drawn by nature to his bodily needs and to This-Worldly matters, while his divine service and his love of G-d are earned at the expense of considerable toil.

Likkutei Torah, Seitzei, p. 40a

Divine Service by Way of War¹⁶

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, when the Divine Presence was openly manifest, the divine sparks that had fallen

15. In the original, חומריות האדם.

16. In the original, עבודה בדרך מלחמה.

into the *kelippos* were sifted and elevated as a matter of course: the *kelippos* spontaneously became null and void, losing their separate identity as they became incorporated in the forces of holiness, just as a candle becomes lost in a great flame. Moreover, the Jewish people delighted in their divine service (on account of the intense revelation of G-dliness in the *Beis HaMikdash*), and by nature they were drawn to it.

In the time of exile, by contrast — when the divine Countenance is hidden, and the way of the wicked prospers — a man's divine service is motivated mainly by the attribute of *Netzach*, [one of whose meanings is "conquest"]. This involves battling and standing firm against all the internal and external forces that hinder any man who seeks to draw close to G-d. (Indeed, the attribute of *Netzach* is aroused specifically when one is challenged by obstacles and hindrances.)

There is another characteristic of divine service motivated by the attribute of *Netzach*: Even when one does not derive delight from the pleasant flavor (*taam*) of his service of G-d, he persists in his service notwithstanding, "in a way that transcends [intellectual] delight (*taam*) and understanding."

Or HaTorah, Shir HaShirim, p. 123

Divine Service by Way of Awe

In the days of the *Beis HaMikdash* the Divine Presence diffused its light openly. The divine service of the Jewish people was therefore mainly inspired by the love and desire that they felt towards G-d, and they derived pleasure from this service. In the time of exile, by contrast, when the radiance of the Divine Presence is not manifest, divine service is mainly prompted by an acceptance of the yoke of heaven, by awe, and by self-nullification.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XV, p. 238

Safety Fences and Regulations¹⁷

At the time that the *Beis HaMikdash* stood, the Jewish people needed no more than the laws of the Torah, for they were not drawn so powerfully to bodily desires. It was thus easy for them to have the love of G-d fixed firmly in their hearts, and this inspired them to serve Him with fiery ardor. Generation after generation, however, their hearts waned. The Jewish people were seared by the alien flame of worldly pleasures, until they were no longer able to serve G-d out of love — except insofar as they were aided by the detailed and stringent regulations of the Talmudic Sages. These reflect two approaches:¹⁸ סור מרע — “turn away from evil” (i.e., all the restrictive rulings in the *Gemara* and in the halachic decisions of the *poskim*), and עשה טוב — “do good” (i.e., the ethical instruction in the *aggados* of the Sages and in *Pirkei Avos*).

Likkutei Torah, Matos, p. 85a

The Additional Day of Yom-Tov in the Diaspora¹⁹

Yom-Tov is a time of divine revelation, such as took place during the pilgrim festivals in Temple times. For there is a verse that says,²⁰ יראה כל זכורך — “[Three times a year] shall all your males appear [(lit., “be seen”) before the L-rd your G-d in the place that He will choose].” On this our Sages comment,²¹ “Just as [every man] came to see (לראות), he also came to be seen (ליראות) [by the Divine Presence].”

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, when souls were loftier, the Jewish people used to receive this revelation from an exceedingly exalted divine source, for which reason one day of *Yom-Tov* sufficed. In the time of exile, by contrast, when souls are lowlier, this revelation has to descend from step to step

17. In the original, סייגים ותקנות.

18. *Tehillim* 34:15.

19. In the original, יום-טוב שני של גלויות.

20. *Devarim* 16:16.

21. *Chagigah* 2a.

until it reaches their level, and for this reason an additional day of *Yom-Tov* is needed.

Likkutei Torah, Shemini Atzeres, p. 91c

The Distinctive Quality of Israel is Not Evident

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the Holy One, blessed be He, may be described metaphorically as “awake”; in the time of exile, He may be described metaphorically as “asleep”.

When a man is awake, all the faculties of his soul are overtly active in his body, each in its own way. Hence one can readily observe their relative merits; among other things, one can see how the intellect is superior to the other faculties and rules over them. When a man is asleep, by contrast, his various faculties are obscured to the point that they all appear equal, and there is no way of telling that the intellect is superior.

And now in the analogue: Saying that G-d is “awake” means that the divine light is revealed in the world, just as it used to be palpably revealed in the *Beis HaMikdash*. In such a situation one can observe the distinctive quality of the “intellect”, i.e., of the souls of Israel. (This was indeed the case in the days of King Shlomo, who ruled over many peoples.) Saying that G-d is (so to speak) “asleep” means that the divine light is obscured, so that the distinctive quality of the Jewish people is not discernible in the world.

Sefer HaMaamarim 5700 [1940], p. 5

A Dream²²

The time of exile has been likened to a dream. For so it is written,²³ בשוב ה' את שיבת ציון היינו כחולמים — “When G-d will return the exiles of Zion, we will have been like dreamers.”

22. In the original, חלום.

23. *Tehillim* 126:1.

A dream can fuse two opposites. In the present time of exile likewise, a man can be a paradox. While he is at prayer he is aroused to a love of G-d; when his prayers are over this love has vanished: he is preoccupied all day with his business affairs, and gives priority to his bodily needs.²⁴

Torah Or, Vayeshev, p. 28c

A Battle between Beasts

To understand the inner meaning of the Jewish people's subjugation to various nations during the time of exile, one can consider the sport arranged by a noble who pits one beast against another in his palace arena, and enjoys watching how one of them overcomes the other.

The seventy nations of the world are likened to beasts, as we read in the Book of *Daniel*.²⁵ The Tribes of Israel, too, are likened to beasts — Yehudah, to a lion;²⁶ Binyamin, to a wolf;²⁷ and so on. The Jewish people's subjugation to various nations during the time of exile is thus a battle between beasts, each striving to overcome the other, to wrench the prey from its jaws and to overthrow it.

As to the inner meaning of this battle, this will become apparent in the Time to Come.

The Short *Maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, p. 230

The Concept of Exile in Man's Divine Service and in the Torah²⁸

The inner meaning of Israel's exile among the nations of the world is paralleled within the spiritual life of every individual Jew.

24. See also the passage below entitled "Revealing the Soul's Transcendent Potential" (p. 46).

25. Chs. 7-8.

26. *Bereishis* 49:9.

27. *Ibid.* v. 27.

28. In the original, ענין הגלות בעבודת האדם ובתורה.

For the divine soul, which is called “Israel”, becomes encloded and (so to speak) dispersed in the alien desires of the animal soul. This “dispersion” calls for an “ingathering of the exiles” — marshaling all these desires, by means of *teshuvah*, so that all the components of the divine soul are synthesized and can together ascend to the realm of unity.

In this sense we can understand the verse,²⁹ אִם יִהְיֶה נִדְחֶיךָ — “Even if your [‘your’ in the singular] dispersion will be at the furthestmost parts of the world, from there the L-rd your G-d will gather you.”

* * *

Not only is there a “dispersion” within every individual Jew, but in the Torah, too, there is an “exile”; i.e., the separate laws are so dispersed that it becomes impossible to discover a clear halachic ruling. (This difficulty is evident in the involved argumentation of the *Gemara*.) This “dispersion”, too, calls for an “ingathering of the exiles” — clarifying the various laws, defining the precise area in which each one applies, and excluding any possibility of contradiction or logical inconsistency between related texts.

In this sense we can understand the verse,³⁰ וְהָיָה עֵקֶב תִּשְׁמְעוּן — “And it shall come to pass, if you will listen to these judgments,...” [That is how the phrase translates on the level of *psbat*, the plain meaning. On the non-literal level of *derush*, however, it can be interpreted as follows:]

“וְהָיָה עֵקֶב: At the time of the footsteps of *Mashiach*,³¹ when the task of sifting and elevating the hidden sparks of holiness in the material world will have been completed,

“תִּשְׁמְעוּן: there will be a rallying and ingathering³²

“אֵת הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים הָאֵלֶּה: of all the laws of the Torah.”

Shaarei Teshuvah, Vol. II, p. 62c

29. *Devarim* 30:4.

30. *Ibid.* 7:12.

31. In the Heb./Aram. original, בְּזֶמַן עֵקֶבְתָּ דְּמִשִּׁיחָא. The word עֵקֶב (lit., “heel”) suggests “footsteps”. The opening clause thus means: “On the eve of the appearance of *Mashiach*,...”

32. This interpretation of תִּשְׁמְעוּן is suggested by the root שָׁמַע, as in the verse, וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׁאוּל אֶת הָעָם (*I Shmuel* 15:4) — “And Shaul rallied the people.”

The Soul was Not Exiled (i)

In the days of the Rebbe Rashab, the Czarist regime demanded that the rabbis of Russia introduce certain reforms in Jewish education and in the rabbinate.

The Rebbe Rashab responded as follows: “It was not by our will that we were exiled from the Land of Israel, and not by our endeavors will we return to the Land of Israel. Our Father and King exiled us, and it is He Who will redeem us and gather in our scattered dispersion....

“Nevertheless, all the nations on the face of the earth must know: Our bodies alone have been handed over into exile to be ruled by the nations of the world, but not our souls.... We must openly declare for all to hear, that with regard to everything involving our religion — the Torah of the people of Israel, with its commandments and customs — no one is going to impose his views on us, and no force has the right to subjugate us.”

Likkutei Dibburim, Vol. IV, p. 1383

The Soul was Not Exiled (ii)

[The Jubilee year frees a Jew who has been forced by poverty to sell himself as a bondman.]

Concerning him the Torah writes:³³ ויצא מעמך הוא ובניו עמו — “He shall depart from you, he and his children with him.”

On this *Rashi* makes the following comment.³⁴

“Rabbi Shimon said: [Even] if he himself is sold, who sold his children? What we learn from this verse is that his master is obliged to support the bondman’s children.”

[This teaching can be understood on the non-literal level of *derush*, as follows:]

He and his children with him: Both the father (i.e., our heavenly Father) and the children (i.e., the Children of Israel)

33. *Vayikra* 25:41.

34. *Ad loc.*, paraphrasing *Kiddushin* 22a.

have been “sold” into exile. For, as our Sages teach,³⁵ “Wherever they were exiled, the Divine Presence was with them.”

[Even] if he himself is sold, who sold his children? It is all very well to say that G-d is able to (so to speak) “sell” Himself into exile, for He can survive the exile without being affected by it. But how is it possible to sell the Children of Israel into exile? For if the exile does exert an influence over them, then the very experience of being G-d’s children cannot surface within them.

What we learn from this verse is that his master is obliged to support the bondman’s children: The Children of Israel were handed over to subjection in exile only insofar as their bodily needs are concerned. (This is hinted at by the term *מזונות*, here translated “support”.) Though these material needs are granted to them in this world through the agency of the heavenly representatives of their respective countries, the Jew’s soul has never been “sold” (G-d forbid) into captivity.

His master is obliged to support...: Rabbi Shimon stresses that this is an obligation. It is true that G-d desired that the livelihood of the Jewish people during the exile should be granted them through the heavenly representatives of their respective countries, but none of these national angels has any say in the matter: he is a mere ax in the hands of the forester. Moreover, he is obliged to satisfy the needs of the Jewish people generously.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXII, p. 157

The Length of the Exile³⁶ (i)

The First *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed on account of serious transgressions. As our Sages teach,³⁷ “G-d has overlooked [even] idolatry, incest and murder, but did not excuse the neglect of Torah study.” The Second *Beis*

35. *Megillah* 29a.

36. In the original, אריכות הגלות.

37. *Yerushalmi, Chagigah* 1:7.

HaMikdash was destroyed on account of the sin of baseless hatred.³⁸ Why, then, is the present exile lasting so long, whereas the Babylonian exile which followed the First Destruction lasted only seventy years?

We can gain a perspective on this question by comparing the respective wrongs that had to be corrected by the two periods of exile.

The seven nations that inhabited Canaan when our forefathers arrived there were the embodiment of the seven evil attributes. Though commanded to displace these nations, our forefathers did not do so, as it is written,³⁹ “You shall make no covenant..., but you have not obeyed My voice.” As a consequence, they themselves were contaminated by the seven evil attributes. In order to rectify these attributes, (each of which comprises ten aspects,) the people of Israel were exiled from their land for seventy years.

The sins of the time of the Second *Beis HaMikdash* did not involve the evil attributes; rather, they were bred by baseless hatred. This is the *kelippah* that characterizes a particular nation that was not one of the above-mentioned seven nations — Midian, whose very name (מדין) signifies dissension (מדין). Though this attribute is not absolutely evil, it is the root of evil; moreover, it is the antithesis of holiness, whose essence is unity and harmony.⁴⁰ And this is why our exile is so extended — for it serves to correct and elevate the baseless hatred out of which it grew.

This perspective enables us better to understand a teaching of our Sages,⁴¹ which compares “the earlier people” (i.e., those of the period of the First *Beis HaMikdash*) with “the latter people” (i.e., those of the period of the Second *Beis HaMikdash*): “Because the sin of the earlier people was revealed, the end [of their exile] was revealed;⁴² because the sin

38. In the original, שנת חנם; *Yoma* 9b.

39. *Shoftim* 2:2.

40. For an elaboration of this theme, see *Heichaltzu: A Chassidic Discourse on Ahavas Yisrael* (Sichos In English/Kehot; N.Y., 1988).

41. *Yoma*, *loc. cit.*

42. I.e., it was predicted to take place “after seventy years of Babylon have passed” (*Yirmeyahu* 29:10).

of the latter people was not revealed, the end [of their exile] has not been revealed.”

This we can now understand as follows. In the period of the First *Beis HaMikdash*, when the transgressions of our people involved visibly outright evil (i.e., “their sin was revealed”), they repented of them at once, and their exile came to an end within a short time (i.e., “the end [of their exile] was revealed”). In the period of the Second *Beis HaMikdash*, by contrast, the prevalent sin was baseless hatred. In such a case people can delude themselves that this is not really a sin, for they can persuade themselves that their hatred of their fellows is justifiable. That is to say, “their sin was not revealed” even to themselves. And for this reason “the end [of this exile] has not been revealed,” for people do not genuinely regret having sinned in this way.

Another possible explanation for the length of the current exile: It takes longer to sift and elevate subtle traces of evil than to sift and elevate coarse manifestations of evil, which are immediately identifiable.

Likkutei Torah, Matos, p. 85d

The Length of the Exile (ii)

In the early generations a wrongdoer was not ashamed of his evil. In the latter generations, since people are ashamed to sin publicly, they do so furtively, deceiving those around them. In this sense “their sin is not revealed,” for they conceal their sins.

Likewise: In the earlier generations a saintly individual sought to serve G-d in truth, without any self-seeking motives. In the latter generations, evil is hidden away even in divine service itself, as in the case of a person who studies Torah for ulterior motives, rather than for its own sake.

And this is why the present exile is lasting so long — for seeking out hidden evil is much more difficult than seeking out conspicuous evil. Thus we find that Yaakov Avinu’s struggle

against Eisav, who was overtly evil, was brief; coping with the wiles of Lavan took twenty years.

The Short *Maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, p. 453

The Length of the Exile (iii)

The *Gemara* teaches:⁴³ שית אלפי שני הוה עלמא — “The world will exist for six thousand years.”⁴⁴ As is well known, these years correspond to the six *middos*, [and these divine attributes in turn correspond to the first six days of the week,] as it is written,⁴⁵ כי אלף שנים בעיניך כיום אתמול כי יעבור — “For a thousand years are in Your eyes like yesterday that has passed.”

The first thousand years reflected the divine attribute of *Chessed* (“lovingkindness”). This explains the extreme longevity in that period.

In the second millennium the dominant attribute was *Gevurah* (“strict justice”); hence the Flood took place at this time.

The third millennium was characterized by the attribute of *Tiferes* (“glory”), which combines the preceding two attributes. This was the time of the Giving of the Torah, which comprises the attribute of *Chessed* (expressed in the 248 positive commandments) and of *Gevurah* (expressed in the 365 prohibitive commandments).

The fourth millennium gave expression to the attribute of *Netzach* (which means both “eternity” and “victory”). During this period, therefore, the two Temples stood, for, as our Sages taught,⁴⁶ והנצח: זו ירושלים — “*Vehanetzach*”⁴⁷ is an allusion to Jerusalem.” The Destruction of the Second *Beis HaMikdash* began towards the end of this millennium, at its “heel” (Heb.: עקב) — 172 (עק"ב) years before the fifth millennium.⁴⁸ (This is

43. *Rosh HaShanah* 31a.

44. See Comparative Chronological Table below (p. 20).

45. *Tehillim* 90:4; cf. *Sanhedrin* 97a.

46. *Berachos* 58a.

47. *I Diveri HaYamim* 29:11.

48. I.e., 240 CE - 172 years = 68 CE. (See Table.)

hinted at in the phrase,⁴⁹ ואתה תשופנו עקב. Though the plain meaning of this verse is, “You will strike him in the heel,” it can also be understood to mean, “You will strike it 172 [years before the end of the millennium].”)

The fifth millennium corresponds to the attribute of *Hod* (“majesty”), which in the scheme of the *Sefiros* is cognate with the sternness of *Gevurah*. And, indeed, this millennium was replete with expulsions, anti-Semitic edicts and annihilation. Incidentally, the two diverse facets of the attribute of *Hod* are reflected in a *derush* that transforms the meaning of the Hebrew word הוד by reversing its three letters. There is a verse that says,⁵⁰ כל היום דוה — “...ailing all day.” Another verse says,⁵¹ והודי נהפך עלי למשחית — “My majesty was transformed for me to a despoiler.” This divine attribute can thus be viewed from two angles, so to speak.

The sixth millennium reflects the divine attribute of *Yesod* (“foundation”), [which focuses and transmits the accumulated spiritual riches of the preceding *Sefiros*]. It thus serves as a preparation for the seventh millennium, יום שכולו שבת — “the day which is entirely *Shabbos*.”⁵²

Let us now consider the Redemption from this historical perspective.

Concerning the promised time of the Ultimate Redemption, the Sages say,⁵³ זכו: אחישנה; לא זכו: בעתה — “If [the Jewish people] are found worthy, I shall hasten it; if they are not found worthy, [the Redemption will come] at its appointed time.”

Had the Jewish people been found worthy of it, they would have been redeemed at the beginning of the sixth millennium, which followed after the previous millennium’s dark night of exile. To use the above-mentioned metaphor of days, the beginning of the sixth millennium was the first “morning.”⁵⁴

49. *Bereishis* 3:15.

50. *Eichah* 1:13.

51. *Daniel* 10:8.

52. *Tamid* 7:4.

53. *Sanhedrin* 98a, interpreting *Yeshayahu* 60:22.

54. “Morning” is used here not in the sense of daybreak, but in the sense that it began the sixth day’s evening-to-evening cycle of twenty-four hours.

However, since at that time the Jewish people were not found worthy of redemption, the exile has now extended beyond the five-hundredth year of the sixth millennium,⁵⁵ which is the second “morning”.⁵⁶ Indeed, the author of *Or HaChayim* writes⁵⁷ that the sparks of the revelation of the Redemption first began to appear from the five-hundredth year of the sixth millennium, by virtue of the lofty *tzaddikim* who flourished at that time.

The *Mnamarim* of the Alter Rebbe on the *Parshiyos* of the Torah and the Festivals, p. 419

Comparative Chronological Table

<u>Millennium & Jewish Date</u>	<u>Gregorian Date</u>	<u>Corresponding Events Mentioned Above</u>
1st: 0-1000	3760 BCE - 2760 BCE	Longevity of early generations
2nd: 1001-2000	2760 BCE - 1760 BCE	The Flood: Year 1656 (2104 BCE)
3rd: 2001-3000	1760 BCE - 760 BCE	Sinai: Year 2448 (1312 BCE)
4th: 3001-4000	760 BCE - 240 CE	1st Temple:2928-3338 (832-422 BCE) 2nd Temple:3408-3828 (352BCE-68CE)
5th: 4001-5000	240 CE - 1240 CE	Massacres, expulsions, Crusades
6th: 5001-6000	1240 CE - 2240 CE	Preparation for the era of <i>Mashiach</i>

The Length of the Exile (iv)

Fulfilling *mitzvos* during the time of exile is like sowing seeds. A seed planted in the ground sprouts into a harvest that far exceeds its beginnings. So, too, by fulfilling *mitzvos*, one “sows” and increases the lights Above, in the Supernal “Land”, and the harvest will “sprout” in future time. Moreover, the longer a seed remains in the ground, the richer will be the yield. So, too, the longer this exile is extended, the more intense will the revelation be in time to come.

55. I.e., the year 1740 C.E.

56. In this case “morning” signifies the halfway mark of the twenty-four-hour day that began with the previous evening.

57. On *Parshas Tzav* and *Parshas Pinchas*.

This link between the present and the future is hinted at in the following verse:⁵⁸ ואמר ביום ההוא...זה ה' קוינו לו — “And it shall be said on that day,...”This is G-d in Whom we hoped.’ ”

That is to say: “In anticipation of the divine revelation (‘This is G-d!’) that is manifest to us now, in the time of the Redemption, we already prepared, through our divine service during the exile, conduits and lines (קוין) for the downward flow of divine energy.”

Likkutei Torah, Shir HaShirim, p. 50a

“Lebanon” will be Felled by a Mighty One⁵⁹

Whenever the Jewish people are made to submit to the rule of any nation, that nation at first gains ascendancy over all others, and as long as the Jewish people are subject to them, that nation continues to grow ever more powerful. This was the case with Pharaoh of Egypt, with Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, with the emperors of Rome, and with the great powers of later generations.

The explanation is that when the Jewish people are exiled, the Divine Presence is exiled together with them, in the spirit of the teaching of our Sages,⁶⁰ גלו לאדום שכינה עמהם — “When they were exiled to Edom, the *Shechinah* accompanied them.” And it is not seemly that the Divine Presence should be in exile at the hands of a lowly nation.

Toras Chayim, Bereishis, Vol. I, p. 92a

* * *

The Rebbe *Shlita* adds: “Our generation, too, has observed that so long as the bulk of our people lived in Russia, the world quaked in dread of her. More recently, when most of its Jewish

58. *Yeshayahu* 25:9.

59. *Ibid.* 10:34. “Lebanon”, though literally referring to the mighty cedar forests of Lebanon, also serves as a metaphor for the *Beis HaMikdash* (*Gittin* 56b); in the above context this is extended to refer as well to the Jewish people.

60. *Megillah* 29a. In the language of the Sages, “Edom” is a code word for the Roman Empire.

population migrated to the United States, this country has become the world's most powerful.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 142

With Him In His Distress⁶¹ (i)

There is a verse in the Torah in which G-d speaks of a period in which the Jews will break their covenant with Him:⁶² “Then My anger will burn against them..., and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them” — “...as if,” adds *Rashi*, “I did not see their distress.”

Only *as if...*, for G-d does not actually forsake Israel: He observes them and (as it were) feels their anguish. In the words of the prophet,⁶³ בכל צרתם לו צר — “In all their distress, *He* is distressed.”

Indeed, the ultimate reason for which G-d “hides His face” is to arouse His people to return to Him. This demonstrates how deep is His love for them, no matter what their condition.

The Alter Rebbe⁶⁴ likens this to the case of “a son who is at home with his father; the father, however, hides his face from him so that the son should become more aware of his own love for his father and express it more ardently — which will assuredly result when the son realizes that his father is present but is hiding his face.”

Likkutei Sichos, *Parshas Vayelech*, 5748 [1988]

With Him In His Distress (ii)

“I will hide My face from them..., and many evils and troubles will befall them; and they will say on that day, ‘It is

61. In the original, עמו אנכי בצרה — “I (G-d) shall be with him in his distress” (*Tehillim* 91:15).

62. *Devarim* 31:17.

63. *Yeshayahu* 63:9.

64. *Likkutei Torah*, *Parshas Ki Savo*, p. 44d.

because our G-d is not among us that these evils have come upon us.’ ”⁶⁵

Rambam explains⁶⁶ that when G-d hides His face and Divine Providence is (so to speak) withdrawn, the Jews are “left to the devices of chance,” and thus it happens that evils and troubles come upon them. Hence the expression in the above-quoted verse, “...will *befall* them,” and “have *come upon* us.”

At the same time, however, this mode of Divine conduct itself is also determined by *hashgachah pratis*, the active and particularized Divine supervision which is known as Divine Providence. For Divine Providence is of two kinds: (a) *hashgachah pnimis* (lit., “inward Providence”), which is manifest, not being hidden in the garb of nature; and (b) *hashgachah chitzonis* (lit., “outward Providence”), which is en clothed in the workings of nature. Accordingly, the state in which G-d “hides His face” (*bester panim*) does not imply that Divine Providence is suspended. What is being hidden is only the *panim* (for this word means both “face” and “inward”): it is only the inward and undisguised form of Providence that is hidden. And this Divine self-concealment can reach a point at which a man is likely to perceive his troubles as being “the way of the world,” or (to borrow the expression used by *Rambam*⁶⁷) “happenstance” — something that “befell” him, whereas in truth, at such times too Divine Providence determines every detail of his life.

(Compare the following statement at the end of *Shomer Emunim*: “Nothing occurs by chance without Divine intent and Providence; as it is written,⁶⁸ ‘I shall be indifferent to you’ — from which we see that even chance is a Divinely-chosen mode of conduct, for everything comes from G-d through particularized Divine Providence.” Note likewise the words in which *Rambam*⁶⁷ paraphrases the above verse: “When I shall *bring* troubles upon you,... I shall *add* the fury of this chance indifference.”)

65. *Devarim, loc. cit.*

66. *Moreh Nevuchim*, Part I, ch. 23; Part III, ch. 51.

67. *Hilchos Taaniyos* 1:3; in the original, מַקְרָה נִקְרֵית.

68. *Vayikra* 26:24.

This conception resembles the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov on Divine Providence, that⁶⁹ “G-d decreed that a particular living blade of grass should live, etc.” — except that this very decree is en clothed in the garb of nature.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVIII, p. 199

With Him In His Distress (iii)

“Wherever they (the Jewish people) have been exiled, the Divine Presence is with them.”⁷⁰

After all, the law prescribes that⁷¹ “If a disciple is exiled, his teacher is exiled with him.” Moreover,⁷² “[G-d] commands Israel to do what He Himself does.”

The point of the former quotation is that the master is not (for example) *brought* with his disciple, but that he is *exiled*. He is not simply located in the same town as a free man: he, too, is in a state of exile. The same is true of G-d and Israel:⁷³ “The Divine Presence experiences, together with Israel, the *distress* of their exile.”

It is therefore self-understood that there is no justification whatever for despair (G-d forbid) in the face of this awesome exile, for “his teacher is...with him.” Or, in the words of *Tehillim*,⁷⁴ “G-d is your guardian; G-d is your protective shade [*because He is present*] at your right hand.”

Hence, since “the *Shechinah* is in exile,⁷⁵ then even if the spiritual state of the Jewish people would suggest that the present exile should be prolonged, G-d will nevertheless bring

69. *Sefer HaMaamarim — Kuntreisim*, Vol. II, p. 470. See the essay entitled “Master Plan: The Baal Shem Tov’s Unique Conception of Divine Providence” (Sichos In English, N.Y., 1992).

70. *Megillah* 29a.

71. *Makkos* 10a.

72. *Shmos Rabbah* 30:9.

73. *Rashi* on *Devarim* 30:3.

74. 121:5.

75. In the original Aram., שכיתת בגלותא (cf. *Megillah* 29a).

the Redemption *for His own sake*, so to speak — “For My sake, for My sake, will I do it.”⁷⁶

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXIX, p. 93

Yaakov Avinu Planted Cedars in Egypt

“And from where did they have [cedar wood] in the wilderness? Rabbi Tanchuma explained: ‘Yaakov Avinu had seen with divine foresight that the Jewish people would one day build a sanctuary in the wilderness. He therefore brought cedars to Egypt and planted them there, and commanded his sons to take them with them when the time came to leave Egypt.’”⁷⁷

The wilderness: This alludes to the time of exile. Many sources compare the exile to the wanderings of the Jews in the wilderness, in⁷⁸ “the wilderness of the nations” — a place of *kelippos*, of⁷⁹ “snakes, vipers, scorpions and drought,” a place desolate of anything holy.

To build a sanctuary in the wilderness: The purpose of this trek is to build a sanctuary for G-d in the wilderness, a dwelling place for Him among (and within) the dwellers of this lowest of all worlds.

Cedars: An allusion to *tzaddikim*, as in the simile,⁸⁰ “The righteous will flourish like a palm, grow tall like a cedar in Lebanon.” More specifically, the towering cedar alludes to a *nasi* of Israel, to the leader of each generation (for the term *nasi* is related to *התנשאות*, meaning “elevation”).

Yaakov Avinu brought cedars to Egypt: As its Hebrew initials suggest,⁸¹ every *nasi* is a “spark of Yaakov Avinu” *ניצוץ שיל ייעקב איבינו*. Moreover, his soul derives from the Land of Israel, for in truth he transcends exile — except that during this

76. *Yeshayahu* 48:11.

77. *Rashi* on *Shmos* 25:8.

78. In the original, *מדבר העמים* (*Yechezkel* 20:35).

79. *Devarim* 8:15.

80. *Tehillim* 92:13.

81. *Megaleh Amukos, Ofen* 84.

time he has been “planted” in “Egypt”, in order to give his fellow Jews the courage and strength to contend with the darkness of exile.

This is the explanation of Rabbi Tanchuma: This is Israel’s consolation (for the name Tanchuma means “consolation”) — that even when they are in the thick of exile, they have in their midst those “cedars” that Yaakov Avinu planted in every generation.

Likkutei Sichos, Parshas Terumah, 5748 [1988]

The Butchers’ Market

There is a promise in the Torah which reads,⁸² “Yet even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not abhor them nor spurn them so as to destroy them.”

On this the *Zohar* writes:⁸³ “During the time of exile the Jewish people may be likened to a bride standing in a butchers’ market. Because of her Bridegroom’s great love for her, its foul odor does not deter Him from visiting her where she is; indeed, in His imagination she is standing in a bazaar of perfumers.”

“This relationship,” comments the Rebbe *Shlita*, “refers to the time of exile. But the time has now come that there should be an *end to the exile*,⁸⁴ and we have to get ready for the Redemption. And surely it is obvious that we cannot accompany G-d to the *chuppah* wearing the same ‘garments’⁸⁵ that were good enough for the butchers’ market....”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 178

82. *Vayikra* 26:44.

83. End of *Parshas Bechukosai*.

84. In fact the Rebbe *Shlita* expressed this in Russian: *Daloi galus!*

85. “Garments” (*levushim*) serve as a metaphor for the soul’s various means of expression — thought, speech and action; cf. *Tanya*, ch. 4.

G-d Regrets Having Created Exile

There are four things, as our Sages teach,⁸⁶ that G-d regrets having created. One of them is — exile. It is wise to remember this constantly: exile is not the true state in which G-d would like His people to be.

Our Sages taught us about this regret for two reasons:

(a) in order that we should not come to be satisfied with the state of exile, but that we should remember that it is a punishment:⁸⁷ “Because of our sins we were exiled from our Land”;

(b) in order that we should not be daunted by the darkness of exile, nor driven to despair — for we know that exile is not a substantial reality, and it will ultimately dissolve.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXIV, p. 175

“Exile Comes to the World”⁸⁸

“Exile comes to the world because of idolatry, incest and murder, and because the land is not left to rest during the Sabbatical year.”

This teaching stresses that it is so unthinkable that exile should exist in the world, that it is brought on only by the weightiest transgressions in the Torah. In other words, even if (G-d forbid) all the other 609 *mitzvos* were spurned, the punishment of exile would still not be warranted.

The reason is simple: Since this is G-d’s world, it is unthinkable that it should comprise a component like exile.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5744 [1984]

86. *Sukkah* 52b.

87. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 258.

88. *Apos* 5:9.

Four Reasons for Thanksgiving

[A person who has safely survived a voyage across the ocean, a journey in the wilderness, imprisonment on a capital charge, or serious illness, is obliged to express his thanksgiving.⁸⁹ In the days of the *Beis HaMikdash*, this took the form of a *Korban Todah* (a thanksgiving offering); in our days, the appropriate blessing (*Birkas HaGomel*)⁹⁰ is recited immediately after one has been called to the Reading of the Torah.]

The condition of the Jewish people during the time of exile may be compared to each of these four states:

The ocean: The insistent demands of making a livelihood, which distract a man from his service of G-d, are comparable to turbulent waters, as in the chassidic interpretation of the verse,⁹¹ “Many waters cannot quench the love [which the Jewish people feel toward G-d].”

The wilderness: This place of⁹² “snakes, vipers, scorpions and thirst, a place without water,” alludes to the spiritual desolation of exile.

Imprisonment: For the Jewish people, this long exile is a veritable prison.

Illness: The dense darkness of exile makes the Jewish people lovesick with an ardent yearning for G-d.

And when *Mashiach* comes, we will express our thanksgiving to G-d for having liberated us from these four constraints.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Tzar*, 5740 [1980]

89. *Tehillim* ch. 107; *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 219:1.

90. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 186.

91. *Shir HaShirim* 8:7.

92. *Devarim* 8:15.

Chapter 2: The Aim and Purpose of Exile

Descent for the Sake of Ultimate Ascent⁹³

Ultimately, the main intent of exile is not to punish, but to refine and purify the Jewish people so as to make them worthy recipients of the revelations of Divinity which *Mashiach* will bring about. As is explained in *Chassidus*,⁹⁴ “The ultimate intent of the descent and exile is to prepare for a great ascent, when, in the Days of *Mashiach*, the light of G-d will radiate manifestly.” Now, during the exile, we need to prepare “vessels” — receptors — for these revelations.

This sequence enables us to understand why, in response to the question of the Baal Shem Tov, “Master (i.e., *Mashiach*), when are you coming?”, the answer was, “When your wellsprings will be disseminated outward.”⁹⁵

For the light within the teachings of *Chassidus* is the vessel which can receive the revelation of *Mashiach* — and when the vessel is complete, the light will be revealed.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. I, p. 216

Seeking Sparks (i)

“The only reason for which G-d exiled the Jewish people among the nations of the world was that proselytes be added to them.” So teach our Sages.⁹⁶

But were there in fact so many converts in the course of the exile? Rather, the Sages were alluding to a different task — the task of sifting and refining the materiality of this world, and

93. In the original, *ירידה צורך עלי-ה*.

94. *Torah Or* 51c.

95. See below, p. 71.

96. *Pesachim* 87b.

elevating the sparks of holiness that are to be found within it. A convert is someone who was first distant and later came close; so, too, these sparks were first subject to the impure rule of *kelippah*, and through man's spiritual labors of refining and sifting materiality they are brought ever nearer to the realm of holiness.

It will be noted that the Sages spoke of proselytes being *added*, implying that the Jewish people are augmented by their incorporation. So, too, these sparks derive from such an exalted source that when they are sifted out from the material things in which they are embedded, and are elevated and restored to that original source, the divine light that is thereby diffused is of augmented intensity.

Sefer HaMaamarim 5702 [1942], p. 69

Seeking Sparks (ii)

“One of you is exiled to Barbary, one of you to Samatria; to Me it is as if you were all exiled.”⁹⁷

What can this mean? How can the exile of a solitary Jew scour the entire House of Israel of its sins?

The main function of the exile is not to serve as a punishment for the Jewish people's misdeeds, but to make possible the divine service of sifting and refining the physicality of this world, and elevating the divine sparks concealed within it. Therefore, when even a single Jew finds himself in a particular country, and G-d prospers his efforts at elevating all of its divine sparks, he is fulfilling the function of the exile: he is preparing that land for the coming of *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. III, p. 1016

97. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:8.

