



לקוטי שיחות  
PROJECT  
LIKKUTEI  
SICHOS



# Likkutei Sichos

Volume 23 | Matos-Masei

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Initially translated by Sichos In English  
as  
“A Knowing Heart”

## I.

When the *parshiyos Matos* and *Masei* are joined together,<sup>1</sup> they are read on the *Shabbos* when the month of *Menachem Av* is blessed or on the first *Shabbos* of *Menachem Av*. As is well known,<sup>2</sup> all of the Torah readings share a connection to the time at which they are read. Thus, it is evident that the *parshiyos Matos* and *Masei* share a connection, not only to the period of *Bein HaMetzarim*<sup>3</sup> in general,<sup>4</sup> but also (and primarily) to the month of Av.<sup>5</sup>

## II.

(When blessing the month [of Av], it is Jewish custom — which is considered as Torah Law<sup>6</sup> — to refer to it as *Menachem Av*. {This custom has *halachic* relevance with regard to the manner in which the name of the month is written in a legal document. [A legal document is unacceptable if the month's name is not written correctly. Nevertheless, such] a document is acceptable when dated *Menachem Av*. Indeed, even if one writes merely *Menachem* and not Av, the legal document is acceptable<sup>7</sup> because it is well known that the month of Av is referred to as *Menachem*. In fact, some follow the custom of using the term *Menachem* instead of the term Av in marriage contracts and other legal documents.<sup>8</sup> }

This custom can be explained based on the following preface: Our Sages relate<sup>9</sup> that the names of the months “ascended with them from Babylonia.” The commentaries<sup>10</sup> explain that the names of all<sup>11</sup> the months are not based on *Lashon HaKodesh*<sup>12</sup> but are of Chaldean origin,<sup>13</sup> (and are Persian names).<sup>14</sup>

This statement, however, is problematic, for we find that our Sages make several extrapolations<sup>15</sup> based on the meaning of the names of the months in Hebrew.<sup>16</sup> It is possible to explain that, at the outset, there is no difficulty. When our Sages say that the names of the months ascended with them from Babylonia, they mean the connection between the names and the months originated in Babylonia and [the use of the term as the name of a month] was brought [to *Eretz Yisrael*] from

there. The names of the months themselves are not, however, Babylonian in origin.<sup>17</sup>

Even if one would say that some of the terms are of Babylonian origin, that certainly does not apply to the name Av. Moreover — and this is of fundamental importance — since they are names employed<sup>18</sup> by the Torah,<sup>19</sup> it is evident that they are associated with the interpretation that they are given in *Lashon HaKodesh*.<sup>20</sup> In particular, this applies to (*Menachem*) Av. The term Av has the meaning “father,” just as the word is interpreted in *Lashon HaKodesh*.<sup>21</sup>

According to this, the meaning of the name *Menachem* Av is that we “comfort the father,” i.e., we are comforting our Father in Heaven, as it were. Were the month named Av *Menachem*, the intent would be that the Father (our Father in Heaven) is comforting (the Jews).<sup>22</sup> The term *Menachem* Av, by contrast, implies that the father is the one being comforted.<sup>23</sup> {[In contrast,] the meaning of the term *Menachem Tziyon* (mentioned in the blessing *Nacheim*) is that *Tziyon* is being comforted (by G-d).}

Our Sages state:<sup>24</sup> “G-d says, as it were: ‘What will be<sup>25</sup> with a Father Who exiled His children?’<sup>26</sup> (Woe to the children who were exiled from their Father’s table.)”<sup>27</sup> [Since He is in distress,] we comfort Him, as it were.

### III.

On this basis, we can understand the connection between the month of *Menachem* Av and the *parshiyos* of *Matos* and *Masei*. This concept — that a Jew appreciates that the comfort he is seeking in this month is not (only) comfort for himself, but (primarily) comfort for the Father, our Father in Heaven — is also emphasized in *Parshas Matos* and in *Parshas Masei*.<sup>28</sup>

*Parshas Matos* relates G-d’s command to Moshe with regard to the war against Midian:<sup>29</sup> “Take the revenge for the children of Israel from the Midianites.” When, however, Moshe communicated the commandment to the Jewish people, he spoke of: “tak[ing] the revenge for G-d upon Midian.”<sup>30</sup> The *Sifri*<sup>31</sup> comments that Moshe told the Jews: “You are not taking vengeance on behalf of mortals. You are taking vengeance on behalf of He Who spoke and brought the world into being.”

