
Sichos in English Classics 39

**Stop the Excuses —
Get it Done!**



**Shabbos Parshas Toldos,
Mevarchim Chodesh Kislev,
29th Day of MarCheshvan, 5741 (1980)**



Sichos In English
788 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, New York 11213
www.sie.org

IN PLACE OF AN INTRODUCTION

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.

These weekly publications can be sponsored to honor a loved one, a Yortzeit or a simcha by contacting us at **sichosinenglish@gmail.com**. If you would like to receive this weekly publication to your email, then please use the above email address as well, or you can sign up to receive it on WhatsApp at 917-868-6509.

To partner with us, so that we can continue to publish original Sichos in English content as well as behind the scenes stories and documents, please make a contribution at: sie.org/partner

STOP THE EXCUSES — GET IT DONE!



**Shabbos Parshas Toldos, Mevarchim Chodesh Kislev,
29th Day of MarCheshvan, 5741 (1980)**

DON'T ALLOW PERFECTION TO GET IN THE WAY

4. The contents of the Parshah is summed up in its name — Toldos, meaning generations,¹ the concept of producing something new. Even though “the world was created in its entirety,” a Jew must nevertheless effect a change in the world, “generate” something new. During the days of creation, the world was created in its entirety, yet it was still lacking “a man to till the ground” (Bereishis 2:5). So too, the world needs men “to work it and keep it” (Bereishis 2:15), thereby perfecting it. For the entire world was created only for the sake of Yisroel and his perfection of the world through the Torah.

This service of bringing the world to perfection is demanded not only of those who are lacking in proper service, but also of those who have attained perfect service. Indeed, the responsibility to produce “generations” is greater for those who are at a greater level.² This concept clarifies our understanding of the order of the Parshiyos in the Torah, in which Parshas Chayei Sarah (“years of Sarah’s life”) precedes Parshas Toldos. Of the life of Sarah, the Torah tells us that all her years were equal in goodness. A person

-
1. There are two Parshahs in the Torah which begin with the word ‘Toldos’ — “these are the generations of Noach” and “these are the generations of Yitzchok,” and thus could have been called by that name. The reason why it was our Parshah that was chosen to be called Toldos (and not Yitzchok) and not the other (which is called Noach), is because those names best sum up their respective contents. The stress in our Parshah is on “generations” (i.e. Ya’akov and Esav), whereas the stress in Parshas Noach is laid on Noach himself.
 2. This is comparable with the adage of our sages that “he who has one hundred (coins) desires (only) two hundred; (but,) he who has two hundred desires four hundred.” That is, the more a person has, the more he wants.

who has conducted his life similarly to the “years of Sarah’s life” — in the same exemplary manner, could suppose that he has nothing more to do, he has reached the height of perfection. Therefore the following Parshah is Toldos, to teach such a person, that despite, and indeed *because* of, his previous exemplary conduct, he must now continue to work in the world, in order to produce “generations.”

DUAL SERVICE

5. A further point to consider is that the Torah uses the word “generations” — a plural form. Rashi explains that this refers to “Ya’akov and Esav who are mentioned in the Parshah.” Ya’akov is the service of Tzaddikim; Esav is associated with the service of “The L-rd has made everything for His sake; also the wicked unto the day of evil” (Mishlei 16:4), meaning “that the wicked man shall repent of his evil and turn his evil into day and light above” (Tanya Ch. 27). These two types of service are indicated in the verse “and make me delicacies such as I love,” said by Yitzchok to Esav. “Delicacies” is plural, alluding to, in material foods, two kinds of relishes. One of “sweet luscious foods, and the other of tart or sour articles of food, which have been well spiced and garnished so that they are made into delicacies to quicken the soul” (Tanya Ch. 27). Spiritually, these refer to two types of service: one in good matters — “do good,” and the other in transforming the wicked into day and light — “depart from evil.”

These two types manifest themselves into two different forms of service to the Creator. Ya’akov is “a simple man, dwelling in tents” (Yeshivos), Esav is “a cunning hunter, a man of the field” — the service of going out into the world (“field”), and capturing it for G-d — i.e. the service of “in all your ways you shall know Him” and “all your deeds shall be for the sake of heaven.” A person must combine within himself *both* types of service (“generations” — plural). One must be a “dweller intents,” sitting and learning Torah, intensively and thoroughly, without any excuses — a “simple” man. Afterwards he must go out into the “field,” into the world, and there “hunt” the

quarry of worldly matters, making from them “relishes” for G-d. Only then does he receive the blessings of Yitzchok.