Seeking Sparks (iii)

As has been stated elsewhere, the purpose of the exile is to provide the framework for the divine service that consists of sifting and refining the materiality of this world, and elevating the sparks of holiness that are entrenched within it. The question thus arises: How would this have been attained if the Jewish people had not sinned and had not been banished from their land?

And the answer: In such a situation, the sparks would have been reincorporated in the realm of holiness of their own accord, just as a mere candle loses its separate identity when it joins a major flame. To take a historical instance of this: all the nations of the world came to listen to the wisdom of King Solomon.⁹⁸ Likewise, in time to come, G-d promises that⁹⁹ “at that time I will make the peoples pure of speech so that they will all call upon the Name of G-d and serve Him with one purpose.” And in similar vein it is written,¹⁰⁰ “Nations shall walk by your light” [i.e., by the light of the Jewish people].

Torah Or, Bereishis 6a

Seeking Sparks (iv)

The ultimate purpose of the exile is that the “288 sparks” that (so to speak) fell into this material world from the World of *Tohu* (i.e., the realm of Chaos) be discovered, rectified, and restored to their original state.

Now is it not unthinkable that in the course of this long exile these sparks have not yet been refined?

The explanation is as follows: The sparks that originally “fell” into the World of *Atzilus* were 288 in number. However, when they descended into the less spiritual World of *Beriah*, each of them divided into many lesser sparks; as their light was

98. *I Melachim* 5:14.

99. *Zephaniah* 3:9.

100. *Yeshayahu* 60:3.

further veiled and they descended further into the even more obscure World of *Yetzirah*, they subdivided further; and in the even lower state of being called the World of *Asiyah* they were divided into tens of thousands.

And this is why the exile is so prolonged: the task of rehabilitating this vast number of exiled sparks has yet to be completed.

Or HaTorah, Bereishis 2264

Elevating and Refining the Seventy Nations

“The Holy One, blessed be He, acted charitably towards His people by dispersing them amongst the nations of the world.”¹⁰¹

This dispersal enables the Jewish people to elevate and refine all the seventy nations, by means of the Torah that they study and the commandments that they fulfill wherever they are scattered.

And this is why we find that when *Mashiach* appears, all the nations of the world will gather around him, as it is written,¹⁰² וְלוֹ יִקְהַת עַמִּים — “He will have a gathering of nations.”

Toras Chayim, Shmos, p. 335b

Purifying the Lands of the Gentile Nations

Why is it that the Jewish people have been scattered throughout the whole world, including the remotest islands? And why does it happen that individual Jews here and there lose their way, and find themselves tramping from township to township?

The underlying intent here is that they should purify the gentile lands, whose atmosphere is impure.¹⁰³ For within the

101. *Pesachim* 87b.

102. *Bereishis* 49:10.

103. *Gittin* 8b.

heart of every single Jew there is a simple faith which, though it may be dormant, is capable of purifying that impurity.

Keser Shem Tov, Hosafos, sec. 137

A Dwelling Place Among Mortals

“And this is the offering that you shall take from them: gold, silver and copper,... reddened rams’ skins....”¹⁰⁴

The *Midrash*¹⁰⁵ explains that gold represents Babylon; silver represents Medea; copper — Greece; and the reddened rams’ skins — Rome.

The ultimate purpose of the offerings brought for the Tabernacle was that a dwelling place for G-d be built among mortals,¹⁰⁶ a sanctuary made of material objects. This goal, however, was not attained in its entirety through the building of the *Mishkan*. It is consummated only during the time of exile, and for this reason the four major exiles are alluded to in the listing of the above offerings.

The underlying explanation for this is that G-d desires to dwell among mortals in order that His abode be constructed of the lowest conceivable created things.¹⁰⁷ This goal could not be achieved through the building of the *Mishkan*, in which even fleshly eyes beheld the Divine Presence: it can, however, be achieved during the time of exile, when the materiality of the world exists in all its intensity. When one transforms *this* into a dwelling place for G-d, the lowest rungs of the universe are elevated.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVI, p. 293

104. *Shmos* 25:3.

105. *Tanchuma, Terumah*, sec. 7.

106. *Ibid.*, *Naso*, sec. 16.

107. *Tanya*, ch. 36.

A New Light Revealed (i)

If the exile meant nothing more than atonement for sins, it should have become progressively less severe, as each successive period brought partial atonement. In fact, however, we observe that the exile is becoming ever more intense, while G-d's presence is becoming less and less manifest. The earliest days of the exile were illuminated by giants of the spirit, the *tannaim*; they were succeeded by the *amoraim*; and in the generations since that time the divine light has become more and more heavily veiled.

It is therefore obvious that the exile has an additional, inward content.

The innermost function of the exile is the ultimate revelation of a new light. The greater the divine focus on this new revelation, the more is the [present] flow of divine light deferred. (This concept is explained in passage (ii), below.) Hence, the greater the divine focus on the future Redemption, as we draw ever closer to the coming of *Mashiach*, the denser does the exile become.

Ibid., Vol. II, p. 361

A New Light Revealed (ii)

The above-described inner content of the exile is explained in the teachings of *Chassidus* by means of the analogy of a mentor and his disciple.

Picture a teacher transmitting a concept to his disciple. If, in the midst of his exposition, a new thought is born in his mind, he must immediately deflect his attention to this new inspiration, lest it vanish. [Paradoxically,] it is his intense and deep-seated love for his disciple that impels him to focus on the new inspiration and to absorb it, in order to be able to share it eventually with his disciple.

Now, the more exalted this new concept, the more completely will he have to divert his attention to it — even to the

point that his waiting disciple will feel that he has been forsaken, and relegated to a state resembling exile or destruction.

In truth, however, only in outward appearance is this a state of exile or destruction; ultimately, this very state is the pinnacle of revelation. Indeed, the very fact that the mentor is willing, for the sake of his disciple, to divert his attention from him in order to absorb the new concept, proves how precious that new idea is — to the point that it is even worth producing a moment of exile or destruction in the mind of the disciple, so long as he will ultimately be able to illuminate his mind with his new perception.

The greater the temporary obscurity, therefore, the more completely does it prove how great is the promised revelation.

* * *

The above model enables us to grasp the inner meaning of the present exile. Even though what presents itself to all external appearances is exile and destruction, *when perceived from within* this is the pinnacle of revelation — for the imminent revelation of the future Redemption warrants a transient experience of exile and destruction.

Op. cit., p. 360

A New Light Revealed (iii)

Our Sages record¹⁰⁸ that when the alien invaders burst into the Holy of Holies, they observed that the two golden cherubim were facing each other. This would appear to contradict a different teaching of the Sages,¹⁰⁹ to the effect that when the Jewish people fulfilled G-d's will, the cherubs faced each other, and when they did not, [as at the time of the Destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*,] the cherubs faced outwards.

108. *Yoma* 54b.

109. *Bava Basra* 99a.

This paradox may be understood as follows. The entire concept of exile exists only from an external point of view, whereas from its innermost perspective it is the ultimate sign of revelation, as explained in passage (ii), above. This is why in the Holy of Holies, the place of *ultimate* truth, the cherubim continued to face each other, even at a time such as the above.

Loc. cit.

A New Light Revealed (iv)

“Now this ultimate perfection of the Messianic era and [the time of] the Resurrection of the Dead, meaning the revelation of [the infinite] *Ein Sof*-light in this physical world, is dependent on our actions and [divine] service throughout the period of exile.”¹¹⁰

Let us consider: Why should this future revelation depend on the divine service that is carried out specifically *in the time of exile*?

Observing the Torah’s commandments draws down divine energy in such a manner that it *transforms* the materiality of the world. (I.e., the world does not merely remain a static recipient, to which an increased measure of divine light is now added.) For, since the ultimate intent underlying the creation of the universe is that the Jewish people reveal the G-dliness within it by means of their Torah study and their observance of the commandments, this implies that from its innermost core the universe itself *demand*s (so to speak) that its ultimate purpose be realized.

However, since this purpose is not perceived in the tangible reality of the world, it follows that from this perspective the G-dliness that is drawn down into the world comes to it as an addition. This is why the Alter Rebbe concludes the above quotation with the words, “throughout the period of exile.”

As is known, the power of self-sacrifice shines forth more brightly now, during the obscurity of exile, than it did when the

110. *Tanya*, ch. 37.

Beis HaMikdash stood, because it is the very concealment of G-dliness that arouses it. But why in fact was the world created in such a way that it takes obscurity¹¹¹ to bring about revelation? The explanation: In order that the underlying intent of creation should be realized by virtue of the nature of the universe itself, G-d created the universe in such a way that its ultimate purpose finds expression in it. This means that concealment was built into the universe, in order that it should give rise to a superior revelation, to “the superiority of light [that proceeds] from darkness.”¹¹² This is why the world was created in such a way that it takes obscurity to call forth a superior revelation.

And since this function of G-d’s self-concealment in the world finds expression in the world itself, it is self-evident that the revelation of G-dliness here is bound up with the tangible reality of the world.

We can now understand why the Alter Rebbe specified, “throughout the period of exile.” For it is the power of self-sacrifice in the course of the exile that reveals, within the obscurity of the world, the intent underlying the creation of the world, viz., the manifestation of G-dliness.

This being so, it also follows that it is especially in the period of exile that this revelation of G-dliness (brought about by the Jewish people’s divine service) is enfolded in the tangible reality of the world.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVII, p. 95

A New Light Revealed (v)

Even when the darkness of exile grows ever thicker, a Jew has no reason to be overawed by it. Quite the contrary: Since he realizes that the spiritual decline called “exile” is a descent made for the sake of a consequent ascent, he intensifies his divine service, and augments the light of his Torah study and

111. *Chassidus* points out the connection between עולם (“world”) and העלם (“obscurity”).

112. *Koheles* 2:13.

observance of the *mitzvos* — in order to banish or transform the darkness of the exile. In fact it is this very descent, this very darkness of exile, that spurs him on to scale the most exalted heights.

Moreover, the thicker the darkness of exile, the more does it indicate how intense will be the revelation in future time. When the darkness is redoubled, this shows that the future revelation of light will likewise be redoubled.

Hisvaaduyos, 5742 [1982], Vol. I, p. 454

A New Light Revealed (vi)

The innermost intent underlying the exile is that the exile should enable the Jewish people to attain a higher spiritual level than they had attained before it began. In fact spiritual perception in the time of the future Redemption will surpass even that in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

Hence, even though in practice the Redemption *follows* the exile, nevertheless, since the entire exile exists only for the sake of the Redemption, from the point of view of the divine intent it *precedes* the exile.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. V, p. 183

A New Light Revealed (vii)

The ultimate purpose of the exile is that the Jewish people should climb to a rung higher than the one they had reached in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*. It follows, therefore, that the spiritual decline experienced during the time of exile is nothing but a beginning and a part of the ascent which is to follow.

Op. cit., p. 62

A New Light Revealed (viii)

The goal of exile is the lofty revelation in the future which could not be secured in any other manner. Hence, even though exile in itself is no more than a preparation for something beyond itself, viz., the Redemption, from the perspective of the Jewish people the exile *in itself* — albeit only in seminal form — is one aspect of the Redemption.

Op. cit., Vol. VI, p. 238

A New Light Revealed (ix)

Our Sages teach¹¹³ that immediately after the Destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash* the Redeemer of Israel was born.

This means that not only did the Destruction bring with it the *possibility* of Redemption (i.e., if the Jewish people had repented immediately), but that immediately after the Destruction there appeared in this material world, in the Land of Israel itself, the *beginning* of the Redemption — for the Redeemer of Israel was born.

The Destruction was thus a case of “destroying for the sake of rebuilding,”¹¹⁴ undertaken for the sake of the superior perfection of the Third *Beis HaMikdash*, which will be everlasting. The building of the Third *Beis HaMikdash* thus began with the Destruction of the Second.

This concept is hinted at in the allusive teaching of our Sages:¹¹⁵ “A lion¹¹⁶ came up...and destroyed Ariel...,¹¹⁷ *in order that* the Lion¹¹⁸ should come...and build Ariel.”

113. *Yerushalmi, Berachos* 2:4.

114. The phrase is borrowed from *Shabbos* 31b.

115. *Talkut, Yirmeyahu*, sec. 259.

116. In the Heb. original, ארִי־הָ, here referring to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, who destroyed the First *Beis HaMikdash*.

117. A poetic name for the *Beis HaMikdash* (or the altar); cf. *Rashi* on *Yeshayahu* 29:1.

118. A metaphor for G-d.

Those *tzaddikim* whose comprehensive souls make them the Princes of the Jewish people, and whose eyes are luminous, can see the Redemption within the very exile.

Op. cit., Vol. XXIX, p. 13

Uncovering the Inner Dimension of the Torah

The main intent of the exile in Egypt was that the Jewish people be found worthy of receiving the Torah; as G-d tells Moshe Rabbeinu,¹¹⁹ “When you have brought the people out of Egypt you shall serve G-d on this mountain.” In the same way, the ultimate objective of the present long exile is that in time to come, the Jewish people be granted a revelation of the innermost dimension of the Torah.

This objective underlies the Sages’ interpretation of one of the verses whose plain meaning describes the way in which the ancient Egyptians treated our forefathers:¹²⁰ וימררו את חייהם — “They made their lives bitter with harsh labor, with mortar and bricks, as well as all kinds of labor in the field.” By relating the above Hebrew words to words of related etymology, the *Zohar*¹²¹ interprets them on the non-literal level of *derush*, as follows:

“וימררו את חייהם — This alludes to the Torah, which is our *life* (Heb.: *chayim*);

“בעבודה קשה — this alludes to a *kushia*¹²² asked by a student of Torah;

“בחומר — this refers to the principle of Scriptural interpretation called *kal vachomer*;¹²³

“ובלבנים — this refers to the clarification (*libun*) of the law;

119. *Shmos* 3:12.

120. *Ibid.* 1:14.

121. III, 153a.

122. This is a query posed in the course of clarifying a seeming inconsistency, logical or textual, encountered in one’s Torah study.

123. This is a rule whereby a conclusion is drawn from a minor premise or more lenient condition to a major or more strict one, or vice versa.

“ובכל עבודה בשדה — this *outdoor* work alludes to the study of the *beraisa*.¹²⁴”

We do not have before us a body of unequivocally-defined *Halachah*; all the laws of the Torah are the subject of debate, some authorities permitting what others forbid. And just as through the labor of the Jewish people with mortar and bricks they were found worthy of being granted the Torah at Sinai, so too, through the clarification of the laws throughout the present exile we will be found worthy of a revelation of the innermost dimension of the Torah, in time to come.

Torah Or, Shmos 49a

* * *

The Rebbe *Shlita* responds to the above teaching of the Alter Rebbe with the following insight:

By virtue of the crushing severity of the current exile, we will ultimately be shown the luminary that lights up the Torah from within. This connection is hinted at in the phrase¹²⁵ which specifies that the olive oil for the *Menorah* in the *Mishkan* is to be *כתית למאור* — “*crushed for illumination*.” And in this spirit the Sages teach:¹²⁶ “Why have Israel been likened to the olive? — To teach you that just as the olive does not release its oil unless it is crushed, so too the Jewish people [do not repent except through suffering].”

And what is the promised luminary hidden within the Torah? — This is *pnimiyus haTorah*, its innermost, mystical dimension. This is apparent from the allegorical verse¹²⁷ in which the beloved one, the House of Israel, says of G-d: *ישקני מנשיקות פיהו* — “He will kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.” And *Rashi* explains: “These are the mystical reasons hidden within the Torah, which will be revealed in time to come.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 488

124. A teaching which R. Yehudah HaNasi chose to leave *outside* (Aram.: *bar*) the canon of the *Mishnah* is known as a *beraisa*.

125. *Shmos* 27:20.

126. *Menachos* 53b.

127. *Shir HaShirim* 1:2.

Your Taskmasters Will Be Charitable

A businessman who wants to double his capital first has to invest it in merchandise, and then, emptyhanded, await his profit. In the same way, only by being dispersed emptyhanded among the nations of the world can the Jewish people ultimately arrive at their great profit — the exalted revelation of divine light which will take place in future time.

A hint of this may be perceived in the verse,¹²⁸ וּנְגִשִׁיךְ צְדָקָה — “Your taskmasters will be charitable.” Oppression by the nations of the world enables the Jewish people to profit — to attain the perfect state of the future, when the dead will be resurrected and all the prophecies of consolation will be fulfilled.

Maamarei Admur HaZaken, Parshiyos, sec. 184

I Will Raise My Eyes

Commenting on the verse,¹²⁹ אֲשֶׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים — “I will raise my eyes to the mountains,” the Sages say:¹³⁰ “This refers to *Mashiach* the son of David.”

“Raising” one’s eyes implies that one ought to contemplate the higher goal of the exile, namely, the superior spiritual state which will be attainable at the time of the future Redemption. If one looks upward in this way, then even when the exile’s last grim stretches of darkness make one ask, מֵאֵין יבוא עזרי — “From where will my help come?,” not only is one not overawed by that darkness, but one can even experience manifest joy. This joy is alluded to by the opening words of that verse: שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת — “A *song* of ascents.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 127

128. *Yeshayahu* 60:17.

129. *Tehillim* 121:1.

130. *Tanchuma*, end of *Parshas Toldos*.

My Righteousness Will Be Revealed

There is a promise in the Book of *Yeshayahu*:¹³¹ “Observe justice and practice righteousness, for My salvation is soon to come and My charitable righteousness will soon be revealed.”

In time to come, the manner in which the exile is in fact an expression of divine righteousness will become apparent. At the present, it is a matter of faith. Since the Sages teach us that¹³² “The Holy One, blessed be He, acted charitably towards His people by dispersing them amongst the nations of the world,” we believe that this is so. This is not, however, comprehensible. For even after we have considered all the explanations offered for the exile (such as punishment for the people’s sins, sifting scattered sparks of holiness, and so on), numberless ways are open to G-d; why, then, is there a need for the sufferings of exile?

In future time, by contrast, in place of faith, everyone will palpably see how the exile was an expression of G-d’s righteousness.

In this sense we can understand the prophetic verse,¹³³ *ואמרת ביום ההוא אודך ה' כי אנפת בי* — “On that day you will say, ‘I shall thank You, G-d, for You were angry with me.’ ” This means that in future time, the good that lay hidden in the suffering of exile will be revealed: it will then be understood how it was specifically this suffering that enabled the Jewish people to be found worthy of the divine revelation of the time to come.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 361; Vol. IV, p. 1081

131. 56:1.

132. *Pesachim* 87b.

133. *Yeshayahu* 12:1.

Chapter 3: Exile has its Merits

Parched, My Soul Yearns for You (i)

Alone in the torrid wastes of the Judean Desert, David HaMelech prayed:¹³⁴ צמאה לך נפשי כמה לך בשרי בארץ צי ועיף בלי מיס — “My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a parched and weary land without water.” And indeed, like a wanderer in the wilderness, it is in exile that a Jew experiences a burning thirst for G-d.

This thought brings to mind a mystical teaching in the *Zohar*.¹³⁵ Speaking of Tamar, there is a verse that says,¹³⁶ הוציאוה ותשרף — “Take her out and let her be burnt...” Interpreting these two Hebrew words on the level of *sof*, the *Zohar* adds: בשלהובי טיהרא בגלותא — “...in the midday flames of exile.” That is to say: הוציאוה — “When a soul is taken out into a state of exile,” ותשרף — “she is aflame with a passionate love of G-d.”

Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar 2c

Parched, My Soul Yearns for You (ii)

A man is not near so thirsty when in a populated area as he is when in a dry desert. It is likewise in the time of exile, when G-d’s presence is obscured, and when materiality is at its coarsest, that a man longs most intensely to serve his Creator. As David HaMelech writes,¹³⁴ “My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a parched and weary land without water.”

Sefer HaMaamarim 5700 [1940], p. 11

134. *Tehillim* 63:2.

135. III, 72a.

136. *Bereishis* 38:24.

Revealing the Potential for Self-Sacrifice (i)

The above-quoted verse is followed in the Book of *Tehillim* by the phrase,¹³⁷ כן בקדש חזיתיך — “Thus have I beheld You in the Sanctuary.”

The Baal Shem Tov understands these words to mean: “If only in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash* I had beheld You!”

In other words: If only, in those times, I could have perceived the same lofty level of revealed divine light which we now, in the times of exile, draw down into this world. For in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash* divine service involved the mind and the heart, and was thus a pleasurable experience. In these times of exile, however, divine service is motivated by one’s acceptance of the yoke of heaven, and by self-sacrifice.¹³⁸

And when a Jew undergoes self-sacrifice for the study of the Torah and the observance of its commandments, especially when he risks the punishments meted out in times of religious persecution,¹³⁹ the lights he draws down into this world are far more intense than the lights that were brought down in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

Sefer HaMaamarim — Kuntreisim, Vol. I, p. 106

Revealing the Potential for Self-Sacrifice (ii)

“My soul thirsts for You,... in a parched and weary land without water. If only in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash* I had beheld You!”

These verses speak of the divine service of the Jewish people during the times of exile.

Their soul thirsts for G-d “in a parched and weary land”; i.e., they are weary of the bothers of making a livelihood, weary

137. *Tehillim* 63:3.

138. In the original, “by *kabbalas ol* and by *mesirus nefesh*.”

139. This passage is extracted from a *maamar* first delivered in 1929, during the darkest days of the Stalinist regime, on the second anniversary of the Previous Rebbe’s liberation from imprisonment (together with a number of his chassidim) and from capital sentence.

of the yoke of the exile, when they are “without water,”¹⁴⁰ i.e., unable to engage in Torah study and the service of G-d. Nevertheless, despite all odds, they do serve Him out of self-sacrifice, and of this self-sacrifice they say, “If only in the times of the *Beis HaMikdash* I had beheld You thus!”

Sefer HaMaamarim 5700 [1940], p. 11

Revealing the Potential for Self-Sacrifice (iii)

In the times of the *Beis HaMikdash*, when the divine light was revealed for all to see, the divine service of the Jewish people mainly involved the soul’s revealed faculties: the people actually experienced G-dliness in their minds and with their spiritual emotions.¹⁴¹ And since this kind of divine service is prompted by reason and feeling, the *yechidah* within the soul, the soul’s very essence, did not play a perceptible role in it.

It is specifically in times of exile — when the divine light is hidden, when obstacles to divine service abound, and when the intellect and spiritual emotions are inactive — that the *yechidah* within the soul is aroused. For it is this innermost faculty of the soul that fortifies a man with the self-sacrifice that can overcome all the difficulties and trials that beset him.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVI, p. 36

Revealing the Soul’s Transcendent Potential¹⁴²

Chassidus explains that the time of exile resembles a dream. Just as when dreaming a man can fuse two opposites, so too in the present time of exile: one can imagine that he loves G-d and at the same time he can love his body, despite the paradox involved.¹⁴³

140. *Bava Kama* 17a.

141. In the original, “in their *seichel* and in their *middos*.”

142. In the original, *hisgalus hamakkif*.

143. See also the above passage entitled “A Dream” (p. 11).

Nevertheless, *Chassidus* warns, one should not make an easy mistake. A person might conclude that since after *davenen* he can act in ways that contradict his status while at prayer, it follows that his endeavors at prayer, his Torah study and his fulfillment of the *mitzvos* are all worthless. This is not true. Dreams stem from a lofty source indeed — from the *makkif*, i.e., from the intense, transcendent spiritual dimension that is not consciously vested in the body. This dimension of the soul shines forth specifically during the time of exile, and its infinite perspective tolerates the existence of paradoxes.

In this sense, then, the current time of exile is superior to the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*. During that time, the spiritual faculties which actively radiated within a man were those which were consciously invested within him. These *kochos pnimiyim* (“indwelling faculties”) are finite. This explains, for example, why an impure person was forbidden to enter the *Beis HaMikdash*. During the time of exile, however, the spiritual faculties that radiate within a man are from the higher reaches of his soul — the *kochos makkifim*, the transcendent faculties.¹⁴⁴ From their perspective, since they are infinite, opposites can coexist. Thus it is that the Torah can assure the Jewish people that G-d “dwells with them *within their impurity*.”²¹⁴⁵

Ibid., Vol. I, p. 86

A True Union

The union between the Jewish people and G-d that found expression at the time of the Giving of the Torah was not intrinsic. True, they said “We shall do” *before* they said “We shall hear,”¹⁴⁶ and they did in fact accept the Torah — but in these decisions they were prompted by an arousal which shone upon them from Above, not by their own initiative. For this

144. See the above passage (p. 46) headed “Revealing the Potential for Self-Sacrifice (iii).”

145. *Vayikra* 16:16.

146. *Shmos* 24:7.

reason their bond with G-d did not permeate their essence, nor, so to speak, His Essence.

The time of exile is different, in that the divine light does not shine down in a manifest manner. The Jewish people nevertheless continue to observe the Torah through a humble acceptance of the yoke of heaven and in a spirit of self-sacrifice — because G-dliness *is their very essence*.

And it is through this level of divine service that the true union of G-d and His people finds expression.

Ibid., Vol. IX, p. 150

Loftier Perceptions

Tzaddikim of stature can now attain loftier perceptions in the Land of Israel than comparable *tzaddikim* could attain in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*. The *AriZal*, for example, soared to heights that *tzaddikim* of previous generations never reached.

The reason is that during the time of the *Beis HaMikdash* two modes of divine light shone forth: that which is called “Supernal Thought”¹⁴⁷ (from the realm known in Aramaic as *alma de’iskasya* — “the hidden world”) and that which is called “Supernal Speech”¹⁴⁸ (from the realm known as *alma de’isgalya* — “the revealed world”). It was the divine “speech” that was dominant; after the divine “thought” became en clothed in it, it then became manifest. (This explains why in that period there was a revelation of divine light in the *Beis HaMikdash*, and why in that period there were people blessed with divine inspiration.¹⁴⁹) It is thus clear that the *tzaddikim* of those times attained a perception of divine “thought” only insofar as it was en clothed in divine “speech”.

In the time of exile, by contrast, the divine “speech” is not revealed, and what remains is the divine “thought”. (However,

147. In the original, *hamachshavah haelyonah*.

148. In the original, *hadibbur haelyon*.

149. In the original, *ruach hakodesh*.

since it derives from “the hidden world,” the revelation of divine light in the Land of Israel at present is not revealed as it was in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*.) Accordingly, *tzaddikim* attain perceptions of the divine “thought” itself, at its own level, where it transcends any possibility of being en clothed in “speech”.

Torah Or, Vayeitzei 22d

The King on his Travels

As we can see for ourselves, when a king is in his palace not everyone is granted an audience with him. When he is on his travels, however, and staying at an inn, even a simple villager can approach him.

So too during the exile, when G-d is “on the road,” so to speak, it is easier to attain divine inspiration than it was when the *Beis HaMikdash* was standing. As soon as a man meditates upon cleaving to G-d, G-d rests upon him and abides with him.

Likkutei Amarim (by the Maggid of Mezritch), sec. 77

The Possibility of Repentance

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, repentance was of no avail to an individual who killed unintentionally or willfully. As is explained in the Responsa entitled *Noda BiYehudah*,¹⁵⁰ *teshuvah* is of no avail in the case of transgressions punishable by the terrestrial court, for¹⁵¹ “the judge can only go by what his eyes observe.” *Teshuvah*, by contrast, belongs to the category of “things (or: words) that reside in the heart,”¹⁵² those inarticulated intentions that carry no weight in a court of law.

In the time of exile, however, when the earthly *beis din* no longer has jurisdiction over capital cases, and the four kinds of

150. On *Orach Chayim*, first recension, sec. 35.

151. *Bava Basra* 131a.

152. In the original, *devarim shebalev*; see *Kiddushin* 49b.

capital punishment are meted out only from Above, *teshuvah* is effective. As our Sages taught:¹⁵³ “If a man has transgressed and is liable to the death penalty at the hands of the Omnipresent, what should he do in order to live? If he was accustomed to study one page, let him study two, and so on.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 624

Your Seed Shall Remain

“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me, says G-d, so shall your seed and your name remain.”¹⁵⁴

The “new heavens” which will be revealed in future time allude to the diffusion of a new *or makkif*, a Divine light that transcends the finitude of the created universe; the “new earth” alludes to the diffusion of a new *or pnimi*, a Divine light that is immanent within the finitude of the created universe. Even then, however, “your seed and your name shall remain” before G-d: the spiritual labors of the era of exile, which consist of sowing seeds in preparation for the Days of *Masbiach*, will be prized then, too.

Likkutei Torah on Shir HaShirim

Halachic Regulations¹⁵⁵

The later a generation, and the lower its spiritual status, the loftier is the Divine light which is garbed in the halachic ordinances of the Sages of that generation. For it is precisely by observing these *takkanos* that the Jewish people arrive at all the goals and revelations of future time.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IV, p. 1089

153. *Vayikra Rabbah*, beginning of sec. 25.

154. *Yeshayahu* 66:22.

155. In the original, *takkanos*; i.e., the sublaws ordained from time to time within the framework of the *Halachah* by the Sages of each generation.

Nostalgia for the Days of Exile (i)

When *Mashiach* comes, people will start hankering after the bygone days of exile. It is then that they will start feeling regret for not having devoted themselves to *avodah*; it is then that people will feel anguish over their lack of *avodah*. As for now, during the era of *galus*, these are the days of *avodah* — to prepare oneself for the coming of *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Dibburim (in English translation), Vol. I, p. 292

Nostalgia for the Days of Exile (ii)

The teaching of my father-in-law the [Previous] Rebbe is well-known, that when *Mashiach* comes people will regret that the best days, the last days of the period of exile, have passed. For those were times when one was able to engage in Torah and *mitzvos* despite all obstacles and all obscurity; times when one's divine service was more gratifying and more lovable, both for the mortal who did it and for his Maker Who commanded that it be done; times unlike the future time, when¹⁵⁶ "I shall remove the spirit of impurity from the earth," and when there are no antagonists to contend with.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXI, p. 388

Nostalgia for the Days of Exile (iii)

My revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, once said: The time will soon come...This recalls something said by my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, in one of his talks: The time will soon come when people will suddenly and regretfully grasp that the divine service of just a short while earlier had been pleasurable, and the opportunity for engaging in it had not been exploited.

156. *Zechariah* 13:2.

It is true that this statement refers specifically to the time of the ultimate Redemption, when people will regret that they had not fully utilized the time of exile. Nevertheless, the same may be said on a smaller scale regarding any individual *within* the time of exile, for there are things which are becoming revealed through the removal of the obscurity which had surrounded them.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. VIII, p. 268

G-d Calculated the End of the Exile

In the *Haggadah* of Pesach we say: “Blessed be He Who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be He. For the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end of the exile....”

So pleasurable does G-d find the divine service of the Jewish people during the time of exile, that the exile could have been made endless, G-d forbid. For this reason we thank Him Who “calculated the end of the exile.”

Sefer HaMaamarim 5708 [1948,] p. 151

Chapter 4: The Approaching Footsteps of Mashiach

A Paradox

The phrase¹⁵⁷ עקבתא דמשיחא (“the footsteps of *Mashiach*”), signifying our era at the very dawn of the Redemption, appears to point in two opposite directions.

The first word derives from the root עקב, meaning “heel”, the part of the body that is so far from spirituality that it has been called¹⁵⁸ “the Angel of Death in man.” As such this word indicates that in these latter generations, Divinity is revealed in this world only minimally.

On the other hand, it is this very generation, lowly as it may be, that will witness the Redemption. Indeed, this era is called עקבתא דמשיחא because, as the latter word of the phrase indicates, we can feel and hear the footsteps of *Mashiach*.

It could well be argued that the second concept in this phrase depends on the first. Precisely because this generation is a “heel” in the sense that it is located at the extremity of Jewish history, the last generation that comes after and in the wake of all the preceding generations, it benefits from all the accumulated spiritual energy of its predecessors. For this reason, indeed, it is our generation that will be privileged to experience the Ultimate Redemption. A man’s heel is certainly situated lower than all the other organs, but it is upon the heel that they all, including the heart and the head, stand. Indeed, when the head wishes to move from place to place, it is the heel that makes this possible.

At the same time, a heel should realize that it is no more than — a heel. Being aware that all the other organs are superior to it, it is able to hold them erect and to move them about according to need. And the same is true of the

157. In the original, this Aramaic phrase is the title of ch. 4.

158. *Apos de Rabbi Nasan*, end of ch. 31.

generation of *ikvesa diMesicha*. This “heel”-generation should realize that it is no more than a “heel”: its superior quality consists only in the fact that it comes after and in the wake of all the preceding generations.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Bo*, 5744 [1984]

Working on the Lower Levels of the Soul

In the days of the *tannaim* and *amoraim*,¹⁵⁹ the spiritual task of the Jewish people primarily entailed the refinement and elevation of the intellectual faculties (the “brain”) of the soul — *Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Daas*,¹⁶⁰ and of the emotive faculties (the “heart”) of the soul — *Chessed*, *Gevurah* and *Tiferes*.¹⁶¹ In our days, the main *avodah* involves the refinement and elevation of the lower, more practical faculties (the “nether limbs”) of the soul — *Netzach*, *Hod* and *Yesod*,¹⁶² for this is the generation of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*.”

An allusion to this concept may be perceived in the prophetic verse¹⁶³ which describes the stance of *Mashiach* at the End of Days: ועמדו רגליו ביום ההוא על הר הזיתים — “On that day his *feet* shall stand upon the Mount of Olives.”

Likkutei Torah, Chukas, p. 63d

Reason Can Be Misleading

In this era, the generation of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” it is essential that one not follow the dictates of rationalization, for mortal reasoning can mislead a man. Rather, we should observe the Torah and its commandments out of simple and unquestioning faith in G-d.

The Rebbe Rashab, quoted in *Igros Kodesh* (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. I, p. 488

159. I.e., in the time of the *Mishnah* and the *Gemara*, respectively.

160. The initial letters of these three terms form the acrostic **חב"ד**.

161. Abbreviated as **חג"ת**.

162. Abbreviated as **נח"י**.

163. *Zechariah* 14:4.

What Counts is the Deed

During the period of *ikvesa diMeshicha*, the era of “the approaching footsteps of the *Mashiach*” — the “pre-nuptial era” of which the *Zohar*¹⁶⁴ speaks — the chief spiritual task is at the basic, practical level symbolized by *akev*, the heel. It is specifically this level of divine service that will bring about the Redemption, for¹⁶⁵ “The beginning [of the *Sefiros*] is wedged in their culmination, and their culmination is wedged in their beginning.” That is to say, the realization of the prime intent underlying Creation hinges upon the last and lowliest levels of spiritual endeavor.

This, after all, is the overall goal of *avodah* — to construct for G-d¹⁶⁶ “a dwelling place in the lower worlds.” I.e., it is man’s spiritual endeavors in this physical world, particularly on the nethermost level of practical action, that create an abode for G-d’s Essence.

This has been illustrated by a familiar analogy. If a house has to be lifted off the ground, it is lifted from the bottom, for then it is raised in its entirety.

We can now understand why the forthcoming Redemption will be distinctive in that it will not be followed by any further exile. For since the divine service carried out throughout the years of exile has already elevated even the lowest elements of the universe, any further experience of exile is now impossible.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vaes’chanan*, 5745

The Final Beirurim

Now is the time for the very last *beirurim* of this period of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*.”

164. II, p. 258a.

165. *Sefer Yetzirah* 1:7; this is a reference to the reciprocal influence of the *Sefiros* of *Keser* and *Malchus*.

166. *Tanchuma, Parshas Bechukosai*, sec. 3.