We see a similar concept in *Parshas Masei*. It is written,<sup>32</sup> “And you shall not defile the land... in which I dwell, because I, G-d, dwell among the children of Israel.” The *Sifri* comments on that verse: “Cherished are the Jewish people. Even though they are impure, the Divine presence is among them<sup>33</sup> .... Cherished are the Jewish people. Wherever they are exiled,<sup>34</sup> the Divine presence accompanies them, and when they return, the Divine presence will accompany them.”

For exile does not affect the Jewish people alone; it also affects G-d. [When the Jewish people are in exile,] the Divine presence is [also] in exile. And the redemption of the Jewish people also involves the redemption of the Divine presence, as it were. Certainly, it is obvious that the redemption of the Divine presence is more important than the redemption of the Jewish people.

#### IV.

It is, however, necessary to understand [the following]: The name *Menachem Av* emphasizes only the comfort given the Father and does not mention at all the comfort given the Jewish people, the son. Nevertheless, this is the name with which all Jews refer to the month.<sup>35</sup>

It is thus problematic: Were we speaking about great *tzaddikim* whose Divine service is carried out for G-d’s sake without any thought of their own selves, not even to cling to Him,<sup>36</sup> we could understand that their perception of the exile involves feeling the exile of the Divine presence.

[Moreover, the use of such a name would be understandable] even if the Jews were not on the level where they perform their Divine service for G-d’s sake, but they perceive the exile of the Divine presence in terms of the spiritual destruction they face — “We are unable to ascend, see, and prostrate ourselves,”<sup>37</sup> i.e., [they would feel discomfort from the fact that] G-dliness is not shining in the world and they are lacking the revelation of G-dliness in their souls,<sup>38</sup> in their study of the Torah and observance of the *mitzvos*, and in particular in the Divine service of prayer (to prostrate themselves).

This could be considered somewhat parallel to the concept of “comforting the Father,” for one comforts the “part of G-d from Above”<sup>39</sup> found within oneself, i.e., the spark of the Father within oneself.

Can this, however, be said about every Jew, in every situation? There are times when we feel under stress, with pressure from the gentile powers, financial worries, and trying and vexing physical situations. We are lacking our physical needs with regard to [matters involving] our children, health, and sustenance, for they are not as abundant as is appropriate for the Jews. Every person knows that these are the concerns that cause us aggravation. How is it appropriate that even a person [with such concerns] refers to the month as *Menachem Av*, [putting the emphasis on comforting G-d, and not on receiving his own needs]?

## V.

The above concepts can be resolved by first explaining a similar concept that applies with regard to prayer. There is a well-known teaching of the Maggid [of Mezritch]<sup>40</sup> based on our Sages' statement:<sup>41</sup> "One should stand in prayer only with an attitude of earnest reverence." [The Maggid explains that] we must pray not for our own lacks and needs, but for the needs and lacks [felt] by the Divine presence, as it were. "Even if one asks for his own needs, his intent should be that nothing should be lacking Above, Heaven forbid. For<sup>42</sup> the soul is an actual part of G-d from Above; it is one of the limbs of the Divine presence. This is the essential request that should be fulfilled and that influence be generated Above."<sup>43</sup>

In this as well, there is — as mentioned above — a conceptual difficulty. There are individuals who are on the level that their own needs are not important to them. Hence they do not feel their own lack — or at least they do not regard it as being of primary importance. Hence, their prayers are focused on the lack Above.

Most people, however, are concerned with their own bodies and physical needs. They feel the body's lack and this distresses them and disturbs them from concentrating on the study of the Torah and the observance of the [\*mitzvos\*](#).<sup>44</sup> Hence it is a positive commandment to pray to G-d and entreat Him to fulfill this lack.<sup>45</sup> How can the teaching of the Maggid — that one should be concerned with the lack felt by G-d as it were — be appropriate to such prayer?