HOLY FRAUDULENCE: SPEAK IN ENGLISH!

To be successful in capturing and transforming the world, one must be a “cunning hunter;” to be wise in the ways of the world, adopting its customs, donning its “clothing.” In short, when speaking to a fellow Jew about Yiddishkeit, do not speak in the holy tongue, Hebrew, if he does not understand it. Speak in the language he understands, with, obviously, the proper contents to influence him to good. One cannot wait for people to come to him,³ one must go forth into the world, seek out the “sparks” there, and extricate and elevate them. A Jew’s soul has descended from the loftiest heights to the lowest depths precisely in order to transform those depths into holiness.

This is the concept of Yonah. The Maftir read on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, is not called “Maftir Teshuvah” (repentance), but “Maftir Yonah,” teaching us a profound lesson. Yonah is derived from the word ‘Onoah’ — deceit, fraud. A person’s soul descends from the loftiest heights and, in a Jew’s body, is introduced to animalistic functions — eating, drinking etc. These things are totally alien to the soul (as it was before entering the world), and thus constitute a deception, a fraud. It is precisely these aspects of eating, drinking, etc., which a person must transform into G-dliness. The only way to be successful in such work is through such deception — i.e. adopting the “deceptions” of the world — its customs, ways, etc. Again in plain language, this means that when attempting to influence a fellow Jew, one does not speak in the lofty Hebrew tongue, but in the language the fellow Jew understands — be it English, French, or whatever.

This in no way contradicts the first mode of service, of Torah and Mitzvos — “a simple man, dwelling in tents.” One can and must perform both types of service. When serving G-d through the mode

3. King Shlomo did not need to go forth to seek the sparks of holiness; they were brought to him. But that was a type of service applicable only in special times, whereas today, we must actively pursue them.

of “dwelling in tents,” Torah and Mitzvos, one must indeed be a “simple man.” But when he goes out into the world, into the “field,” then he must adopt the customs of the world as the mode of “deception,” in order to be able to transform it. This was the mode of service of Ya’akov, who, when coming to Lavan, told Rochel that “if he (Lavan) comes to deceive, then I too am his brother in deceit.” Notwithstanding his previous time spent immersed in complete holiness, the only way to perform service in the outside world was to don the clothing of the world.

“BUT I’M SCARED OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD!”

This is a directive for all. The service of “Ya’akov, a simple man dwelling in tents” — is not alone sufficient. One must also perform the service of “Esav, a cunning hunter, a man of the field;” to go out into the world, to those places which are in reality a fraud, and there adopt its ways — “if he comes to deceive, then I too am his brother in deceit” — and thus be able to elevate that place. There are many excuses put forward to avoid this type of service. The claim is made that one does not wish to associate in any way with a person who is not a G-d-fearing, completely trustworthy person.⁴ But then, nothing will ever be done. For if the person is G-d-fearing, then there is nothing to influence him about — he already fulfills Torah and Mitzvos; and if he isn’t — then he is not trustworthy and one will have nothing to do with him!

But what if it isn’t the other person’s fault? If he doesn’t know any better? True, comes the retort, but I don’t wish to have anything to do with him, people might suppose that I consider him trustworthy! But what if his sincere efforts at influencing this lost Jew will help him to reform? Again the retort: it may all be true, but I wish to live entirely in Torah and Mitzvos and have nothing to do with the outside world.

The answer to such claims comes from this week’s Parshah ‘Toldos’ — a plural form. It is not enough to alone keep Torah and

4. The Talmud Yoma 9b relates Reish Lakish would speak only with completely trustworthy people. Therefore people would deposit their money, without any witnesses or contracts, with people to whom Reish Lakish was seen talking.

Mitzvos; one must also transform the world into holiness. In the war with Amalek, Moshe commanded Yehoshua “Go out, fight with Amalek — go out from the cloud and do battle” (Shemos 17:9, Rashi). One must actually go out from his lofty height, go into the world, search for Amalek, and do battle — elevate the sparks of holiness found therein. This service is demanded of everyone, individually, just as the Ten Commandments were said to every individual personally.