In a period such as this, our reason might mistakenly tell us that certain aspects of this world appear to be far removed from any chance of being refined and elevated. By way of analogy: It is during the final stages of cooking that a pot boils most vigorously, so that the very dregs of its contents are thrust up to the surface. This is what is happening in these times of intensive *beirurim*. Things that we previously considered to be beyond restitution may now well prove to be very close to their *beirur*, for in such times the refining and rehabilitating processes of *beirurim* and *vikkunim* do not follow the usual patterns of orderly progression.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe Rashab, Vol. I, p. 266

The Hem of Aaron's Robe

In describing the robe of the *Kohen Gadol* the Torah states that there shall be alternately¹⁶⁷ “a gold bell and a pomegranate, a gold bell and a pomegranate, all along its lower border..., and the sound [of the bells] shall be heard when he enters the Sanctuary....”

According to all the signs which our Sages have given us at the end of Tractate *Sotah*, our generation is the generation of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” the last and lowest stage of the exile before the coming of *Mashiach* — the “lower edge of the robe.” Hence, when one is endeavoring to bring every single Jew “under the wings of the *Shechinah*,” so that every single Jew will ultimately “enter the Sanctuary,” this needs to be done publicly and audibly, so that “the sound will be heard.” In our days, it is necessary to bring our people back to the practice of *Yiddishkeit* in a clamorous manner — to go out into the streets and to announce loudly that Jews ought to put on *tefillin*, affix *mezuzos* to their doorposts, and so on.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVI, p. 341

167. *Shtmos* 28:34-35.

Gathering In All the Camps

Speaking of the order in which the Twelve Tribes journeyed through the wilderness, the Torah finally describes Dan as¹⁶⁸ “the gatherer of all the camps.” This *Rashi* explains by saying that “if anyone [in any of the previous tribes] lost something, [those in the tribe of Dan] would return it to him.”

Now if Dan was responsible for finding and returning the mere *property* of a Jew, then it is certain that if a *Jew* was lost — spiritually — from the camp of Israel, it was their responsibility to find him and to return him to the camp.

Since our generation, in the era of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” is the *last* generation of the exile, its crucial role is to undertake the task of Dan — to gather in all those who in the course of their wanderings have lost their way, and to bring them home to their parent camp.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the Last Day of Pesach, 5742 [1982]

A Generation Reincarnated

The *AriZal* writes¹⁶⁹ that the last generation before the coming of *Mashiach* is a reincarnation of the generation of our forefathers who came out of Egypt.

Just as that generation was found worthy of our people’s first redemption through the agency of Moshe Rabbeinu, so will this generation, the generation of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” be found worthy of our people’s final and ultimate Redemption — through the hands of our Righteous *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XII, p. 175

168. *Bamidbar* 10:25.

169. *AriZal*, *Likkutei Torah* and *Sefer HaLikkutim*, *Shmos* 3:4.

Moshe Rabbeinu Contemplates Our Generation

As he looked into the Book of Adam, Moshe Rabbeinu was shown the Sages and the leaders of all the generations of the future.¹⁷⁰ When he thus gazed ahead at the generation that would live to witness the footsteps of *Mashiach*, he saw that they would have but a modest conception of Divinity, and in serving G-d with their minds and their hearts they would not attain the loftiest peaks of *avodah*. Rather, they would actively observe the Torah and its commandments in a spirit of self-sacrifice. At the same time, he was shown what joy this service would bring about in the heavens Above.

In the light of what his eyes then beheld, Moshe Rabbeinu became exceedingly humble; as it is written,¹⁷¹ והאיש משה ענו — “The man Moshe was very humble, more so than any man on the face of the earth.”

Sefer HaMaamarim 5710 [1950], p. 237

The Righteous and the Wicked

In earlier generations there were *tzaddikim* of absolute truth, who were near the level of prophecy and divine inspiration.¹⁷² On the other hand, there were exceedingly wicked people. In these latter generations, in the era of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” there are no consummate *tzaddikim* and no utter *resha'im*.

Shaarei Orah, p. 44

170. *Sanhedrin* 38b; *Vayikra Rabbah* 26:7.

171. *Bamidbar* 12:3.

172. In the original, נבואה ורוח הקודש.

The “Lightweight” Mitzvos

There is a verse in the Torah that begins with the phrase,¹⁷³ והי עקב תשמעון. Plainly translated, this verse would read as follows: “And it shall be, that as a result of your heeding these laws, safeguarding and keeping them, the L-rd your G-d will keep in mind the covenant and the love with which He made an oath to your fathers.”

Since the Hebrew word *eikev* (here translated “as a result”) shares the same letters as the Hebrew word *akev* (“heel”), *Rashi* interprets the opening phrase of the verse as follows: “If you will heed the *akev*, the ‘lightweight’ commandments that people trample underfoot....”

Looking at the same word *eikev* from a different perspective, the teachings of *Chassidus* perceive in it an allusion to *ikvesa diMeshicha*,¹⁷⁴ the era of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*.” Accordingly, the above-quoted Hebrew opening phrase can be understood as a *reassurance* to our people: והי עקב — “When the generation of the ‘footsteps of *Mashiach*’ comes about,” תשמעון — “you will certainly heed [these laws]....” This reassurance recalls the promise of *Parshas Nitzavim*,¹⁷⁵ that the approach of *Mashiach* will witness the fulfillment of the verse, ושבת עד ה' אלקיך — “You will return to the L-rd your G-d.”

Though they appear to be very different, one can find a common theme underlying these two interpretations; i.e., (a) the interpretation of *Rashi*, which speaks of the *mitzvos* which are trampled underfoot, and (b) that of *Chassidus*, which speaks of the way in which the *mitzvos* will be observed by the generation which will hear the approaching “footsteps of *Mashiach*.”

In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the Divine light shone forth manifestly. Accordingly, it was the blissful delight¹⁷⁶ of perceiving this that motivated the people of that time to serve

173. *Devarim* 7:12.

174. See the above passage entitled “A Paradox” (p. 53).

175. *Devarim* 30:2.

176. In the original, תענוג.

G-d. Inevitably, this pleasurable experience involved a certain consciousness of self.¹⁷⁷

The time of exile, by contrast, and especially this last period of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” is a time during which G-d (so to speak) *hides* His Countenance.¹⁷⁸ Thus, in the absence of palpable spiritual delight, the individual is not conscious of his own self. Indeed, what comes to light is his utter self-annulment before G-d.¹⁷⁹

If a person’s divine service involves an awareness of *himself*, he will differentiate between the various kinds of commandments. For example, he may give preferential treatment to the *mitzvos* of the “head” — i.e., to those *mitzvos* that are intellectually oriented — because of the superior divine irradiation that their performance calls forth, while the *mitzvos* of the “heel” will be observed less punctiliously. This will not happen if he fulfills the commandments by “accepting the yoke of heaven,” as an act of *kabbalas ol*. For when a person acts because of the command of his Master, he fulfills all the *mitzvos* with equal care, whether they appear to be “lightweight” or not.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IX, p. 71

A Long Wait

The closing stage of this long exile, *ikvesa diMeshicha*, is being painfully prolonged, yet *Mashiach*, the son of David, has still not arrived to signal the Redemption of our people.

A hint of this may be perceived in a certain phrase in the Book of *Tehillim*,¹⁸⁰ הגדיל עלי עקב. It refers to one of the enemies of David HaMelech, and its plain meaning is understood by *Rashi* to mean, “He has made a great ambush against me.” However, the word עקב, here translated “ambush”, also means “heel”, and may thus be seen as an

177. In the original, ה"מציאות" של האדם.

178. In the original, הסתר פנים.

179. Cf. the above passage entitled “Outward Self Nullification” (p. 6).

180. 41:10.

allusion to עקבתא דמשיחא — “the footsteps of *Mashiach*.” Understood in this sense, the phrase can be heard to echo the above plaint: “He [i.e., G-d] is making the *ikvesa* so long!”

Torns Levi Yitzchak, p. 182

The End of the Tunnel is in Sight!

The *Mishnah*¹⁸¹ forewarns us: “On the eve of the coming of *Mashiach*, ...each day’s curse will be heavier than that of the preceding day.”

What possible good could come from giving us this somber prophecy?

Yet it serves a purpose. Had the Torah not foretold this situation, it would have been so perplexing that the Jewish people would have become dispirited. But now that the Torah has told us what to expect as the era of exile finally draws to a close, Jews can take heart, and can tackle their divinely-appointed tasks with zest.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 19 Teves, 5742 [1982]

A Painfully Tight Shoe

We are living in the generation of the footsteps of *Mashiach*. Now as everyone knows, wearing a hat that is too small is bearable, but a tight *shoe* — that’s something altogether different. So shouldn’t the Merciful One take it easy on us...?

Quoted in the name of the Rebbe Rayatz

181. *Sotah* 49a.

Yearning for Those Footsteps

The saintly Kabbalist, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, of blessed memory, father of the Rebbe *Sblita*, passed away on the twentieth day of Menachem Av, 5704 (1944).

Throughout the morning of that day, unceasingly, his lips were seen to murmur. As one of the chassidim at his bedside leaned over, he heard a few words from the Book of *Tehillim*¹⁸² being uttered with a sigh: ועקבותיך לא נודעו — “Your footsteps were not known.”

And then he heard a whisper, yearning for those footsteps: “Ah! *Ikvos Meshicha, ikvos Meshicha!*”

Reported by one of those present

182. 77:20.

Chapter 5: “With the Advent of the Footsteps of Mashiach...”

With the advent of the footsteps of *Mashiach*, insolence will increase and prices will soar; the vine will yield its fruit, yet wine will be dear; the government will turn to heresy and no one will rebuke them; the meeting place of scholars will be used for immorality; Galilee will be destroyed, Gavlan will be desolate, and those who dwell on the borders will wander about begging from town to town without being pitied; the wisdom of the scholars will degenerate, those who fear sin will be despised, and the truth will be lacking; youths will put old men to shame, elders will rise in deference to the young, a son will revile his father, a daughter will rise up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be the members of his household; the face of the generation will be like the face of a dog; a son will not feel ashamed before his father.

So upon whom can we rely? — Upon our Father Who is in heaven.

Sotah 9:15

“Insolence will Increase” (i)

When is the night at its darkest? — Just before dawn. This is the case too with the above teaching of our Sages, that “With the advent of the footsteps of *Mashiach*, insolence will increase,” and so on. For this is the darkness that is intensifying just before the revelation of the light of the great day, the day which is all light.

Hemshech 5672 [1912], Vol. I, p. 551

“Insolence will Increase” (ii)

The above-mentioned *chutzpah* should be utilized in a positive way — by asking and demanding of G-d insistently, that our righteous *Mashiach* should actually appear. G-d will surely be pleased with this demand, and will accordingly fulfill it.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 27 Adar II, 5746 [1986]

“Youths Will Put Old Men to Shame”

In the realm of divine service, regardless of his own attainments even in such basic areas as vigilance in thought, speech and action, a person can take the liberty of influencing, arousing and guiding his environment. This applies not only to the observance of laws but also to orienting one’s life according to the spiritual lifestyle of *Chassidus*. Likewise, this applies not only to the study of the revealed dimensions of the Torah, but also to the study of the mystical dimension of the Torah and even to its innermost secrets, for these too are incorporated and clarified in the teachings of *Chassidus*.

Moreover, it sometimes happens that an unseasoned youth encounters scholars who have indeed acquired the wisdom of the Torah, but have not yet been privileged to savor the light within it, namely, the teachings of *Chassidus*. Let such a youth borrow the words of the above *mishnah* in a beautiful transmutation: “Youths shall put old men to shame.”

Furthermore, it sometimes happens that even in the young person’s own home, certain religious obligations had been taken somewhat lightly because of environmental conditions in earlier times. In such cases too, young people may likewise take heart from the prediction of the above *mishnah* — that on the eve of the coming of *Mashiach*, “a daughter shall rise up against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” If a daughter or a daughter-in-law conducts herself properly in these areas too, irrespective of the conventional standards of

the mother or mother-in-law in the past, the mother or mother-in-law will eventually emulate her example.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shtita*, Vol. VII, p. 90

**“The Face of the Generation will be
Like the Face of a Dog” (i)**

The eminent Rabbi Yisrael Salanter of blessed memory once explained this teaching as follows.

A dog by nature runs ahead of its master, always turning around to see where he is heading; whatever that direction may be, the dog arrives there first.

Now in common Hebrew and Yiddish parlance, the phrase *pnei hador* (here translated “the face of the generation”) often signifies those who are [supposed to be] the *leaders* of the generation. In our days, however, on the eve of the Redemption, these ostensible leaders merely look around to see where their congregants would like to head, and they run there first....

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. VII, p. 59

**“The Face of the Generation will be
Like the Face of a Dog” (ii)**

This quotation may be understood as alluding to a dog’s perpetual appetite.

On the eve of the coming of *Mashiach*, the entire generation will be hungry for the word of G-d, as it is written:¹⁸³ “Behold, days are coming,” says the L-rd G-d, ‘when I will send a famine in the land — not a famine for bread, nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of G-d.’ ” Every man in that day will be as hungry as a dog, in the spirit of the verse,¹⁸⁴ “The dogs...are never sated.” Whatever

183. *Amos* 8:11.

184. *Yeshayahu* 46:11.

they are given is never enough: they are forever demanding more.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IX, p. 105

**“Upon Whom Can We Rely? —
Upon Our Father Who Is In Heaven.”**

This sentence is not only a conclusion drawn from the previously enumerated symptoms of exile; in addition, it is *in itself* one of the signs of exile.

One of the difficulties of being in exile is that Jews imagine that there is nothing they can do to light up its darkness. So they sit passively with arms folded and declare: “Upon whom can we rely? — Upon our Father Who is in heaven.” They would simply leave it to *G-d* to end the exile and to bring about the Redemption.

From a talk of the Rebbe Rayatz

Part Two:
On the Way to the Redemption

Prologue: A Daily Entreaty

O behold our affliction and wage our battle; redeem us speedily for the sake of Your Name, for You G-d are the mighty Redeemer. Blessed are You L-rd, Redeemer of Israel....

Sound the great *Shofar* for our freedom; raise a banner to gather our exiles, and bring us together from the four corners of the earth into our land. Blessed are You L-rd, Who gathers the dispersed of His people Israel.

Restore our judges as in former times, and our counselors as of yore; remove from us sorrow and sighing, and reign over us, You alone, O L-rd, with kindness and compassion, with righteousness and justice. Blessed are You L-rd, King Who loves righteousness and justice....

Return in mercy to Jerusalem Your city and dwell therein as You have promised; speedily establish therein the throne of David Your servant, and rebuild it, soon in our days, as an everlasting edifice. Blessed are You L-rd, Who rebuilds Jerusalem.

Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish, and may his power be increased by Your salvation, for we hope for Your salvation all day long. Blessed are You L-rd, Who causes the power of salvation to flourish....

Look with favor, L-rd our G-d, on Your people Israel and pay heed to their prayer; restore the service to Your Sanctuary and accept with love and favor Israel's fire-offerings and prayer; and may the service of Your people Israel always find favor. May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in mercy. Blessed are You L-rd, Who restores His Presence to Zion.

Excerpts from *Shemoneh Esreh, Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, pp. 53-58

Chapter 1: The Light of Mashiach

“When Your Wellsprings Will Be Disseminated Outward”¹

The Baal Shem Tov writes in a letter² that on Rosh HaShanah of the year 5507 (1746) his soul ascended to the heavenly realms, where he was granted the privilege of entering the palace of *Mashiach*.

He writes as follows:

I asked the King *Mashiach*, “Master, when are you coming?”

And he replied: “When your wellsprings will be disseminated outward.”³

On this exchange the Rebbe Rayatz commented: “From this reply it is apparent that the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov — the revelation of the Divine Intellect which the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples and their disciples (our forefathers, the Rebbeim) bequeathed us — are very closely connected with the coming of *Mashiach*. ... *Mashiach* is an *or atzmi*, quintessential light itself, and the teachings of *Chassidus* are the vessel for this great light.”

Likkutei Dibburim (in English translation), Vol. II, pp. 269 and 273⁴

-
1. This theme is treated at length in *Or HaChassidus*, ed. Rabbi Avraham Chanoch Glitzenstein (Kehot, Kfar Chabad, 5725), pp. 255-269.
 2. Reproduced in *Keser Shem Tov* (Kehot, N.Y., 1981), p. 3.
 3. Cf. *Mishlei* 5:16. The metaphor of “wellsprings” signifies “teachings”.
 4. In fact the discussion of this subject begins there on p. 227.

The Revelation of Chassidus in Recent Generations

There are two explanations as to why *pnimiyus haTorah*, the mystical dimension of the Torah, was revealed precisely in these last generations, as the footsteps of *Mashiach* are approaching.

(a) Since the darkness of exile is thickening, an ever more brilliant light is required to pierce it. For this reason the “soul of the Torah”⁵ was revealed, for this is what awakens and uncovers the “hidden point of the soul,”⁶ i.e., those faculties of the soul that are most deeply concealed.

(b) Since we are now at the very end of the exile, we have been given a foretaste of the Torah’s secrets which will be fully revealed only in time to come. This foretaste serves as a preparation for the Days of *Mashiach*, the main point of which is a knowledge of G-d. As *Rambam* writes,⁷ “The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d..., and the Jews...will attain an understanding of their Creator....”

The first of these reasons emphasizes the lowly state of the latter generations, while the second highlights their distinctive privilege — the fact that they have been found worthy of being granted a glimmer of the future revelation. Nevertheless, though they are opposites, these two reasons are interdependent. For the quintessential power of the inner dimension of the Torah, i.e., the Torah teachings of *Mashiach*, comes to the fore in its ability to light up even the redoubled darkness of the days that anticipate the footsteps of *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XV, p. 282

* * *

One of the differences between the above two explanations is the following:

The first explanation [see (a) above] relates to the overt faculties⁸ of the soul. It is they that contend with the exile, and

5. In the Aramaic original, נשמתא דאורייתא.

6. In the Aramaic original, סתים דנשמתא.

7. *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchos Melachim* 12:5.

8. In the original, הכוחות הגלויים.

it is they that master the individual's body, his animal soul, and his physical environment. The study of *Chassidus* fortifies these faculties, by investing in them the power of the hidden, innermost point of the soul, and thereby enables them to overpower the darkness of the exile.

The second explanation, by contrast [see (b) above], relates directly to the hidden, innermost point of the soul,⁶ which is one, so to speak, with the hidden, innermost point of Divinity, (since⁹ “Israel and...the Holy One, blessed be He, are all one”). For this explanation hinges on the individual's innate union with G-d, not with his vigilance in keeping clear of darkness, which takes place spontaneously.

Ibid., Vol. XX, p. 173

* * *

Corresponding to the above two explanations, there are two ways in which the inner dimension of the Torah is revealed:

From the point of view of the first explanation [see (a) above], revealing it even in brief and summary form is sufficient, for even one seminal insight of *pnimiyus haTorah* is able to vitalize one's soul.

From the point of view of the second explanation [see (b) above], by contrast, the inner dimension of the Torah has to be revealed by means of thorough intellectual comprehension. For, as was stated above, this revelation serves as a preparation for the Days of *Mashiach*, when the knowledge of G-d will be thoroughly comprehended,¹⁰ “as the waters cover the ocean bed.”

If so, one should prepare oneself for the forthcoming Redemption by studying *pnimiyus haTorah*, and doing so specifically by means of systematic intellectual comprehension, as indicated by the acronym *Chabad* — by activating one's *Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Daas*.

Ibid., *Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5748 [1987]

9. Cf. *Zohar* III, 73a (...תלת קשרין).

10. *Yeshayah* 11:9, quoted at the conclusion of the *Mishneh Torah* of the *Rambam* (in *Hilchos Melachim* 12:5).

“Those Who Savor It Will Merit Eternal Life”¹¹

As the end of the exile draws near, our task is to furnish “vessels” (i.e., means of expression) for the revelations of the impending Redemption. Since in time to come¹² “they will all know Me,” now too we should in some measure anticipate this destiny. Simply stated, this means that everyone should exert himself toward gaining an intellectual grasp of G-dliness.

In the writings of the *AriZal* there is a well-known teaching, which is also cited in the *Halachah*,¹³ that on the afternoon of the eve of *Shabbos* one should taste something of the delicacies that have been prepared for *Shabbos*. This practice gives tangible expression to the phrase in the *Mussaf* prayer of *Shabbos*, “Those who savor it will merit eternal life.” Since according to the cosmic weekly calendar it is now late on Friday afternoon,¹⁴ we should already savor a foretaste of the innermost dimension of the Torah that will be revealed in time to come. In this spirit it is written,¹⁵ “He will kiss me with the kisses of His mouth,” and on this *Rashi* comments: “We have G-d’s promise that He will again appear to [the Jewish people as at Sinai] and elucidate for them the secrets of [the Torah’s] reasons and its hidden mysteries.”

Ibid., Vol. II, p. 475

11. In its original context, this phrase refers to those who observe the *Shabbos* (see *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 194).

12. *Yirmeyahu* 31:33.

13. *Magen Avraham, Orach Chayim* 250:1.

In the original of the above text, the Rebbe *Shlita* notes that he did not observe the Rebbe Rayatz practicing this custom — but that no doubt referred only to its material dimension; in its spiritual dimension it was certainly observed, and not only on the eve of *Shabbos* but throughout the week as well.

14. I.e., the first six thousand years of the world’s history (*Rosh HaShanah* 31a), the maximum period that can precede the coming of *Mashiach*, correspond to the six weekdays of Creation (*Sanbedrin* 97a on *Tehillim* 90:4).

15. *Shir HaShirim* 1:2.

The Torah at All Its Levels

Since the Redemption must occur in all the spiritual worlds, and since every spiritual occurrence is actualized by means of the Torah, it follows that it is essential in these last days of the exile that our Torah study should penetrate the worlds of all levels. And this is achieved through studying all four levels of the Torah together, for these four levels whose acronym is פּרד"ש [*pshat* — the plain meaning of Scripture; *remez* — meanings implied by allusion; *derush* — insights arrived at by means of a non-literal, homiletic interpretation, as in the *Midrash* or Talmudic *Aggadah*; and *sod* — the Kabbalistic mysteries of the Torah] correspond [in reverse order] to the Four Worlds — *Atzilus*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*.

In our days, therefore, how vital it is to study the revealed levels of the Torah¹⁶ together with its inner dimensions.¹⁷

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Haazinu*, 5743 [1982]

Dressing Up for the Wedding

“The teachings of *Chassidus*,” someone might argue, “are indeed likened to gems and pearls¹⁸ — but I’m not one to chase after pearls; I’m satisfied if my clothes aren’t torn.”

There is an answer to this argument: “Look,¹⁹ ‘Here He stands behind our wall,’ so we have to get ready for the coming of *Mashiach*, when we will be privileged to enter the marriage canopy together with the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He. So we will need pearls, too.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 178

16. In the original, גולה דתורה.

17. In the original, פנימיות התורה.

18. Cf. *Sefer HaSichos* 5705, p. 50.

19. *Shir HaShirim* 2:9.

Serving G-d Tranquilly²⁰

How can it be said that disseminating the wellsprings of *Chassidus* will bring about the Redemption, when it is common knowledge that the Redemption depends directly on the refinement²¹ and elevation of the 288 primordial Divine Sparks²² that “fell” into the material world?

By way of reply: Sifting the material world for Divine sparks is an aggressive mode of spiritual service,²³ demanding arduous and prolonged exertion. Once a particular spark is hidden away in a physical object, one has to battle with the obscurity and negate it before being able to refine the spark and elevate it to its original source in the holy “side” of the universe.

By contrast, disseminating the wellsprings of *Chassidus* is a tranquil mode of Divine service. With this approach there is no need whatever to fight one’s opponent. Instead, as soon as the wellsprings reach their outermost extent,²⁴ the obscurity of this material world is washed away as a matter of course, and the sparks are refined spontaneously.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Sblita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayishlach*, 5745 [1984]

To the Corners of the Earth

The dissemination of the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov gained vigorous momentum when the teachings of the *Chabad* school of *Chassidus* were revealed, for it was then that those wellsprings found intellectual expression. This momentum has been accelerated by the Rebbeim of the respective generations since then, until the time of my revered father-in-law, the

20. In the original, עבודה בדרך מנוחה.

21. In the original, בירור.

22. This concept is explained in: Rabbi Jacob Immanuel Schochet, *Mystical Concepts in Chassidism*, ch. 7; reproduced in the Soncino Bi-Lingual Edition of *Likkutei Amarim — Tanya*, p. 866 ff.

23. In the original, עבודה בדרך מלחמה.

24. In the original, חוצה, in allusion to the first passage (above) in the present chapter.

[Previous] Rebbe who, through his disciples and emissaries, disseminated the wellsprings of *Chassidus* to the most farflung corners of the earth.

This labor having been done, all that is left for us to do is to bring the *Beis HaMikdash* down to this world — in the true and ultimate Redemption by means of our righteous *Mashiach*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayigash*, 5747 [1987]

An Easy Task

On Simchas Torah in the year 1900 the Rebbe Rashab delivered a celebrated address to the students of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah in Lubavitch,²⁵ in which he expounded the teaching of our Sages which begins,²⁶ “Whoever goes out to fight the battle of the House of David...” There he explained that the “House of David” alludes to the King *Mashiach*, who is a scion of David, and that the “battle of the House of David” alludes to the task of disseminating the wellsprings of *Chassidus* outward, this being the spiritual labor that will bring about the Redemption.

It could well be argued that in our generation this task is the obligation of every Jew, wherever he may be.

When this task was first embarked upon, it had to be undertaken for various reasons by the *temimim*, the students of the Yeshivah who were then being addressed and their successors there, for they were endowed with the enhanced strength that was needed for its fulfillment. In our generation, however, after all that has been accomplished in the intervening generations in the dissemination of these wellsprings, this labor has become easier, so that it is now within the reach of every Jew.

By way of a historical model for this change: In the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, when the Jewish people stood at a high level of spirituality, the sacrificial service there could be carried

25. *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. IV, p. 1566-9.

26. *Shabbos* 56a.

out only by a *Koben*; during the period of the exile, by contrast, when the successive generations are of inferior spiritual standing, any Jew can secure the same results in the heavenly realm by means of prayer, which replaces the sacrificial service.²⁷ The reason for this change is that in the time of the *Beis HaMikdash* the sacrificial service was carried out in its entirety, and the *beirur* and elevation of the animal offering were manifest: the change that the animal underwent by being offered on the altar was patently and tangibly visible. The spiritual labor of prayer, by contrast, is easier to perform, since it is a spiritual labor — the refinement and elevation of the worshiper's animal soul. And such a task can be performed with a more modest measure of strength.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 20 MarCheshvan, 5745 [1984]

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (i)

Every single Jew anticipates and believes in the coming of *Mashiach* — speedily, in our own days, and the preparation for this is the spreading of the wellsprings of the Baal Shem Tov ever outward. Accordingly, every Jew should utilize every opportunity to absorb the precepts of the Baal Shem Tov, which have been clarified in minute detail in the teachings of the school of *Chassidus* known as *Chabad*. (Significantly, this name is an acronym for the three stages in the intellectual process — *Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Daas*.) And the people who absorb these precepts will thereby be enabled to stand at the head of those who will soon be privileged to greet the righteous *Mashiach*.

From a letter of the Rebbe *Shlita*, published in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. VII, p. 227

27. *Berachos* 26b.

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (ii)

The destiny of the teachings and the message of the Baal Shem Tov — that they should be disseminated to the furthest reaches of the world — must be fulfilled. Accordingly, no corner of the globe inhabited by Jews should remain untouched by this message.

And since we are now in the era that is hearing the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, who²⁸ “is standing behind our wall,” waiting only for the finishing touches to our refinement of this physical world, it is thus imperative that *Chassidus* be studied in Australia too. This applies not only to the Russian-born chassidim who were sent there as emissaries: it should likewise permeate the local Jewish population. And since this is something that must happen, all the necessary resources will no doubt be forthcoming.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shtita*, Vol. IX, p. 322²⁹

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (iii)

The dissemination of the wellsprings of *Chassidus* is the essential call of the hour. One of the proofs of this is that this task has suddenly found opponents, shades of the unholy side of the universe, those of whom our Sages have said that³⁰ “they have the shadow of a shadow.” Their desire is (G-d forbid) to delay the Redemption and the coming of our righteous *Mashiach*, to intensify the exile of the Divine Presence, and so on, by confusing people’s minds so that they will not do whatever is needed to spread the wellsprings. This confusion distracts the attention even of those who recognize the necessity of their own mission, but are drawn into debates or dialectics or whatever, with those who oppose it.

28. Cf. *Shir HaShirim* 2:9.

29. Addressed by the Rebbe *Shtita* to Rabbi Zalman Serebryanski ז"ל in 1954.

30. *Gittin* 66a.

Now these last moments within earshot of the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, — is it really worth wasting them on debates to refute vain claims, when they could be put to use in the dissemination of the wellsprings of *Chassidus*?

Ibid., Vol. XIV, p. 349

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (iv)

I was pleased to read of your decision to engage in the diffusion of the light of *Chassidus*, and so on. It is a pity, though, that you are deferring this for some time, when²⁸ “behold, [*Mashiach*] is standing behind our wall,” and is being delayed only because the wellsprings are not yet sufficiently widespread. Can anyone measure [the Jewish people’s] anguish with every additional moment of exile, or [their] bliss in every additional moment of the Era of the Redemption?

Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 436

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (v)

It is my obligation (and my privilege) to make you aware of the great necessity of studying the inner dimensions of the Torah, which in these latter generations have been revealed within the teachings of *Chassidus*. And if this study is a necessity for every Jew, how much more is this true of a person who is in a position to influence others, and who is thus (in the words of the *Mishnah*³¹) “himself meritorious and causes many others to attain merit.” Moreover, from this affirmative statement one can infer [that the reverse is true when one does not take steps to be meritorious].

Especially in this period of the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, when²¹² “behold, he is standing behind our wall” and everyone should be prepared every day for his coming, every single individual must do his duty. For, as the King

31. *Avos* 5:18.

Mashiach himself stated, he will come³² “when the wellsprings of [the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings] will be widespread.” Heaven forbid that the exile be prolonged, even for the shortest time, by reason of any inactivity in this task of dissemination, or even by incomplete activity. For this is an exile both of the Holy One, blessed be He, and of the House of Israel, since³³ “when they were exiled to Edom the Divine Presence accompanied them.”

Ibid., Vol. XIX, p. 422

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (vi)

Disseminating the teachings of *Chassidus* abroad is not only a *mitzvah* which these times demand: it is an imperative. Moreover, as we can see for ourselves, it is a vital imperative, for upon it depends the actual, practical performance of the *mitzvos*, of which it is said,³⁴ וחי בהם — “You shall be *alive* in them.” The performance of the *mitzvos* depends on the dissemination of *Chassidus* especially in the present era, when the Divine light is obscured and concealed, and trials are rampant.

Ibid., Vol. XVII, p. 264

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (vii)

In one of the letters which the Rebbe Rayatz addressed to his chassidim at large in 5710 [1949] he wrote as follows:

In honor of the forthcoming *Yud-Tes* Kislev I am hereby forwarding to you [...], as well as a copy of a letter of mine written in 5687 [1927] which urges its readers to engage in making the study of *Chassidus*

32. See the first passage (above) in the present chapter.

33. *Megillah* 29a.

34. *Vayikra* 18:5.

widespread. This letter is still valid today, and in fact more so.³⁵

Explaining the last phrase, the Rebbe *Sblita* writes:

(a) From the mortal perspective: Today’s world needs a more intense light and a greater diffusion of light, because of its lower *standards* (as the Sages write,³⁶ “Is the generation fit...?” and moreover,³⁷ “If the early generations were like angels, we are [like mortals, etc.]”), and because of the seriously depleted *numbers* of our Jewish brethren (as a result of the events of recent years).

(b) From the heavenly perspective: Year by year in every era, a new and lofty spiritual light which has never yet radiated is drawn down to this world, each year from a higher realm.³⁸ This obliges us to provide additional “vessels” for this light. In this era in particular, we are coming ever closer to the time of which we have been promised,³⁹ “In its time I will expedite it.” This verse refers to the time of the coming and revelation of *Mashiach*. The “vessel” for this revelation is the light of *Chassidus*; the condition for this revelation is the dissemination of the wellsprings of *Chassidus*. It follows that this light must radiate even to places which until now were “outside”,²¹⁶ and that everywhere, vessels to contain the light of *Mashiach* should be expanded.

Ibid., Vol. III, p. 222

Our Duty to Disseminate the Wellsprings (viii)

The study and the widespread dissemination of the wellsprings of *Chassidus*, — these are the prelude and the preparation and the vessel for the promise of the prophet, that⁴⁰ “the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d, as

35. The final phrase (“and in fact more so”) translates נבדדו in the original.

36. *Yevamos* 39b.

37. *Shabbos* 112b.

38. *Iggeres HaKodesh* of the Alter Rebbe, Epistle 14.

39. *Yeshayahu* 60:22, interpreted in *Sanhedrin* 98a.

40. *Ibid.* 11:9.

the waters cover the ocean bed.” This refers to the Torah teachings of *Mashiach*, who will give the entire Jewish people an understanding incomparably superior to the Torah insights of today.⁴¹

Ibid., Vol. XIII, p. 472

Déjà Vu

A chassid once asked the *Tzemach Tzedek*: “What is the point of exerting ourselves in the study of *Chassidus*, which deals with abstractions that no mortal mind can fully grasp? After all, when *Mashiach* comes even those who did not study *Chassidus* will know G-d, as it is written,⁴² ‘For they will all know Me.’ ”

The *Tzemach Tzedek* replied: “A person listening to a conversation conducted on the other side of a wall does not grasp it all; he only grasps its general drift. But later, when the conversation is repeated to him in all its detail, he understands everything that he had heard previously. Every moment or two he thinks, ‘*Aha! Now I understand all those connections and details!*’

“Here, too,” explained the *Tzemach Tzedek*, “it is true that someone who studies *Chassidus* grasps only part of the subject. But when *Mashiach* will teach it in time to come, that man will be able to look back and say, ‘*Aha...!*’

“And not only that, but someone hearing those teachings for the second time will understand them much more deeply than someone who will then hear them for the first time. As the above-quoted verse says, ‘For they will all know Me, from their smallest to their greatest’ — and it is obvious that the understanding of a young child cannot be compared to that of an adult.”

Transmitted by oral tradition

41. *Koheles Rabbah*, sec. 11, on *Koheles* 11:8.

42. *Yirmeyahu* 31:33.

**Mashiach will Come
to Wherever Chassidus is Being Studied**

The Rebbe Rashab once said: “*Mashiach* will come to wherever *Chassidus* is being studied.”

So one of his chassidim asked: “Does the prophet not foretell that on the day that *Mashiach* appears,⁴³ ‘His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives’?!?”

“That’s precisely what I said,” replied the Rebbe, “for as you know,⁴⁴ olive oil alludes to the mystical secrets of the Torah....”

Transmitted by oral tradition

43. *Zechariah* 14:4.

44. Cf. *Berachos* 57a.

Chapter 2: The Festive Meal of Mashiach⁴⁵

The Revelation of the Radiance of Mashiach⁴⁶

It was the custom of the Baal Shem Tov to partake of three meals⁴⁷ on *Acharon shel* Pesach, the Last Day of Pesach. The third meal, which took place late in the afternoon, was known as “the Festive Meal of *Mashiach*,” for on this day the radiance of *Mashiach* is openly revealed.

From the year 5666 (1906) it became customary in Lubavitch for the students of the Tomchei Temimim Yeshivah to eat their Pesach meals together in the study hall. That year the Rebbe Rashab joined the students for the [third] festive meal of the Last Day of Pesach, and directed that each of them be given four cups of wine.⁴⁸

HaYom Yom, p. 47

Thirteen Questions and Answers about the Festive Meal of Mashiach

Question 1: Why was it specifically the Baal Shem Tov who initiated this custom?

