
Sichos in English Classics 44

**In Those Days — In Our
Times: Didan Notzach**

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5th Day of Teves, 5747



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.

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IN THOSE DAYS — IN OUR TIMES: DIDAN NOTZACH

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5th Day of Teves, 5747

The Alter Rebbe learned from his incarceration that after the liberation he had to increase and expand his efforts to teach Chassidus. We, too, must learn to advance, and transcend all restrictions and limitations.

On the 5th of Teves 5747, the verdict in the case of the Previous Rebbe's library was handed down and great rejoicing enveloped Chassidim all over the world.

After Minchah on that day the Rebbe Shlita, spoke about the lesson we must learn from the suffering and the pain of undesirable phenomena.

We must increase those areas which were under attack, and we must expand our work of spreading Yiddishkeit and Torah and the wellsprings of Chassidus.

LEARN TORAH, LIVE WITH TORAH

The Previous Rebbe transmitted a teaching of the Alter Rebbe to us, that “*We must live with the times.*” This was expounded by the Mittlerer Rebbe, who as the mentor of the younger Chassidim of the Alter Rebbe, explained that in this aphorism the Alter Rebbe was referring to the Torah portion of the week and the study section of that specific day of the week. The daily Torah portion should be learned in a way that we can live with its message.

Being Tuesday, today's study portion of Vayigash will have the added quality of the double blessing “*Ki-Tov*” (that it was good), which the Gemara tells us indicates “good to heaven and good to man.” This of course does not mean that part of the day shall be devoted to “heaven” and another part to “man,” rather, that every moment, and each action, speech and thought of the day — should have both aspects — goodness for heaven and goodness for man.

YOSEF'S ODYSSEY — A MISSION FROM G-D

In the first verse of today's portion Yosef assured his brothers:

Now it is not you who sent me here but G-d (*Elokim*).
(Bereishis 45:8)

Yosef wanted them to know that although his descent to Egypt had caused him much suffering, he nevertheless realized that his being in Egypt was a mission of G-d. From this explanation we learn that when a Jew is in an unfavorable situation, even after extricating himself from that painful condition, he must explain to others, and certainly to himself, that the troublesome state was not a mere coincidence, and most importantly, it was not something caused by man! He should also not carry with him the bad memories of the suffering he endured.

The story of Yosef took place before Matan Torah (the giving of Torah). How much more so, after the Torah was given to the Jewish people, when we realize how the Jewish people and Torah are one entity, we certainly must realize that nothing happens by accident:

Yisrael, (the Jewish People) Torah and the Holy One,
Blessed be He, are one. (Zohar III, 73a)

Now, if in the story of Yosef he relates that: "It is not you who sent me here but G-d (*Elokim*)," then, we, too, must realize now, that when a Jew finds himself in any condition — good or bad — he must recognize that he has been given a mission to fulfill — and not one delineated by man, but by G-d.

The mission and the conditions may appear in a benevolent way or in a malevolent form. Although sometimes the situation may be such that it appears to be clothed in the framework of a "judgment," as we see in the story of Yosef where Scripture used the term "*Elokim*," which alludes to the aspect of judgment, nevertheless, the result was all for the good. We garner from this that **every Jew** must realize his/her mission and *must* increase his/her actions in the world with clear knowledge, as G-d's *Shaliach* — emissary — in the world.

BUT WHY SUFFERING?

You may wonder that this same development could have been effected by G-d in a revealed and a merciful way (with the name

“*Havayah*” which alludes to mercy)? However, here it had to go through the garment of *Elokim* — severity! Because it stems from an aspect that is sequestered, it adds another level of descent, and ultimately it will attain a greater degree of elevation.

Every Jew must know, that no matter where he is and no matter what condition he is in, he has a *Shlichus* — a mission — which may be clothed in a situation that hides and conceals. Nevertheless, it is still clear that it must come into action. Thus, the Torah tells us that every Jew is a Shaliach of G-d (as He stands beyond revelation in the state of concealment and withdrawal, symbolized by the name *Elokim*), and the agent must reveal G-dliness and cause the *Shechinah* to find a resting place by fulfilling his mission.

EVERY STEP IS GUIDED

The previous Rebbe explained the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov, on the verse: “Man’s footsteps are guided by G-d” (Tehillim 37:23). That no matter where a person goes, he must cause the Name of G-d to be revealed in the world. As the Torah tells us:

And go to the site that G-d will choose to give a habitation to His Name. (Devarim 26:2)

Wherever you go it is by Divine Providence and you must make there a habitation for G-d’s Name, as in the Tabernacle and Holy Temple.