## VI.

According to *nigleh* (the revealed dimension of Torah Law), it is possible to offer (at least, a somewhat forced) explanation based on the ruling of the Alter Rebbe in his *Shulchan Aruch*:<sup>46</sup> “A person does not have jurisdiction over his body at all.” For a person’s body is not his own. It is G-d’s property.<sup>47</sup>

It thus follows that when a person lacks his material needs, this brings about sorrow, as it were, for G-d, the true Owner of the body. Therefore there is no contradiction in praying for G-d to satisfy the bodily needs that one feels and having the intent that “nothing should be lacking Above.” For his intent in praying that his bodily needs be fulfilled is {not that he (himself) should not feel a lack,} but that G-d’s property should not suffer deficiency.

## VII.

This explanation is not sufficient, however, [for several reasons]. {Firstly, the wording of the Maggid implies that one should have in mind the lack of “the Head of all heads,” [G-d Himself,] and not the lack present within G-d’s possessions.}

[More fundamentally, however,] as explained several times, *nigleh*, the Torah’s external, legal dimension, and *nistar*, its hidden mystic secrets, are one Torah. The *Zohar*<sup>48</sup> describes them as “the soul of the Torah and the body of the Torah.” Thus it is impossible that there should be a contradiction between them.

It would appear [on the surface] that the intent of the concept of prayer as mandated by Torah Law is different from that expressed in the Maggid’s teaching cited above. In *nigleh*, it is stated<sup>49</sup> that when a person feels that he is lacking something, he should pray to G-d that He should fill that lack. According to this concept, when a person is on a level when he is bothered by only — or at least primarily — the lack he feels in his material needs, and at that moment he does not feel that his body is G-d’s possession, there is a positive commandment for him to pray for the fulfillment of his needs.

Moreover, the meaning of the words of prayer [focuses on our physical necessities]. And praying according to the meaning of the words is a fundamental element of prayer. Those words should be interpreted according to their simple meaning. [Thus we are praying for material benefits, health, and wellbeing,] as

explained by the commentaries to the prayers.<sup>50</sup> Even those who interpret the prayers according to the intent of the *AriZal* emphasize that he spoke about subtle intents, allusions, and mystic secrets [and not the simple meaning of the prayers].

According to the teaching of the Maggid, by contrast, our Sages' statement: "One should stand in prayer only with an attitude of earnest reverence," implies that the entire concept of prayer should be only "that nothing should be lacking Above."<sup>51</sup> We are thus forced to say that even a person who at that moment is thinking only about his personal needs, is — in an inward way — praying for the lack felt Above.<sup>52</sup>

### VIII.

The explanation of these concepts is as follows:<sup>53</sup> There is a fundamental difference between a Jew's soul and his body. A Jew's soul is "an actual part of G-d from Above."<sup>54</sup> The material make-up of his body, by contrast, resembles the bodies of the gentiles.<sup>55</sup> Therefore the Alter Rebbe writes that G-d's choice [of the Jewish people's souls] is as they are en clothed in a body.<sup>56</sup>

The rationale is as follows: The term "choice" is appropriate when speaking about two subjects that resemble each other (in the matter under concern). When subjects do not share any common factors and have no shared traits, the concept of choice is not appropriate. [In such a case, one merely selects] what one desires.

Therefore the true concept of choice applies in relation to the body which "in its material being resembles the bodies of the gentiles." With regard to the soul, by contrast, the concept of choice is not appropriate, [since the differences are distinct].

This itself, however, reflects an advantage that a Jew's body possesses over his soul. For it is the body, as it were, that has a connection to G-d's essence.<sup>57</sup> The soul (in and of itself) relates to the qualities of light and revelation. The body and its material dimensions, which G-d chose, are connected with G-d's very essence.