Answer 1: The entire mission of the Baal Shem Tov is bound up with the revelation of *Mashiach*, for two reasons: (a) It was in response to the Baal Shem Tov’s question, “Master, when are you coming?” that *Mashiach* replied, “When the wellsprings [of your teachings] will be disseminated

45. In the original, סעודת משיח.

46. In the original, גילוי הארת המשיח.

47. I.e., as on *Shabbos*, in contrast to the two customary festive meals of *Yom-Tov*.

48. The Rebbe *Shlita* has commented that this was obviously intended to become an annual custom.

outward.”⁴⁹ (b) One of the basic teachings of the Baal Shem Tov is that one should serve G-d *with* the body, refining and purifying it so that it will become a fit receptacle for the light of the soul, and not crush it through fasts and self-mortification. This mode of divine service foreshadows the forthcoming Redemption, when the most sublime levels of Divinity will be revealed specifically in this *physical* world, in the spirit of the verse,⁵⁰ *כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה'* — “For the *earth* will be filled with the knowledge of G-d....”

Question 2: Why did this custom come to light specifically in these latter generations?

Answer 2: (a) As the darkness of the exile grows denser, a more intense revelation of light and holiness enables us to overpower it.

(b) As we draw nearer to the forthcoming Redemption, a foretaste of its delights is revealed to us. This recalls the phrase from the *Mussaf* prayer of *Shabbos*,⁵¹ *טעמיה חיים וכו'* — “Those who savor it will merit eternal life.” This is the phrase that underlies the Friday afternoon custom of tasting something of the delicacies that have been prepared for *Shabbos*.⁵²

Question 3: Why was Pesach chosen for this *seudah*, and why specifically its Last Day?

Answer 3: (a) As is well known, the concept of redemption came into being with the Exodus from Egypt, and it was then too that a conduit was opened for the coming of the future Redemption. Since the same downward flow [of Divine energy]⁵³ is aroused afresh every Pesach as it was at the time of the Exodus, it is obvious that every Pesach the radiance of *Mashiach* is aroused and revealed afresh. And since every such flow of Divine light illuminates most intensely at its

49. On the history and content of this exchange see p. 71 (above).

50. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

51. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 194.

52. See also the above passage entitled, “Those Who Savor It Will Merit Eternal Life” (p. 74).

53. In the original, *המשכה*.

conclusion, it is self-evident that the radiance of the light of *Mashiach* is revealed most intensely on the *Last Day* of Pesach, and, more specifically, as that day draws to its close.

(b) This revelation foreshadowing the future Redemption takes place specifically on the *Last Day* of Pesach, because this day is a *Yom-Tov Shení shel Galuyos*, one of the days which only in the Diaspora is appended to each of the pilgrim festivals. The essence of each of these days is that in the Diaspora and in the time of exile, the Jewish people capture 24 mundane weekday hours, and transform them into a day of *Yom-Tov* and holiness. In our case, more specifically, this means transforming them into a festival of freedom and redemption. And this process of transformation is the essence of the forthcoming Redemption — converting the very exile itself into redemption, so that G-dliness is revealed even at the very lowest levels of creation.

Question 4: What is the point of eating an actual physical meal that relates to the subject of *Mashiach*?

Answer 4: This festive meal causes the image and the feeling of the future Redemption to penetrate not only all the faculties of a man's soul, including his capacity for action, but his physical body as well — by means of the physical food that becomes part of his very flesh and blood. Understanding this enables us to distinguish between “the revelation of the radiance of *Mashiach*” (a) through partaking of *seudas Mashiach* and (b) through reading this day's *haftorah*,⁵⁴ which speaks of the future Redemption.⁵⁵ For the reading influences one's faculties of thought and speech alone, whereas the meal involves the physical body.

Partaking of this festive meal is intended to draw down the radiance of *Mashiach* into every aspect of one's daily life throughout the year. This simply means — as an anticipatory echo of how the world will appear after the Redemption — that holiness should permeate all of a man's activities, including his physical activities, to the point that he is prepared to

54. *Yeshayahu* 10:32ff.

55. See also Answer 5, below.

sacrifice the innermost core of his soul. This is the *yechidah* within his soul, the element of *Mashiach* in his soul.

Question 5: Does the revealed plane of the Torah offer any hint or support to the concept that on the Last Day of Pesach the radiance of *Mashiach* is openly revealed?

Answer 5: The *haftorah* that is read on this day is the passage from *Yeshayahu* that begins,⁵⁴ עוֹד הַיּוֹם בְּנוֹב לַעֲמוּד — “This very day he will halt at Nov,” because the downfall of Sancheriv (Sennacherib) which is here predicted took place on the first night of Pesach.⁵⁶

It will be noted, however, that the downfall [of this Assyrian invader] took place on the first night of Pesach, not on the Last Day. Likewise problematic is the fact that only the opening verses speak of this subject, while the bulk of the *haftorah* speaks of *Mashiach*.

It would therefore appear that this *haftorah* is connected with the Last Day of Pesach (partly) because this day is connected with *Mashiach*. Indeed, even the opening verses — which foretell the downfall of Sancheriv and the victory of King Chizkiyahu (Hezekiah) — are connected with *Mashiach*, for as the Sages teach,⁵⁷ “The Holy One, blessed be He, had desired to make Chizkiyahu the *Mashiach*.”

Question 6: Would it not seem appropriate that *seudas Mashiach* is a custom to be observed by select men of stature, rather than by any Jew, no matter what his spiritual standing?

Answer 6: (a) *Mashiach* is going to redeem every single Jew, regardless of his spiritual attainments. Every single Jew is therefore obligated to prepare himself for the Redemption, and this includes participating in such a *seudah*. Moreover, since⁵⁸ “one *mitzvah* brings another in its train,” it is certain that observing this custom will encourage people to undertake

56. The Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 490:13.

57. *Sanhedrin* 94a.

58. *Avos* 4:2.

further activities which will hasten the coming of the future Redemption.

(b) Within every Jew there resides a spark of *Mashiach*.⁵⁹ There is thus no Jew who does not have a connection with the revelation of the radiance of *Mashiach* and with the festive meal held in his honor.

Question 7: Why was it specifically a *Chabad* Rebbe who added the custom of drinking four cups of wine at this *seudah*?

Answer 7: The *Chabad* school of *Chassidus* explains the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov in rationally comprehensible terms, thereby making them palatable and pleasurable. Herein lies the distinction between *matzah* and wine: *Matzah* is the poor bread of affliction, that does not have the taste of leavened bread; wine not only has a taste, but moreover leads to joy and pleasure.

Question 8: Why was it in Yeshivas Tomchei Temimim that this custom was first introduced?

Answer 8: The Rebbe Rashab, who founded the Yeshivah [in Lubavitch in 1897], referred to its students as “soldiers of the House of David”;⁶⁰ i.e., their task is to bring about the coming of *Mashiach*, the scion of the House of David, through their labors in disseminating the wellsprings of *Chassidus* to the outermost limits. It is thus appropriate that the custom of drinking four cups of wine was first added to the observance of the *seudah* of *Mashiach* in the very place that was founded in order to expedite his coming.

Question 9: Why was the time for drinking these four cups of wine not fixed for the *beginning* of the Last Day of Pesach, as with the four cups that are drunk at the *Seder*, which takes place at the *beginning* of the eve of the first [two] days⁶¹ of the festival.

59. See below, Part IV, ch. 3. (p. 173ff).

60. In the original, חילי בית דוד. See the above passage headed “An Easy Task” (p. 77).

61. I.e., in the Diaspora, corresponding to the first day of the festival in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Answer 9: (a) The first days of Pesach echo the redemption from Egypt. The accent in this redemption is on the beginning of a new period, a period during which the world was granted permanence⁶² and fulfillment through the Giving of the Torah. For the Exodus itself was a preparation for the Giving of the Torah; as G-d told Moshe Rabbeinu at Mount Horev (Sinai) when He first sent him on his mission,⁶³ “When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will serve G-d on this mountain.” This is why the four cups related to this redemption are drunk at the beginning of the day(s) in question.

The Last Day of Pesach, by contrast, foreshadows the future Redemption. Here the accent (as seen from our present perspective, before its arrival) is on the close of a period, the period of exile with its distinctive mode of divine service. The four cups relating to the future Redemption are therefore drunk at the *end* of the day in question.

(b) In the time of the future Redemption, the initial letters of **משיח, אדם, ויוד** (i.e., *Mashiach*, Adam and David) will be arranged⁶⁴ with the letter *mem* of *Mashiach* first, so as to form the word **מאד**, signifying the transcendent powers of the soul. During the present time of exile, however, these initials are arranged with the letter *mem* of *Mashiach* last, so as to form the word **אדם** (Adam). Hence the four cups of the *seudah* of *Mashiach* (as celebrated during the present exile) are drunk at the *end* of the day.

Question 10: Does the custom of drinking four cups of wine at this *seudah* have a source in *nigleh*, the revealed plane of the Torah?

Answer 10: One of the reasons for drinking four cups of wine at the *Seder* is that they correspond to the “four cups of retribution” which G-d will cause the nations of the world to drink in future time, and corresponding to these, G-d will then

62. See *Shabbos* 88a on *Tehillim* 76:9.

63. *Shmos* 3:12.

64. In the original, the Kabbalistic arrangement of letters is called **צירוף**.

cause the Jewish people to drink “four cups of consolation.”⁶⁵ Accordingly, we drink four cups — on the Last Day of Pesach, at its close, at the *seudah* of *Mashiach* — in order to bring about the revelation of the four cups of future time.

Question 11: A festive meal is usually based on⁶⁶ “meat and fish and all kinds of delicacies.” Why does this festive meal (apart from its basic component, *matzah*) focus on wine?

Answer 11: Our Sages taught⁶⁷ that in time to come “the Holy One, blessed be He, will make a festive meal for the righteous.... After they have eaten and drunk they will offer Avraham Avinu a cup of wine over which to recite the Grace After Meals, but he will reply, ‘I will not lead the Grace....’ ...He will say to David HaMelech, ‘Take the cup of wine and lead the Grace.’ And David HaMelech will reply, ‘I shall lead the blessing, and it is fitting that I lead the blessing, for it is written,⁶⁸ *I raise the cup of deliverance and call upon the Name of G-d.*’ ”

From this we see that what distinguishes David, the King *Mashiach*, from the other *tzaddikim* named, is related to wine. Significantly, it is our righteous *Mashiach*, a scion of the House of David, who will reveal and explain the Torah’s secrets — and wine alludes to this inner, mystical dimension of the Torah. As our Sages taught,⁶⁹ נכנס יין, יצא סוד — “When wine enters, the secret comes out.”

Question 12: Is there a connection between the number four and the future Redemption?

Answer 12: (a) Our Sages⁷⁰ teach that “the world resembles a portico whose northern side is not enclosed.” It is Israel’s task to enclose the fourth side, too, and thereby bring

65. *Yerushalmi, Pesachim*, beginning of ch. 10.

66. From the *zemiros*, hymns traditionally sung at the *Shabbos* table.

67. *Pesachim* 119b.

68. *Tehillim* 116:13.

69. *Eruvin* 65a, which points out that the letters of יין (“wine”) are numerically equal to the letters of סוד (“secret”).

70. *Bava Basra* 25a.

completeness to the world.⁷¹ In this context the number four thus indicates the perfection which the world will attain in the time of the future Redemption.

(b) In its prophecy of the Redemption, the *haftorah* of this day promises that G-d⁷² “will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed people of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Question 13: What is the difference between the *seudah* of *Mashiach* which is held on the Last Day of Pesach, and the *seudah* of *Melaveh Malkah* which is held after the close of every *Shabbos* to escort the departing Sabbath Queen? For the latter meal, too, is known as “the festive meal of David, the King *Mashiach*.”⁷³

Answer 13: The *Melaveh Malkah* is mainly connected with the activity of David in his role as King of Israel (as is apparent from this meal’s above-quoted name). His monarchy was conducted within the bounds of nature, its central goal being to refine and elevate the nature of the material world, and to transform it into a holy level of nature. The *seudah* of *Mashiach*, by contrast, as is apparent from its very name, is connected with the activity of the King *Mashiach*, who functions on a supernatural level, thereby renewing the whole of creation.

This distinction also explains why a *Melaveh Malkah* is held every week: it is part of the nature of the world, part of the pattern of divine service of the present period in which we live. The *seudah* of *Mashiach*, by contrast, is a novel experience that occurs only once a year, alluding to the miraculous renewal of the world in the time of the future Redemption.

This also explains why a *Melaveh Malkah* comes after one has already undergone the spiritual preparation of the preceding three *Shabbos* meals: since it is part of a natural

71. The Rebbe *Shlita* connects this simile with the verse which the above *Gemara* quotes a little later (*Yirmeyahu* 1:14), “For from the north will the evil break forth.” This verse alludes to the *kelippas*, the forces of evil in the universe, which it is Israel’s task to subjugate or sublimate. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIV, p. 19; see also *Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer*, sec. 3.

72. *Yeshayahu* 11:12.

73. In the original Aramaic, סעודתא דדוד מלכא משיחא.

pattern of divine service, it follows due preparation. The *seudah* of *Mashiach*, by contrast, is a *seudah* in its own right, unconnected with the meals that precede it, for it belongs to a pattern of divine service that transcends the natural order.

Assembled from *Likkutei Sichos*, Vols. IV and VII (Appendices),
as well as from talks of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Acharon shel Pesach* in the years 5712
[1952], 5743 [1983], 5744 [1984], 5748 [1988] and 5749 [1989]

The Four Cups of Mashiach

The four cups of wine on *Seder* night are the cups of Moshe Rabbeinu; the four cups of wine at *seudas Mashiach* on the Last Day of Pesach are the cups of our righteous *Mashiach*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Acharon shel Pesach*, 5720 [1960]

The Dance of Mashiach

The Rebbe Rayatz introduced the custom whereby “*Mashiach’s* dance” takes place during *seudas Mashiach*.

The Rebbe *Shlita* has offered two explanations of this name: (a) This is a dance that is related to the coming of *Mashiach* and hastens his coming; (b) This is a dance in which the King *Mashiach* himself takes part.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Acharon shel Pesach*, 5712 [1952]

Chapter 3: The Sefer Torah of Mashiach

A Sefer Torah with which to Greet Mashiach

Before *Hakkafos* on the eve of Simchas Torah in the year 5702 (1941), the Rebbe Rayatz announced that a *Sefer* Torah was going to be written especially “to greet our righteous *Mashiach*.” The writing was intended to begin on *Chaf* MarCheshvan (the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab), and at that stage was intended to begin publicly. In fact it was postponed to *Beis Iyar* (the birthday of the Rebbe Maharash), when the writing began, according to the Rebbe’s instructions, discreetly.

Excerpts from Letters of the Rebbe Rayatz

On Simchas Torah I announced that I am about to begin writing⁷⁴ a *Sefer* Torah and with it to greet *Mashiach*. Please announce that whoever so desires may participate in the writing of letters.⁷⁵

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. VI, p. 47

I have telegraphed my friend [i.e., Rabbi Shlomo Yehudah Leib Eliezrov of Jerusalem] about acquiring lengths of parchment six handsbreadths high, explicitly prepared from kosher animals that have undergone *shechitah*, on which to write (with G-d’s help) a *Sefer* Torah with which to greet our righteous *Mashiach* very soon.

Ibid., p. 28

74. In the Hebrew and Yiddish idiom, to “begin writing” means to commission a professional scribe.

75. I.e., by “buying” a letter.

I hereby authorize...to arrange for...a particular person who should engage in this — to print copies of the public letter which announces the writing of the *Sefer Torah*, and of the open letter which invites those interested to notify that they wish to participate in its writing.

Ibid., p. 104

By virtue of our saintly forebears, the Rebbeim, the Prime Cause has so engineered circumstances that it has fallen to my fortunate lot to become the agent for the performance of a sublime mission — to become aroused and to arouse others in immediate repentance, so that we may prepare ourselves for immediate redemption, and write a *Sefer Torah* with which to greet our righteous *Mashiach*.

My unspoken intention was that this should be done privately. At the table on Simchas Torah, however, as I extolled the virtue of *ahavas Yisrael*, the love of a fellow Jew, ...a doubt arose in my mind as to whether it would be right on my part to keep this truth concealed, and thereby to prevent many men of merit from sharing in this holy privilege. Accordingly, regardless of the forces of evil which the *Zohar*⁷⁶ likens to “insolent dogs...which cannot tolerate a pure spirit, and which abuse scholars and scorn their works,” I decided to announce that with G-d’s help I am about to begin writing a *Sefer Torah* with which to greet our righteous *Mashiach*, speedily and in our own days, Amen.

I pray that G-d in His mercy will be compassionate and ease the birthpangs of the coming of *Mashiach*, for us and for all our Jewish brethren, wherever they may be. Protected by His lovingkindness and mercy, both materially and spiritually, may we be found worthy of welcoming our righteous *Mashiach* in the very near future. Amen, Amen!

Ibid., p. 278

76. I, 43a.

The Sefer Torah is Completed

Though the *Sefer Torah* with which to greet *Masbiach* was written in 5702 (1941-42), its final letters were not completed until the ninth of Shvat, 5730 (1970),⁷⁷ on the afternoon of *erev Shabbos*. Sensing the historic nature of the occasion, thousands of chassidim from near and far converged on the *beis midrash* of Lubavitch in Brooklyn for this solemn and moving ceremony.

The Rebbe *Shlita* opened the proceedings with a brief *sichah*, and asked that Psalm 20⁷⁸ be read “as an invitation to all our Jewish brethren, wherever they are.” The venerable Rabbi Shmuel Levitin read it aloud, while all those present repeated it, one verse at a time. Then, in preparation for the writing of the final letters of the *Sefer Torah*, the entire congregation sang together the “*Niggun* of Four Themes” of the Alter Rebbe, followed by a representative *niggun* associated with (in turn) the Mittlerer Rebbe, the *Tzemach Tzedek*, the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz, and finally the *niggun* sung to the words of the verse that begins,⁷⁹ הושיעה את עמך — “Grant salvation to Your people and bless Your heritage; tend them and exalt them forever.”

The final letters of the *Sefer Torah* were now written. Various elder chassidim were then honored in turn with the responsive reading of individual verses from the passage beginning *Atah bareisa*,⁸⁰ [as on Simchas Torah]. The first verse and the last were read by the Rebbe *Shlita*.

The congregation now sang the melody set to the words of the verse,⁸¹ פרוות תשב ירושלים — “Jerusalem shall be settled as an unfortified town.”

The *Sefer Torah* was now bound, and garbed in a royal blue silk-velvet mantle. The Rebbe *Shlita* placed an ornate golden crown upon it, and, surrounded by chassidim holding lighted

77. I.e., the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz.

78. I.e., the *kapitl* beginning למנצח ... יענך.

79. *Tehillim* 28:9.

80. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, pp. 335-6.

81. *Zechariah* 2:8.

candles and supporting a canopy aloft, carried it to the Holy Ark. At this point the Rebbe recited aloud the full blessing of *Shehecheyanu*,⁸² and ate a fruit of the new season.⁸³

Returning to his place, the Rebbe *Shlita* delivered a *maamar* that began with the words, ענין כתיבת ספר תורה להבין — “To understand the meaning of writing a *Sefer* Torah....”

In the course of the brief talk with which this occasion then closed, the Rebbe *Shlita* said: “A certain deed was lacking, a deed that would enable [us] to draw on the strength which the leader of our generation, the Previous Rebbe, is granting. The completion of this *Sefer* Torah has removed that lack. All that now remains is for every individual to attend to the particular details in his divine service that are still outstanding. And thereby we will nullify the exile, and will be found worthy of going out with joyous and gladsome hearts to greet our righteous *Mashiach*.”

82. The traditional expression of gratitude to G-d on certain happy or auspicious occasions; see *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 87.

83. I.e., which in any event would require the recitation of *Shehecheyanu*. This is the practice when the other occasion for the blessing is not one of those formally ordained.

Chapter 4: As the Redemption Draws Near

Grant Salvation to Your People

Since people may not be counted by being numbered,⁸⁴ the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* writes⁸⁵ that “it is customary to count [congregants to see whether a *minyan* of ten is present] by reciting the following verse,⁷⁹ which comprises ten words: הושיעה את עמך, וברך את נחלתך, ורעם ונשאם עד העולם — ‘Grant salvation to Your people and bless Your heritage; tend them and exalt them forever.’” This is somewhat surprising, for *Rashi* writes explicitly in his *Sefer HaPardes*⁸⁶ that one counts by using a different verse,⁸⁷ which also has ten words: ואני ברוב חסדך אבוא ביתך, אשתחוה אל היכל קדשך ביראתך — “And I, through Your abundant kindness, come into Your house; I bow toward Your holy sanctuary in awe of You.”

This change may be explained as follows.

In these last generations that await the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, in a time pervaded by the doubly dense darkness of exile, the *very first* request of any ten Jews that assemble together is — that G-d bring about the Redemption. And so it is that even before they begin to *daven* they plead: הושיעה את עמך — “Grant salvation to Your people and bless Your heritage; tend them and exalt them forever!”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Sblita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei*, 5743 [1983]

84. Cf. *Rashi* on *I Shmuel* 15:4.

85. Sec. 15:3.

86. Sec. 99.

87. *Tehillim* 5:8.

Clapping on Shabbos and Yom-Tov

The *Shulchan Aruch*⁸⁸ records the following rulings: “One may not clap...nor dance... [on *Shabbos* and *Yom-Tov*]... The reason that no objection is raised nowadays when people do clap and dance is that⁸⁹ ‘it is better that they should act innocently [i.e., out of ignorance, than that they should act willfully]...’ Some authorities hold that in our times this is all permissible....”

It is the custom among chassidim (and this we have seen among the Rebbeim of *Chabad*) to clap and dance on *Shabbos* and *Yom-Tov*. The deep-rooted reason for this may be explained as follows. Since we are coming ever closer to the arrival of *Mashiach*, we follow the custom of David, the King *Mashiach*, of whom it is written,⁹⁰ “And David leaped about before G-d with all his strength.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 230

Elijah's Cup

The custom of filling a goblet of wine for the Prophet Eliyahu at the *Seder* night on Pesach is not mentioned in the *Gemara* nor in the *Rishonim*, the early medieval halachic authorities. Its earliest source is in the writings of the *Acharonim*, the authorities of the sixteenth century and later. Why is this so?

This custom is an expression of the Jewish people's belief in the coming of *Mashiach* and in the coming of Eliyahu, who will herald the imminent Redemption. The nearer we approach the time of the Redemption, the more keenly is this faithful anticipation felt in the heart of every Jew. This is why the above custom came to light and became widespread in recent

88. *Orach Chayim* 339:3.

89. *Shabbos* 148b.

90. *II Shmuel* 6:14.

generations, even though we do not find tangible evidence of it in earlier days.

Ibid., Vol. XXVII, p. 55

The Twelfth of Tammuz

The outstanding date in the month of Tammuz is the seventeenth, which recalls themes of destruction and exile.⁹¹ In our times an additional date stands out, with an opposite theme — the Festival of Liberation, celebrated on the twelfth and thirteenth of the month (*Yud-Beis* and *Yud-Gimmel* Tammuz), marking the release of the Rebbe Rayatz from incarceration and exile in Stalinist Russia in 1927. His release from mortal danger was a redemption for the cause of Torah and the practice of Judaism at large.

For what underlying reason does the latter date fall in the midst of the somber month of Tammuz? — Because it is in our very generation, the generation that can hear the closely-approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, that the theme of redemption which lies hidden in the month of Tammuz has been revealed.

Ibid., Vol. XVIII, p. 310

The Advance of Scientific Discovery

The *Zohar*⁹² teaches that in the six-hundredth year of the sixth millennium after Creation,⁹³ there will be a great advance in the secular sciences, in order to ready the world for the advent of the seventh millennium.

This can be understood from three perspectives:

91. Five calamities occurred on this date, notably the breach of the walls of Jerusalem during the Roman siege three weeks before the Destruction of the Second *Beis HaMikdash*.

92. I, 117a.

93. Corresponding to the year 1840 C.E.

(a) Utilizing this knowledge for the service of G-d provides us with a certain glimpse of the level of perception that will be attained in the Era of the Redemption:⁹⁴ וְרָאוּ כָל בָּשָׂר — “And all *flesh* will see that the mouth of G-d has spoken.” I.e., all flesh will then enjoy perceptions of divine service with physical, sensory vision. The telephone and radio, for example, provide us with palpable models that enable us to visualize the concept of⁹⁵ “an Eye that sees and an Ear that hears.”

(b) When the radio, for example, is used to disseminate Torah knowledge worldwide, it pre-echoes the universal diffusion of knowledge in future time:⁹⁶ כִּי מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ דַּעַת אֵת ה' — “For the *earth will be filled* with the knowledge of G-d, as the waters cover the ocean bed.” Moreover, it foreshadows the promise of the above-quoted verse,⁹⁴ that “all *flesh* will see...,” for the physical sound is heard simultaneously around the world.

(c) The advance of scientific understanding is increasingly revealing the inherent unity in the universe, as expressed in the forces of nature.⁹⁷ Being aware of this can serve as a preparation and prologue to the Era of *Mashiach*, for at that time the Creator’s simple, uncompounded Unity will become evident. That time will also reveal the way in which G-d’s Unity finds expression in the unity that is inherent in all of Creation.

Ibid., Vol. XV, p. 42

The Exile Transformed: A Foretaste

At the time of the future Redemption, the darkness of exile will be transformed into light; indeed, the exile itself will be transformed into redemption. Indeed already now, in the time of exile, we are allowed to savor a semblance of this transformation — when even in conditions of exile Jews are

94. *Yeshayahu* 40:5.

95. *Apos* 2:1.

96. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

97. See also the essay entitled “Linking Heaven and Earth: Communications in the Service of Their Creator,” published by Sichos In English (N.Y., 1991).

granted mastery over worldly things, and receive assistance from the governments under which they live.

This is especially evident in our generation, both in this benevolent land, and in that other land,⁹⁸ which has helped Jews find their way from distress to freedom.

The reason: Ours is the last generation of the exile and the first generation of the Redemption. And the nearer we approach the Redemption, the more clearly can we perceive that the world is being prepared for the transformation of the exile in the imminent Redemption, by means of our foretaste of this transformation during the time of exile.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayigash*, 5751 [1990]

98. I.e., the USA and the (former) USSR, respectively.

**Part Three:
On the Threshold
of the Redemption**

Prologue: A Prayer for Compassion

Grant a happy future for Your people; restore the Sanctuary to our midst; exalt the Mountain that is the most exalted of all mountains; raise the glory that has been cut down; brighten the darkness of Your desired Abode; bestow glory upon the [city] which sits alone; You alone shall enwrap her with sovereignty; remove disgrace from the city; shake off the wicked from Your dwelling-place; show mercy to Your congregation; take Your beloved to Your heart; make a new covenant with her; let her life be precious in Your eyes; cleanse her with pure waters; settle her in the city where David camped; raise the stature of [Israel, who is compared to a] palm tree; proclaim to all our love; walk in the midst of our camps; seek the redemption of our exile; reveal the end of exile when You will acquire us again; come swiftly to have mercy upon us; proclaim that we are Your chosen people and we will acknowledge You as our G-d.¹

Seder Avodah LeYom Kippur, Machzor for Yom Kippur
(trans. Rabbi Nissen Mangel), p. 191

1. All of the verbs in the original of this poetic prayer, which is replete with Biblical allusions, begin with the letter *taf*, signifying the second person; the first operative letters thereafter all follow the order of the alphabet in reverse.

Chapter I: Here He Stands Behind Our Wall

Mashiach is Waiting for Us

Mashiach is already here: “Here he stands behind our wall.”¹ In a higher world there is rejoicing already: he has already come; down here, however, he is waiting for the Jewish people to repent, to do *teshuvah*.

Sefer HaSichos 5701 [1941], p. 81

It’s *Our* Wall that is Obstructing

In our generation one can see and feel that *Mashiach* “is standing behind our wall.”¹ Moreover, that wall already has “windows” and “crevices”; *Mashiach* is “watching through the windows, peering through the crevices.” He is watching and waiting in anticipation: When are we finally going to finish off our sundry outstanding tasks,² and complete the final *beirur* that will refine and elevate the world?

If we do not see him, that is because it is *our* wall that is standing in the way.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. VII, p. 104; *ibid.*, Vol. XXII, p. 79

A Glance by Mashiach

Mashiach is standing on the other side of a wall that is already cracked and crumbling. He is¹ “watching through the windows, peering through the crevices.” And it surely goes without saying that a glance from *Mashiach* gives a person the

1. *Shir HaShirim* 2:9; cf. *Kiddush Levanah* in *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 239.

2. In the original, פכים קטנים; cf. *Rashi* on *Bereishis* 32:25.

energy that he particularly needs to complete the required preparations so that he can be privileged to greet *Mashiach*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 25 Nissan, 5745 [1985]

The Afternoon of Erev Shabbos³ (i)

What are people waiting for? The Redemption is being held up! It's already the afternoon of *erev Shabbos*!

From a talk of the Rebbe Rayatz on Shavuot, 5709 [1949]

The Afternoon of Erev Shabbos (ii)

Whoever takes note of what is happening in the world can see that the present time is *erev Shabbos* before candle-lighting time.... All the troubles and tribulations of the past and the present constitute an immersion in boiling water to remove all uncleanness, in order that our people should be able to receive the worthy guest whose arrival — speedily, in our own days — is being awaited by the eager eyes of our Jewish brethren throughout the whole world, including the Holy Land.

The world's *erev Shabbos* is a busy day of preparation for the imminent holy *Shabbos* day.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. II, p. 531

The Afternoon of Erev Shabbos (iii)

The author of *Bayis Chadash* records that “in the days of our forefathers...people used to pray the evening service and read the *Shema* so early before sunset on *erev Shabbos*, that the *rav* of the city, who was one of the eminent scholars of former times, used to go out to stroll by the banks of the river after the

3. On the correspondence between the projected six thousand years of the world's history and the six weekdays, see the above passage (p. 18) entitled “The Length of the Exile (iii),” and the Chronological Table there.

evening *Shabbos* meal together with all the prominent householders, and they would return to their homes before nightfall.”⁴

From this we may differ that even though we are so and so many years before the end of the sixth millennium, “so early before sunset,” we are already able *now* to welcome⁵ “the day which is entirely *Shabbos* and repose,” through the arrival of our Righteous *Mashiach*; we are already able *now* to partake of the festive “*Shabbos* meal,” and be served the meat of the Leviathan and of the wild ox, and the precious aged wine.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Pekudei*, 5744 [1984]

To Polish the Buttons (i)

All that remains is to polish the buttons of our uniforms so that we will be ready to go out and greet our Righteous *Mashiach*.

From a talk of the Rebbe Rayatz on Simchas Torah, 5689 [1928]

To Polish the Buttons (ii)

On the above statement the Rebbe *Shlita* once commented:

At any time clothes are merely an external supplement; how much more so here, where we are speaking of a garment that is needed not for protection against the cold but only to glorify the appearance of official garb. Moreover, we are speaking only of a superficial detail — buttons, which merely add tidiness to the appearance. And even these finishing touches, the “buttons”, are also in place already. All that remains is to polish them, to give them the beauty of an added *hiddur*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5744 [1984]

4. *Bayis Chadash, Orach Chayim*, sec. 261.

5. *Tamid* 7:4; see also the passage referred to in footnote 286 above.

To Polish the Buttons (iii)

On another occasion the Rebbe *Shlita* said:

(a) Since the function of a button is to fasten the right side of a garment over the left, “polishing one’s buttons” implies fastening the left (worldly) side of one’s life to the right (holy) side; the latter remains dominant, and refines the other side.

(b) Everyone knows that a shiny button can be ruined by too much polishing.... Surely, then, the Almighty should bring about the Redemption at once!

(c) Since decades have already been spent on polishing buttons, this task too has obviously been completed, and the Redemption must come immediately.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Emor*, 5744 [1984];
Sefer HaSichos 5748 [1988], Vol. I, p. 355

We Are Nearing the Summit

Our generation is like a man clambering up a mountain. As he nears the summit, (a) a mountaineer has to exert himself to the utmost to reach it, and in so doing he is glad of every bush, branch or rock that he can use as a foothold or to grasp or lean on; (b) he must have daylight so that he can see what he can grasp, and when it comes, he treasures it.

We are nearing the summit of the mountain. There is only a short way to go, for *Mashiach* “is standing behind our wall,” and whoever has sharp ears and perceptive eyes can already hear his voice and see him. At this time, then, (a) we should value every positive thing, and (b) we are in need of light — the study and dissemination of Torah.

Chassidus explains that a man climbing a mountain needs three things:

(i) He has to be strong — strong of soul (with the love and awe of G-d) and strong of body (in the refinement of his animal soul);

(ii) He must know the way — he must be knowledgeable in the paths of Torah and *mitzvos* and *avodah*;

(iii) He must be suitably garbed — he cannot be hindered by unroadworthy soul-”garments” (thought, word and deed).

If, however, he is lacking these three prerequisites, then he must go ahead with self-sacrifice, with *mesirus nefesh*. Then he *really* learns to appreciate whatever there is to grasp, and whatever daylight is available.

* * *

Everyone knows that sleep is deepest before daybreak. We must be strong and vigilant, therefore, not to slumber through the great moment, so that we will be fit receptors for the light of day. This is something that every Jew should know. Accordingly, whenever one meets a fellow Jew one should tell him: “Listen here, my brother! Don’t fall asleep before daybreak!”

Sefer HaSichos 5696 [1936], p. 316

* * *

On this the Rebbe *Shlita* once commented:

There is no need to *create* the desire within a Jew to fortify himself and to take action to hasten the daybreak of the Redemption. All that is needed is to wake him up from his slumbers. Once that is done, there is no doubt that he will do whatever he can to bring about the Redemption.

Likkutei Sichos, Parshas Emor, 5751 [1991]

Rousing Fellow Jews to Repentance

In this era, the time of the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, it is the duty of every Jew to be concerned with the welfare of his fellow, old or young, and to rouse him to *teshuvah*.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. II, p. 388

The Birthpangs of Mashiach⁶

We are now at the conclusion of the exile. We have already been through the labors of *beirurim* — sifting and refining and elevating the exile — with all their attendant trials. Moreover, we have also been through the “birthpangs of *Mashiach*,” those awesome events that took place in our generation. It is now clear and obvious that we are standing at the threshold of the Redemption.

Sefer HaSichos 5748 [1988], Vol. II, p. 573

All the Appointed Times have Passed⁷

As far back as in the times of the *Talmud* our Sages taught that “all the appointed times have passed.” How much more so must this be today, after all the divine service of our people throughout this long and bitter exile, for over a thousand and nine hundred years. *Mashiach* must most certainly come immediately.

Sefer HaSichos 5748 [1988], Vol. I, p. 328;
From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayechi*, 5751 [1990]

Immediate Redemption (i)

It is clear that our generation is the last generation of the exile and the first generation of the Redemption. For my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, already proclaimed in his time,⁸ לאלתר לגאולה, לאלתר לתשובה — “Immediate Repentance: Immediate Redemption!” He likewise declared,⁹ עמדו הכן כולכם — “Stand ready, every one of you, to greet our Righteous *Mashiach*!”

6. In the original, חבלי משיח; *Sanhedrin* 98b.

7. In the original, כלו כל הקיצין; *ibid.* 97b.

8. *HaKeriah VehoKedushah* (periodical), in the issues of 5701-2 [1941-2].

