
Sichos in English Classics 42

**Linking
Heaven And Earth**



**Communications
in the Service of Their Creator**



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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.

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LINKING HEAVEN AND EARTH

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Communications in the Service of Their Creator

Admittedly, the six participating audiences were strikingly different.

As seen on the mammoth screen in Paris, the Melbourne audience must have appeared happy, but in a restrained, British kind of way; at the same time the Melbourne audience must have been struck by the unmistakable fervor that electrified the vocal thousands jostling at the foot of Eiffel Tower.

The participants in Hong Kong were visibly (and justifiably) proud of the number of adults and children from their tiny Jewish community who had assembled in a hotel room for this historic occasion in the wee hours of the night; the ten thousand Jewish Muscovites who packed the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin were visibly (and justifiably) exultant at the fact that they were witnessing such a happening, in many cases for the first time ever, in such an undreamed-of venue.

The outdoor crowd who became cheerfully drenched at the Kotel in Jerusalem sensed their unique privilege of standing only a few meters from the exact spot where the Chanukah miracle took place; the thousands of exuberant participants in the indoor Children's Rally at "770" (as their parents watched on outdoor screens) were privileged to be able to personally observe the Rebbe Shlita as he addressed them, and as he joined them in their recitation of twelve quotations from the Chumash, the Talmud and the Tanya.

Yet, as different and as separate as these six far-flung audiences were, they were all warmed by a world-embracing

sense of togetherness. They all felt as if they were crowding together in the same cozy little shtibl, all joining together in the mitzvah of kindling this year's first Chanukah light. This feeling was even shared by the additional millions of viewers on cable and public television stations around the world.

And indeed, one of the recurrent themes in the Rebbe's address on this unforgettable occasion, as summarized in these pages, was the harnessing of sophisticated communications technology to bring the world a feeling of unity and brotherliness.

ONE INDIVIDUAL CAN ILLUMINATE THE ENTIRE WORLD

In the darkness of night, a little child kindled a light that was seen throughout the world.

This sight, which we have just witnessed in six countries across the globe by satellite communication, reflects a fundamental spiritual truth. Every Jew — man, woman, or child — has the power to illuminate the entire world. He can generate G-dly light that can brighten even those parts of our world where darkness persists.

What is the source for this potential? In the very first verse of Scripture, the Torah tells us, “In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth.”¹ Our Sages² note that the Hebrew word translated as “in the beginning,” *Bereishis* (בראשית) can be divided into two Hebrew words, namely, *beis reishis* (ב' ראשית), which mean “two firsts.” These are the Torah and the Jewish people, each of which is described in a Scriptural verse as a “first.”³

G-d created the world for the sake of these two “firsts”. This means that all existence was brought into being so that a Jew could conduct his life according to the guidelines of the Torah. When a

* It can safely be said that never since Moses spoke at Mount Sinai have so many Jews joined together to listen to Torah teachings.

1. *Bereishis* 1:1.

2. *Bereishis Rabbah* 1:6 and *Vayikra Rabbah* 36:4, cited at the beginning of *Rashi's* commentary to the Torah.

3. See *Mishlei* 8:22 and *Yirmeyahu* 2:3.

Jew realizes this potential and lives his life in harmony with the Torah, he adds light to the entire world.⁴ To cite an example from our everyday lives: Before drinking water, a Jew recites a blessing in which he proclaims that “everything came into being through G-d’s word.” When this is done by even a little child, he reveals that not only the water he is drinking, but everything that exists, was created by G-d.

PHYSICAL LIGHT AND SPIRITUAL LIGHT

What is the nature of this light? There is a verse that says, “A *mitzvah* (a G-d-given commandment) is a lamp, and Torah is light.”⁵ I.e., the Torah and its commandments are the means which G-d has granted us to illuminate the world and reveal this spiritual truth. More particularly, there are certain *mitzvos* that give physical expression to this concept; e.g., lighting candles in honor of the approaching *Shabbos* (Sabbath) before sunset every Friday, and kindling the candles of the Chanukah festival which begins this evening. The visible light which they diffuse reflects how every *mitzvah* a Jew performs increases the G-dly light within the world.

In particular, the *mitzvah* of kindling Chanukah lights stands out for the following reasons:

a) The Chanukah candles commemorate the miraculous victory of the virtually unarmed Jews over the Greek occupation forces during the period of the Second Temple.⁶ This victory revealed how

4. Indeed, G-d created the world with the intent that it be illuminated with G-dly light. He communicated this purpose in His very first creative utterance, “Let there be light” (*Bereishis* 1:3). When Jews generate such light, G-d in turn increases His blessings, both material and spiritual, to the world at large.

5. *Mishlei* 6:23.