For the concept of choice applies only with regard to G-d's essence, which has no prior cause or antecedent,<sup>58</sup> Heaven forbid. (All the levels other than His essence, by contrast,<sup>59</sup> even the most sublime levels of G-dly light [follow a different

motif]. For light is [characterized by] a tendency<sup>60</sup> — and thus there is something resembling compulsion to follow the tendency — [toward revelation]. As such, the true concept of free choice is not relevant at that level.)<sup>61</sup>

Although the concept of choice is totally dependent on the initiative of the One Who chooses and does not stem from the object chosen (i.e., the body) at all, since it is G-d's essence that is choosing, that choice defines the body's identity. For when G-d's essence is drawn down,<sup>62</sup> it is not possible that there will remain the possibility of there being [even in the abstract] anything other than Him.<sup>63</sup>

## IX.

Based on the above, it is understandable that even when a Jew prays and petitions G-d for his bodily needs (and their material dimensions), this is not a contradiction to the Maggid's teaching that one should pray for the lack felt Above. On the contrary, when there is a lack in a Jew's bodily [needs], this affects {not only the revealed levels of G-dliness (as is true when there is a lack in the spiritual needs of the soul,) but also} (the true) "Head of all heads," in G-d's very essence, as it were. [For that is the source of] the choice of a Jew's physical body.

Thus, when a Jew feels a lack in his bodily needs that brings him to pray to G-d, the true inner [dimension of his prayer] stems<sup>64</sup> from the fact that inside, he feels his true being — the choice of G-d's essence, which is focused on the physical body.

Therefore, every Jew is given the directive: "One should stand in prayer only with an attitude of earnest reverence." It is possible for him — and therefore, it is necessary for him — to have the apparent intent<sup>65</sup> that his requests for his material needs are being made because of the lack in his source Above, in the dimension of G-d's essence that relates to him, as it were.

## X.

On this basis, we can understand the intent of the name *Menachem* Av, "comforting the Father."<sup>66</sup> Every Jew is G-d's son, [as it were]. And the choice of G-d's essence is focused on [a Jew's] body. Hence the inner dimension of a Jew's feeling in exile, (even) [because of a lack] in physical matters that concern his body, is the fact that the Divine presence is in exile.



The exile of G-dliness, as it were, does not involve only the *Shechinah*, [the aspect of G-dliness that] “rests within and enclothes itself in the midst of the worlds to grant them vitality and to maintain them,”<sup>67</sup> but instead affects “the Father,” even His essence, as it were. When a Jew lacks his physical needs, [since] the choice of G-d’s essence is focused upon them, this brings about a condition of exile for (the Father), as it were,<sup>68</sup> [affecting] the very essence of G-dliness.<sup>69</sup>

## XI.

On this basis, we can also understand a relevant passage in the *Sifri*.<sup>70</sup> After stating: “Wherever (Israel) is exiled, the Divine presence accompanies them... and when they return, the Divine presence will accompany them” and citing relevant proof texts, the *Sifri* continues:

Rebbi states: “To cite an analogy, it is like a King who tells his servant: ‘If you seek me,<sup>71</sup> I am with my son. Whenever you look for me, I will be with my son.’ This is [implied by] the phrase<sup>72</sup>, ‘...Who dwells among them amid their impurity.’”

This passage is seemingly problematic: What does Rebbi add to the preceding statements in the *Sifri* made by Rabbi Nassan, who states: “Cherished are the Jewish people. Wherever they are exiled, the Divine presence accompanies them, and when they return, the Divine presence will accompany them”? That statement also implies that G-d is always together with the Jewish people in all places.

The difference between these two quotes can be explained as follows: When saying, “Cherished are the Jewish people. Wherever they are exiled, the Divine presence accompanies them,” Rabbi Nassan is speaking about the aspect of the Jews’ souls that is connected with a dimension that arouses cherished feelings. This is not the essence of the soul, but a revealed level related to feeling. On this level, it is manifest that the Jewish people are “cherished” and thus distinguished from the other nations of the world. With regard to this level of the soul, we say: “Wherever [the Jews] are exiled, the Divine presence accompanies them.”

Since the soul in its own right is “an actual part of G-d from Above” and this is revealed, it is sufficient that “the Divine presence accompany them” for the exile not to have an effect on them.

Rebbi adds that [the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people encompasses] the body as well. Therefore he refers to the analogy of:

a king who tells his servant: “If you seek me, I am with my son. Whenever you look for me, I will be with my son.” This is [implied by] the phrase: “...Who dwells among them in the midst of their impurity.”