9. *Igros Kodesh* (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. IV, p. 279.

How much more does this all apply today, decades later.

Sefer HaSichos 5748 [1988], Vol. II, p. 584

Immediate Redemption (ii)

In his outspoken requests for the coming of *Mashiach*, my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, stirred the very heavens. Forty years ago he declared,⁸ “Immediate Repentance: Immediate Redemption!”

Yet this was not a case of undue impatience for the End of Days;¹⁰ rather, as he stated on a number of occasions, the time of the Redemption had already arrived.

Op. cit., p. 628

Immediate Redemption (iii)

Throughout all the generations of the Rebbeim of *Chabad*, up to and including the early years of the leadership of my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, the main thrust of activity was directed towards the dissemination of the wellsprings of *Chassidus*, rather than towards bringing about the coming of *Mashiach*. (At the same time, of course, it was known in general terms that this activity in fact hastens the Redemption, as stated in the celebrated reply of the King *Mashiach* to the Baal Shem Tov.¹¹)

Since the well-known declaration of the Rebbe Rayatz,⁸ “Immediate Repentance: Immediate Redemption,” this thrust has changed direction. Every activity has been suffused with the explicit intention of bringing about the Redemption, and this direction springs from an awareness that this is the specific function of this generation.

Ibid.

10. In the original, דחיקת הקץ; cf. *Kesubbas* 111a.

11. See the above passage entitled, “When Your Wellsprings Will Be Disseminated Outward” (p. 71), and sources there.

Immediate Redemption (iv)

Jews everywhere should know that the time for the coming of *Mashiach* has certainly arrived. All that is needed is to fulfill the directive of my revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe:⁹ “Stand ready, every one of you, to greet our Righteous *Mashiach!*” These preparations, motivated by a yearning and desire for *Mashiach*, will of themselves surely bring *Mashiach*.

As to the query, “Why has he not come until now?” — *Mashiach* will no doubt provide an answer for this in person. In the meantime, the query must not be allowed (G-d forbid) to weaken a man’s spiritual endeavors. On the contrary, it should spur his *avodah* ahead with ever more energetic vitality.

Op. cit., p. 574

The Time for Your Redemption has Arrived!

The letters that spell out this year’s date (תנשי״א) serve as an acronym for the words, תהא שנת אראנו נפלאות — “This will surely be a year in which ‘I shall show you wonders.’” I.e., this year will see the fulfillment of the verse,¹² כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים — “As in the days of your going out of Egypt, I shall show you wonders.”

We have already seen tangible wonders that testify that this is¹³ “the year in which the King *Mashiach* is revealed.” We are approaching “the time at which the King *Mashiach* comes, ...and announces to the Jewish people, עניים הגיע זמן גאולתכם — ‘Humble ones: The time for your Redemption has arrived.’” We are nearing the proclamation,¹⁴ הנה זה בא (“Behold he comes!”), meaning that he has already come¹⁵ — for we are already standing on the threshold of the beginning of the Days

12. *Michah* 7:15.

13. *Yalkut Shimoni*, Vol. II, sec. 499, commenting on *Yeshayahu* 60:1.

14. *Shir HaShirim* 2:8; and *Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, *loc. cit.*

15. The verb בא may be equally translated “comes” or “has come.”

of *Mashiach*, on the threshold of the beginning of the Redemption.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5751 [1991]¹⁶

Every Minute is Precious (i)

Concerning the generation of “the footsteps of *Mashiach*” it is said,¹⁷ כִּי לֹא בַחֲפוּז — “For you shall not go out with haste.” This, however, describes the actual beginning of the Redemption, and the actual going out of exile. It does not speak of the last moments of the exile when, on the contrary, every single moment is ever more precious. For soon¹⁸ “the years draw near when you shall say, ‘I have no desire for them’ ” — “an allusion to the Days of *Mashiach*,²¹⁹ [when it will be too late to take up the challenges which face man today].

This is why it is so urgent to utilize every moment in the most fruitful way possible.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. XIII, p. 444

Every Minute is Precious (ii)

Since we are now at the conclusion of the era of exile, anticipating “the footsteps of *Mashiach*,” then most certainly²⁰ “the day is short,” while “the work is much,” for there is already an abundance of Torah and *mitzvos* to be dealt with.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Masei*, 5741 [1981]

16. See *Sound the Great Shofar: Essays on the Imminence of the Redemption* (adapted from addresses of the Rebbe *Shlita*; Kehot, N.Y., 1992).

17. *Yeshayahu* 52:12.

18. *Koheles* 12:1.

19. *Sanhedrin* 151b, interpreting the above verse, and *Rashi* there.

20. *Apos* 2:15.

Every Minute is Precious (iii)

If, in any period, time has been a commodity that never returns, how much truer is this in the present, when we are anticipating “the footsteps of *Mashiach*.” At this time, every moment is priceless. Every moment can be filled and used for great and wonderful things that will yield fruit, which in turn will yield fruit, עד סוף כל העולם — “until the end of the world” (i.e., until the end of time). Or, as we shall understand this phrase, since עולם (“world”) comes from the word העלם (“obscurity”, since it is the world which conceals the Divine Presence), our task is to labor *until the obscurity comes to an end*.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. VI, p. 16

Every Minute is Precious (iv)

The closer we come to the beginning of the true Redemption, every cherished moment becomes increasingly valuable, because we have to make haste and get ready for the coming of King *Mashiach*. Every moment has to be used to the utmost.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. XIII, p. 50

The Weak will Say: I am Strong (i)

This is a time when the world is being conducted supernaturally. We can see with our own eyes that at this time²¹ “the weak will say, ‘I am strong’ ” — and this verse speaks of²² “that time, when I shall bring back the captivity of Yehudah and Yerushalayim.”

Sefer HaSichos 5696 [1936], p. 316

21. *Yael* 4:10.

22. *Ibid.*, verse 1.

The Weak will Say: I am Strong (ii)

In these times of ours — soon after the recent horrors (heaven forbid), and living in the generation that is anticipating “the footsteps of *Mashiach*,” who is²³ “standing behind our wall” and waiting only for the completion of the tasks (easier than the tasks of our forebears) that have been allotted our generation — every man and woman should act in the spirit of the verse, “The weak will say, ‘I am strong.’”

A firm resolve in this direction makes one’s hidden strengths surface. A person then finds that he can accomplish many times more than he could in ordinary times and under ordinary conditions.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. VIII, p. 353

The Bottom of the Wheel

In these days of ours, when all around us we see the palpably thick darkness of the exile, it is clear that we have already reached its last days. Since any lower darkness is inconceivable, it is certain that the present darkness must be immediately followed by the ascent of the Era of the Redemption.

To use a familiar analogy: When someone is halfway up the edge of a wheel, its next turn can either raise him or lower him. When, however, one is at the very bottom of the wheel, whatever direction it turns *must* raise him.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Haazinu*, 5743 [1982]

Build till the Last Minute (i)

A person might think that since we are now at the threshold of the Redemption, there is no need for further

23. *Shir HaShirim* 2:9.

exertion: all he has to do is to tie up his bundles and wait for *Mashiach* to arrive.

We note, however, that even when our forefathers encamped only briefly in the wilderness, they established themselves on a permanent basis. This included erecting the *Mishkan* with all of its related divine service, even though the very next day they would have to disassemble it.²⁴ Even if we are likewise in exile for only a short time, for only one moment longer, that single moment should be lived as if it were permanent: that single moment needs to be filled with the erection of the *Mishkan*, i.e., with Torah and *mitzvos*.

This form of divine service bridges opposites. On the one hand it involves a thrust — one’s yearning for the Redemption — that transcends the dimensions of finitude; on the other hand this *avodah* demands precision, which is the ultimate expression of the demands of finitude.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayigash*, 5747 [1987]

Build till the Last Minute (ii)

Even during the last moments of the exile we should work towards the dissemination of the Torah and the wellsprings of *Chassidus*, as fully and as intensively and as devotedly as possible, even though we know that our people²⁵ “will immediately be redeemed.”

Not only does this knowledge not weaken one’s efforts: on the contrary, it energizes them, when one realizes that every individual endeavor helps bring the tasks of the period of exile to an end; indeed, one’s present individual endeavor may be the finishing touch to the entire series.

The *Rambam* expressed it thus:²⁶ “If a person performed one *mitzvah*, he has tipped the scales to the merit of himself

24. See *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. III, p. 786 [and in English translation (Kehot, N.Y., 1990): Vol. III, p. 79].

25. *Rambam*, *Hilchos Tesuvah* 7:5.

26. *Ibid.* 3:4.

and of all the world, and has brought deliverance and salvation upon himself and upon them all.”

Sefer HaSichos 5748 [1988], Vol. I, p. 126

Golah and Geulah: Exile and Redemption

Some people are apprehensive about having the Redemption come upon them so soon. What will come of all the businesses that they have set up, the property and possessions that they have accumulated, the friendships and the contacts that have been established, and so on?

They need not worry. The Redemption does not imply the annulment of the natural order nor the loss of the good things that came into being (in the spirit of the Torah) during the exile. Indeed, these very things will be comprised in the Redemption, and will be elevated to a state of Redemption, to the level of their true consummation.

This is hinted at in the fact that the Hebrew word גולה (“exile”) plus the letter א gives גאולה (“redemption”). The positive aspects of the exile (*golah*) will not be annulled; rather, the *alef* within them will be revealed — in allusion to *Alufo shel Olam*, the Master of the World; the innermost essence of truth within them will come to light.²⁷

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim*, 5751 [1991]

G-d’s Salvation Comes in a Blink²⁸

There are people who are unable to understand how one can talk over and over again about the coming of *Mashiach*, and how one can stress every time that at that particular moment the Redemption can come. They are willing to concede that an occasional mention of the subject might be in

27. Inspired by this teaching, the cover illustration of the present work depicts the letter *alef* as lighting up the dimness of the surrounding letters.

28. Cf. *Minchah LiYehudah*, p. 27.

order, but why does it have to be raised at every opportunity, and with such tangible immediacy?

The very asking of this question is in itself a result of the exile. A person can become so permeated with a feeling of exile that he cannot sense the impending Redemption, to the point that any discussion of it sounds to him like a dream. In truth, however, the opposite is true: it is the exile which resembles a dream, as is explained in *Chassidus*.²⁹

There is a positive side to this analogy, for in one moment one can wake up from a dream and return to reality. In the same way the entire Jewish people can return in one moment to their true reality — to a state in which they love G-d and cleave to Him, to an actual state of Redemption. Current conditions can be transformed in one moment literally, so that on this very day, and at this very moment, people will open their eyes and suddenly see that our Righteous *Mashiach* is here with us.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Pinchas*, 5744 [1984]

A Special Time

It should be proclaimed and publicized that we are living in a special time, when only one solitary thing remains to be done:³⁰ עמדו הכן כולכם — “Stand ready, every one of you,” for the forthcoming rebuilding of the *Beis HaMikdash* with the coming of David, the King *Mashiach*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayigash*, 5747 [1987]

How Things Will Look

Looking out of his window one day, the Alter Rebbe observed how the street was being cleaned: the garbage was

29. *Torah Or, Parshas Vayeishev*, p. 28c.

30. *Igros Kodesh* (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. IV, p. 279.

swept together into a little pile, and then a number of such piles were swept together into a big mound.

The Alter Rebbe commented to his family: “This is how things will look before *Mashiach* comes. Nowadays, wealth is in the hands of many people, some moderately rich and some very rich. But before *Mashiach* comes money will be concentrated either in the hands of a few private individuals, or in the hands of the government.”

Transmitted by oral tradition

A Desperate Last Struggle

One of the early chassidim once observed: We see that the forces of impurity in the world are insistently gaining strength. The reason is that we are now at the end of the period of the *beirurim*. When a wrestler is thrown to the ground, and realizes that his opponent is about to overpower him, he summons every last shred of strength in a desperate last bid to rally.

The very fact that the forces of *kelipah* in the world are putting up a desperate struggle, in itself testifies that their end is near.

Transmitted by oral tradition

Chapter 2: Our Generation will Generate the Redemption

At Twilight on Sabbath Eve

The creation of the world was consummated on the sixth day, concerning which it is written,³¹ “And G-d saw *all* that he had made, and behold it was very good.” To be precise, it was consummated at twilight on the sixth day, with the creation of the ten things listed in *Pirkei Avos*.³²

The same applies to³³ “the world [which] will exist for six thousand years.”³⁴ These six millennia will likewise reach their consummation in the sixth millennium, and, more specifically, during the twilight of that era — during the very last generation, the generation that will hear the approaching “footsteps of *Mashiach*.”³⁵ Significantly, this phrase uses the idiom of the heel (אָפּ), for it is by virtue of the lowly heel that the whole torso and head of a man can stand erect. In the same way, paradoxical as it may seem, it is our generation, situated at the lowest extremity of our people’s history, that will enable the ultimate intent underlying the creation of the world to be consummated — namely, the transformation of this material world into a dwelling place for G-d, through the imminent Redemption.

For our generation, therefore, this is clearly a sign of G-d’s love, a great privilege, and a responsibility.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IV, p. 1125

31. *Bereishis* 1:31.

32. 5:6.

33. *Rosh HaShanah* 31a.

34. On the correspondence between the projected six thousand years of the world’s history and the six weekdays, see the above passage (p. 18) entitled “The Length of the Exile (iii),” and the Chronological Table there.

35. See the above passage (p. 53) entitled “A Paradox.”

The Redemption will be Credited to Whoever Completes It (i)

“A *mitzvah* is credited only to the one who completes it.”³⁶

True enough, “Our forefathers [who] were like angels”³⁷ served G-d through Torah study and prayer in a manner that surpassed the divine service of our own generation beyond compare. Nevertheless, we may truly say that the Redemption will be credited only to whoever completes it, because it will be brought about by virtue of the divine service of the Jewish people of this generation of ours, through whom the divine service of all the preceding generations will be brought to fruition.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XIX, p. 104

The Redemption will be Credited to Whoever Completes It (ii)

Whether we like it or not, we are the successors to the *Chabad* chassidim of all the generations that preceded us, all the way back to the wise and mellow chassidim³⁸ of the Alter Rebbe, the founder of the *Chabad* school of thought.

Generation after generation paved the way for us, so that we only have to finish off our sundry outstanding tasks.³⁹ On the other hand, the obligation rests upon us and upon our generation — to complete the task of elevating the *beirurim* of the era of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” and to draw the revelation of *Mashiach* down to “below ten *tefachim*,”⁴⁰ all the way down to this physical world.

Even a brief consideration of the above should be enough to make one tremble — for all the awesome things foretold by

36. Lit., “A *mitzvah* only bears the name of the one...” (*Sotah* 13b).

37. *Shabbos* 112b.

38. In the original, דור דעה; cf. *Vayikra Rabbah* 9:1.

39. In the original, פכים קטנים; cf. *Rashi* on *Bereishis* 32:25.

40. An idiom for concretizing an ethereal abstraction.

our Sages, especially as they are explained in *Chassidus*, regarding the revelations at the time of *Mashiach*, depend on our divine service.

From a letter of the Rebbe *Shtita* reprinted in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXIII, p. 458

“Is the Generation Worthy?!”⁴¹ (i)

Goodness and holiness are eternal. Hence, when a Jew fulfills a *mitzvah*,⁴² “in the upper spheres this union [between the soul and G-d] is eternal.”

Evil, by contrast, has no true existence: it is no more than a concealment of the Divine light. Hence, when a person is punished for a sin (for this cleanses the resultant blemish), or when he repents, the evil ceases to exist.

Since good is eternal, all the accumulated good of all the past generations still exists. And this is why now, specifically, we will soon be privileged to witness the coming of *Mashiach*, even though superficial appearances might indicate that “the generation is unworthy.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 245

“Is the Generation Worthy?!” (ii)

Some people have a question: How can one understand the fact that precisely the present orphaned generation should be found worthy of witnessing the Redemption?

Significantly, this very question provides its own answer. Only from ultimate obscurity can one arrive at ultimate revelation. Light, for example, is at its most resplendent when it shines forth from dim obscurity. In the same way, it is the initial distance from the light of G-dliness that empowers *teshuvah* to transform darkness into light — since for the

41. In the original, אכשור דרא; cf. *Yevamos* 39b.

42. *Tanya*, ch. 25.

penitent,⁴³ “his intentional sins become like virtues.” (The righteous individual, by contrast, repels evil, rather than transforming it into good.)

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 203

“Is the Generation Worthy?!” (iii)

There is a passage⁴⁴ in which G-d allays the apprehensions of the farmer who knows that during the Sabbatical *Shemita* year his fields must rest: וְצוֹתִי ... נֹכַח בְּשָׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית — “And if you shall say, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year?...’ I shall direct My blessing to you in the sixth year, and [the land] will yield a harvest sufficient for three years.”

In addition to its plain meaning, which speaks of the sixth and seventh years in a seven-year cycle, our verses can also be understood on the non-literal level of *derush* as alluding to the apprehensions of the Jewish people, as the sixth millennium in the cosmic cycle of seven thousand years draws to a close. (For, as the *Gemara* teaches,^{33, 34} “The world will exist for six thousand years.”) To interpret these verses, then, in this spirit, —

“And if you shall say, ‘What will we eat in the seventh year?’ ...”

How can we, in this orphaned generation of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” bring about the “seventh year,” i.e.,⁴⁵ “the Day which is entirely *Shabbos* and repose”?

“I shall direct My blessing to you in the sixth year...”

When one carries out the spiritual tasks demanded by this era of exile, and serves G-d during the sixth millennium with self-sacrifice and with superrational acceptance of His sovereignty, this cosmic “year” is blessed.

“And [the land] will yield a harvest sufficient for three years...”

43. *Yoma* 86b.

44. *Vayikra* 25:20-21.

45. End of Tractate *Tamid*.

Divine service of the above-described caliber will yield a threefold harvest, for the revelations in the time to come will appear in three comprehensive stages:⁴⁶ the Days of *Mashiach*, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Seventh Millennium.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXVII, p. 190

“Is the Generation Worthy?!” (iv)

The advent of the future Redemption and the Resurrection of the Dead⁴⁷ “depends on our actions and divine service throughout the period of exile.”

In other words, the divine service of an individual Jew in our generation is capable of resurrecting the dead of all past generations. Yet this is not really surprising, in spite of the query, “Is the generation worthy?!”

For when the spiritual potential of one generation is compared with the spiritual potential of another, the distinction between them is only a question of the extent to which this potential is manifested or concealed; the distinction does not relate to the actual objective *status* of the soul of any particular Jew, for this remains⁴⁸ “truly a part of G-d above.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the sixth night of Sukkos, 5749 [1988]

“Is the Generation Worthy?!” (v)

There are those who ask: If the preceding generations have already fulfilled the bulk of the spiritual mission of the Jewish people in this world, what value is there in the seemingly inconsequential tasks that remain for our generation?

The answer is that the spiritual labors of all the generations which preceded ours, depend for their consummation on the⁹ “sundry remnants” which await our attention. It is precisely

46. In the original, ימות המשיח, תחיית המתים והאלף השביעי.

47. *Tanya*, ch. 37.

48. *Ibid.*, ch. 2.

these seemingly inconsequential tasks which will bring the divine service of all the past generations to a state of perfect completeness — and then the Redemption will come.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. V, p. 34

A Dwarf on the Shoulders of a Giant⁴⁹

Early Jewish ethical writers liked to use the analogy of the dwarf who could see further than the giant — because he was standing on his shoulders.

Our present generation is dwarfed by the gigantic stature of⁵⁰ “the earlier generations [who] were like the sons of angels.” Nevertheless, since the spiritual labors of our generation *follow* the accomplishments of the previous generations, it is *this* generation’s labors which will be rewarded by the future Redemption.

At the same time, it should be clear that the dwarf’s vantage point was not earned by his own efforts: it was the giant who perched him there. There is thus no point in asking whether it is reasonable that the dwarf should be up there (since, after all,⁵¹ “the generation is unworthy”), because the A-mighty so ordained.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the Last Day of Pesach, 5742 [1982]

“The Jewish People Will Ultimately Repent”⁵²

Regarding the coming of the Redemption, our Sages taught,⁵³ “This matter depends only on repentance.” The *Rambam* likewise writes that “The Torah has promised that the Jewish people will ultimately repent at the end of their exile,

49. Foreword to *Shibolei HaLeket*.

50. *Shabbos* 112b.

51. Cf. *Yevamos* 39b.

52. *Rambam*, *Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:5. In the original, סוף ישראל לעשות תשובה בסוף גלותן, ומיד הן נגאלין (translated in the text above).

53. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

and will immediately be redeemed.” For three reasons, however, the fulfillment of this condition will not block the coming of the future Redemption.

(a) There is no Jew who has not had a thought of repentance at least a few times in the course of his life. And one such thought of repentance⁵⁴ transforms even an utter *rasha* into a perfect *tzaddik*. This principle is reflected in the *Halachah*:⁵⁵ “If a man betroths a woman ‘on condition that I be a *tzaddik*,’ then *she is betrothed*, for he may have had a thought of repentance in his heart.”

(b) Those of our contemporaries who are not yet observing the Torah and its commandments, are only⁵⁶ *tinokos shenishbu*, “captive infants” who are victims of duress — and⁵⁷ “The Torah exonerates a victim of duress.” Indeed, a single *mitzvah* performed by someone in this situation is immeasurably precious in the eyes of G-d. And it is precisely in this generation that tens of thousands of “captive infants” have returned, and are returning, to the path of the Torah.

(c) The Redemption will come even before the Jewish people repent. For it is written,⁵⁸ “And He will redeem Israel from all its sins,” and the commentators explain,⁵⁹ “Even sin will not obstruct the Redemption, for He will redeem Israel from sin.”

This is also seen in the order of the relevant verses cited in the prayers of *Nefilas Apayim*.⁶⁰ First comes the request,⁶¹ “G-d, redeem Israel from all its afflictions!” — and only then comes the above-quoted promise,⁵⁸ “And He will redeem Israel from all its sins.” G-d will first redeem His people from this distressful exile; only thereafter will He redeem them from their sins.

54. In the original, *hirhur teshuvah*.

55. *Kiddushin* 49b.

56. Cf. *Shabbos* 68b: תינוק שנשבה בין העכו"ם — “an infant taken into captivity among the heathen nations.”

57. In the original, אונס רחמנא פטריה (*Bava Kama* 28b).

58. *Tehillim* 130:8.

59. *Metzudas David*, *loc. cit.*

60. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 62.

61. *Tehillim* 25:22.

The same Divine attitude to the imperfections of the generation that is due to be redeemed, has been perceived by some of the classical commentators on the verse,⁶² מי אל כמוך נושא עוון ועובר על פשע לשארית נחלתו לא החזיק לעד אפו כי חפץ חסד הוא — “Who is a G-d like You, Who pardons iniquity, and forgives the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not maintain His anger forever, for He delights in mercy.”

The author of *Metzudas David* comments: “As to ‘the remnant of His heritage,’ those who will survive the suffering of the⁶³ ‘birthpangs of *Mashiach*,’” — [The Rebbe *Shlita* inserts:] This refers to the⁶⁴ “firebrand plucked from the conflagration” of this generation — “G-d will not focus His attention on their transgressions and dispense due retribution, but will ‘forgive [lit., *bypass*] their transgressions,’ continuing on as if He did not notice them.”

The *Radak* (R. David Kimche) likewise comments on the same verse: “As to those of our people who will remain when the Redeemer comes,... even though their unworthy deeds could make them liable to the punishment of not being released from exile, G-d will not direct His attention forever to their deeds, ‘for He delights in mercy.’ ...His mercy will prevail over their transgressions when the time for the Redemption arrives.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayechi*, 5751 [1991]

The Lowest Edges of the Tabernacle

Concluding its description of the Sanctuary which our forefathers assembled in the wilderness, the Torah speaks of⁶⁵ “the stakes of the *Mishkan* and the stakes of the enclosure, and their tying ropes.” *Rashi* explains there that the function of the stakes or tent-pegs was “to tie the lower hems of the hangings

62. *Michah* 7:18.

63. In the original, חבלי המשיח (cf. *Sanhedrin* 98b).

64. The original, אוד מוצל מאש (*Zechariah* 3:2), is quoted here by the Rebbe *Shlita* with reference to the Holocaust.

65. *Shmos* 35:18.

and fix them in the ground, so that they would not flap loosely in the wind.”

This hints at a lesson: Only when something is completed down to its most external details can one be sure that it will endure, and “not flap loosely in the wind.”

A similar lesson is to be found in the verse that speaks of the promises that G-d made to Yitzchak,⁶⁶ “because Avraham obeyed My voice.” The word here translated “because” is *אֵיכֶּן* which, when differently vocalized, means “heel”.⁶⁷ The message here is that when a man’s divine service permeates the entire stature of his personality, including the lowliest and earthiest levels represented by the heel, he can then rest assured that this divine service will firmly withstand the threat of any wind.

This is encouraging indeed for our generation, the generation that can hear⁶⁸ “the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*.”

For it is true that we are merely a “heel”-generation relative to the generations of our illustrious forbears, and the question of the *Gemara* still stands: “Is the generation worthy?!” Nevertheless, it is specifically our divine service at the *final* stages of the *beirurim*⁶⁹ — hinted at by the stakes that tied down the *lowest* edges of the hangings of the *Mishkan* — that consummates the labors needed to bring about the Redemption.

It will be noted, too, that the lower edges of the hangings had to be tied and fixed in the *ground*. If we keep in mind the function of the *Mishkan*,⁷⁰ this detail reminds us of the task of our generation — to draw the Divine Presence all the way down to the earthiness of this material world.

Likkutei Sichos, Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel, 5749 [1989]

66. *Bereishis* 26:5.

67. *Eikev* — “because”; *akeiv* — “heel”.

68. See above, Part I, ch. 4 (p. 53ff.).

69. I.e., the divine service of sifting and refining the materiality of this world, and elevating the divine sparks concealed within it. See above, Part I, ch. 2 (p. 29ff.).

70. *Shmos* 25:9.

The First Red Heifer and the Tenth

The ashes of the first Red Heifer, the one prepared by Moshe Rabbeinu, have been preserved⁷¹ “in safekeeping” until the time of the tenth one, which will be prepared by the King *Mashiach*.⁷² This Heifer thus lasts forever: the following [eight] Heifers were sanctified by means of its remnants, and some of these remnants have been preserved for the sanctification of the future Red Heifer.⁷³

What does this signify in terms of the spiritual tasks of our generation?

The labors of all the generations — the spiritual “ashes of the Red Heifer” — are preserved “in safekeeping” forever. This means that they are preserved for our generation, too. In fact, the spiritual labors of Moshe Rabbeinu’s contemporaries have been laid away *especially* for our times. For Moshe Rabbeinu was humbled by the prospect of the generation of the “footsteps of *Mashiach*,” a generation of Jews who would resist the trials and the terrors of that epoch, undaunted.⁷⁴

Moreover, the purifying “ashes” of the spiritual labors of all the generations, especially of ours, are being laid away until the coming of *Mashiach*. From these accumulated “ashes” will the Red Heifer of *Mashiach* be sanctified, for the future Redemption⁷⁵ “depends on our actions and our divine service” throughout all the generations.

At the same time, the spiritual labors of all those years can be regarded as perfect only if they show signs of being undertaken for the express purpose of being safely preserved for the days of *Mashiach*.

* * *

71. *Bamidbar* 19:9.

72. *Rambam, Hilchos Parah Adumah* 3:4.

73. *Bamidbar Rabbah*, sec. 19, and see the commentary there entitled *Peirush Maharzu*.

74. See the above passage entitled “Moshe Rabbeinu Contemplates Our Generation” (p. 58).

75. Cf. *Tanya*, beginning of ch. 37.

If so, let no man be discouraged by the darkness of these last days of exile. Quite the contrary. Our generation's endeavors will bring the tasks of the period of exile to their culmination. And it is these endeavors that have secured the survival of the purifying "ashes" of all our predecessors, including the "ashes of the Red Heifer which Moshe Rabbeinu prepared" — i.e., the divine service of his contemporaries — and the purifying "ashes" of the spiritual work of all the intervening generations.

Sefer HaSichos 5749 [1989], Vol. I, p. 349

Chapter 3: Signs of the Redemption

The Signs in Tractate Sotah

The signs which our Sages gave for the approach of the Redemption were the subject of Part I, ch. 5 (pp. 63-66, above), entitled “With the Advent of the Footsteps of *Mashiach*.” According to all these signs, our era is close to the End of Days, for never before in history have all these signs been realized as in our days.

Quiet Revolutions (i)

Radical revolutions for the good have been taking place lately across the globe — in Russia, China, India and elsewhere. They are directly affecting the greater part of the world, for they involve governments which rule the bulk of humanity. And thanks to the mercies of heaven they are taking place quietly, without wars or bloodshed — quite an unprecedented phenomenon.

These revolutions are among the signs of the imminent Redemption, for, as our Sages teach,⁷⁶ “If you see regimes challenging one another, watch out for the footsteps of *Mashiach*.” The meaning of this turbulence is — revolutions, except that now this is taking place quietly. We can clearly see how the world is becoming refined, and becoming increasingly fit for the Days of *Mashiach*.

From talks of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Toldos*
and *Shabbos Parshas Vayetztei*, 5750 [1990]

76. *Bereishis Rabbah* 42:4.

Quiet Revolutions (ii)

Regimes in major and powerful countries are changing for the good, in the direction of justice and equity. This phenomenon is an advance echo and a sampling of the state of perfection and completeness which will characterize the Days of *Mashiach*, as well as a preparation for it.⁷⁷ This is one of the wonders taking place around the world, which foreshadow and afford a sampling of the wonders of the imminent Redemption.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Bereishis*, 5751 [1990]

Quiet Revolutions (iii)

In a certain big country, the laws relating to belief in G-d have been upturned. Perhaps this is in the nature of a direct preparation for the fulfillment of the prophetic promise,⁷⁸ “I will make the peoples pure of speech so that they will all...serve Him with one purpose.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Terumah*, 5751 [1991]

The Collapse of the Iron Curtain

The departure of hundreds of thousands of Jews from Russia to freedom, and their consequent encounter with the observance of *mitzvos*, foreshadows the fulfillment of the prophetic promise of the Ingathering of the Exiles:⁷⁹ “A great multitude shall return here.” It affords a sampling of that promise, and serves as a preparation for it, in the spirit of the teaching that on the afternoon of the eve of *Shabbos* one should

77. In the original, the key words (here translated “an advance echo,...a sampling..., and a preparation”) are מעין ודוגמה והכנה, respectively.

78. *Zephaniah* 3:9.

79. *Yirmeyahu* 31:7.

taste something of the delicacies that have been prepared for *Shabbos*.⁸⁰

From talks of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Bereishis* and *Shabbos Parshas Bo*, 5751 [1990-91]

The Gulf War

The *Talkut Shimoni*⁸¹ predicts: “In the year that the King *Mashiach* will be revealed, the kings of all the nations of the world will challenge one another. The King of Paras will challenge an Arab king, and the Arab king will go to Aram (or, according to another reading: ‘to Edom’) to consult with them, ...and all the nations of the world will panic and will be stricken with consternation.... G-d will tell the Jews: ‘My children, have no fear. Whatever I have done, I have done only for your sake....’ When the King *Mashiach* comes, he will stand on the roof of the *Beis HaMikdash* and proclaim to Israel, ‘Humble ones: The time for your redemption has arrived!’ ”

It is clear, then, that the Gulf War is a sign of the imminent Redemption, for one of these signs is⁸² “kingdoms challenging one another,” especially when (as above) “the King of Paras will challenge an Arab king,” as was the case in this war.

The Nations of the World are Helping

Russia has not only allowed Jews to leave her borders: she is even helping them reach *Eretz Yisrael*. This is a kind of preparation for the future Redemption, when the nations of the world will help the Jewish people get out of their exile and proceed to the Holy Land. As it is written,⁸³ “And they shall

80. See the above passage entitled “Those Who Savor It Will Merit Eternal Life” (p. 74).

81. Vol. II, sec. 499, interpreting *Yeshayahu* 60:1.

82. *Bereishis Rabbah* 42:4; see the above passage (p. 133) entitled “Quiet Revolutions (i).”

83. *Yeshayahu* 66:20.

bring all your brethren from among all the nations...to My holy mountain, Jerusalem.”

The Nations of the World Opt for Benevolence

One observes lately that various nations are undertaking benevolent activities, thereby making it ever clearer that⁸⁴ “there is a Master to this castle.” Their awareness of this serves as a preparation for the era of the future Redemption, of which it is written,⁸⁵ והיתה לה' המלוכה — “Kingship will be G-d's.”

In these very days we can see how various nations are preparing and clearing the path to the Redemption, by means of charity and education (which are based on the realization that “there is a Master to this castle”).

As a current instance of charity: The United States saved refugees from a distant location by means of consignments of food, clothing and medical supplies (even though this did not directly benefit her own citizens).

In the realm of education: The President of the United States has issued a detailed declaration on this subject (in keeping with the announcement at the beginning of his Presidency that he hoped to be remembered as “the Education President”).

The last three passages are from talks of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 22 Elul, 5750 [1990], and *Shabbos Parshas Bereishis* and *Acharei-Kedoshim*, 5751 [1990-91]

Not Yet the Beginning

The above-listed events are a *preparation* and a *foretaste* of the state of affairs which will prevail at the time of the future Redemption, but not⁸⁶ “the beginning of the Redemption,” and not even the *beginning* of “the beginning of the

84. Cf. *Bereishis Rabbah* 39:1.

85. *Ovadiah* 1:21.

86. In the original Aramaic, אַתְּחִלְתָּא דְגְאֻלָּה; cf. *Megillah* 17b.

Redemption” — for even the *beginning* of the beginning will be brought about by the King *Mashiach*.⁸⁷

From a talk of the Rebbe Shlita on *Shabbos Parshas Vayeira*, 5751 [1991]

87. See below, Part VI, ch. 4 (in Vol. II of the present work).

**Part Four:
Yearning For the Redemption**

Prologue: My Soul is Lovesick for G-d

Beloved of my soul, merciful Father, draw Your servant to Your will. Then Your servant will run as swiftly as a deer; he will bow before Your splendor; Your acts of affection will be sweeter than honeycomb and every pleasant taste.

Glorious, resplendent One, Light of the world, my soul is lovesick for You; I beseech You, O G-d, pray heal it by showing it the sweetness of Your splendor. Then it will be strengthened and healed and will experience everlasting joy.

O pious One, may Your mercy be aroused, and show compassion to Your beloved child. For it is long that I have been yearning to behold the glory of Your majesty. These my heart desires, so have pity and do not conceal Yourself.

Reveal Yourself, my beloved, and spread over me the shelter of Your peace. Let the earth be illuminated by Your glory; we will rejoice and exult in You. Hasten, Beloved, for the time has come; and be gracious unto us as in days of yore.

Yedid Nefesh, from *Minchah* for *erev Shabbos*;
Siddur Tehillat HaShem (trans. Rabbi Nissen Mangel), p. 126

Chapter 1: I Await His Coming Every Day

G-d Will Act for Him Who Waits for Him

Hoping and yearning for *Mashiach*, in itself hastens his coming. This is clearly seen in the verse,¹ אלקים גוי יעשה למחכה לו — “G-d ... will act for him who waits for Him.” Or, as rendered in the Aramaic paraphrase of *Onkelos*, “...for those who hope and wait for Your Redemption.”

How does one’s yearning hasten its coming?

To understand this, we need only observe the comment of the Sages on the Divine promise of the Redemption,² בעתה אחישנה — “I will hasten it in its time.” Now, is this verse promising that the Redemption will be *hastened*, or that it will come *in its time*? To resolve this paradox, the Sages taught:³ זכו אחישנה; לא זכו - בעתה. I.e., if the Jewish people are found worthy, the Redemption will be hastened, ahead of its preordained time; if they are not found worthy, it will come in its time.

