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**Sichos in English Classics 25**

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# **Living With The Redemption**

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**A New Perspective**

**On The Love Of Our Fellowman**



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# IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

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At the Shloshim of R' Yonah Avtzon A" H, Director of Sichos in English, a resolution was taken to reprint the original weekly Sichos in English publications.

To fulfill this, a weekly booklet including a translation of a *farbrengen* as it was first published will be distributed. Our intention is to reprint the entire set in the near future.

Following the Sichos we will include an addendum with pictures, notes, and insights into the process of its publication.

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## THE INTRO TO THE ORIGINAL ESSAY

### PRINTED IN 5751 (1991)

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For some weeks now, the Rebbe *Shlita* has been urging us to “live in the spirit of the Redemption.” At a recent *farbrengen*, he provided us with a practical directive as to how to do this in the sphere of interpersonal relations.

In this context, the Rebbe refers to a unique phrase in *Pirkei Avos*, “loving your fellow creatures.”\* This is a surprising choice of words, for the Holy Tongue is rich in words meaning “man” — for example, *adam*, *ish*, *gever*, *enosh*, each of them signifying a particular kind or level of mortal excellence. *Adam*, for example, suggests that a man has developed his intellectual stature; *ish*, by contrast, describes how well he has refined the emotive side of his spiritual personality; and so on.\*\* Why, then, does the *mishnah* urge each of us to “be one of the disciples of Aharon — loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow *creatures*, and bringing them near to the Torah”?\*\*\*

By way of reply, the Alter Rebbe explains that this usage of the term “creatures” in reference to human beings means that “even those who are far from G-d’s Torah and His service, for which reason they are classified simply as ‘creatures’ ” — indicating that the fact that they are G-d’s creations is their sole virtue — even those “one must attract with strong cords of love.”\*\*\*\*

Keeping in mind the teaching of the Alter Rebbe — that every Jew is obliged to love every other Jew, imperfect as he/we may be — will help us to carry out the request of the Rebbe *Shlita* in the address before us. For the Rebbe devoted a significant segment of the *farbrengen* of *Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Maasei* (2 Menachem Av, 5751) to a close examination of the above-quoted statement

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\* In the original (*Pirkei Avos* 1:12), אהוב את הבריות.

\*\* See, for example *Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, p. 226ff. (English translation; Kehot, N.Y., 1987).

\*\*\*\* *Tanya*, ch. 32.

from *Pirkei Avos*: “Be one of the disciples of Aharon — loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures, and bringing them near to the Torah.”

And in this manner, we can experience a foretaste of the ultimate love that will permeate our people in the Era of the Redemption.

May we experience this in the immediate future.

# LIVING WITH THE REDEMPTION

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## A New Perspective On The Love Of Our Fellowman

### RISING ABOVE SELF-CENTEREDNESS

Towards the conclusion of his description of the Era of the Redemption, the *Rambam* writes:<sup>1</sup>

In that Era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition.

The Jewish people, and indeed, the world at large, will join together in bonds of love and unity. An awareness of G-d's transcendental oneness will pervade all existence and this will produce a higher and more inclusive conception of unity than is possible at present.

In the present era, unity involves people of differing natures joining together. As the diverse limbs of the body function together as part of a single organism, so too, unity can be established between different individuals.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, such a bond does not raise a person above his individual identity entirely. On the contrary, his very awareness of self should be employed in his efforts to unite with others.

In contrast, the transcendent unity of the Era of the Redemption will raise every individual above the limited horizons of his personal identity, "For the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed."<sup>3</sup> The verse (which the *Rambam* quotes in this sense at the conclusion of *Hilchos Melachim*) employs this simile to express the following concept: A vast multitude of creatures inhabit the ocean.

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

2. See *Likkutei Torah, Parshas Nitzavim* 87a.

3. *Yeshayahu* 11:9.

Nevertheless, what we see is the ocean as a whole and not the particular entities which it contains. Similarly, in the Era of the Redemption, individual created beings will lose consciousness of their separate identities, for they will be suffused with an awe-inspiring knowledge of G-d.<sup>4</sup> The unity that will be established between individual entities will thus be of a higher and more consummate nature.

### HUMBLE OUTREACH

In microcosm, we should anticipate these concepts in our own present conduct. Since we are on the threshold of the Redemption, it is now possible to appreciate a foretaste of the spiritual awareness to be achieved in that era, and to apply it in our lives.

In this context, we may examine a teaching in *Pirkei Avos*:<sup>5</sup> “Be one of the students of Aharon — loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures, and bringing them near to the Torah.” Significantly, unlike many of the other teachings of *Pirkei Avos* that are merely suggestions, this teaching is phrased as a command.

Furthermore, this command is directed to every member of the Jewish people. The Torah states<sup>6</sup> that Aharon’s death was mourned by the entire Jewish people, both men and women, for everyone appreciated his patient endeavors to spread peace and harmony among them.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, every Jew is urged to emulate Aharon’s behavior and to reach out to others with love and care.

The wording of the above teaching, “Be *one of the students of Aharon*,” is a reminder that one must realize that there are other “students”, and one’s own favorite path in bringing about love and unity among the Jewish people is not the only possible approach.<sup>8</sup>

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4. See the essay entitled “The Ultimate Good of the Era of the Redemption,” published by Sichos In English, which elaborates upon these concepts.

5. 1:12.

6. *Bamidbar* 20:29. Note the contrast to Moshe Rabbeinu, as mentioned by *Rashi* in his commentary on *Devarim* 34:8.

7. On Aharon’s resourcefulness in this, see *Midrash Kallah Rabbasi*, sec. 3.

8. In fact, even the disciples of Rabbi Akiva had to learn this lesson. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XXII, p. 138ff.

## A FORETASTE OF REDEMPTION

As mentioned, this directive is particularly relevant at present, for we need to accustom ourselves to the spirit of the Redemption. Previously it had been explained<sup>9</sup> that an emphasis on *ahavas Yisrael* (“love for one’s fellow Jew”) was necessary as a *preparation* for the Era of Redemption. Since the exile came about because of unwarranted hatred,<sup>10</sup> we would nullify the *reason* for the exile by spreading love among our people. And this in turn would cause the exile itself to cease.

Since, however, to borrow an expression used by the Previous Rebbe,<sup>11</sup> we have already completed all the spiritual service necessary to bring *Mashiach*, to the point that “we have even polished the buttons,” we can assume that the reason for the exile has also been eradicated already. At present, therefore, the emphasis on *ahavas Yisrael* comes primarily as a *foretaste* of the Era of the Redemption.

And through living in the spirit of the Redemption, accustoming ourselves to this way of thinking, and more significantly, to this form of conduct, we will hasten the actual coming of the Redemption. May this take place in the immediate future.

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9. See, for example, *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. II, p. 598.

10. See *Yoma* 9b, *Gittin* 55b.

11. *Sichos Simchas Torah*, 5689.

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