A note of warning: Rashi, in his comment of Toldos, says “Ya’akov and Esav *who are mentioned in the Parshah.*” When in the world one’s conduct in one’s service must be as “mentioned in the Torah” — according to the dictates of the Torah and he who sent him on his mission, the Previous Rebbe. When one conducts oneself so, performing the service of both Ya’akov and Esav according to the dictates of Torah, then one merits all the blessings of our father Yitzchok.

From Shabbos Mevorchim Kislev, Shabbos Parshas Toldos, and Chanukah, we take the strength to carry out our proper service. With joy we involve ourselves in all the Mitzvah campaigns, until the greatest campaign of them all, the redemption. With all the blessings of Yitzchok we go forth to receive our righteous Moshiach, when “kingship will be the L-rd’s.”

*

WHERE ARE THE BOOKLETS?

7. Chanukah has as its etymological root the word “Chinuch” — Jewish education. There is a custom that Jewish children should give Tzedakah during Chanukah, and although this custom has lapsed, it should now be renewed and strengthened.

The above is part of the on-going concept of Tzivos Hashem — the Army of G-d. Parents have a tremendous responsibility to educate their children as to their membership in Tzivos Hashem. Children have a tremendous merit (and responsibility) to be a member in Tzivos Hashem, their appropriate conduct helping to redeem themselves, their parents, and all Jews from exile.

In Tishrei we directed that the booklets containing the twelve verses should be reprinted on special paper, with space for the children to inscribe the names of those whom they have succeeded in recruiting for Tzivos Hashem to learn the twelve verses. We did not then appoint anyone to head this project and, apparently because of that, nobody has done anything about it! Five weeks have passed, and not one booklet has been published. Who suffers? — the children! For five weeks children have had no booklets as an incentive to find other children to recruit into Tzivos Hashem.

When I asked what a particular communal worker was doing about it, I was answered that he had been too busy with other projects and had no time. Of course. First he must eat and drink, then get plenty of sleep so he is well rested. Then, because he *is* after all a communal worker, he must work on his own projects, so that the honor he receives from others will be well earned! Simultaneously he must make certain that no one else does the work he is meant to do, to ensure, that he, and he alone, receives all the plaudits.

After all this, if there is time, he then puts himself out — to find someone else to do all the necessary work in printing the booklet! But should something inconvenient occur, such as it starts to rain, then he beats a quick retreat to his house to rest up!

IS IT ALL ABOUT HONOR?

When it is a matter of printing his own things, something that he receives honor from, then you can be sure that he will leave no stone unturned to see it through. The proper paper is found, money is found, everything becomes available; it is even published in the newspapers replete with his picture. But when it comes to printing the booklet containing the twelve verses in a five week period of time — he has no time! Why should the children suffer because one seeks honor and therefore has no time for them?

As in all other matters, I am held responsible. Why did I not appoint one individual to be in charge, instead of leaving it up to everyone? Know, however, that a person's livelihood and all other necessities, and one's World to Come, are dependent on this thing.

And it is not my business to apportion shares in the World to Come. Therefore I did not appoint any particular individual, for it is *everyone's* business. And yet five and a half weeks have passed by, and nothing has been done.

Children have been stopped for that amount of time from learning the twelve verses. This is not my personal matter. The twelve verses are from G-d, and He wants children to learn them!

The worst thing of all is that no one has protested about this situation. Should someone stick a needle into a person's little toe, you can be sure that he would raise a howl of protest. Yet about the twelve verses no one has even protested, showing that it matters less to them than even a pinprick.

EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES

This is not the first time. After we had spoken about establishing a Kollel especially for older people, we thought there would be a great flurry of activity, setting up Kollels wherever possible. What eventuated? I received letters enquiring whom should be appointed the head of the effort to establish Kollels. I did not answer, for, as mentioned, it is not my business to apportion shares in this or the other world.