And here lies the answer to our above question. If a man yearns for the Redemption in earnest, he lives a worthier life. By virtue of his endeavors, the Jewish people as a whole will increasingly be found worthy, and accordingly, the long-awaited coming of the Redemption will be brought forward.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. VIII, p. 359

With Hope Like This, We Deserve to be Redeemed (i)

Regarding the value of *anticipating* the Redemption, a certain scholar has drawn my attention to an interpretation of

-
1. *Yeshayahu* 64:3.
 2. *Ibid.* 60:22.
 3. *Sanhedrin* 98a.

the *Chida*⁴ on the following teaching of our Sages in *Yalkut Tehillim, Remez 736*: “Even if the only virtue to Israel’s credit is their hopefulfulness, this alone makes them worthy of being redeemed.... And if one should think,⁵ ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved,’ there comes the redoubled exhortation of the verse,⁶ קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה — ‘Hope in G-d, be strong and let your heart be valiant, and hope in G-d.’ Why the repetition? — For if salvation has not yet come, hope — and hope again!”

The *Chida* used this teaching to resolve a seeming difficulty in the wording which the Sages instituted for one of the blessings (את צמח) in the *Shemoneh Esreh*: “Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish, and increase his power by Your salvation, *for we hope for Your salvation* every day.”⁷

“What kind of a reason is this?” asks the *Chida*. “If the Redemption is warranted, then we will merit its coming even *without* hoping for it; and if it is not warranted, then how can hoping help?”

And he answers, “The above-quoted teaching enables us to understand the thrust of our daily request, ‘Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish.’ Even if the objection be raised that we are unworthy of this, grant our request nevertheless, *for we hope for Your salvation.*’ We have this hope — and by virtue of this hope, we deserve to be redeemed!”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Haazinu*, 5746 [1985]

With Hope Like This, We Deserve to be Redeemed

(ii)

One should trust in the coming of *Mashiach* with unwavering certainty, “awaiting his coming every day” — anticipating that he will come at once, even if reason and

4. Cited by *Tzemach David* in *Midbar Kdeimos, s.v. קיוו* (“hoping”), in the name of the *חידושי* (acronym for [Rabbi] Chayim Yosef David Azulai).

5. *Yirmeyahu* 8:20.

6. *Tehillim* 27:14.

7. In the original, כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום (*Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 56).

nature offer no grounds for believing so. And this certain trust in itself will speed his coming.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. VII, p. 57

“Did You Yearn for the Redemption?”⁸

A man’s spiritual labors should be imbued with a constant yearning for the Redemption, in the spirit of the phrase,⁹ “I await his coming every day.” Our Sages taught,¹⁰ “What is the light that the House of Israel is awaiting? — It is the light of *Mashiach*.” Thus, too, they taught, “When a man is led into the Heavenly Court he is asked, ‘...Did you yearn for the Redemption?’ ” So since one is obliged to serve G-d constantly, all day long, it is clear that this hopeful anticipation should likewise be constant, all day long.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXII, p. 77

“To Bring the Days of Mashiach”¹¹

There is a verse that says,¹² “...So that you remember the day you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life.” As understood by the Sages, the word “all” indicates that the obligation to recall the Exodus will continue into the days of *Mashiach*. Thus, quoting the final phrase of the verse and then interpreting it, the Sages say: כל ימי חיך להביא לימות המשיח — “‘All the days of your life’ includes (lit., ‘is to bring’) the days of *Mashiach*.”

This teaching may in turn be interpreted in two ways:

-
8. *Shabbos* 31a.
 9. From the popular version of the twelfth of the *Rambam’s* Thirteen Principles of Faith. See the book of this title (Kehot, N.Y., 1991), which is subtitled, “Analytical Studies by the Lubavitcher Rebbe *Shlita* of the *Rambam’s* Rulings on *Mashiach* and the Ultimate Redemption.”
 10. *Pesikta Rabbasi*, beginning of sec. 36.
 11. *Berachos* 1:5, quoted in the *Haggadah* for Pesach.
 12. *Devarim* 16:3.

(a) One should consider what every component of This World will be like when *Mashiach* comes;

(b) Throughout these days of exile, one should constantly intend that one's present *avodah* should bring the days of *Mashiach*, that it should bring about the Redemption.¹³

Sefer HaSichos 5703 [1943], p. 73

Cosmic Repercussions (i)

The Alter Rebbe writes:¹⁴ “This ultimate perfection of the Messianic Era and the time of the Resurrection of the Dead, meaning the revelation of the infinite *Ein Sof*-light in this physical world, depends on our actions and divine service throughout the period of exile.”

Since we are now at the stage of *ikvesa diMeshicha*, in the era which can hear the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, every individual ought to sense the above teaching in his daily service of G-d. And when one senses that his Torah study and his divine service speed the coming of the Redemption and bring the world closer to the fulfillment of its ultimate perfection, making it a dwelling place for its Creator,¹⁵ he pursues his spiritual labors with redoubled energy and conscientiousness.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXI, p. 18

Cosmic Repercussions (ii)

A person studying Torah or fulfilling a *mitzvah* should be aware of the effect of his action. It should be clearly apparent that he is now sowing something that will lead to an ultimate sprouting — the coming of *Mashiach*.

13. See *Likkutei Dibburim* (in English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 1990), Vol. III, ch. 23, sec. 40.

14. *Tanya*, beginning of ch. 37.

15. Cf. *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Naso* 7:1.

It can happen that though a person knows that his spiritual labors can bring about the Redemption, they are not affected by this knowledge, for either of two reasons:

(a) His Torah study and his observance of the *mitzvos* are not spurred by the intention that they should help bring about the Redemption;

(b) He does not really care if the Redemption takes place at some later date, perhaps in some later generation, G-d forbid: he is quite satisfied with having sown its seeds.

In truth, however, one's *avodah* during this period of exile should be permeated with constant anticipation and longing for the Redemption. In his Torah study and in his observance of the *mitzvos* a Jew should sense that he is thereby bringing about and hastening the coming of the Redemption.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXII, p. 76

Cosmic Repercussions (iii)

A Jew who is steeped in “awaiting his coming every day” seeks the link of every *mitzvah* and of every festival with the coming of *Mashiach*. For it is in the days of *Mashiach* that the true essence of every *mitzvah* and of every festival will be fully revealed.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Miketz*, 5751 [1990]

Living with the Concept of Mashiach

All of a man's actions, including both his *avodah* with himself and his *avodah* with others, should be immersed in one intent: to bring about the¹⁴ “ultimate perfection of the Messianic Era” — “the revelation of the infinite *Ein Sof*-light in this physical world.”

And though one may be undertaking a particular spiritual task repeatedly,¹⁴ “throughout the period of exile,” one should nevertheless throw oneself into it with gusto, as if he were now

hearing for the first time that this endeavor of his brings about the “ultimate perfection of the Messianic Era.” When one does this, his divine service is fired by all the zest and intensity of his innermost core — the *yechidah* within his soul, because he is living with the concept of *Mashiach*.

Sefer HaSichos 5748 [1988], Vol. II, p. 415

“All One’s Days in Repentance”

Rabbi Eliezer taught,¹⁶ “Repent one day before your death.”

His disciples asked him,¹⁷ “But does a man know on what day he will die?”

“That is exactly the point!” he replied. “Let a man repent today lest he die tomorrow, and in this way he will live all his days in repentance.”

* * *

An alternative reason for doing so is to be found in *Sefer Maharil*:¹⁸ “One should repent every day..., because in the days of *Mashiach* repentance will not be acceptable. (Similarly, converts will not be accepted then,¹⁹ for a person seeking conversion at that time will be prompted not by the love of G-d but by a desire to share the joyful lot of the Jewish people.) And since we are expecting to be saved every day, whoever does not repent before *Mashiach* comes (*Speedily in our own days!*) will no longer be able to repent; he will remain (G-d forbid) with his sins.”

* * *

If so, then instead of repenting out of a dread of the day of death, surely it is preferable to repent out of a hopeful anticipation of the coming of *Mashiach!*

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayelech*, 5719 [1958]

16. *Apos* 2:10.

17. *Shabbos* 153a.

18. P. 42.

19. *Yevamos* 24b.

Awaiting His Coming

The *Rambam* writes:²⁰ “Nine Red Heifers were prepared from the time that our forefathers were charged with this commandment until the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed the second time..., and the tenth will be prepared by the King *Mashiach*. (May he be speedily revealed, Amen! May this be G-d’s will!)”

Now what is the relevance of a prayer or supplication in a legal work, in a work of *Halachah*? And even if it were to be argued that there is a place for a prayer in the *Yad HaChazakah*, then surely that place is in the Laws Concerning *Mashiach* (at the end of the Laws Concerning Kings).

An answer may be found in the ruling of the *Rambam*²¹ that beyond merely believing in *Mashiach*, there is an obligation “to await his coming.” And here, in the Laws Concerning the Red Heifer, the *Rambam* is teaching us a law as to the extent of this obligation “to await”: Even a passing reference to *Mashiach* should immediately arouse a prayer for his speedy coming.

Why is this so? — An individual should feel that his own perfect fulfillment depends on the coming of *Mashiach*, and so long as *Mashiach* has not come, he is incomplete. When someone who is awaiting his coming mentions *Mashiach* even in passing, this intensifies his anticipation. The absence of *Mashiach* becomes one of his needs. And everyone is obliged to pray for the fulfillment of his needs²² — in this case, the coming of *Mashiach*.

The fact that *Rambam* does not append this prayer to every mention of *Mashiach* presents no problem, for this *halachah* may be taught by one instance alone.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXVIII, p. 131

20. *Hilchos Parah Adumah*, end of ch. 3.

21. *Hilchos Melachim*, beginning of ch. 11.

22. *Hilchos Tefillah* 1:2.

The Effect of Anticipating

The Redemption and the coming of *Mashiach* are not merely a future reward, but a reward that is an intrinsic part of our present divine service.

This can be explained in two ways:

(a) Believing in the coming of *Mashiach* and anticipating it are among the principles of the faith. This includes the request and the demand that he come immediately, as (for example) in the thrice-daily prayers,²³ ... ותחזינה עינינו — “May our eyes behold Your return to Zion...”; or,²⁴ ... את צמח — “Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish, ...for we hope for Your salvation every day.”

(b) When one considers that the Redemption is imminent, neither the darkness nor the difficulties of exile will disturb him from performing his divine service cheerfully. His service will then be perfect, being “redeemed” from all kinds of obstacles and hindrances, and thus foreshadowing the future Redemption. Indeed, it will be a foretaste of the Talmudic blessing,²⁵ עלמך תראה בחיך — “May you in your lifetime behold your [share in the] World [to Come].”

Nevertheless, it goes without saying that this degree of perfection does not rule out one’s earnest anticipation of the ultimate Redemption, for one’s present experience of perfection is infinitely inferior to the perfect consummation that will reign at the time of the Redemption, both as regards the *mitzvos* which cannot be observed today, and likewise as regards the *mitzvos* which can also be observed today.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXIX, p. 275

23. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 58.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

25. *Berachos* 17a.

Speaking About Mashiach

On the phrase,²⁶ עַד כִּי יבֹא שִׁילֹה — “...until Shiloh comes,” *Rashi* comments that this refers to “the King *Mashiach*, to whom sovereignty belongs.” And on the level of *gematria*, the author of *Baal HaTurim* points out that the words בֹּא שִׁילֹה are numerically equivalent to the word מְשִׁיחַ.

The word בֹּא contains a profound allusion to the means by which *Mashiach* can be brought.

This word is numerically equivalent to the word אחד (“one”). When there will be unity among Jews, and in particular, when Jews will unite in speaking about *Mashiach*, they will (with G-d’s help) succeed in drawing down and realizing the ultimate Redemption through the hands of the Righteous *Mashiach*.

Sefer HaSichos 5696 [1936], p. 330

Peering Out of the Ark

After the Deluge had been raging for forty days,²⁷ “Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.”

Now even if the water had abated, Noah was not allowed to leave until he had been commanded by G-d to²⁸ “leave the ark.” So why should he look out?

The answer to this question is relevant to our generation, the generation of the Redemption.

The Deluge is known in the Holy Tongue as the מבול, because (as *Rashi* explains²⁹) “it confused everything” (בלבל את) (הכל). Accordingly, it alludes to the confusion of our exile, in which some people³⁰ “set darkness for light... and bitter for sweet.” The ultimate purpose of this “deluge” is to purify the

26. *Bereishis* 49:10.

27. *Ibid.* 8:6.

28. *Ibid.* 8:16.

29. *Ibid.* 6:17.

30. *Yeshayahu* 5:20.

world, in the spirit of the prophetic promise,³¹ ואת רוח הטומאה — אעביר מן הארץ — “I shall remove the spirit of impurity from the earth.”

In today’s deluge, too, when it occurs to a Jew that the time has possibly come for the confused turbulence of exile to come to an end, that the time has come to leave the ark, he should do everything within his power to verify this: instead of sitting and waiting until G-d gives the order to leave the ark, he should act to hasten the advent of the Redemption.

And when Heaven sees that a Jew is yearning for the Redemption to come “now”, this in itself speeds the giving of the command to “leave the ark” — the exodus from bondage to Redemption.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Chukas*, 5745 [1985]

Getting Ready for Shabbos

On the verse,³² “Remember the *Shabbos* day to sanctify it,” *Rashi* writes: “Take heed to remember the *Shabbos* day constantly, so that if you encounter something special [such as a delicacy, in the course of the week], set it aside for *Shabbos*.”

The same applies to the future Redemption. Even when we are still in the weekdays of the exile,³³ we should constantly keep in mind and prepare for the Redemption, for³⁴ “the Day which is entirely *Shabbos* and repose for life everlasting.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 11 Sivan, 5744 [1984]

31. *Zechariah* 13:2.

32. *Shmos* 20:8.

33. I.e., the first six thousand years of the world’s history (*Rosh HaShanah* 31a), the maximum period that can precede the coming of *Mashiach*, correspond to the six weekdays of Creation (*Sanhedrin* 97a on *Tehillim* 90:4).

34. *Tamid* 7:4.

“The Beis HaMikdash will be Speedily Rebuilt”³⁵

There is an opinion in the *Gemara* that even in our days, after the Destruction, a *Kohen* is forbidden to drink wine, since it is probable that “the *Beis HaMikdash* will be speedily rebuilt,” finding him under the influence of wine, and hence disqualified from serving there.

Now this influence can wear off by either of two causes:

(a) sleep; or

(b) the passage of as much time as it takes to walk a *mil*.

According to the longest estimate, this comes to 24 minutes.³⁶

Here, then, we have evidence from the revealed plane of the Torah that in the course of a very short time (i.e., within a maximum of 23 minutes and 59 seconds), *Mashiach* is likely to arrive together with a completed *Beis HaMikdash*.³⁷

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 618

“A Nazirite on the Day that Mashiach Comes”³⁷

The *Gemara* discusses the case of a person who makes a conditional vow to become a *nazir*,³⁸ thereby abstaining (among other things) from drinking wine.

“If one vows, ‘I hereby undertake to be a *nazir* on the day that [*Mashiach*] the son of David comes,’ — if the vow was undertaken on a weekday, he is forever forbidden to drink wine; if it was undertaken on a *Shabbos* or a *Yom-Tov*, then he is permitted to drink wine on that *Shabbos* or that *Yom-Tov*, but from then on, this is forbidden forever.”

From this law we learn that *Mashiach* can come any day.

The fact that the law of the *nazir* is the source for this principle may be understood in the light of the fact that the nazirite status will find full expression in the Time to Come, in

35. *Taanis* 17a.

36. *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim* 99:2 and 459:2.

37. *Eruvin* 43b.

38. *Bamidbar* 6:1-4.

the spirit of the verse,³⁹ “I set up some of your sons as prophets and some of your young men as nazirites.”

There are two facets to this status:

(a) setting oneself apart; and

(b) sanctifying oneself, as in the verse,⁴⁰ “All the days of his separation, he is holy unto G-d.”

[As if addressing a *nazir*,] the Sages say,⁴¹ “What the Torah has forbidden you should suffice for you!” — for a man’s divine service ought to be directed at drawing down sanctity into himself and into the material world. For this reason the *Rambam* writes:⁴² “To vow unto G-d *by way of [self-]sanctification* [as opposed to abstinence for its own sake] is proper and praiseworthy.” And this sanctity of the *nazir* will attain its consummation with the coming of *Mashiach*, when there will be no need to abstain from worldly things, for every Jew will be “holy unto G-d.”

Likkutei Sichos, Parshas Naso, 5751 [1991]

No Hard Feelings

“The Jewish people have been promised that Elijah the Prophet [who will herald the imminent arrival of *Mashiach*] will come neither on the day preceding *Shabbos* nor on the day preceding any of the festivals, because of the trouble it would cause.”⁴³ (*Rashi* explains: “...for they would have to leave their Sabbath eve preparations and go out to greet him.”)

Nevertheless, since his coming hinges on the trouble it might cause, I am certain that if Eliyahu HaNavi were to arrive on a Friday afternoon, the Jewish people would not complain.

From the words of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Teves 5742 [1982]

39. Cf. *Amos* 2:11.

40. *Bamidbar* 6:8.

41. *Talmud Yerushalmi, Nedarim* 9:1.

42. *Mishneh Torah*, end of *Hilchos Nezirus*.

43. *Eruvin* 43b.

This, Too, Has an Answer

The *Tzemach Tzedek* once spoke of the coming of *Mashiach* at one of the times concerning which our Sages have taught that he will *not* come.⁴⁴ One of his listeners, baffled, queried this.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* replied: “Let him come! Then, once he comes and finds solutions for all the other unsolved scholarly queries,⁴⁵ he will find a solution for this one, too!”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 272

Waiting Every Day (i)

The *Rambam* writes,⁴⁶ אַחַכָּה לוֹ בְּכָל יוֹם שִׁבָּא. There are those who understand this to mean, not that one should await his *coming every day*, but that *every day one should await* his coming, while his actual coming will take place in due course, “whenever *Mashiach* should so desire.”

However, if this were the intention of the words, they should have been rearranged thus: בְּכָל יוֹם אַחַכָּה לוֹ שִׁבּוּא.

The true meaning of the phrase can also be understood from the wording of one of the blessings in the *Shemoneh Esreh*:⁴⁷ אֶת צִמְחָה דּוֹד עֲבוּדָךְ מֵהֵרָה תְּצַמִּיחַ — “Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish.” Here, “speedily” is obviously intended to be taken literally, in keeping with the continuation of the same passage, “...for we hope for Your salvation every day.”⁴⁸

44. See “No Hard Feelings” (above).

45. An unresolved query in the *Gemara* is often closed with the word תִּיקוּ, which is traditionally understood to be an acronym for four Hebrew words: תִּשְׁבִּי יִתְרוֹץ קוֹשִׁיּוֹת וְאֲבֵעִיּוֹת — “The Tishbite [i.e., the Prophet Elijah] will solve the [unanswered] Talmudic problems and queries.”

46. The twelfth of the *Rambam's* Thirteen Principles of Faith, as it appears in the popular version (*Ani Maamin*) which is printed in many editions of the *Siddur*.

47. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 56.

48. The phrase כָּל הַיּוֹם, here rendered “every day,” can equally well be translated “all day long,” as in passage (ii), below.

If anyone should argue that perhaps the phrase really means that one should *hope* every day, while anticipating that the actual salvation will come whenever G-d so pleases, — ask him: “When you pray for some ailing member of your family, do you ask that G-d should send a complete recovery whenever He so pleases, or immediately?”

Moreover, since⁴⁹ “Any generation during which [the *Beis HaMikdash*] is not rebuilt, is reckoned as if it had destroyed it,” G-d forbid that we should passively say that “*Mashiach* will come whenever he so desires.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita*, *Shabbos Parshas Eikev*, 5744 [1984]

Waiting Every Day (ii)

I was pleased to read in the *MiBeis HaLevi* edition of the *Haggadah* that the illustrious scholars of Brisk understood the phrase,⁴⁶ אַחַת לַיּוֹם שֶׁיָּבֵא, to refer to the coming of *Mashiach* every day, literally. Furthermore, the statement in the daily prayers that⁴⁷ “we hope for Your salvation *all day long*” (כָּל הַיּוֹם) means that one should hope and wait for *Mashiach* “literally at every single moment.”

The above commentary on the *Haggadah* goes on to consider a possible objection: We have been promised⁵⁰ that Elijah the Prophet will appear first to herald the coming of *Mashiach*; if so, it might be asked, how is it possible that *Mashiach* should appear today, when Eliyahu HaNavi did not appear yesterday?⁵¹

This *Haggadah* answers simply: When Elijah comes and resolves all the other scholarly problems, he will supply an answer for this query, too!⁴⁵

From the words of the Rebbe *Shlita*, *Iyar* 5743 [1983]

49. *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Yoma* 1:1.

50. *Malachi* 3:23.

51. Cf. *Eruvin* 43a.

“Next Year in Jerusalem!”

Commenting on the closing prayer of the Pesach *Seder*, “Next year in Jerusalem!”, the Rebbe Rayatz once said: “One doesn’t have to wait until next year. Rather, the Redemption is already brought into being immediately at the conclusion of the *Seder*. Then, as a matter of course, next year will be in Jerusalem.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 453

A Redemption that is Tangible (i)

The *Tzemach Tzedek* was once asked by his son, the future Rebbe Maharash, why *Mashiach* had not appeared in the year תרי”ח (5608; 1848-49), which had been anticipated as a *keitz*, a time particularly propitious for this.

The *Tzemach Tzedek* replied: “But that year saw the publication of *Likkutei Torah*!”⁵²

The Rebbe Maharash objected: “But we need *Mashiach* down here, ‘lower than ten *tefachim*!’”⁵³

* * *

On this exchange the Rebbe *Shlita* once commented: “It is certain that the *Tzemach Tzedek* likewise knew that *Mashiach* is needed plainly and tangibly⁵⁴ — but he wanted to hear this articulated, *as a demand*, from someone who was not then at the level of a *nasi*,⁵⁵ but who spoke as a *mekabel*.”⁵⁶

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XIV, p. 429

52. A major collection of teachings of the Alter Rebbe on the mystical dimension of the Torah, edited and published after his passing by his grandson, the *Tzemach Tzedek*.

53. A Talmudic phrase serving here as an idiom for the concrete realities of this world.

54. The original which this phrase translates is כפשוטו.

55. I.e., a *tzaddik* in his role as Rebbe, as leader of his contemporaries.

56. Lit., “a recipient.”

A Redemption that is Tangible (ii)

Along the same lines the Rebbe *Shlita* has said: “When we are speaking of a *nasi* from the point of view of his bond with his contemporaries, then *Mashiach* is needed plainly and tangibly. But when we are speaking of a *nasi* in and of himself, then since he himself is in the world of *Sod*, the mystical dimension of the Torah, the publication of *Likkutei Torah* is in a sense an actual coming of *Mashiach* — for in essence, the coming of *Mashiach* is the revelation of the innermost, mystical dimension of the Torah.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Chai* Elul, 5742 [1982]

The Shofar of Mashiach

The awe-inspiring *Niggun* of Four Themes⁵⁷ is commonly known as “The Alter Rebbe’s *Niggun*.” The chassidim of the Alter Rebbe used to call it “The *Shofar* of *Mashiach*,” because, as they explained, it arouses a yearning for the coming of *Mashiach*.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe Rayatz, Vol. VI, p. 172

Jewish Style

One day, when the *Tzemach Tzedek* was still a young man, he was sitting with a group of chassidim who were discussing the question, “Who knows when *Mashiach* is going to come?”

He commented: “This kind of talk recalls the style of [the gentile prophet] Bilaam,⁵⁸ who said [concerning the ultimate Redemption of Israel⁵⁹], ‘I see it, but not now; I perceive it,

57. This is the wordless melody traditionally sung at Lubavitch weddings as bride and groom are escorted to the *chuppah*; see *Sefer HaNiggunim* (Nicho’ach; N.Y., 1948), Vol. I, p. 1, and p. י”ב of the introductory texts there. See also *Likkutei Dibburim* (in English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 1987), Vol. I, ch. 4b, sec. 5.

58. *Bamidbar* 24:17.

59. See *Rashi* there; see also *Rambam, Hilchos Melachim* 11:1.

but not in the near future' — as if the Redemption were far away. A Jew, though, should hope and anticipate every day that *Masbiach* will come *on that very day.*”

Transmitted by oral tradition

A Poor Businessman

One of the chassidim of the *Tzemach Tzedek* operated an inn and a store for which he prepaid an annual rent to the local squire. As he was growing old, he sent his son one day to sign the annual contract on his behalf. The son, however, asked the *paritz* to agree to a three-year contract, which he did, and the son paid for the three years in advance.

Hearing this, his father was irate: “Look here! We believe with perfect faith that *Masbiach* is coming. In fact, he is coming this year, for sure. And you’ve gone and wasted two years’ payment for nothing?!”

Transmitted by oral tradition

Chapter 2: We Want Mashiach Now!

“Because They Did Not Demand It”

The coming of *Mashiach* is hastened when it is asked for and eagerly anticipated.

In this spirit our Sages taught:⁶⁰ “All those thousands who fell in battle in the days of King David, fell only because they did not demand that the *Beis HaMikdash* be built.... Now if such things and such punishment were brought upon *those* people for not having demanded it — people who had not had the *Beis HaMikdash* in their midst, and in whose days it had not been destroyed, — then we, in whose days it was destroyed, and who do not lament its destruction, and who do not seek Divine compassion for it, are ever so much more accountable. This is why the righteous men of earlier generations ordained that we should pray three times a day, and in the prayers they inserted the request, ‘O Compassionate One! In Your abundant mercies restore Your Divine Presence to Zion and the Temple service to Jerusalem!’ They likewise instituted the request for the rebuilding of Jerusalem as a separate blessing (concluding with the words, בונה ירושלים) in the *Shemoneh Esreh*, and as a separate blessing in the Grace After Meals.”⁶¹

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Re'eh*, 5746 [1986]

60. *Midrash Tehillim*, *Mizmor* 17; *Rokeiach*, *Hilchos Tefillah*, sec. 322; *Beis Yosef* on *Tur Orach Chayim*, sec. 188, s.v. וכתב הרמב"ם.

61. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, pp. 56 and 91, respectively.

The Answer to a Prayer

The *Shelab* writes:⁶² “There is something puzzling about the statement of the Sages that⁶³ ‘The A-mighty does not spurn the prayer of a multitude.’ Our own eyes testify otherwise, for three times a day the entire Jewish people pray the *Shemoneh Esreh*, which speaks of the Redemption several times.... Yet we are still in exile after over 1554 years!”

To resolve this, the *Shelab* explains that “G-d acts in keeping with the nature of this request. For every day there is a redemption: ...the nations of the world rise up against us to destroy us, and G-d saves us.”

The Rebbe *Shlita* adds the following comment: “The Alter Rebbe explains in *Tanya*⁶⁴ that when a Jew requests something of G-d *in the course of a blessing*, this request is certainly fulfilled ‘without the faintest vestige of doubt, ...[for] we are forbidden to recite a blessing of doubtful obligation, for fear that it be pronounced in vain.’ We are forced to conclude, therefore, that the Jewish people’s request for the Redemption is in fact fulfilled.”

From talks of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Va'eira*
and *Shabbos Parshas Bo*, 5744 [1983-84]

Birthpangs

The coming of *Mashiach* has been likened to birth, for it is *Mashiach* [the scion of David] who is alluded to in the verse,⁶⁵ “This day I have begotten you.” Birth, in essence, is the revelation of an infant who had been concealed in its mother’s womb. With the coming of *Mashiach*, the essential Four-Letter Name of G-d, which is now concealed in the self-obscuring, self-screening *tzimtzumim* of the Divine Name *Elokim*, will likewise become manifest. When a Jew stimulates the revelation

62. *Shnei Luchoth HaBris*, p. 251a.

63. *Berachos* 8a.

64. *Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 11.

65. *Tehillim* 2:7.

of the Name *Havayah* by his fulfillment of the *mitzvos*, he brings nearer the self-revelation which will take place in time to come.

Just as birth is preceded and accompanied by birthpangs, there are likewise “pangs of *Mashiach*” in the generation in which the Son of David will appear.

And just as birthpangs hamper a birth, the greatest outcry in that generation will come when the obstacles are most numerous. Before the revelation of the Name *Havayah* the Jewish people will cry out to G-d on account of the dense obscurity which obstructs the revelation of His light.

Torah Or (Hosafos) on Shmos, p. 106a

Father: Enough!

The Rebbe Rayatz once said: “If all the Jews, great and small alike, together said, ‘Father, enough! Have pity on us and send us our *Mashiach!*’ — *Mashiach* would certainly come!”

Sefer HaSichos 5696 [1936], p. 312

Mashiach Now (i)

The distinctive goal and task of this generation is to bring *Mashiach* immediately. We want *Mashiach* now!⁶⁶

There is nothing innovative about this. After all, every Jew requests in the prayers of *Shemoneh Esreh*,⁶⁷ “*Speedily* cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish, ...for we hope for Your salvation *all day long*.” And when it is time for the afternoon prayers of *Minchah*, and *Mashiach* has not yet come, we say it again; and if (G-d forbid) the “speedily” is further delayed, we repeat the same prayer yet again in the evening prayers of *Maariv!*

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 458

66. This sentence was said in English. See “But Why in English?” (below).

67. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 56.

Mashiach Now (ii)

Rashi writes:⁶⁸ “Yaakov Avinu desired to reveal the end [of the exile].”

A Jew should desire and should ask that the Redemption become manifest. Moreover, this request in itself — together with his contemplation of this subject — grants him help and encouragement in his service of the Creator. When a Jew is told that “*Mashiach* is just around the corner,” or “We want *Mashiach* now,” this energizes and intensifies his divine service, and makes him be ever more vigilant that he should not do anything that will (G-d forbid) hinder the coming of *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 234

But Why in English?

One’s anticipation and yearning for *Mashiach* should be expressed in English, too, as well as in any language in which this can be expressed.

(a) In this way, all the world will know that the Jewish people want *Mashiach* to come now.

(b) There are Jews who for many and various reasons find this language closer to them than the Holy Tongue. And since there is no time to wait until such a Jew returns to his true language (the Holy Tongue), because *Mashiach* is needed *now*, there is no alternative than that he should proclaim and cry out aloud in his language: “We want *Mashiach* now!”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Chai* Elul, 5742 [1982]

How Much Longer? (i)

The current vociferous outcry — “We want *Mashiach* now!” is no innovation introduced in recent years. For the

68. On *Bereishis* 49:1.

essence of many verses in the *Tanach* is the heartfelt plea of the Jews that they are no longer able to withstand the sufferings of exile. One example is the verse,⁶⁹ “How much longer will You not have pity upon Jerusalem and the cities of Judah?” Likewise, certain versions of *Tikkun Chatzos* include a hymn of six stanzas, each of them beginning with the words, עד מתי.

It goes without saying that this phrase expresses the feeling that people can wait no longer.

And this is the very essence of *Tikkun Chatzos*: the anguish of exile is so unbearable that a Jew can no longer restrain himself — he gets up *in the middle of the night* in order to lament and to cry out about the length of this exile.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, 5744 [1984]

How Much Longer? (ii)

Perhaps the reason for the continuation of the exile for yet one moment longer, is that⁷⁰ “G-d desires the prayers of the righteous.”

Now, since⁷¹ “Your people are *all* righteous,” let them pray and request and plead and make demands of G-d on account of this long exile: “*Ad masai?* —How much longer?” And then *Mashiach* will come at once.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayigash*, 5747 [1987]

Brain vs. Heart (i)

Chassidus is replete with explanations about the positive aspects of exile⁷² — it is a descent for the sake of an ultimate ascent; it demonstrates⁷³ “the superiority of light [that

69. *Zechariah* 1:12. The quotation begins with the words, עד מתי (lit., “Until when...?”).

70. *Yevamos* 64a.

71. *Yeshayahu* 60:21.

72. See (above) Part I, ch. 2, on “The Aim and Purpose of Exile” (p. 29ff.).

73. *Koheles* 2:13.

proceeds] from darkness”; and so on. These explanations are all addressed to the mind. As far as the feelings of the heart are concerned, however, the bitterness of the exile makes all of these explanations unacceptable.

And that is why, even after all the explanations have been offered, the Jewish people still ask and cry out in prayer that the exile should finally be annulled, and that the Redemption should come.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shtita* on *Shabbos Parshas Nitzavim*, 5741 [1981]

Brain vs. Heart (ii)

The teachings of *Chassidus* explain the great spiritual gains of our descent into exile. Thus it is written,⁷⁴ “I will thank You, G-d, for You have been angry with me.” When *Maschiach* comes, Israel will thank G-d for the exile, for they will then appreciate the great gains that it brought about.

At the same time, this knowledge must not dampen (G-d forbid) one’s will and desire to leave the exile. One should cry out, and truthfully so,⁶⁷ “for we hope for Your salvation all day long.”

This means that a Jew is expected to house two opposites simultaneously. On the one hand he is expected to believe that there is something good in exile, and on the other hand he is expected to cry out from the bottom of his heart that he wants to get out of it.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shtita* on the eve of Hoshana Rabbah, 5744 [1983]

“Carry Me Out of Egypt”

The opening verses of *Parshas Vayechi*⁷⁵ tell how Yaakov Avinu asked his son Yosef, “Please do not bury me in Egypt.... Carry me out of Egypt..., and swear unto me.”

74. *Yeshayahu* 12:1.

75. *Bereishis* 47:29-31.

This teaches us that a Jew should unceasingly cry out to G-d with the request, “Carry me out of Egypt!” It may indeed be said of him, *Vayechi* (lit., “He lived”), inasmuch as he studies Torah and observes the *mitzvos* — but exile is not his proper environment. For this reason he begs of G-d, and even (so to speak) administers an oath to Him, “Carry me out of Egypt!” For he desires to *leave* this exile.

Likkutei Sichos, Parshas Vayechi, 5747 [1987]

“They Groaned and Cried Out”

Describing the Egyptian bondage, the Torah writes:⁷⁶ “The Israelites groaned on account of their labors and cried out, and their pleas on account of their labors went up before G-d.”

This means that Jews should cry out to G-d because of this long exile and beg Him to take them out of it. They should argue that they have already completed their tasks (as hinted at in the verse, “they groaned...*on account of their labors*”); and if so, why are they still being detained in exile?

And when Jews cry out to G-d over the length of the exile, this will no doubt arouse the Divine reaction,⁷⁷ “G-d took note” — and He will send them the righteous Redeemer.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Shmos*, 5743 [1982]

“Why Have You Mistreated This People?”

The concluding verses of *Parshas Shmos* record Moshe Rabbeinu’s plaint to G-d concerning the plight of the Jews enslaved in Egypt:⁷⁸ “Why have You mistreated this people?”

What does this teach us?

A Jew should not resign himself to the state of being in exile, assuming that he can (G-d forbid) linger in such a state;

76. *Shmos* 2:23.

77. *Loc. cit.*, v. 25.

78. *Shmos* 5:22.

he should cry out to G-d, “Why have You mistreated this people?” He should ask for the coming of the Redemption.

Now it is true that the Torah teaches us that G-d said to Moshe,⁷⁹ “Alas for those who have passed away, and whose likes are no longer to be found! I have good cause to lament the passing of the Patriarchs.... *They* did not doubt the justice of My decisions, whereas you argued, ‘Why have You mistreated this people?’ ”

At the same time, G-d gave the command that this plaint of Moshe Rabbeinu be *recorded in the Torah* — because in this plaint, too, there is an everlasting lesson for every single Jew.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Va'eira*, 5743 [1983]

“Why Should We Be Deprived?”