You must start by making your own home a place for the *Shechinah* to dwell, and then go out to the outside of your doorways, as we just learned from the holiday of Chanukah.

Today is still blessed from the past Shabbos which was Chanukah. From Chanukah we learn that we must propagate G-dliness outside our doors, and that we must increase our good efforts from day to day. Also, the lights of Chanukah must illuminate the street, “Until the feet of the Tarmodoians have ceased” (Shabbos 21b).

CONVERT EVIL, INCREASE HOLINESS

Chassidus explains the term “Tarmodoians” as the forces which oppose G-dliness. When they cease to exist they are converted and uplifted, causing an increase in G-dliness.

All of the aspects of Chanukah are related to oil, which symbolically alludes to the esoteric teachings of Torah — but just as oil spreads through and permeates an object, so, too, the esoteric teachings of Torah descends, infuses and spreads to the *outside* — by spreading the inner teachings of Chassidus in this way all aspects increase.

In dealing with our responsibility to increase our efforts, how do we know where the special emphasis must be placed? For this we have the advice: “From my enemies I am wiser” (Tehillim 119:98).

In the story of the liberation of the Alter Rebbe from Czarist incarceration we were told that based on the charges brought against him, he later learned where, and in what areas, it was necessary to increase his efforts.

Having grasped this principle he was then able to receive the directive which he heard from the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid, while still in prison, that after being released he would have to work harder at spreading the philosophical teachings of the esoteric knowledge of Chassidus, in a manner of continual increases, much more than before.

In recent years great and wonderful things in the area of spreading Yiddishkeit have been accomplished, especially since the Previous Rebbe came to this country. The spreading of the wellsprings of Yiddishkeit and Chassidus is so widespread that even the *aleph-bais* of Yiddishkeit has become permeated and united with the source of living waters of G-dliness. If so, the question is raised, why was it necessary that in this era and in this area there should be a problem situation similar to the case of “Yosef was sent to Egypt, etc.?” Up until this time so much has been accomplished. The Previous Rebbe himself gave witness to this fact for he said:

Stand together ready... to receive the blessing of the
Eternal....

and,

“You need only to polish the buttons!”

However, we must say that the reason for the problems was only to bring a greater level of ascent. The only reason for the troubling

and uncertain situation, was to accomplish greater things many times over, in the area of spreading Yiddishkeit.

“TO WHOM DOES THIS BELONG?”

To reach the greater heights there had to be opposition presented in the guise of an attack! What was said? That *Agudas Chassidei Chabad* are not active; and we are not using the manuscripts and studying the books and the words of the living G-d; and that the activities of spreading Yiddishkeit to the outside are not being done. These arguments were presented to provide a basis upon which the question could be posed, “To whom do these things belong?”

Really nothing was lacking but the “polishing of the buttons.” Remember, buttons only connect the sides of the garment — the right and left sides would be apart without the buttons. The buttons unify the two halves. (By Jewish custom right is placed over left.) The right helps the left and together they protect the body. But the buttons had only to be polished. Why all these problems?

The answer is that we must do even more! We must be filled with great joy which bursts all limitations and nullifies all restrictions and measure. This joy must infuse our action and influence all that we do.

At the close of today’s Chumash portion we read that:

The spirit of their father Yaakov was then revived.
(Bereishis 45:27)

How was he revived? When he learned of Yosef’s words and of his condition — as we see in the verses and in Rashi’s commentary — of Yosef’s enduring faith and devotion to G-d, he was revived. Even though Yosef was in Egypt and was involved in running the country — in matters dealing with the mundane and the gentile nations of the world — nevertheless, he remained faithful. This phenomenon was new for Yaakov — for the Divine service of the Patriarchs had been to tend the flocks, where they would isolate themselves in their devotion to the Holy One, Blessed be He. Yosef, too, had originally tended sheep in Canaan. But now, Yosef’s approach to Divine service was different. As viceroy — and even in

the home of Potiphar where he was involved in all the matters of the Egyptian household — he had to be involved in the mundane and the profane of Egypt and yet this did not affect his absolute unity and self-abnegation before G-d.

Chassidus explains that the Patriarchs' approach to Divine service was to be removed from worldly matters and to be devoted to G-d — but Yosef had to deal with the restrictions of Egypt in spiritual and even mundane matters — even there Yosef accomplished a great spiritual fortitude, that he stood in absolute unity with G-d. So much so, that the Torah tells us:

These are the chronicles of Yaakov: Yosef.... (Bereishis 37:2)

YOSEF, THE ESSENCE OF YAAKOV

Specifically in Yosef was the essence of Yaakov revealed, Yaakov who was the “chosen one” of the Patriarchs.