This does not refer to a matter that is associated with cherished feelings or revealed levels. Instead, it is an essential matter involving the [fundamental] connection between a father and a son. This is connected with the body upon which the choice of G-d’s essence is focused,<sup>73</sup> as explained above.<sup>74</sup>

Accordingly, Rebbi:

a) emphasizes that [the connection continues] “Whenever you look for me.” Since there is a bond with G-d’s essence, the concepts of variation and change do not apply.<sup>75</sup>

b) quotes the phrase: “Who dwells among them in the midst of their impurity,” which relates to the body and its related matters and not to the soul<sup>76</sup> and its related matters. [For with regard to the latter, our Sages teach]<sup>77</sup> that (even) “The words of the Torah do not contract ritual impurity.”

## **XII.**

According to the above explanation of the name *Menachem Av*, we can resolve another related question: Comfort applies in a situation where an undesirable event occurred to a person and the lack that he suffered cannot be rectified. Through words or through deeds, a colleague who did not suffer a similar loss is able to comfort the one who did.

In the instance at hand, how is it possible for the Jews to comfort G-d,<sup>78</sup> as it were, when they themselves are in exile? On the contrary, the Jewish people

suffer the primary element of the exile. G-d is in exile only as a result of the fact that He is together with the Jews.

The concept can be explained as follows: With regard to a father and son, our Sages state:<sup>79</sup> “A son’s potential surpasses that of his father.” As is well known, the statement has two implications: [the obvious one,] that a son possesses an advantage over his father, but also, that this very advantage is an outgrowth of his father’s potential. Since the son has his source in his father’s essence, it is possible that his potential will surpass the revealed powers possessed by his father.<sup>80</sup> Implied is that the essential connection between a father and his son becomes manifest in the fact that the son’s potential surpasses that of the father.

Every concept on the earthly plane has its source [— and reflects —] the spiritual plane. Similarly, with regard to the concept at hand, the fact that a son’s potential exceeds that of his father stems from the fact that the same relationship exists between G-d and the Jewish people, as it were.

Since G-d’s essence is invested in the Jewish people as they exist on the material plane, that essence is revealed [to a greater extent] than it is revealed in the spiritual realms, even on the highest levels of G-dliness. Therefore the Jewish people as they exist on the earthly plane — where the greatness of the son’s potential, [which in turn manifests] the power of G-d’s essence, is revealed — have the potential to comfort their Father in Heaven, as it were.<sup>81</sup> We see a similar concept in *nigleh*. Our Sages relate<sup>82</sup> that G-d declares: “You have vanquished Me, My son. You have vanquished Me.”

### XIII.

Since the entire month is called *Menachem* Av, it follows that the concept of comfort begins (not only after Tishah BeAv, when the seven weeks of comfort begin, but) from the very beginning of the month. For the comfort for the exile is dependent on the conduct of the Jewish people. The only reason for the exile is our sins. Conducting ourselves in the opposite manner [brings about comfort].

This is particularly true with regard to the practices performed in the beginning of the month of Av that are associated with the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Through these activities we comfort the Father, weakening [the

influence of] the destruction and bringing closer the rebuilding [of the *Beis HaMikdash*].

In general, during these days we should endeavor to increase our observance of the Torah and its *mitzvos* to the greatest degree possible. In particular, this applies with regard to those laws and practices observed at the present time. [Our Sages teach]<sup>83</sup> that in these days, we should reduce [those activities that lead to material satisfaction and happiness,] and increase our involvement in the Torah about which it is said:<sup>84</sup> “The precepts of G-d are just, gladdening the heart.” In particular, this applies to the custom followed in several places of concluding Talmudic tractates<sup>85</sup> during these days at which time “a celebration<sup>86</sup> is made for the sages.”<sup>87</sup>

In general, this applies to energetic study of all aspects of the Torah, for this [study] brings happiness. In particular, it applies to the study of the laws of the construction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. For the *Midrash*<sup>88</sup> relates that through such study, “the construction of the *Beis HaMikdash* is not nullified” and G-d considers it as if one is involved<sup>89</sup> in the actual construction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.

Through these deeds and this Divine service, we comfort our Father in Heaven. And then He will have regret<sup>90</sup> and He will take the Jews out of exile and build the Third *Beis HaMikdash*, “the Sanctuary of G-d, established by Your hands.”<sup>91</sup> May this take place speedily, in our days.