I received other letters informing me that many of the old people were senile [and therefore what is the use of setting up a Kollel for them]. A true incident answers this excuse. A young fellow went to an old age home, where he met an old man, about whom the doctors had long given up hope of raising from the stupor into which he had sunk. This young man approached him with a Lulav and Esrog, and immediately, without a word having been spoken to him, the old man snapped out of his lethargy, immediately cognizant of his entire surroundings. The sight of the Lulav and Esrog had reminded him of his youth, and he thereupon made all the blessings without any help whatsoever. The doctors were stupefied by the amazing recovery. This episode demonstrates the influence and effect that Yiddishkeit can have on elderly people. And yet, the proper efforts to set up Kollel Tiferes Zekanim (for men) and Tiferes Chochmas Noshim (for women), are still lacking.

If such is the effect on senile elderly people, how much more so is it important to ensure that healthy Jewish children receive the proper Jewish education. Such education includes providing them with the booklets containing the twelve Torah verses, enabling them to learn it themselves, and also influence others to enroll in Tzivos Hashem. Yet five weeks have gone by, nothing has been done, and children have not learned the verses. Time for everything else can be found, except for this. There are no valid excuses as to quibbling over who should head the effort, and who should be the main worker. *Let everyone do it!* If this will cause confusion, then let there be confusion; as long as the children get the booklets! It would be better to have too many booklets, then none at all.

I asked that special paper be used in the booklets. So of course, once again, it is my fault, for now there is the problem of acquiring special paper. For five whole weeks, special paper could not be found in New York!? As before, rest assured that had it affected people's personal honor, they would have quickly found the right paper. If the children would have been older, they would have stormed the offices, taken away the printing-presses, and printed the booklets themselves.

THERE IS NO COPYRIGHT ON JUDAISM

I could have chosen an individual, grabbed him by the fore-lock or the beard, and commanded him to be the one in charge of the entire operation. But then everyone else would have been frightened off, thinking that only that individual is allowed to be involved in printing the booklets and no others.

Know then, that no one has a copyright on spreading Judaism, Torah and Mitzvos; and no single individual has inherited the right of specifically being the head of the organization, with only himself being involved. No one has been appointed the head of world Jewry! These are matters which involve each and every Jew. Everyone who so wishes, wherever he may be, can spread Judaism.

It used to be the custom that the sexton of the synagogue had, among his other duties, the responsibility of waking the members for morning prayers. He would rap on the shutters of their houses

with his sturdy staff, saying: “Wake up Jews to the service of the Creator.” In our situation, I do not wish to appoint anyone to be the sexton (to rouse people to involve themselves in printing the booklets); hopefully, it will not be necessary.

If the only way to make someone do something is to appoint him the overall chief of Tzivos Hashem, second only to G-d, the Commander-in-Chief, then so be it. As long as it gets results.

The five and a half weeks of inactivity have delayed Moshiach’s coming by that much time. For had the booklets been printed five and a half weeks ago, Moshiach’s coming would be five and a half weeks earlier! Children should band together, make a coup, overthrow their “generals,” and do themselves what is necessary!

I am not talking in such a fashion because I am angry at anyone, or because I wish to annoy anyone — but only to ensure that the job is carried out through any means whatsoever — be they natural or miraculous. May it be G-d’s will that my words will help, not only in this matter, but in all things we talk about — be it in the past, present, or future. May our actions from now on light up the exile, with the “superiority of light that comes from darkness,” that darkness resulting from the five and a half weeks of delay and foolishness. Then we will receive our righteous Moshiach quickly in our time.



Dedicated to the Lubavitcher Rebbe



& In Memory of

Naftali Hertz ben Tzvi Hirsh א"י Kaiser

On the occasion of his Yartzeit, 2nd Day of Kislev

&

Reuven ben Gedalyahu א"י Kimball

On the occasion of his Yartzeit, 7th Day of Kislev

&

Shimon ben Moshe א"י Yellin

On the occasion of his Yartzeit, 13th Day of Kislev

&

Dovid ben Nachman א"י Yellin

On the occasion of his Yartzeit, 13th Day of Kislev

&

Chaska Yellin & children א"י

On the occasion of his Yartzeit, 28th Day of Kislev



If you would like to receive this weekly publication sent via email, or to sponsor a publication please contact us at: sichosinenglish@gmail.com.

or you can sign up to receive it on WhatsApp at 917-868-6509