Unlike all the other commandments of the Torah, the *mitzvah* of Pesach Sheni⁸⁰ was not given by G-d in the first place; it was only initiated as a result of the Jews’ demand, “Why should we be deprived from offering G-d’s sacrifice at its appointed time, among all the children of Israel?”

Recalling this plaint during the present long exile, when our people are either wandering “on a distant road,” or “defiled by contact with the dead” (for since the Destruction we do not have the ashes of the Red Heifer through which to become ritually cleansed⁸¹), we ought to state our claim to G-d: “Why should we be deprived from offering G-d’s sacrifice? We want — now — to participate in the sacrificial offerings in the Third *Beis HaMikdash!*”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXII, p. 215

79. *Rashi* on the beginning of *Parshas Va'eira*.

80. A person who was unable to offer the Paschal sacrifice on the 14th of Nissan because he had become “defiled by contact with the dead” or because he was “on a distant road,” was given a second chance to do so one month later, on the 14th of Iyar, which is called Pesach Sheni (“Second Pesach”); see *Bamidbar* 9:6ff.

81. *Bamidbar*, ch. 19.

The Subject of the Request

In response to the request of Moshe Rabbeinu that he be permitted to cross the Jordan and see the Promised Land, G-d says,⁸² “Enough! Do not speak to Me any more about this!” On this *Rashi* comments, “...in order that people should not say, ‘Look how hardhearted the master is, and how persistently the disciple is pleading!’ ”

It is self-evident that this argument does not apply to prayers and requests for the coming of the Redemption. On the contrary, it is G-d’s will that Jews entreat Him for this — and, in fact, the Men of the Great Assembly incorporated such supplications in each of the thrice-daily prayers.

When it comes to supplications for the coming of the Redemption, G-d is prepared to overlook any misgivings as to whether people might say, “Look how hardhearted the master is, and how persistently the disciple is pleading!” Why? — In order that through their multitudinous prayers and entreaties, the Jewish people will bring about the coming of the Redemption.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim*, 5745 [1985]

Thirsting for Dear Life

King David writes,⁸³ “As a deer pants after the water brooks,... my soul thirsts for G-d.”

In these words, speaking for every single Jew, the Sweet Singer of Israel⁸⁴ expresses the Jewish people’s anguish over the exile, and their yearning for the Redemption. “*Mashiach* now” is not only something that they *want*: it is something for which their “soul thirsts,” like the intense thirst of a man who is

82. *Devarim* 3:26.

83. *Tehillim* 42:1-2.

84. *II Shmuel* 23:1.

desperate for water to save his life⁸⁵ — for the Redemption is something on which one's very life depends.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on Shavuot, 5745 [1985]

“Be Not Silent!”

“O G-d, be not silent; do not hold Your peace and be not still, O G-d!”⁸⁶

Commenting on this verse, the Sages teach:⁸⁷ “The righteous tell G-d what [He] should do;... they tell Him, ‘Be not silent,’ and He hears them.”

As a classic instance of this, *Chassidus*⁸⁸ cites Choni the Circle-Drawer, “whose prayer changed (so to speak) the will of the Creator”; as one of the Sages said to him,⁸⁹ “You fondly plead with G-d, and He fulfills your request, like a son who fondly pleads with his father, and he fulfills his request.” The same source likens this case to “someone who takes his friend by the hand and does not let him go, and changes his will...”

It is self-understood, then, that when a Jew asks G-d, “Be not silent,” He certainly hears his request and actually fulfills it, since every Jew is “like a son who fondly pleads with his father,” as it is written,⁹⁰ “You are children of the L-rd your G-d.” This relationship may be appreciated even more richly in the light of the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov,⁹¹ that every Jew is esteemed and cherished by G-d like an only son born to parents of an advanced age.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 11 Nissan, 5744 [1984]

85. See the commentaries on this phrase.

86. *Tehillim* 83:2.

87. *Midrash Tehillim*, *loc. cit.*

88. *Yahel Or*, *loc. cit.*

89. *Taanis* 3:8.

90. *Devarim* 14:1.

91. *Keser Shem Tov (Hosafos)*, sec. 133.

“Even the Bird has Found a Home”

“Even the bird has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself!”⁹²

The particular care of Divine Providence extends even to seeing to it that a creature as small as a bird should find a home. And even the swallow, which is constantly on the wing and has no fixed home, has at least a nest. The only son of the King of kings, however, has neither home nor nest, neither a permanent nor a temporary home: he is a restless wanderer in exile.

Hence the pained cry that erupts from every heart: “*Ad masai?* How much longer?”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Ki Sissa*, 5747 [1987]

Self-Sacrifice for Mashiach

In a recently republished letter,⁹³ the author of *Minchas Elazar* [R. Elazar Chaim of Munkatch] writes explicitly and unequivocally that one is obliged to be prepared to sacrifice one’s life for the sake of the coming of *Mashiach*, just as one is obliged to undergo *mesirus nefesh* rather than transgress any one of the three prohibitions concerning which our Sages ruled,⁹⁴ יהרג ולא יעבור — “Rather be killed than transgress.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz*, 5744 [1983]

A Life-Threatening Danger

It is an unquestioned principle in Torah law that the saving of a life overrules all the commandments of the Torah (except for three⁹⁵).

92. *Tehillim* 84:4.

93. In *Igros Shapirin*, p. 238ff.

94. *Sanhedrin* 74a.

95. *Rambam*, *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah* 5:1.

Now, we are going through an extremely difficult period, when the very survival of the spiritual life of Jews is constantly threatened by intermarriage and assimilation. Accordingly, G-d is obliged to liberate His people from this exile, without detaining them for one moment longer — for spiritually, this is a life-saving emergency!

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, 5745 [1985]

A Jewish Bondman

Our Sages teach,⁹⁶ “If one acquires a Jewish bondman, it is as if he acquired a master over himself.”

Since he serves G-d, every Jew may be regarded as a “Jewish bondman.” G-d is thus obliged not only to supply him with all his material and spiritual needs, but in addition, He is obliged to respond to the pleas of His people that they can no longer tolerate this exile.

And our Sages have taught,⁹⁷ “A *tzaddik* decrees...” (“and your people are all *tzaddikim*”⁹⁸) “...and G-d fulfills.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Yisro*, 5745 [1985]

Striking One’s Son

The Torah rules that it is forbidden to strike one’s grown son.⁹⁹

How much more must this be forbidden when we are speaking of *all* the Children of Israel, who ever since the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah have been¹⁰⁰ “a great (‘fully-grown’) nation.”

96. *Kiddushin* 20a, where the Sages stipulate that an employer is obliged by Torah law to provide his bondman (*eved Ivri*) with better wine and bread and a more comfortable mattress, than his own.

97. Cf. *Taanis* 23a.

98. *Yeshayahu* 60:21.

99. *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah* 240:20.

100. *Devarim* 4:7.

Yet despite all this, this exile has continued for over 1900 years!

From a talk of the Rebbe *Sblita* on *Shabbos Parshas Tzav*, 5742 [1982]

Chapter 3: Bringing the Redemption — An Individual Obligation¹⁰¹

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (i)

“It is the duty of every individual Jew to perfect and prepare that part of the spiritual stature of *Mashiach* to which his soul is related.”¹⁰²

[The *yechidah* of each individual soul is its sublime and innermost essence.] *Mashiach* is the comprehensive *yechidah*,¹⁰³ and the *yechidah* which is hidden within every individual Jew is a spark of the soul of *Mashiach*, who is the all-embracing *yechidah*.

When a Jew arouses the *yechidah* within himself, his quintessential Jewish spark, so that it governs his thought, speech and action, this is an act of individual redemption. Through this he uncovers the spark of the soul of *Mashiach* within him — and this hastens the advent of the all-embracing Redemption, with the coming of *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 522

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (ii)

Within every Jew there is a spark of the soul of *Mashiach*. This is the *yechidah* in his soul, which is a spark of the comprehensive *yechidah*, viz., the soul of *Mashiach*. When an individual Jew unveils the *yechidah* within himself, he brings

101. This phrase translates the Heb./Aram. halachic term, חובת גברא, denoting an obligation which devolves “upon the man,” and which cannot be discharged by proxy.

102. *Meor Einayim* (by R. Nachum of Chernobyl) on the conclusion of *Parshas Pinchas*, quoting the Baal Shem Tov.

103. See Vol. II of the present work, p. 5.

about the speedier revelation of the comprehensive *yechidah*, through the coming of *Mashiach*.

At that time the innermost dimension (the *pnimiyus*) of the Torah will also be revealed — i.e., the *yechidah* of the Torah.

And through this, in turn, the *yechidah* of the entire universe will be revealed — viz., G-d Himself, Who is known as *Yechido shel Olam*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Naso*, 5751 [1991]

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (iii)

When a Jew reveals the “spark of *Mashiach*” within himself, he thereby brings about the revelation of the comprehensive *yechidah*, viz., the coming of *Mashiach* — for [it is axiomatic in the Kabbalah that] “if you grasp a part of an *etzem* (i.e., an entity which is one integral essence), you have grasped its entirety.” This spark thus contains the entire essence of *Mashiach*. Accordingly, it is capable of having the above effect on the universal *Mashiach*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the eve of Simchas Torah, 5746 [1985]

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (iv)

The capability of *Mashiach* to redeem the entire Jewish people derives from the fact that he has a connection with the entire people; i.e., there is a part of him within every Jew.

Thus we find that Moshe Rabbeinu says,¹⁰⁴ “The people *in whose midst I am*,¹⁰⁵ are six hundred thousand men on foot,” intimating that there was a part of himself within every single one of those six hundred thousand.

And it was by virtue of this that he was able to lead them out of Egypt.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the Last Day of Pesach, 5743 [1983]

104. *Bamidbar* 11:21.

105. In the original, אשר אנכי בקרבם.

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (v)

In one of the prophecies of Bilaam it is written,¹⁰⁶ דרך כוכב מיעקב — “A star shall go forth from Jacob.” In one of its tractates, the *Talmud Yerushalmi*¹⁰⁷ explains that this phrase is an allusion to the King *Mashiach*. Elsewhere,¹⁰⁸ the *Talmud Yerushalmi* explains it as an allusion to every individual Jew. (The *Talmud* there relates that a certain gentile once dreamed that he had swallowed a star; it transpired that he had killed a Jew, for the Jews are likened to stars.)

These two interpretations are related, for within every single Jew there is a spark of *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 599

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (vi)

When the Ark is opened before the Reading of the Torah on *Yom-Tov*, we make the following request:¹⁰⁹ “May there be realized in us the verse which states,¹¹⁰ ‘And the spirit of G-d shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of G-d.’”

Now how can we possibly request that within every single one of us there should be realized a verse which describes *Mashiach*?

Since within every Jew there is an element of the soul of *Mashiach*, every Jew can ask that this verse be fulfilled with respect to the spark of *Mashiach* within his soul.

This prayer is appropriate to *every* Jew, regardless of his actual spiritual standing. For this spark of *Mashiach* within him is not the result of his own spiritual labors. (If this were the case, it would be possible to assess his *avodah*, and accordingly

106. *Bamidbar* 24:17.

107. *Taanis* 4:5.

108. *Maaser Sheni* 4:6.

109. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 184.

110. *Yeshayahu* 11:2.

to determine whether or not it was appropriate in his case to request that “the spirit of G-d I rest upon him.”) Rather, this spark was created thus by G-d, and the task demanded of the individual is only to unveil it, and to actualize it from potentiality into reality.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the Last Day of Pesach, 5743 [1983]

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (vii)

This spark is manifest in Jewish children, who are manifestly termed “*Mashiach*.” Thus, on the verse,¹¹¹ אל תגעו במשיחי — “Do not touch My anointed ones,” the Sages teach,¹¹² “This refers to the little children who study Torah in their teacher’s house.”

When a child is born into a Jewish home, he is the element of *Mashiach* in that home, and when a number of children are born, each of them is a *Mashiach* in his own right.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Re'eh*, 5741 [1981]

The Spark of Mashiach Within Every Jew (viii)

Within the soul of every Jew there is a spark of the soul of the King *Mashiach*.

Perceived from the other side, it thus goes without saying that the soul of *Mashiach* is based and built on the souls of all the individual Jews, regardless of their tribe of origin, and regardless of their actual spiritual state. The very existence of a Jew is connected with the King *Mashiach*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on Asarah BeTeves, 5751 [1990]

111. *I Divrei HaYamim* 16:22.

112. *Shabbos* 119b.

The Key to the Redemption is in Everyone's Hand (i)

The key to the Redemption is in the hand of absolutely every individual. Thus the Alter Rebbe,¹¹³ citing *Tikkunei Zohar*, teaches that “even if one *tzaddik* in his generation (“And your people are *all* righteous”¹¹⁴) would return in perfect repentance, *Mashiach* would come immediately.”

The *Rambam* likewise states as a clear halachic ruling¹¹⁵ that “If a person fulfilled one *mitzvah*, he thereby tipped the scales in favor of himself and of the whole world, and brought about redemption and salvation for himself and for the whole world.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Pinchas*, 5744 [1984]

The Key to the Redemption is in Everyone's Hand (ii)

It is the task of every Jewish man, woman and child, from the greatest of the great to the smallest of the small, to bring about the Redemption. This mission is unaffected by distinctions of prayer rites (*nussach*), ideological circles, or parties: it is the concern of the entire House of Israel.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayigash*, 5747 [1986]

The Key to the Redemption is in Everyone's Hand (iii)

It is within the power of every Jew to speed the coming of the Redemption, and indeed to bring about the coming of the Redemption. For his Torah study and his divine service lessen the spirit of impurity in the world, and thereby bring nearer the day which will see the fulfillment of the Divine promise,¹¹⁶ “I shall remove the spirit of impurity from the earth.” At the same

113. *Boneh Yerushalayim*, end of ch. 4.

114. *Yeshayahu* 60:21.

115. *Hilchos Tesbuva* 3:4.

116. *Zechariah* 13:2.

time, his Torah study and his divine service reveal goodness and holiness in the world, and thereby bring nearer the day which will see the fulfillment of the Divine promise,¹¹⁷ “And the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 599

The Key to the Redemption is in Everyone’s Hand (iv)

Every single Jew of our generation — including “our young and our old, ...our sons and our daughters”¹¹⁸ — is capable of bringing about the sublime revelations of the Days of *Mashiach*, which fulfill G-d’s ultimate intent in making an abode for Himself among mortals.¹¹⁹

Since in the future Redemption not a single Jew will (G-d forbid) remain in exile, it is clear that the task of bringing about the Redemption likewise devolves upon every single Jew.

And it is self-evident that every single Jew has been given the requisite strength for this, since, as G-d reassures His people,¹²⁰ “I demand only according to their ability.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Sblita* on the eve of Hoshana Rabbah, 5746 [1985]

The Key to the Redemption is in Everyone’s Hand (v)

Why has it been repeatedly emphasized of late, time and again, that bringing about the advent of the Redemption is the task of every individual Jew, great and small alike?

My revered father-in-law, the [Previous] Rebbe, the *nasi* of our generation, proclaimed, לאתּר לתשובה: לאתּר לגאולה — “Immediate Repentance: Immediate Redemption.” And even though decades have elapsed since this proclamation and since this auspicious time (*ketz*), we have still not been saved.

117. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

118. *Shmos* 10:9.

119. Cf. the opening lines of chs. 36 and 37 of *Tanya*.

120. *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Parshas Naso*, sec. 11.

The only possible explanation for this, is that from this time the matter has been passed on from the *nasi* to every individual Jew. From now on, endeavors to bring about the Redemption are the task of the Jewish people at large — men, women and children.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on Purim, 5747 [1987]

The Key to the Redemption is in Everyone's Hand (vi)

Every Jew — man, woman and even child — ought to augment his divine service in order to bring about the actual coming of our righteous *Mashiach*. One should not rely on others, nor should one pass on this responsibility to others; this is the task of every individual man and woman, and every individual man and woman has to fulfill it himself.

What does this kind of divine service consist of? — Increasing one's study of both the revealed and the mystical dimensions of the Torah, and enhancing one's fulfillment of the *mitzvos*. In addition, encouraging others to do likewise. And, more broadly, making Torah and *Yiddishkeit* increasingly widespread, and disseminating the wellsprings of *Chassidus* abroad, for this in particular secures the arrival of the King *Mashiach*.¹²¹

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Shemini*, 5751 [1991]

Particular Redemption and Universal Redemption

Every activity of a Jew that is connected with Torah and *Yiddishkeit*, draws down Divine light and infuses it into the world. Such an activity thus hastens the approach of the future Redemption, which will be characterized by¹²² “the revelation of the [infinite] *Ein Sof*-light in this physical world.”

121. See the above passage entitled “When Your Wellsprings Will Be Disseminated Outward” (p. 71).

122. *Tanya*, beginning of ch. 37.

When one unveils the life-giving Divine spark within any particular entity, this is the individual redemption of that particular entity. And this particular instance of redemption is a step towards the universal Redemption, for it prepares for the revelation of the glory of G-d in the world in time to come.

Let no man therefore argue: “Since in my heart of hearts I know the realities of my spiritual standing, what value can there be in any particular activity of mine?”

For in truth, every single activity of his, whether in the realm of thought or of speech or of action, has the power to bring about redemption — an individual redemption and the universal Redemption.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Yud-Tes* Kislev, 5745 [1984]

Why Should They Have to Suffer?

The Redemption is for all of Israel, and that includes the Jews of all past generations; they too are waiting impatiently for the future Redemption. It is not their fault that they are unable to hasten its approach but are obliged to wait for the finishing touches of “polishing the buttons,” which can be attended to only by souls that are clothed in bodies.

This realization highlights the responsibility of our generation to fully complete¹²² “our actions and our divine service,” for on these the Redemption depends.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim*, 5748 [1988]

A Leading Question

Three times a day we pray in the *Shemoneh Esreh*,¹²³ “Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish,” and likewise we ask, “May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in mercy.”

123. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, pp. 56 and 58.

When any Jew says these words, and means what he says, he no doubt asks himself: “*What have I done today in this direction?*”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 384

Thinking and Doing

We are now in the last moments before the coming of *Mashiach*. The fact that he has not yet arrived is not (G-d forbid) because the *time* is not yet ripe, but because we are still lacking one single deed that will tip the scales, and make the world worthy of being granted the Redemption.

The demand of the hour is therefore that every Jew, great and small, *think* about the ultimate Redemption to be brought about through *Mashiach*, and then *do* something to actualize it, both in his own life and in his encouragement of others.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 16 Adar, 5747 [1987]

The Gematria of Shaliach and Mashiach

The numerical equivalent of the letters of the Hebrew word שליח totals 348; add ten, corresponding to the faculties of the soul, and the total comes to 358, which is the numerical equivalent of the letters of משיח.

What does this teach us?

Every Jew is G-d’s emissary, G-d’s *shaliach*; his task — to build a dwelling place for G-d down here among mortals. And this mission will mature into perfection in the Days of *Mashiach*, when the glory of G-d will be manifest, and it will be clearly apparent that the entire world is indeed a dwelling place for Him.

There are two stages in this mission:

(a) The “appointment” of the emissary: G-d dispatches a soul to the nether world, and equips it with all the requisite strengths so that it will be able to discharge its duty;

(b) the individual below utilizes these strengths and in fact accomplishes his mission.

When this שליח (*shaliach*) actually harnesses all ten faculties of his soul toward the fulfillment of his task, he brings the world closer to the state of משיח (*Mashiach*) — which is the ultimate goal of his mission.

Sefer HaSichos, 5748 [1988], Vol. I, p. 81

Do Everything You Can!

What more can I do to motivate the entire Jewish people to clamor and cry out, and thus actually bring about the coming of *Mashiach*? All that has been done until now has been to no avail. For we are still in exile....

All that I can possibly do is to give the matter over to you. Now, do everything you can to bring *Mashiach*, here and now, immediately.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the eve of 28 Nissan, 5751 [1991]

Chapter 4: Catalysts of the Redemption

Unearned Love

Since the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed on account of undeserved hatred,¹²⁴ this reason must be undone by means of unearned love — by loving every Jew *without cause*, even when one sees no apparent justification for loving him.

This is the inner meaning of the teaching of our Sages¹²⁵ that “Pinchas is Eliyahu.” Pinchas epitomizes peace and unity, as in the Divine promise,¹²⁶ “I hereby grant him My covenant of peace.” And it is this unity which will bring the Prophet Eliyahu, the harbinger of the Redemption.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. II, p. 598

A Letter in a Sefer Torah

The obligation to write a *Sefer Torah* is the culmination of all the 613 *mitzvos* (as in the *Sefer HaChinuch*, *mitzvah* 613). It is thus clear that acquiring a letter in one of the universal Torah scrolls now being written hastens the culmination of the exile.

On this, see *Ben Ish Chai* on *Parshas Bereishis*, p. 7.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXIV, p. 215

124. *Yoma* 9b.

125. *Targum Yonasan* on *Shmos* 4:13.

126. *Bamidbar* 25:12.

Unity

The Redemption will unify all of Israel, from the greatest to the smallest. For not a single Jew will remain in exile:¹²⁷ “You, the Children of Israel, will be gathered in one by one.” Moreover, the multitudes who will then be gathered in are described collectively, in the singular:¹²⁸ “A great congregation will return here.”

In preparation for this state, therefore, one should make every endeavor to unify all the different kinds of Jews, in a spirit of *ahavas Yisrael*, the love of a fellow Jew, and of *achdus Yisrael*, the unity of all Israel.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on the eve of the Fifth Day of Sukkos, 5745 [1984]

Faith

Our Sages teach,¹²⁹ “By virtue of faith, our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt.”

Our future Redemption will likewise come about by virtue of the fact that our people, disregarding the thick darkness of our present exile, believe firmly in the imminent coming of *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. III, p. 872

By Virtue of Pious Women

“By virtue of the pious women of that generation, our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt.”¹³⁰

In the same way, the future Redemption will come about by virtue of the spiritual labors of Jewish women and girls.

127. *Yeshayahu* 27:12.

128. *Yirmeyahu* 31:7.

129. *Mechilta* on *Shmos* 14:31.

130. *Sotah* 7b.

We therefore see that the three particular *mitzvos* which have been entrusted to Jewish women and girls — lighting candles in honor of *Shabbos* and *Yom-Tov*, separating the tithe of *challah* from bread and baked goods, and the family purity laws — all involve needs which are basic to all of humanity, including gentiles (viz., light, food, and family life). It is the task of Jewish women and girls to ensure that these activities be undertaken in a distinctively *Jewish* manner, highlighting the connection of the candle-lighting with *Shabbos* and *Yom-Tov*; the *kashrus* of the family's food and drink; and the *purity* of the family.

These labors constitute a preparation for the coming of *Mashiach*, when the very materiality of the world will be refined. As it is written concerning that era,¹³¹ “And all *flesh* will together see that the mouth of G-d has spoken.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 227

Printing the Tanya

Since in the future Redemption not a single Jew will remain in exile, it is clear that the redemption of every individual Jew has a bearing on the Redemption of the entire House of Israel. It is thus our duty to work with every Jew to ensure that he will be ready for the Redemption.

This is accomplished by disseminating the Torah and especially its *pnimiyus*, its innermost and mystical dimension, wherever Jews are to be found, and wherever even only one single Jew is to be found.

Therefore, in order that the wellspring itself (and not merely the waters that derive from it) should reach the furthestmost places (חוצה),¹³² the *Tanya* should be printed everywhere, for it is the Written Law¹³³ of the teachings of

131. *Yeshayahu* 40:5.

132. See the above passage entitled “When Your Wellsprings Will Be Disseminated Outward” (p. 71).

133. In the original, “Torah *shebichsav*.”

Chassidus. The well-spring itself, the source of the life-giving waters, will thus be found in every such place.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Terumah*, 5744 [1984]

Directives for the Three Weeks

In the course of the Three Weeks of mourning for the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, from the Fast of the Seventeenth of Tammuz until the Fast of Tishah BeAv:

(a) One should augment one's Torah study and one's contributions to *tzedakah*, in the spirit of the verse,¹³⁴ ציון בצדקה במשפט תפדה, ושביה בצדקה — “Zion will be redeemed through judgment, and those who return to her will be redeemed through charity.” (It is explained in the teachings of *Chassidus*¹³⁵ that *mishpat* (“judgment”) alludes to the Torah, as in the phrase¹³⁶ כמשפט הראשון, which *Onkelos* renders in Aramaic to mean, “according to the original law.”)

(b) Regular study sessions should be set up on the subject of the *Beis HaMikdash*, for our Sages teach¹³⁷ that “G-d esteems such study as if those involved were engaged in the construction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.”

(c) Charitable contributions should be set aside for the “little sanctuary”¹³⁸ of our times — synagogues, *batei midrash*, *yeshivos*, and the like.

(d) On each of the Nine Days from Rosh Chodesh Menachem Av through Tishah BeAv, one should celebrate the completion (*siyyum*) of the study [of a Talmudic tractate, or the like].¹³⁹ (This applies also to Tishah BeAv itself, when the *siyyum* marks the completion of one of the subjects whose study is permitted on that day.) On each such occasion, which

134. *Yeshayahu* 1:27.

135. *Likkutei Torah*, beginning of *Parshas Devarim*.

136. *Bereishis* 40:13.

137. *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Parshas Tzav*, sec. 14.

138. See *Megillah* 29a on *Yechezkel* 11:16.

139. As to the inclusion of wine and meat in the meal that honors such a *siyyum*, see *Sefer HaMinbagim: The Book of Chabad-Lubavitch Customs* (in English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 1991), p. 95.

should involve as many listeners as possible, mention should be made of the commandment of *ahavas Yisrael*, loving a fellow Jew,¹⁴⁰ and of the giving of *tzedakah*.¹⁴¹

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XVIII, p. 486, and Vol. XXIV, p. 336

The Dissemination of Yiddishkeit (i)

Concerning the generation which witnessed the destruction of the First *Beis HaMikdash*, our Sages teach¹⁴² that if they had held the Torah in esteem, the luminary within it would have restored them to the good path, and the *Beis HaMikdash* would not have been destroyed. The Sages teach elsewhere¹⁴³ that the Second *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed on account of undeserved hatred.

We are living in the generation which can hear the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach*, a stage by which¹⁴⁴ “all the propitious final times for the coming of the Redemption have already passed, and the matter now depends only on repentance and the performance of good deeds.” At a time like this, particular effort should be invested in these two areas: (a) *ahavas Yisrael*, loving a fellow Jew; and (b) endearing the Torah and its *mitzvos* to the hearts of our brethren.

Both of these goals are attained simultaneously when one fosters the practice of Judaism among the broadest sectors of our people, for (a) there is no greater love than a loving endeavor to save one’s brother from the distress that would result from his misdeeds; and (b), how can one make the Torah more esteemed and more cherished than when one explains to one’s fellow Jews that the Torah is G-d’s will and wisdom, that

140. Cf. the Talmudic teaching that the Second *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed on account of undeserved hatred (*Yoma* 9b), and the above passage entitled “Unearned Love” (p. 183).

141. Cf. paragraph (a) in the present passage.

142. *Bava Metzia* 85b; *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Chagigah* 1:7.

143. *Yoma* 9b.

144. *Sanhedrin* 97b.

it remains eternal at all times and in places, and that through it G-d has implanted within us the life of the World to Come!

From a letter of the Rebbe *Shlita*, in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIII, p. 291

The Dissemination of Yiddishkeit (ii)

The future Redemption will be complete: not a single Jew will remain in exile, neither physically nor spiritually.

This obliges every individual to exert himself in bringing our fellow Jews near to the Redeemer of Israel — to G-d, the Giver of the Torah and its commandments. No one is free of this holy task, at least for a certain time every day, every week or every month. And the greater one's aptitude in this task, the more time is one obliged to devote to it.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. XV, p. 29

The Dissemination of Yiddishkeit (iii)

The redemptions of the past were not complete: some of our people remained in physical or spiritual exile. In the case of the present exile, however, we have been promised a true and complete Redemption — both from external and from internal exile, from the exile of the body and from exile of the soul. Saving one more Jew from being overwhelmed by exile thus speeds the universal Redemption.

Igros Kodesh (Letters) of the Rebbe *Shlita*, Vol. XVIII, p. 498

The Dissemination of Yiddishkeit (iv)

The preparation best suited to bringing the Redemption nearer, is to undertake activities which anticipate the lifestyle of that era — “to perfect the world under the sovereignty of

G-d.”¹⁴⁵ In plain words, this entails spreading the practice of Judaism, the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of its *mitzvos*, with ever-increasing radiance.

True, this is a mighty task, but at the same time it is likable work, and its success is certain.

From a letter of the Rebbe *Shlita*, in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXIII, p. 486

Ufaratzta: Bursting All Bounds

In our generation one should serve G-d in the spirit of the Divine blessing to Yaakov Avinu,¹⁴⁶ ופרצת — “And you shall spread forth vigorously, [westward, eastward, northward and southward].” [Or, as it is expressed in the *Shema*,¹⁴⁷ בכל מאדך — “with all your might.” This will hasten the coming of *Mashiach*, concerning whom it is written (using the same root as in ופרצת),¹⁴⁸ עלה הפרץ לפניהם — “The one who breaks through shall ascend before them.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 534

Early Impressions

Concerning the Days of *Mashiach* it is written,¹⁴⁹ “I shall remove the spirit of impurity from the earth.” As the footsteps of *Mashiach* approach ever nearer, we should now enjoy a foretaste of the revelations which will be ours in future time, just as concerning *Shabbos* it is written,¹⁵⁰ טועמיה חיים וכו' — “Those who savor it shall merit eternal life,” a phrase which inspired the Friday afternoon custom (in certain circles) of tasting the delicacies prepared for *Shabbos*.

145. From the *Aleinu* prayer; *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 84.

146. *Bereishis* 28:14.

147. *Devarim* 6:5.

148. *Michah* 2:13, and see *Aggadas Bereishis*, sec. 63.

149. *Zechariah* 13:2.

150. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 194.

Accordingly, it would be advisable to use illustrations only of pure subjects. When choosing toys for infants, for example, one should buy only representations of kosher animals; only such illustrations should appear in the booklets that are prepared for the use of children; and so on.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXV, p. 311

A Time to be Innovative

The Sages describe the Torah teachings of the Redemption by the phrase,¹⁵¹ תורה חדשה מאתי תצא — “A new Torah will come forth from Me,” a phrase which indicates not only addition but novelty. Now, all of materiality is simply an tangible echo of spiritual realities. Accordingly, this promised state of spiritual innovation will spontaneously give rise to the prophesied physical state in which there will be¹⁵² “new heavens and a new earth.”

In this spirit, our own actions and our own endeavors toward hastening the advent of the Redemption should likewise be innovative. Instead of being content with the mere accumulation of additional deeds from one day to the next, one’s *avodah* should be innovative and novel.¹⁵³

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5744 [1984]

Education (i)

Authentic and comprehensive Jewish education, education in a spirit of purity and sanctity,¹⁵⁴ rules out sinfulness, which is the underlying reason for the exile. (As we say in our prayers,¹⁵⁵

151. *Vayikra Rabbah* 13:3.

152. *Yeshayahu* 66:22.

153. Cf. *Rashi* on *Devarim* 26:16.

154. In the original, this kind of *chinuch* is described (borrowing a Talmudic phrase from another context; cf. *Chagigah* 19b) as being *al taharas hakodesh*.

155. From the *Shemoneh Esreh* of *Mussaf* for the Three Pilgrim Festivals; *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 258.

“Because of our sins we were exiled from our land.”) It is written, moreover,¹⁵⁶ “From the mouths of babes and sucklings You have founded strength,... in order to still the enemy and the avenger.” On the word *זִמְּךָ* (“strength”) the Sages teach,¹⁵⁷ “Oz alludes to the Torah.” [I.e., the words of Torah uttered by the mouths of babes and sucklings, silence Israel’s enemies.]

Furthermore, it is the Jewish boys and girls who are being educated in the path of the Torah and its commandments who are active — and who are also activating others — in bringing back those of our brethren who are temporarily distant from their Father in heaven. And, as the *Rambam* writes,¹⁵⁸ “Israel will ultimately repent, and immediately be redeemed.”

From a letter of the Rebbe *Shlita* in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXII, p. 346

Education (ii)

Concerning the era of the Redemption it is written,¹⁵⁹ “I shall pour My spirit upon your seed, and My blessing upon your offspring.” This plainly refers, quite literally, to one’s sons and daughters.

Hence, since all the revelations of the future depend on our present actions and divine service,¹⁶⁰ propagating the Torah education of Jewish children becomes a matter of the utmost urgency.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Vayikra*, 5740 [1980]

Conquering the World

The Sages teach¹⁶¹ that the spiritual personality (so to speak) of the future Redemption will be male, and the “new

156. *Tehillim* 8:3.

157. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:10.

158. *Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:5.

159. *Yeshayahu* 44:3.

160. *Tanya*, beginning of ch. 37.

161. *Mechilta*, *Parshas Beshallah*, 15:1.

song” of gratitude which celebrates it will accordingly be called a שיר חדש (using the male form) rather than a שירה חדשה (using the female form of the same phrase).

It is thus self-evident that the spiritual endeavors which will bring about the Redemption should likewise be “male” — characterized by vigor and courage, as in the phrase of the *Gemara*,¹⁶² “It is the way of a man to conquer.” Indeed, the entire world needs to be “conquered” vigorously, regardless of the various kinds of scoffers.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 238

Kashrus and Family Purity

When our forefathers were in the wilderness, on the eve of their entry into the Land of Israel, they were commanded to be vigilant with the *kashrus* of their vessels,¹⁶³ and with the purity and sanctity of their family life.¹⁶⁴

In our days, too, in these last days of exile, our generation should be particularly vigilant with these two *mitzvos* — with *kashrus* and with the laws of family purity — as a preparation for our entry into the Land of Israel together with our Righteous *Mashiach*.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XIII, p. 297

Torah Study (i)

The *Zohar* teaches¹⁶⁵ that as a result of wasting opportunities for Torah study,¹⁶⁶ “the day on which *Mashiach* [will redeem us] from this exile is postponed.” Through

162. *Kiddushin* 35a.

163. See the laws of *hag'alah* (rendering vessels *kosher*) in *Bamidbar* 31:21-23.

164. The law governing the periodic self-purification of a woman (*niddah*) by immersion in a *mikveh* is derived by the Sages (see *Tosafos* on *Yoma* 78a) from the phrase *bemei niddah* (*Bamidbar* 31:23; lit., “in the waters of sprinkling”).

165. *Zohar Chadash*, *Bereishis* 8:4.

166. In the original, *bittul Torah*.

“*mitzva* Torah,”¹⁶⁷ by studying both the revealed and the hidden dimensions of the Torah, this postponement can be revoked.

From a letter of the Rebbe *Shlita* in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XII, p. 237

Torah Study (ii)

Describing the time after the coming of *Mashiach*, the *Rambam* writes that¹⁶⁸ “in that era...the occupation of the whole world will be solely to know G-d.” In the present, therefore, one should augment one’s study of the Torah, as a preparation, sampling and foretaste of this promised state.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Noach*, 5745 [1984]

The Study of Mishnayos

The *Midrash* teaches,¹⁶⁹ “All these exiles will be gathered in only by virtue of the study of *Mishnayos*.”

Why specifically *Mishnayos*?

The Second *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed because of undeserved hatred,¹⁷⁰ while the First *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed¹⁷¹ “because [the people of that generation] did not pronounce a blessing before they began their study of the Torah,” i.e., because they did not hold the Torah in due esteem. The study of *Mishnayos* helps to right both these wrongs.

