

# SICHA SUMMARY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 23

*Matos-Masei - Menachem-Av*

### The Context:

The month traditionally referred to as “Menachem Av,” wherein we commemorate the tragic destruction of two Temples, literally translates as “comforting the Father.” That is, it does not refer to G-d’s comforting of the Jewish people, as we might expect, but rather, to our ability to comfort G-d for the destruction and the ensuing exile.

A similar idea is expressed by the Maggid of Mezeritch regarding prayer. Prayer is traditionally understood as the person asking G-d to fulfill his needs. But the Maggid taught that in prayer a person must beseech G-d to fulfill the Divine lack, the incompleteness of G-d’s revelation within creation.

### The Question:

This standard may be achievable for perfectly righteous individuals, but how are these interpretations relevant to the majority of Jewish people? How can we be

expected to ignore our own material needs to focus solely on G-d’s, and to extend comfort to G-d instead of seeking the comfort we so sorely need?

### The Explanation:

Chassidus explains that G-d’s choice of the Jewish people was not just for their souls and spiritual qualities, but specifically their bodies which resemble every other human being. True choice is an expression of one’s deepest self, a revelation of what is truly bound to the deepest part of you. Therefore, “choosing” is not an appropriate description of G-d’s relationship with the Jewish soul, since that possesses overt spiritual advantages over other beings; it appeals to the logical structure of G-d’s “interest,” so to speak. When G-d “chooses” the Jew, we mean He is inherently bound up specifically with the body of the Jew, with his material self and concerns.

Therefore, when a Jew prays for his own material concerns, he is actually praying on behalf of G-d’s essence, since that essence is bound up with his material deficiencies. So, too, in the month of “comforting the Father,” the Father is inherently concerned for His son, therefore, the comfort extended

to G-d includes any comfort a Jew can possibly need.

Thus, it is not just the righteous who can fulfill these expectations. The simple Jew's request for material blessing and comfort also carries with it a deeper cry for the redemption of G-d's essence which languishes in exile.

This perspective helps us understand the possibility of a Jew comforting G-d — seemingly, how can someone who is

themselves in exile offer comfort? Chassidus explains that a son can display greater abilities than a father, but even those abilities are derived from the father. That is, the father imparts his entire essence to his son, even those potentials which were unrealized, and the son can actualize those potentials. So, too, the Jew is one with G-d's essence, and therefore can provide comfort to the dimension of G-d which does experience exile.

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