6. This followed the Seleucid invasion of the Holy Land in the second century B.C.E., and with it a cultural invasion — a wave of pagan and secularist Hellenization, and the suppression of religious freedom.

In the words of Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Megillah VeChanukah* 3:1): “In [the era of] the Second Temple, the Greek kingdom issued decrees against the Jewish people, [attempting to] nullify their faith, and not allowing them to observe the Torah and its commandments. They took liberties with their property and their daughters. Moreover, they entered the Sanctuary, wrought havoc within, and defiled sanctified objects.

“The Jews suffered exceedingly at their hands, for they oppressed them severely — until the G-d of our ancestors had mercy upon them, delivered them from their hands

the spiritual power of Torah study and the observance of its precepts could overcome the armed opposition of the most powerful nation in the world.

b) Each night of Chanukah, we light an additional candle. Just as a person, and especially a child, grows from day to day, this additional candle reflects how we must continually *increase* the light we generate through our Torah practice.⁷

c) The Chanukah lights are kindled “at the *outside* of the entrance of one’s home.”⁸ In this way an individual illuminates not only his own home, but the public domain as well. The lamp kindled by a Jew thus shines so far outward that it can be perceived by all passers-by, bringing light — kindness and righteousness — into the lives of gentiles as well as Jews.

JOINING HEAVEN AND EARTH

The above is enhanced by the custom that has been established over the last three years — publicizing the Chanukah miracle by linking up candle-lighting ceremonies throughout the world via interactive satellite communication. As we have witnessed, these candle-lighting ceremonies testify that a Jew’s kindling of the “lamp of a *mitzvah* and the light of Torah” illuminates the entire world, beaming light to its remotest corners.

Moreover, satellite communication reflects the connection between the heavens and the earth. An activity performed in one part of the earth produces an effect in the heavens, and this in turn brings about further change in another part of the world.

COMMUNICATIONS IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR CREATOR

In this manner, not only does this satellite link communicate spiritual truth: it expresses it itself. For satellite communication, like

and saved them. The sons of the Hasmoneans, the High Priests, overcame them, slew them, and saved the Jews from their domination. They appointed a king from among the priests, and the monarchy returned to Israel for over two hundred years, until the Destruction of the Second Temple.”

7. Moreover, the fact that we add a new candle every night for an entire week, a full cycle of time, generates the potential for such increases to continue spontaneously in the future.
8. *Shabbos 21a.*

every other creation brought into being by G-d, exists for a purpose. As our Sages declare,⁹ “Whatever the Holy One, blessed be He, created in His world, He created solely for His glory.” In this instance, G-d revealed the wisdom for this and other technological advances that unite different parts of the world so that we could better appreciate the oneness that pervades all existence.

This oneness is reflected in the Jewish people, who are “scattered and dispersed among the nations,” yet remain “one nation.”¹⁰ For through their connection to the “one Torah,”¹¹ a bond is forged between them and the “one G-d.”¹²

SHARING IN A TANGIBLE WAY

The oneness achieved through satellite communication allows one person to share with another not only in the realm of thought, but also in a tangible way. For example, charitable funds can be transferred from one account to another regardless of the geographic distance, and in this manner, a needy person can be promptly given the wherewithal to purchase his physical necessities.

To emphasize the importance of offering such assistance, this gathering will conclude with the distribution of money for each one of you to give away to a worthwhile charitable cause. (In addition, you will each be given a coin as Chanukah *gelt*, the gift of pocket money which children customarily receive at this season.) Charitable gifts such as you will be giving will no doubt strengthen the bonds of oneness that unite our people.

TIPPING THE WORLD’S BALANCE

Our Sages teach¹³ that charity “brings the Redemption near.” Indeed, not only charity, but every activity associated with the Torah and its precepts has the potential to bring about the Redemption. As Maimonides writes:¹⁴ “A person should always regard himself... and

9. *Avos* 6:11.

10. *Esther* 3:8.

11. *Shmos* 12:49.

12. *Devarim* 6:4.

13. *Bava Basra* 10a; see *Tanya*, ch. 37.

14. *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4.

the entire world as equally balanced,... and with one *mitzvah* he can tip the balance... and bring deliverance and salvation.”

This is particularly true at the present time, when all that is necessary is for us to open our eyes and see that the Redemption is here. This will be hastened by our commemoration of the Chanukah miracle. For our celebration of the Hasmoneans’ rededication of the *Beis HaMikdash*, the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, speeds the coming of *Mashiach* (Messiah), and then, at the time of the Ultimate Redemption, we will dedicate the Third — and eternal — *Beis HaMikdash*.

May this take place in the immediate future.



נדפס לזכות הרוצה בעילום שמו



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