As far as those who study Scripture are concerned, no particular effort has to be made in the direction of unity, for there is no particular opportunity here for disagreement (inasmuch as such study is not directed toward determining practical legal

167. Lit., “Torah Campaign”; i.e., the study of Torah as one of the *mitzva'im*, the *mitzvos* highlighted by the Rebbe *Shlita* as the particular task of this generation.

168. *Hilchos Melachim* 12:5.

169. *Vayikra Rabbah* 7:3.

170. *Yoma* 9b.

171. *Nedarim* 81a.

decisions). And as far as its comprehension is concerned, this is not the prime consideration in the study of Scripture (for even one who does not understand what he is reading nevertheless pronounces the blessing over the study of Torah). There is likewise no particular need here to be frequently reminded of the Giver of the Torah by reciting the relevant blessing, because of the recurring reminders given by the phrase, “And G-d said...,” “And G-d spoke...,” and the like.

As far as the study of *Gemara* is concerned, every individual argues out the reasoning implicit in the *Mishnah* and articulates his own stand, according to the depth of his understanding. The underlying unity here between the various conflicting scholars is not readily observable.

The study of *Mishnayos*, however, is different. The *Mishnah* deals with practical halachic rulings which have to be understood, yet all sides acknowledge the truth of what it states, without dissent. (It is for this reason that¹⁷² “A judge who erred in citing a *mishnah* must adjudicate afresh.”) By all agreeing to one ruling, even though they are men of varied understanding, students of the *Mishnah* demonstrate that it is G-d Who gave us His Torah — one Torah, for Israel, who are one people.

Teshuvos U'Biurim of the Rebbe *Shlita*, sec. 4

Studying About the Redemption (i)

Since our Righteous *Mashiach* is about to come, though he has not yet actually come, a final effort is required that will bring *Mashiach*. Every individual, man, woman and child, should increase his Torah study in subjects that concern the Redemption. This applies to the Written Law, and to the Oral Law — in the *Gemara* (especially in Tractate *Sanhedrin* and at the end of Tractate *Sotah*) and in the *Midrashim*, as well as (and especially) in the mystical dimension of the Torah,

172. *Sanhedrin* 33a.

beginning with the *Zohar*, and particularly in the teachings of *Chassidus*.

This study should preferably be undertaken in groups of at least ten, for group study excites happiness, and increases the eager anticipation of the participants for the coming of *Mashiach*.

One should likewise upgrade one's meticulous observance of the *mitzvos*, particularly the *mitzvah* of *tzedakah*,¹⁷³ "which brings the Redemption near."

It would be well to connect one's additional contributions to *tzedakah* with one's additional study of subjects connected with the Redemption, by making one's increased contribution *with the intent* that it hasten the coming of the Redemption. This intention in itself then becomes part of one's study of subjects connected with the Redemption — for this is a real and tangible study of the teaching of our Sages,⁵⁴³ "Great is *tzedakah*, for it brings the Redemption near."

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora*, 5751 [1991]

Studying About the Redemption (ii)

The above-described study is not only a *segulah*, a spiritual means of securing the speedy advent of *Mashiach*. Apart from this, and more importantly, it is a way of beginning to live one's life in the mood of *Mashiach* and the Redemption — to "live with the times" of the Days of *Mashiach* — by having one's mind permeated with an understanding of the concepts of *Mashiach* and Redemption that are in the Torah. From the mind, these concepts will then find their way into the heart as experienced emotions. Ultimately, they will then find expression in one's actual conduct — in thought, word and deed — in a way that befits this unique era, in which we stand on the threshold of the Redemption.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Balak*, 5751 [1991]

173. *Bava Basra* 10a.

Rejoicing in the Redemption

The story is told of one of the *tzaddikim* of Poland that when he was a little boy he asked his father for an apple but was refused.

“*Baruch atah...Melech HaOlam, boreh pri haetz!*” exclaimed the enterprising youngster.

His pious father could not possibly allow the blessing to have been recited in vain. Vanquished, he promptly handed him an apple.

In our situation, too: If the Jewish people begin now to rejoice already in the Redemption, out of absolute trust that G-d will speedily send us *Mashiach*, this joy in itself will (as it were) compel our Father in heaven to fulfill His children’s wish and to redeem them from exile.

Needless to say, this is not a case of *dechikas haketz*, “forcing” the premature advent of the end of the exile,¹⁷⁴ for here we are not speaking of “practical *Kabbalah*” or the adjuration of angels or the like: we are simply speaking of serving G-d with exuberant joy.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XX, p. 384

Speed

In our days the Redemption has to be hurried along, in the spirit of the prophetic promise,¹⁷⁵ אָחַשְׁבֵּנָה — “I shall hasten it.”

Hence all the activities that are undertaken in preparation for the Redemption should be done in haste, for the above promise indicates not only priority (as opposed to postponement), but also speedy performance.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *erev* Rosh HaShanah, 5742 [1981]

174. Cf. *Kesubos* 111a.

175. See *Sanhedrin* 98a on *Yeshayahu* 60:22.

Letters about the Redemption

It would be advisable that everyone publicize the teachings of famous Torah scholars concerning the obligation to hope for and anticipate and demand the coming of *Mashiach*. This can be done by sending a letter (including such quotations) to ten fellow Jews, with the suggestion and request that each of them send a copy of it to another ten Jews, and so on.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on 7 MarCheshvan, 5746 [1985]

Action is Superior

A well-known debate in the *Gemara*¹⁷⁶ considers whether *study* is the ultimate value (“*talmud gadol*”) or whether *action* is greater (“*maaseh gadol*”). It is explained in the teachings of *Chassidus* that even though the *Gemara* there concludes that in the present era study is superior,¹⁷⁷ in future time the *Halachah* will determine that action is superior.

The fact that we are now standing on the threshold of the Redemption thus adds weight to the teaching of the Sages,¹⁷⁸ המעשה הוא העיקר — “What matters most is practice.”

Until All the Souls are Born (i)

With every Jewish infant born, the Redemption is brought nearer. As our Sages teach,¹⁷⁹ “[*Mashiach*] the son of David will not come until there are no souls left in the heavenly treasury.”

By doing our part in bringing souls down to this world, we will thus bring the Redemption nearer.

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXV, p. 37

176. *Kiddushin* 40b.

177. As the *Gemara* explains there, “...because it leads to action.”

178. Cf. *Ayos* 1:17.

179. *Yevamos* 62a.

Until All the Souls are Born (ii)

The ultimate intent underlying the creation of the world is that G-d should have a dwelling place among mortals.¹⁸⁰ So long as souls remain in heaven, this intent is not fulfilled: they must descend to this world, where the divine abode is situated. And when all the existing souls find their way below, this will bring about the coming of *Mashiach*, and the original desire for a dwelling place below will be fulfilled.

It therefore follows that the birth of a Jewish baby is not only a private cause for celebration for his parents and family: it is a cause for rejoicing in all the worlds, and for the entire Jewish people of all the generations. For they are all thirsting and yearning to arrive at their ultimate fulfillment, which is the coming of *Mashiach* — and every Jewish baby born brings the Redemption nearer.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar*, 5717 [1957]

Until All the Souls are Born (iii)

The future Redemption is conditional specifically on the *mitzvah* to¹⁸¹ “be fruitful and multiply” (including also the “making of Jews” in a spiritual sense, by bringing them near to their Father in heaven). For, as the *Rambam* writes,¹⁸² “If one adds one soul to the Jewish people, it is as if he built a world.” And the complete fulfillment of this *mitzvah* on a universal level will make the construction of the world complete — with the revelation of G-d’s sovereignty in the world in the future Redemption.

Though in a general sense all the revelations of that time depend on *all* our actions and our divine service throughout the course of the exile,¹⁸³ it goes without saying that in a more

180. *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Parshas Naso* 7:1.

181. *Bereishis* 1:28.

182. *Hilchos Ishus* 15:16.

183. *Tanya*, beginning of ch. 37.

specific sense the world will be built anew by the increased fulfillment of a *mitzvah* whose specific function is the building of the world.

Likkutei Sichos, Parshas Noach, 5748 [1987]

Halachic Decisions on the Redemption

“Since you engage in rendering halachic decisions, render a halachic decision (a *psak*) that our righteous *Mashiach* must come, and see to it that your decision is actually and immediately fulfilled. I am amazed that people are not roused to agitate about this.... May G-d find you worthy of being one of those who will render the halachic decision on the coming of *Mashiach!*”

From the words of the Rebbe *Shlita* to Rabbi Yochanan Sofer, Av Beis Din and Rosh Yeshivah of Erloy, Adar II, 5749 [1989]

Tzedakah: Charity (i)

In these times, when the approaching footsteps of *Mashiach* are close upon us, the principal service of G-d is the service of *tzedakah*; as our Sages taught,¹⁸⁴ “Israel will be redeemed only by virtue of charity.” For at this time, when the footsteps of *Mashiach* are close upon us, “the *Sukkah* of David [i.e., the Divine Presence] has fallen” to a level of “feet” and “heels”, i.e., to the level of [the lowest of the worlds, which is known as the World of Action, the World of] *Asiyah*. For this reason, the way to cleave to the Divine Presence in our times, is through a corresponding category of action, namely, through the practice of charity.

And whoever sacrifices his impulse in this respect, and opens his hand and heart, ...will merit to¹⁸⁵ “behold, Eye to eye, G-d returning to Zion.”

Based on *Tanya — Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 9

184. *Shabbos* 139a.

185. *Yeshayahu* 52:8.

Tzedakah: Charity (ii)

The Second *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed on account of undeserved hatred.¹⁸⁶ It is therefore specifically by virtue of *tzedakah* that the Redemption will be brought about, for charity expresses the exact antithesis of undeserved hatred.

Or HaTorah on Chanukah, p. 624

Self-Sanctification

It is stated in the teachings of *Chassidus* that the future Redemption will be brought about by virtue of divine service which observes the Rabbinic injunction,¹⁸⁷ קדש עצמך במותר לך — “Sanctify yourself within that which is permitted to you.”

By way of explanation: The more sublime a beam of light, the more readily can it be obstructed by even the filmiest of curtains. Thus it is that¹⁸⁸ “Concerning the conduct of a *tzaddik*, G-d is punctilious to the extent of a hairsbreadth,” for the greater the *tzaddik*, the greater the consequence of even the merest detail.

So, too, here: As a prerequisite for the future divine revelation (which will surpass even the divine revelation at Sinai), even the subtlest “foreskin of the heart” must be removed¹⁸⁹ — not only the spiritual insensitivity that draws one to forbidden matters, but even that which anchors one in the materiality of permitted matters, through excessive indulgence. And concerning this it is taught, “Sanctify yourself (קדש עצמך) within that which is permitted to you.”

The above observations can give us a new insight into a teaching of our Sages:¹⁹⁰ “In future time, the *tzaddikim*...”

186. *Yoma* 9b.

187. *Yevamos* 20a.

188. *Bava Kama* 50a.

189. *Tanya* — *Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 4.

190. *Bava Basra* 78b.

(“and your people are all *tzaddikim*”¹⁹¹) “...will be addressed by the term קדוש (‘holy’), just as G-d is.”

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, p. 256

The Seven Noachide Laws

The future Redemption will apply not only to Israel, but to the whole world as well. As we say in the *Aleinu* prayer,¹⁹² “...to perfect the *world* under the sovereignty of G-d.”

In preparation for this Redemption, therefore, action needs to be taken so that the world at large will be ready for such a state. This is to be achieved through the efforts of the Jewish people to influence the nations of the world to conduct themselves in the spirit of the verse¹⁹³ that states that G-d “formed [the world] in order that it be settled” — in a civilized manner, through the observance of their seven *mitzvos*.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Beshalach*, 5743 [1983]

The Power of Joy

It is axiomatic in the teachings of *Chassidus* that “Joy bursts bounds.” To this we might add that joy bursts the bounds of exile and hastens the coming of *Mashiach*, concerning whom it is written,¹⁹⁴ עלה הפרץ לפניהם — “The one who breaks through shall ascend before them.”

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on *Shabbos Parshas Toldos*, 5741 [1980]

191. *Yeshayahu* 60:21.

192. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 84.

193. *Yeshayahu* 45:18.

194. See *Bereishis Rabbah* 85:14 on *Michah* 2:13.

The Observance of Shabbos

One of the activities forbidden on *Shabbos* is lifting (lit., “uprooting”) an object from the ground in a private domain, and then depositing it in a public domain. Examining this on a mystical level, the *Tikkunei Zohar*¹⁹⁵ writes that whoever desecrates the *Shabbos* in this way causes the Jewish people to be uprooted from the Land of Israel (the “private domain”) and deposited in the Diaspora (the “public domain”).

From this it is clear that the conscientious observance of the laws of *Shabbos* (in this area among others) reverses the above process of uprooting and transplanting, and contributes to the ultimate return of our people to their Land.

Sefer HaSichos 5749 [1989], Vol. I, p. 143

The Tefillin of Rabbeinu Tam

The *Zohar* teaches¹⁹⁶ that the *tefillin* whose component Biblical passages are arranged according to the order prescribed by Rabbeinu Tam,¹⁹⁷ are related to the coming of *Mashiach*. Accordingly, especially since it has become common to put them on, it would be worthwhile and advisable that this custom become universal.

From a talk of the Rebbe *Shlita* on Purim, 5736 [1976]

Teshuvah: Repentance

“Israel will ultimately repent, and will immediately be redeemed.”¹⁹⁸

195. *Tikkun* 48.

196. III, 258a.

197. See *Sefer HaMinhagim: The Book of Chabad-Lubavitch Customs* (in English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 1991), pp. 37-38.

198. *Rambam, Hilchos Teshuvah* 7:5.

The fact that the Redemption will come about specifically by virtue of repentance, is not so only in order that the sins that stand in its way should be erased. Rather, the very process of redemption itself requires the divine service of *teshuvah*. For in essence, *teshuvah* is an expression of a man's innermost spiritual core, the *yechidah* within his soul. (This is what gives *teshuvah* the power to correct any blemishes which the manifest faculties of the soul may have sustained.) And by means of the *avodah* of *teshuvah* one elicits the advent of the Redemption, which in essence is the manifestation of the Divine *yechidah* — the manifestation of that sublime level of Divine light which *transcends* the graduated self-screening process by which it normally allows itself to be minimally perceived in this lowly world.¹⁹⁹

Likkutei Sichos, Vol. IV, p. 1071

199. "Divine light...lowly world": In the original, *Elokus shelemaalah miseder hishtalshelus*.

Founders of Chassidism & Leaders of Chabad-Lubavitch

- Baal Shem Tov (בעל שם טוב; lit., “Master of the Good Name”): R. Yisrael ben R. Eliezer (1698-1760), founder of Chassidism.
- The Maggid of Mezritch (lit., “the preacher of Mezritch”): R. Dov Ber (d. 1772), disciple of the Baal Shem Tov, and mentor of the Alter Rebbe.
- The Alter Rebbe (דער אלטער רבי; lit., “the Old Rebbe”; Yid.): R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), also known as “the Rav” and as *Baal HaTanya*; founder of the *Chabad*-Lubavitch trend within the chassidic movement.
- The Mittlerer Rebbe (דער מיטעלער רבי; lit., “the Middle Rebbe”; Yid.): R. Dov Ber of Lubavitch (1773-1827), son and successor of the Alter Rebbe, and uncle and father-in-law of the *Tzemach Tzedek*.
- Tzemach Tzedek* (צמח צדק): R. Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1789-1866), the third Lubavitcher Rebbe; known by the title of his halachic responsa as “the *Tzemach Tzedek*”; nephew and son-in-law of the Mittlerer Rebbe, and father of the Rebbe Maharash.
- The Rebbe Maharash (מהר״ש; acronym for *Morainu* (“our teacher”) *HaRav* Shmuel): R. Shmuel Schneersohn of Lubavitch (1834-1882), the fourth Lubavitcher Rebbe; youngest son of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, and father of the Rebbe Rashab.
- The Rebbe Rashab (רש״יב; acronym for Rabbi Shalom Ber): R. Shalom Dov Ber Schneersohn of Lubavitch (1860-1920), the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe; second son of the Rebbe Maharash, and father of the Rebbe Rayatz.
- The Rebbe Rayatz (רי״ץ; acronym for Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak), also known (in Yiddish) as “*der frierdiker* Rebbe” (i.e., “the Previous Rebbe”): R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn (1880-1950), the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe; only son of the Rebbe Rashab, and father-in-law of the Rebbe שליט״א.
- The Rebbe *Shlita*: Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (b. 1902, שליט״א), the seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe; eldest son of the saintly Kabbalist, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, *rav* of Yekaterinoslav; fifth in direct paternal line from the *Tzemach Tzedek*; son-in-law of the Rebbe Rayatz.

Glossary

An asterisk indicates a cross reference within this Glossary.

All non-English entries are Hebrew unless otherwise indicated.

Acharonim (אחרונים): halachic authorities of the period since the publication of the **Shulchan Aruch* in the sixteenth century

Acharon shel Pesach (אחרון של פסח): the Last Day of Passover

aggados (אגדות; the singular Aram. form is *aggad'ta*): non-legal teachings on the non-literal level of interpretation known as **derush*

ahavas Yisrael (אהבת ישראל): loving a fellow Jew

alma de'isgalya (עלמא דאתגליא; lit., “the world of revelation”; Aram.): the spiritual realm in which Divinity is revealed

alma de'iskasya (עלמא דאתכסיה; lit., “the world of concealment”; Aram.): the spiritual realm in which Divinity is concealed

amoraim (אמוראים): post-Mishnaic authorities cited in the **Gemara*

Asiyah, the World of (עולם העשייה; lit., “the World of Action, or Making”): the lowest of the Four *Worlds

Atzilus, the World of (עולם האצילות; lit., “the World of Emanation”): the highest of the Four *Worlds

avodah (עבודה; lit., “work” or “service”): (in Torah usage) divine service, particularly through prayer and (in chassidic usage) through the labor of self-refinement

beis din (בית דין): rabbinical court

Beis HaMikdash (בית המקדש): the (First or Second) Temple in Jerusalem

beis midrash (בית מדרש): communal House of Study

beraisa (ברייתא; pl., *beraisos*; Aram.): tannaitic statement not included in the Mishnah

beirurim (בירורים): the divine service of sifting and refining the materiality of this world by enlightened use, and thereby elevating the divine sparks concealed within it

Beriah, the World of (עולם הבריאה; lit., “the World of Creation”): the second (in descending order) of the Four *Worlds

Binah (בינה; lit., “understanding”): the second of the Ten *Sefiros*, or divine emanations; the second stage of the intellectual process (cf. **Chabad*), developing the initial conception of **Chochmah*

Chabad (חב"ד): acronym formed by the initial letters of the Hebrew words **Chochmah*, **Binah*, and **Daas*, which are both (i) the first three of the Ten **Sefiros*, or divine emanations, and (ii) the corresponding stages that comprise the intellectual process (known as *seichel* or *Chabad*). *Chabad* also signifies: (a) the branch of the chassidic movement (see **Chassidus*) which is rooted in an intellectual approach to the service of G-d, and which was founded by R. Shneur Zalman of Liadi; a synonym for *Chabad* in this sense is **Lubavitch*, originally the name of the township where the movement flourished 1813-1915; (b) the philosophy of this school of Chassidism

challah (חלה): (a) a tithe of dough for the *Kohen*; (b) a braided loaf baked in honor of *Shabbos*

chassid (חסיד; pl., chassidim): adherent of the chassidic movement (see **Chassidus*)

Chassidism, see **Chassidus*

Chassidus (חסידות): (a) Chassidism, i.e., the movement within Orthodox Judaism founded in White Russia by R. Yisrael, the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760), and stressing: emotional involvement in prayer; service of G-d through the material universe; whole-hearted earnestness in divine service; the mystical in addition to the legalistic dimension of Judaism; the power of joy, and of music; the love to be shown to *every* Jew, unconditionally; and the mutual physical and moral responsibility of the members of the informal chassidic brotherhood, each chassid having cultivated a spiritual attachment to their saintly mentor, the **Rebbe*; (b) the philosophy and literature of this movement; see also **Chabad*

chayim (חיים): life

Chessed (חסד; lit., “lovingkindness”): the first of the seven Divine *middos*, or attributes, and of their corresponding mortal *middos*, or spiritual emotions

Chochmah (חכמה; lit., “wisdom”): the first of the Ten *Sefiros*, or divine emanations; the first stage of the intellectual process (cf. **Chabad*); reason in *potentia*

chutzpah (חוצפה): insolence

Daas (דעת; lit., “knowledge”): the third of the Ten *Sefiros*, or divine emanations; the third stage of the intellectual process (cf. **Chabad*), at which concepts, having proceeded from seminal intuition (cf. **Chochmah*) through meditative gestation (cf. **Binah*), now mature into their corresponding dispositions or attributes of character (*middos*)

daven, davenen (דאוווענען; Yid.): (a) praying, prayers; in **Chabad* usage also signifies (b) the **avodah* of praying at length, the reading of passages in the **Siddur* being interspersed with pauses for disciplined meditation from memory on related texts in **Chassidus*

derush (דרוש): the non-literal, homiletic interpretation of Scripture, as in the **Midrash* or Talmudic **aggados*

Ein Sof-light (אור אין סוף): the [infinite] creative and enlightening emanation that radiates from the Infinite One

Eretz Yisrael (ארץ ישראל): the Land of Israel

erev... (ערב; lit., “evening”): the eve of [a Sabbath or a festival]

etzem (עצם): an entity which is one integral essence

galus (גלות): exile; Diaspora

Gemara (גמרא; Aram.): see **Talmud*

geulah (גאולה): redemption

Gevurah (גבורה; lit., “power”; i.e., strict justice): the second of the seven Divine *middos*, or attributes, and of their corresponding mortal *middos*, or spiritual emotions

golah (גולה): exile; Diaspora

haftorah (הפטורה; lit., “final passage”): the passage from the Prophets read in the synagogue after the reading from the Five Books of Moses (cf. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 187)

Haggadah (הגדה; lit., “telling”, from *Shmos* 13:8): book from which the **Seder* service is conducted on **Pesach*

Hakkafos (הקפות; pl. of *Hakkafah*; lit., “circuits”): the sevenfold procession made with the Torah scrolls in the synagogue on *Simchas Torah, accompanied by singing and dancing (cf. *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 335)

Halachah (הלכה): (a) the body of Torah law; (b) a particular law

Hod (הוד; lit., “majesty”): the fifth of the seven Divine *middos*, or attributes, and of their corresponding mortal *middos*, or spiritual emotions

Hoshana Rabbah (הושענא רבה): the seventh day of the festival of Sukkos

ikvesa diMeshicha (עקבתא דמשיחא; also *ikvos Meshicha*; Aram.): the [generation that can hear the approaching] “footsteps of *Mashiach”

Kabbalah (קבלה; lit., “received tradition”): the body of classical Jewish mystical teachings, the central text of which is the *Zohar

kabbalas ol (קבלת עול; lit., “acceptance of the yoke”): self-subordination to the Will of G-d

kal vachomer (קל וחומר): a principle of Scriptural interpretation whereby a conclusion is drawn from a minor premise or more lenient condition to a major or more strict one, or vice versa

kashrus (כשרות): state of being *kosher

kelippos (קליפות; lit., “rind” or “shell”; pl. of *kelippah*): used figuratively (on a personal or universal level) to signify an outer covering which conceals the light within; hence, the unholy side of the universe

ketz (קץ; lit., “end”): a particularly auspicious time for *Mashiach to bring the exile to an end

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (קצור שלחן ערוך): part of the Code of Jewish Law as abbreviated by R. Shlomo Ganzfried for lay use

kochos makkifim (כוחות מקיפים): the transcendent faculties of the soul

kochos pnimiyim (כוחות פנימיים): the internalized, conscious faculties of the soul

Kohen (כהן; pl., *Kohanim*): “priests”, i.e., descendants of Aharon

Kohen Gadol (כהן גדול): high priest

kosher (כשר): ritually fit for use or valid (cf. **kashrus*)

- kushia* (קושיא; popularly pronounced *kashe*; Aram.): a query posed in the course of clarifying a seeming inconsistency, logical or textual, encountered in one's Torah study
- Lubavitch (lit., "town of love"; Rus.): townlet in White Russia which from 1813-1915 was the center of **Chabad* *Chassidism, and whose name has remained a synonym for it
- maamar* (מאמר; pl., *maamarim*; lit., "word" or "[written] article"): in **Chabad* circles means a formal chassidic discourse first delivered by a *Rebbe
- makkif* (מקיף): the transcendent dimension of the soul that is not consciously vested in the body
- Malchus* (מלכות; lit., "sovereignty"): the last of the seven Divine *middos*, or attributes, and of their corresponding mortal *middos*, or spiritual emotions
- Mashiach* (משיח; lit., "the anointed one"): Messiah
- matzah* (מצה; pl., *matzos*): unleavened bread eaten on *Pesach
- Melaveh Malkah* (מלוה מלכה): festive meal held after the close of *Shabbos* to escort the departing Sabbath Queen
- mezuzah* (מזוזה; pl., *mezuzos*): tiny parchment scroll affixed to doorpost, and containing the first two paragraphs of *Shema* (*Devarim* 6:-9 and 11:13-21)
- Midrash* (מדרש): one of the classical collections of the Sages' homiletical teachings on the Torah, on the non-literal level of **derush*
- minyan* (מינין; pl., *minyanim*): quorum of ten men required for communal prayer
- Mishkan* (משכן): the Tabernacle, i.e., the temporary Sanctuary in the wilderness; see *Shmos* 25ff.
- Mishnah* (משנה): the germinal statements of law elucidated by the **Gemara*, together with which they constitute the **Talmud*
- mitzvah* (מצוה; pl., *mitzvos*): a religious obligation; one of the 613 Commandments
- Mussaf* (מוסף): the additional prayer of **Shabbos* and other festive days

nasi (נשיא): (a) in Biblical times, the head of any one of the Twelve Tribes; (b) in later generations, the civil and/or spiritual head of the Jewish community at large

nazir (נזיר): one who sets himself apart for divine service by undertaking certain ascetic restrictions; cf. *Bamidbar* 6:1-21

Netzach (נצח; lit., “eternity; conquest; victory”): the fourth of the seven Divine *middos*, or attributes, and of their corresponding mortal *middos*, or spiritual emotions

nigleh (נגלה; lit., “revealed”): the revealed levels of the Torah (e.g., **Talmud* and **Halachah*); in contrast to **nistar*

niggun (נגון; pl., *niggunim*): melody, usually wordless, especially one figuring in divine service

nistar (נסתר; lit., “hidden”): the mystical levels of the Torah (e.g., **Kabbalah* and **Chassidus*); in contrast to **nigleh*

parshah (פרשה; pl., *parshiyos*): portion of the Torah read publicly each week

Parshas... (...פרשת...): the *parshah* of...

Pesach (פסח): Passover, a seven-day festival beginning on 15 Nissan, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt

Pirkei Avos (פרקי אבות; lit., “chapters of the fathers”): tractate in the **Mishnah* reprinted in most **Siddurim* and commonly known as “Ethics of the Fathers”

pnimiyus haTorah (פנימיות התורה): the innermost, mystical dimension of the Torah; cf. **nistar*

posek (פוסק; pl., *poskim*): decisors; rabbis whose legal decisions are authoritative

pshat (פשט): the plain meaning of (e.g.) a Scriptural passage

rasha (רשע; pl., *resha'im*): opposite of **tzaddik*

rav (רב; pl., *rabbanim*): rabbi, Torah teacher

Rebbe (common Yid. pronunciation of רבי, “my teacher [or master]”; pl., Rebbeim): **tzaddik* who serves as spiritual guide to a following of chassidim; see **Chassidus*

remez (רמז): the interpretation of Scripture at the level of allusive implication

resha'im (רשעים): see **rasha*

Rishon (ראשונים; lit., “one of the early ones”; pl., *Rishonim*): a Torah authority of the period between the *Geonim* (early Middle Ages) and the publication of the **Shulchan Aruch* (in the mid-sixteenth century)

Rosh Chodesh (ראש חודש; lit., “head of the month”; pl. *Rashei Chadashim*): New Moon, i.e., one or two semi-festive days at the beginning of each month

Rosh HaShanah (ראש השנה; lit., “head of the year”): the solemn New Year festival, falling on 1 and 2 Tishrei

Seder (סדר; lit., “order”; pl., *sedarim*): the order of service observed at home on the first night of **Pesach* (and outside of **Eretz Yisrael* on the first two nights)

Sefer Torah (ספר תורה; pl., *Sifrei* Torah): Torah scroll

Sefirah (ספירה; pl., *Sefiros*): divine attributes or emanations which manifest themselves in each of the Four Worlds, and are the source of the corresponding ten faculties (*kochos*) of the soul

seudas Mashiach (סעודת משיח): the Festive Meal of *Mashiach* held on the Last Day of **Pesach*

Seventeenth of Tammuz, the Fast of: fast commemorating five calamities, including the breaching of the walls of Jerusalem during the Roman siege

Shabbos (שבת; pl., *Shabbasos*): the Sabbath

Shabbos Parshas... (...שבת פרשת...): the **Shabbos* on which a [named] **parshah* is read

shaliach (שליח): emissary

Shavuot (שבועות; lit., “weeks”): festival commemorating the Giving of the Torah at Sinai; in **Eretz Yisrael* falling on 6 Sivan, and in the Diaspora on 6-7 Sivan

Shechinah (שכינה): the Divine Presence

shechitah (שחיטה): ritual slaughtering

Shehecheyanu (שהחיינו; lit., “Who has granted us life”): blessing pronounced on seasonal and other occasions for thanksgiving (*Siddur*, p. 87)

Shemitalah (שמיטה): the seven-yearly Sabbatical year (*Vayikra* 25:1-7)

Shemoneh Esreh (שמונה עשרה; lit., “eighteen [benedictions]”): prayer which is the solemn climax of each of the three daily services (*Siddur*, p. 50)

Shlita (שליטיא; acronym of the five Heb. wds., שיחי לאורך ימים טובים, אמן): abbreviation placed after a person’s name, expressing the wish “that he be preserved in life for many good days”

Shofar (שופר): ram’s horn sounded on *Rosh HaShanah

Shulchan Aruch (שלחן ערוך; lit., “a set table”): the standard Code of Jewish Law compiled by R. Yosef Caro in the mid-sixteenth century

sichah (שיחה; pl., *sichos*): an informal Torah talk delivered by a Rebbe (cf. **maamar*)

Siddur (סדור; lit., “order [of prayers]”): prayer book; page references in the present work are to the edition (with English translation) entitled *Siddur Tehillat HaShem* (Kehot, N.Y., 1979)

Simchas Torah (שמחת תורה; lit., “the Rejoicing of the Torah”): festival immediately following Sukkos, on which the public reading of the Torah is annually concluded and recommenced; in **Eretz Yisrael* coincides with Shemini Atzeres, and in the Diaspora falls on the following day

siyyum (סיום; lit., “conclusion”): celebration marking one’s completion of a Talmudic tractate

sod (סוד): the level of Torah interpretation that plumbs its Kabbalistic or mystical depths

taam (טעם): flavor; delight; reason

takkanos (תקנות; pl. of *takkanah*): halachic sublaws ordained by the Sages of the various generations

Talmud (תלמוד): the basic compendium of Jewish law, thought, and Biblical commentary, comprising **Mishnah* and **Gemara*; when unspecified refers to the *Talmud Bavli*, the edition developed in Babylonia, and edited at end of the fifth century C.E.; the *Talmud Yerushalmi* is the edition compiled in **Eretz Yisrael* at end of the fourth century C.E.

tamim (תמים): see **temimim*

Tanach (תנ"ך): acronym for Torah (i.e., the Five Books of Moses), *Nevi'im* (the Prophets), and *Kesuvim* (the Writings; i.e., the Hagiographa)

tanna (תנא; pl., *tannaim*): authority of the 1st-2nd. cents. quoted in the **Mishnah*

Tanya (תניא): the Alter Rebbe's basic exposition of **Chabad* **Chassidus*; "*Tanya*" is the initial word of the book, which is also called *Likkutei Amarim* ("Collected Discourses") and *Sefer shel Beinonim* ("The Book of the Intermediates")

tefach (טפח; pl., *tefachim*): a unit of length corresponding to the width of a fist

tefillin (תפלין): small black leather cubes containing parchment scrolls inscribed with *Shema Yisrael* and other Biblical passages, bound to the arm and forehead and worn by men at weekday morning prayers; "phylacteries"

Tehillim (תהלים; lit., "praises"): the Book of Psalms

temimim (תמימים; pl. of *tamim*): students past or present of one of the senior **yeshivos* of the **Lubavitch* branch of **Chassidism*, which are known as Tomchei Temimim

teshuvah (תשובה; lit., "return"): repentance

Tiferes (תפארת; lit., "glory"): the third of the seven Divine *middos*, or attributes, and of their corresponding mortal *middos*, or spiritual emotions

tikkun (תקון; pl., *tikkunim*): the process of refining, restituting and rehabilitating the materiality of this world

Tikkun Chatzos (תקון חצות; lit., "midnight service"): an optional devotional exercise lamenting the Destruction of the **Beis HaMikdash* and the subsequent exile of the Divine Presence on a cosmic level

tinokos shenishbbu (cf. תינוק שנשבה בין העכו"ם — "an infant taken into captivity among the heathen nations"; *Shabbos* 68b): "captive infants" (of any age) who are victims of environmental duress, such as educational deprivation

Tishah BeAv (תשעה באב; lit., "the Ninth of [the month of] Av"): fast commemorating the Destruction of both Temples

Tomchei Temimim (תומכי תמימים): (a) the **yeshivah* founded in *Lubavitch in 1897 by the Rebbe Rashab; (b) one of its subsequent offshoots

tzaddik (צדיק; pl., *tzaddikim*): (a) completely righteous individual; (b) *Rebbe

tzedakah (צדקה): charity

tzimtzum (צמצום): the self-limitation of the infinite and emanating Divine light by progressive degrees of contraction, condensation and concealment, and making possible the creation of finite and physical substances

Worlds, the Four (ד' עולמות): the main stages in the creative process resulting from **tzimtzum*; in descending order: **Atzilus*, **Beriah*, **Yetzirah* and **Asiyah*, often referred to by their acronym as אבי"ע

yechidah (יחידה): the innermost of the five levels of the soul

yeshivah (ישיבה): Torah academy for advanced students

Yesod (יסוד; lit., “foundation”): the sixth of the seven Divine *middos*, or attributes, and of their corresponding mortal *middos*, or spiritual emotions

Yetzirah, the World of (עולם היצירה; lit., “the World of Formation”): the third (in descending order) of the Four *Worlds

Yiddishkeit (יידישקייט or אידישקייט; lit., “Jewishness”; Yid.): the Torah way of life

Yom-Tov (יום-טוב): festival

Yom-Tov Sheni shel Galuyos (יום-טוב שני של גלות): one of the days which only in the Diaspora is appended to each of the three Pilgrim Festivals

Yud-Beis and *Yud-Gimmel* Tammuz (י"ב וי"ג תמוז; “the twelfth and thirteenth of [the month of] Tammuz”): chassidic festival marking the anniversary of the release of the Rebbe Rayatz from incarceration and exile in Stalinist Russia in 1927

Yud-Tes Kislev (י"ט כסלו; “the nineteenth of [the month of] Kislev”): chassidic festival celebrating the liberation of the Alter Rebbe from capital sentence and imprisonment in Petersburg (1798), after having been slandered to the czarist authorities by his opponents

Zohar (זוהר; lit., “radiance”): classical work embodying the mystical teachings of the **Kabbalah*