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**Sichos in English Classics 33**

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**Celebrating the  
Tzemach Tzedek's  
Birthday**



**Erev Rosh Hashanah, 5744 (1983)**



**Sichos In English**  
788 Eastern Parkway  
Brooklyn, New York 11213  
[www.sie.org](http://www.sie.org)

## 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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# CELEBRATING THE TZEMACH TZEDEK'S BIRTHDAY

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**Erev Rosh Hashanah, 5744 (1983)**

1. The central theme of this gathering is unity. As the final day of the year 5743, it has a special connection with Rosh Hashanah 5743, since, as Sefer Yetzirah puts it, “the end is wedged in the beginning.” Since both extremes are covered, all days in between are also included and unified in this one day.

In addition, in Likkutei Torah, parshas Nitzavim, the Alter Rebbe speaks of the unity of all levels of the Jewish people; a powerful unity in which “one finds neither beginning nor end.” This unity, he writes, is part of the preparation for Rosh Hashanah. Today, the day before Rosh Hashanah, is the time this unity finds special emphasis.

This unity of the Jewish people finds added prominence when a large number of Jews gather together. At such a time, Jewish custom dictates that one begin with a blessing, such as in the verse (Tehillim 118:26), “Blessed is he (singular) who comes in the Name of the L-rd; we bless you (plural) from the House of the L-rd.”

The verse changes from singular to plural in order to point out the added dimension gained by the individual when he joins together with others. At first, he is only an individual. Later, when he joins with others, he gains.

The blessing has additional strength because of the presence of guests who have come to join us in this holy environment. To them, the phrase, “Blessed is he who *comes* in the Name of the L-rd,” applies literally.

We are also connected with all those who are listening through technical devices, although they might be far away. We have

mentioned on other occasions that there are certain times in which one must hear the actual sound directly, such as the reading of the Megillah and the sound of the Shofar. In such circumstances, listening through a telephone, etc. is invalid, since the sound which is heard is merely that of vibrating metal, which mimics the actual sound.

Sometimes, however, it is not necessary to hear the actual sound. Now, for example, the main thing is not hearing a voice — rather, it is that a person should think about the words he has heard, and take them seriously to the extent that he acts upon them. Since everyone hears these words simultaneously, we are all unified even though we are separated by great distances.

This unity helps intensify G-d's blessings, beginning with the writing and inscription for a good year, including the most important blessing, the arrival of Mashiach.

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2. Erev Rosh Hashanah marks the birthday of the Tzemach Tzedek, in the year 5549 (1789). On a person's birthday, the Talmud tells us, "his *mazal* rules," having its effect even down here in the physical world.

Furthermore, just as Rosh Hashanah marks the world's creation, so too a birthday serves as the person's personal Rosh Hashanah. Therefore, just as on Rosh Hashanah, a new revelation, never before revealed, descends to the world; an individual has a similar revelation on his birthday.

Since a *tzaddik's* life is one of Torah, the main theme of his life can be discovered by examining his Torah. Similarly, one must examine his actions as leader of the Jewish people. The Baal Shem Tov went so far as to explain that a *Nasi* must set aside his Torah study for the sake of communal good.

The Previous Rebbe once told a story along this line. The Tzemach Tzedek once complained to his son, the Rebbe Maharash, of the necessity of him having to devote such large chunks of time to helping people with their personal problems, granting personal interviews, etc.

The Rebbe Maharash responded by pointing to the bookcase which held the Tzemach Tzedek's writings in Chassidus and Nigleh, whereupon he asked, "If not for your devotion to the needs of others, would you have merited all of this?!" The Tzemach Tzedek agreed, acknowledging that his communal activities yielded a tremendous blessing in his Torah study.

Part of this blessing was his ability to unify all areas of the Torah, from practical Halachah to the deepest secrets of the Torah.

We also see the theme of unity in his explanation of the statement, "They make him [i.e. the soul, before it is born] swear to be a *tzaddik*." This quote has a special connection with today, since this statement, together with the rest of the first three chapters of Tanya, was taught by the Alter Rebbe on the day of the Tzemach Tzedek's birth.

In Hebrew, the word "to swear" (*mashbi'in*) can also be read "to fill up" or "to supply" (*masbi'in*). In this context, it refers to the special abilities the soul receives which enable it to fulfill its sacred function down here on earth.

Although not every Jew can become a *tzaddik* (as explained in Tanya), all can equally reach the level of perfection when it comes to action. So too, the pure, untainted faith of a Jew is present equally in all Jews, regardless of their level of knowledge, etc. Even should we be unable to see it openly or sense it, this pure faith is present nevertheless.

Aside from this aspect of unity in the Tzemach Tzedek's Torah, we also find this theme in his communal activities. The Tzemach Tzedek achieved unity among all groups of Jews, even those who were opponents in previous generations. This was true to the extent that he even enlisted members of the *maskilim* to help combat the Russian government's attempts to harm Judaism.

His efforts have cleared the path for us to follow — just as one takes the stones out of the road, so too we can remove the obstacle of our "hearts of stone" — in order to attain true *ahavas Yisrael* and *achdus Yisrael*.

\* \* \*

5. As the Previous Rebbe explained, each of the Rebbes had his unique aspect. The Alter Rebbe corresponded to *chochmah*, and the Mittlerer Rebbe to *binah*. The Tzemach Tzedek was *daas*, and just as *daas* includes all of the six middos, so too he had six sons.

Since today is the birthday of the third Rebbe, it is appropriate to complete the “three pillars” of Torah (which we have learned previously), prayer (as we shall sing a request for the rebuilding of the Temple), and charity (through the distribution of dollars).

It is also an opportune time to add on to the suggestion made on Shabbos Nitzavim-Vayeilech, i.e. to pledge sums of money to charity. It is proper that this pledge be made *bli neder* (without constituting a vow). This will apply to both extremes — that he not be bound to give the entire amount, and that he not be bound to give only that amount and not more.

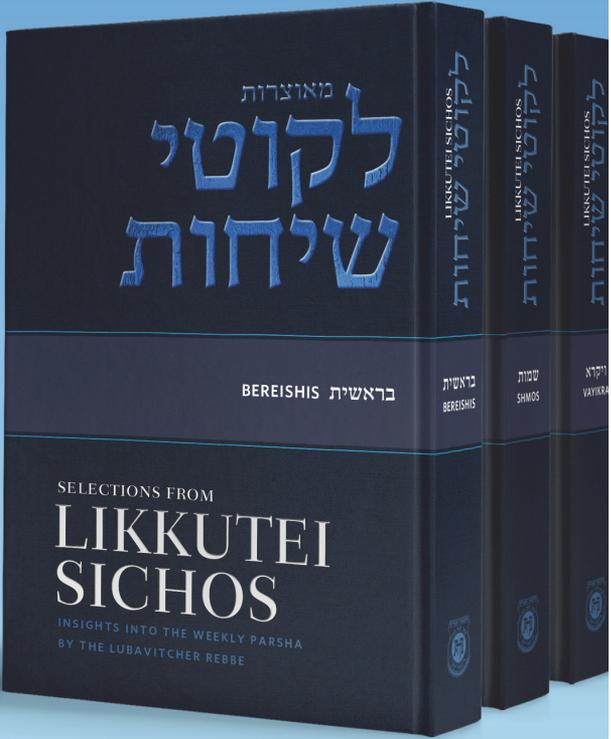


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