
Sichos in English Classics 48

Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration



**Excerpts from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Address
on 10th of Shevat, 5740 (1980)
- Edited -**



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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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THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



**Excerpts from the Lubavitcher Rebbe's Address
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- Edited -**

By the Grace of G-d

IN RESPONSE TO THE GREETINGS AND CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES FROM EMINENT PUBLIC FIGURES, PRESIDENT CARTER AND GOVERNOR CAREY OF NEW YORK, WHOSE PERSONAL LETTERS WERE DELIVERED BY THEIR REPRESENTATIVES, SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, AMBASSADOR EFRAIM EVRON IN THE NAME OF THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS MANY OTHER DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC FIGURES FROM THE USA AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

(Free rendition, condensed and abbreviated)

THANK YOU

On all occasions we take our cue from the Torah, for *Torah* means “instruction.”

Noting that the first word of the Torah (Bereshith, “In the beginning”) begins with the letter *Beth*, which stands for *Berachah* (blessing), our Sages taught, “It is proper to begin with a blessing.”

Accordingly, I will begin with the traditional *Beruchim Haba'im*, Blessed are the guests.

It is a pleasure to welcome all of you who came here in person, from near and far, to participate in this Farbrengen (get-together) and to express my heartfelt appreciation of all the good wishes that have been conveyed to me on the occasion of this Thirtieth Anniversary — which I prayerfully reciprocate to each and all.

At first glance it may be asked, What can a blessing reiterated by a human being add to the Divine blessing already assured in G-d's promise, "I will bless them that bless you" (Gen. 12:3)?

The answer is twofold. The Torah teaches us — and it is also self-evident — that one should acknowledge and reciprocate good for good. Secondly, we find in our sacred literature many references to the efficacy of the spoken word, and that by pronouncing a benediction a person hastens the realization of the Divine blessing in a tangible and manifest form here on earth (in preference to "a blessing in disguise").

It is therefore my very pleasant duty to express here and now my prayerful wish that G-d's blessings to all the well-wishers be materialized in full measure, in all three aspects of "health, children, and sustenance."

* * *

"CHOOSE LIFE"

After beginning with (the letter *Beth* for) *Berachah*, the opening words of the Divine fiat are, "And G-d said, Let there be light!" Commenting on this, the Midrash quotes the verse, "Let your opening words give light" (Ps. 119:130).

The ultimate accomplishment of light is that it not only dispels darkness ("even a little light dispels a lot of darkness"), but it has the power to transform darkness itself into light.

In terms of good and evil, corresponding to light and darkness, it means that there are two ways of overcoming the negative: one is to eradicate it; the other and more desirable — to transform the negative into positive.

The Torah is synonymous with light (Prov. 6:23). It illuminates our everyday life, and teaches us how to illuminate the world around us, to achieve the truly good life. But the choice is left to the

individual. Every person is free to choose the path of Life, or to turn in the opposite direction. “Choose life,” the Torah exhorts (Deut. 30:19).

That a person should need exhortation where the choice is so obvious is due to the fact that a person is subject to the influence of two conflicting forces within him: one advocating the good, the other — under the guise of misconceived self-interest — often pulling in the opposite direction. In our sacred literature, these conflicting forces are called the good inclination and the bad inclination. In other words, the Divine in man and the animal in man.

The path of life entails a sustained vigilance and effort; and not merely to conquer the animal that is in human nature, but also to ultimately refine and sublimate the lower passions to the good and positive — much in the way that a brute animal is tamed and harnessed in the service of man and thus helps him accomplish his human tasks all the better. In this sense our Sages interpret the commandment, “And you shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart,” (Deut. 6:5) to mean, “with both your inclinations.”

* * *

TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

The inner conflict, due to the said inherent conflicting forces, is further compounded by the fact that we live in a multifarious world, in which there are many seemingly irreconcilable forces at work. In such a world — termed in the philosophy of Chabad as “Public Domain,” it is often difficult to grasp how this world could be ruled by one and the same Creator and Master; an orderly world ruled and conducted not by coercion and brutal force, but by mutual respect and love.

Here again the light of the Torah helps us to recognize the unifying force behind the external multifariousness; and by spreading the Divine light in the world around us, we can transform the “Public Domain” into a “Private Domain” — the domain of G-dliness, where everything is attuned to the service of the One and Only G-d, the Creator and Master of the Universe. This is what our

great teacher and Guide for the Perplexed (Maimonides) epitomized by quoting in his *Codex of Laws* (end of *Book of Zemanim*) the declaration that “the entire Torah was given to make peace in the world.”

* * *

THE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL

In connection with the above, we recall the adage of my saintly father-in-law, on this thirtieth anniversary of his demise: “An individual is a multitude,” which reflects the teaching of the Mishnah, “For this reason man (Adam) was created single — to teach you... (that an individual is like) a whole world.”

This means — in a deeper sense — that an individual comprises within him, as mentioned earlier, a world of diverse forces, often conflicting, which are parallel to those in the world at large, or, in more familiar terms, a human being is the microcosm reflecting the macrocosm.

However, it is man’s duty and purpose in life to refine, mold and transform the multiplicity and diversity of his complex nature — his desires, capacities, etc. — into a single entity of a higher order. And everyone is given the full capability and is therefore expected, to achieve this end both on the individual level, as well as to work for, and contribute to, the harmony and peace in his community, his country, and in the world at large.

* * *

UNDERSTANDING DEMOCRACY

The concept of transforming the “Public Domain” into a “Private Domain” in the above sense, has an analogy in the principle of democracy.