This greatness of Yosef was connected with the *wagons* Yosef sent to Yaakov. Why does the Torah say that Yosef sent the wagons when actually Pharaoh had sent them? Rashi explains that Yosef sent the wagons to hint to Yaakov about the laws of “the calf which is decapitated in the valley” (see Devarim 21:4). [They had studied that topic just before Yosef left his father.]

Our sages explain that the details, connected with the investigation of the unsolved murder which involved the decapitated calf, lead to the ultimate discovery of the culprit (see *Midrash Aggadah: Bachya*). It also leads to a condition that “the people will hear about it and they will fear” (Devarim 17:13). Thus, when we study this subject everything becomes revealed and everyone will learn to be careful, not to follow the path which might lead to a case of “a victim in the field.”

Generally speaking Eisav is a “man of the field.” When there are Jews who for some reason find themselves in the “distant fields,” there is a possibility that Eisav will seek ways of trickery to bring about the *opposite* of:

Only you, the ones who remained attached to G-d your L-rd are all alive today. (Devarim 4:4)

In other words the forces of evil try to cause the “victim in the field.”

So the Alter Rebbe says that every Jew cannot and does not want to be separated from G-dliness — and the Rambam likewise rules that when a Jew says “I want” to follow the ruling of Torah, it is his *true*, inner desire which is revealed. And even when one is far away in a field he is really close.

Here we see that Yosef, the Nasi of our generation, provides us with the “wagons” to protect us from the perils of the field and thereby he gives us the power to convert the field into a “house,” a dwelling place for G-dliness. He then gives every Jew a mission which will lead to the state of:

The spirit of their father Yaakov was then revived.

YAAKOV LIVES! BECAUSE WE LIVE!

For the Gemara had stated about Yaakov:

Yaakov our Patriarch is not dead... was it then for naught that he was bewailed and embalmed and buried?... As his seed will be alive, so he too will be alive. (Taanis 5b)

So when we learn in the *Chumash* that the spirit of Yaakov was revived we must understand that this depends on his children; if they are alive so is he! When each of us is alive, tied to the living Torah and its mitzvos, of which it says: “You shall truly live by keeping them” (Vayikra 18:5), then the spirit of Yaakov comes alive. When his progeny are alive with Torah and mitzvos, and as messengers of G-d make a dwelling place in the lower words, then he has all the power of the Infinite and he lives.

Deny the power of the evil, even in the field, and become a messenger of G-d, and transform every other Jew outside of your house to be a Shaliach!

Start with making your own home a place where Torah is *increased*; so, too, increase prayer and also all mitzvos, starting with tzedakah — good deeds.

YOUR HOME — A CHABAD HOUSE

Starting from this Tuesday, and with these verses of Torah, make your own home a Chabad House — and then influence all the Jews in the field, likewise. The nations of the world recognize the power of Yosef the ruler of Mitzrayim, and this will influence their observance of the Seven Noachide Laws.

This will speed the coming of the resurrection when we will see the rejuvenation of Yaakov and the resurrection of Yosef, the *Nasi* of our generation. “Arise and sing all who dwell in the dust” (Yeshayahu 26:19); Yaakov and Yosef. We will go with glad hearts to our Holy Land as it will be expanded to include the land of the Keni, Kenizi and Kadmoni, as “G-d will expand the borders.”

Then we will have the complete redemption through our righteous Mashiach — youth and elders, sons and daughters — a great company — together with the greatness of the perfect Torah and mitzvos and the great gifts given to us by G-d, starting with “children, life and abundant sustenance.” Including also *great study* and *great action* at the time of “the heels of Mashiach.” Each person will accomplish great things in Torah and mitzvos and in all areas for the sake of heaven.

DO MORE TODAY!

Simply put, *today*, do more tzedakah, give money to the poor and also help Jews in every way. Disseminate these words; start today this mission of spreading Torah and good deeds in an ever-increasing way — down to earth — to complete the ultimate goal and that which is temporarily negative will reach the true and ultimate perfection, to create a dwelling place for G-d in the lower worlds, in the last moments of galus. This goodness must be *increased* — with joy and glad hearts — soon and in our days — may this all be in reality and may the reward be *greater* than the pain, as a true *find* — the coming of Mashiach — in our time Amen, so may it be!



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