Contrary to popular saying — all people are not created equal. (We are not talking about human rights, of *course*.) In His infinite wisdom, G-d created the human race so that “no two persons are alike, nor are their opinions identical.” However, in a democracy this problem is resolved on the basis of the principle of majority rule (which is the law of the Torah). According to this principle, the

members of a society, or the citizens of a country, delegate power to, and confer authority on, freely elected representatives to conduct the affairs of the entire group for the good of each and all. More than that. The democratic system provides the process by which a multitude of diverse individuals becomes one entity, indeed one organism — be it in the form of a congregation, a community, a municipality, a state, or a United States.

In a free democracy, and seeing that no two persons think alike, no unanimity should be expected. There are bound to be more than one candidate for the elective office. But once the voice of the majority has spoken, the minority and every individual that voted for another candidate must readily and willingly submit to the will of the majority and accept the elected official as one's personal candidate, as though one had voted for him.

Nevertheless, this submission and acceptance is limited only to one's actions, but does not imply the surrender of one's judgment and reason, which one may freely express as before.

And even in respect of control over the individual's actions, it applies only in the realm of general public interests, not the individual's rights of free religious exercise, his right to choose the kind of education for his children and his right to order his family life as he sees fit. Indeed, a true democracy has built-in constitutional safeguards to protect the individual's inviolable rights, and the right of minorities to preserve their ethnic and cultural identities, each contributing to, and enriching, the society as a whole.

On his part, every elected official must regard himself as the representative of each and every one, regardless of the voter's personal preference at the ballot. Moreover, having been elected by the people, he exemplifies the unity of the multitude, rising above all division and discord. It is in this way that the "Public Domain" of the society can be transformed into a "Private Domain" of a higher order, where there is unity of purpose and interest, overriding the narrow, divergent, egoistic interests of many different individuals; or groups of individuals.

We are indeed fortunate to live in such a democracy, and it is up to each and everyone, Jew and non-Jew, to make the most of it.

What is true on the communal and national level is true on the universal level, — to achieve the ideal of “one world,” where all nations can live in peace and concord, and work in concert for their mutual advancement, both materially and spiritually.

But before this can be achieved, there must be a recognition of a supreme overriding principle for all mankind. This principle will be found only in those basic values of morality and justice, including human rights of course, laid down by the Supreme Being, without which there can be no decent human society. Hence, in accord with Divine Providence and aided by it, it is incumbent upon each and all to work for the dissemination of these Divine laws and precepts.

* * *

MONEY TALKS

The doctrine of Divine Providence as expounded by the Founder of the Chassidic movement and by his successors, the Rebbes of Chabad, teaches us that Divine Providence extends to the minutest detail of everything in this world, even in the realm of the inanimate. A corollary of this doctrine is his adage that “everything one sees or hears should serve as instruction how better to serve G-d.”

In light of the above, it is highly significant and instructive that American money bears the inscriptions “In G-d We Trust” and “E Pluribus Unum.”

Jews in this country, constituting the largest single Jewish community in the world, are fortunate to live in a country that so proudly proclaims its national mottos and gives them the widest possible “currency.” We profoundly appreciate, and identify with, these concepts. Indeed, this is what we have been discussing above.

It should be noted, moreover, that not only are these mottos instructive in substance, but also in form. The motto “In G-d We Trust” is inscribed in plain language — plain English, whereas “E Pluribus Unum” (out of many — one) is expressed in Latin. I do not know what brought the authors of these national mottos to adopt this semantic difference, but they must have been guided by Providential design.

The American dollar is international currency, and it has become even more universally familiar by the substantial help and financial aid this country has distributed to less fortunate nations all over the world. English, too, has become an international language, and certainly more familiar than Latin.

Thus, the motto “In G-d We Trust” is a constant and clearly understood reminder all over the world of a basic concept that pertains to every human being on earth, since it is an inherent universal concept that requires no special intellectual acumen, and it has to be *implemented*, as the basis and motive of everyone’s daily activities, including those who are quite ordinary, *plain* folk and lead a simple life.

On the other hand, the realization of the concept of “E Pluribus Unum,” — the endeavor to make it a reality, which is the essential thing, particularly in the context of our discussion on transforming the “Public Domain” into the “Personal Domain,” requires a great deal of preparation, keenness of mind, study and insight, and therefore more appropriate to the experienced and trained intellectual. Hence, the symbolism of the Latin language.

* * *

WORKING TOWARDS ONE GOAL

In conclusion, since “the essential thing is the deed,” and when it comes to actual deeds everyone has been endowed by the Creator with the capacity to be master over one’s conduct, it behooves everyone, man and woman, to work for the achievement of the higher goals in life, beginning with one’s self — to reinforce one’s trust in G-d, which is so essential to inner peace and harmony, and to enabling one to mobilize and unify all one’s inner forces, as well as resources, for the common goal, to speed the realization of the Prophetic ideal of one world and one humanity, of unity in the midst of diversity, all living in harmony and peace under the reign of the One G-d.



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whose teachings and example are a never-ending source of life for all mankind. May we continue in his paths, and complete the mission with which he has charged us: to make the world conscious of the imminent Redemption and to prepare an environment in which this ideal can be realized.



& In Memory of

Tuvia ben Tzvi ה"י Klein

On the occasion of his Yartzeit,
3rd Day of Shvat, 5724

&

Sosia bas Moshe ה"י Stien

On the occasion of her Yartzeit,
3rd Day of Shvat

&

Tzvi Hirsh ben Naftali Hertz ה"י Kaiser

On the occasion of his Yartzeit,
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&

Pesach ben Avraham Yaakov ה"י Fein

On the occasion of his Yartzeit,
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