Adapted from the *Sichos of Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei*, 5742, and *Shabbos Parshas Emor*, 5737

## FOOTNOTES

1. As is the practice in most years. In only two annual cycles (during leap years) are the two read as separate *parshiyos*. See the calendars included in the *Tur (Orach Chayim)* that follow the laws of *Rosh Chodesh*.
2. See *Shelah, Cheilek Torah Shebichsav*, the beginning of *Parshas Vayeishev* (p. 297a).

3. [Trans. Note: This term literally means “between the straits.” It refers to the three-week period between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and Tishah BeAv when customs associated with mourning are observed to commemorate the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*.]

4. See *Shelah* at the beginning of our Torah reading (p. 366b ff.) which states that these three Torah readings (*Matos*, *Masei* and *Devarim*) are always read during *Bein HaMetzarim* because they are appropriate to the time (see also the title on p. 366a) and explains the connection between them.

See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XVIII, p. 378ff., which explains several particulars regarding this connection. See also *ibid.*, p. 411ff., which explains the connection between *Parshas Masei* and the period of *Bein HaMetzarim*.

5. [The following distinctions can be made:] There is a) the period of *Bein HaMetzarim* as a whole which divides into b) the days of Tammuz and the days of Av. The latter subdivide into c) the beginning days of Av and the week in which Tishah BeAv falls. That in turn subdivides (although not always) into the ordinary week days, the day preceding Tishah BeAv, Tishah BeAv itself, Tishah BeAv which is postponed, and the day following Tishah BeAv. {There are also practical *halachic* distinctions between these different times, as explained in the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim*, sec. 551 ff.) and commentaries.}

6. See *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Pesachim* 4:1; *Tosafos*, *Menachos* 20b, s.v. *nifsal*.

7. *Get Pashut*, *Even HaEzer* 126:35, quoted by the *Pis'chei Teshuvah* 126:12. See also the *Aruch HaShulchan* 126:16 which states that it is not our custom to write only *Menachem*, but that if one writes *Menachem Av*, the *get* is acceptable after the fact, because “the month is blessed in this manner throughout our countries and it is common to mention it in correspondence.”

8. *Get Pashut*, *loc. cit.*

9. *Talmud Yerushalmi*, *Rosh HaShanah* 1:2; *Bereishis Rabbah* 48:9; *Tosafos*, *Rosh HaShanah* 7a, s.v. *midivrei*.

There is a slight difference in the wording of these sources. See the Albeck edition of *Bereishis Rabbah* and the different versions of the text he cites. See also the commentary of *Ramban* to *Shmos* 12:2.

10. Rav Avraham Ibn Ezra and *Chizkuni* to *Shmos*, *loc. cit.* See *Toras Shlomoh* to *Parshas Bo* (sec. 10-11); Appendix, sec. IV.

11. On the surface, the name Av raises a question, as will be mentioned. It is possible to explain that [not all the names are of Babylonian origin,] but the overwhelming majority are.

It is also possible to explain — albeit the explanation is quite forced — that the month was referred to in this manner in Babylonia in the Persian tongue. See the sources cited that explain that this period of the year is referred to in this manner because in Persian, this name describes the events that occur, not because of the meaning of the term Av in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

12. [The Holy Tongue, Biblical Hebrew.]

13. Rav Avraham Ibn Ezra and *Chizkuni* to the above verse.

14. *Ramban* to the above verse.

15. See the *Pesikta Zuta, Bo*, which interprets the name Nissanas alluding to the *nissim*, miracles, wrought on behalf of the Jewish people. See also *Midrash Shmos* with regard to the names of all the months cited in *Toras Shlomoh, loc. cit.* Note also the different acronyms cited by our Sages with regard to the name Elul. See fn. 18.

16. We find the *Talmud (Shabbos 77b; Kesuvos 10b)* interpreting the word *desha*, "doorway," as an allusion to [the Hebrew terms meaning] "the way through there." The connection, however, is merely an allusion, for the word *desha* is not a term in *Lashon HaKodesh* [and the allusion is not intrinsically related to its meaning]. With regard to the names of the months, by contrast, it appears that the allusions are connected to the meanings of the terms [in *Lashon HaKodesh*].\*

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\* *Toras Shlomoh, loc. cit.*, states that our Sages endeavored to find a Jewish connection to the names of the months and endow the names with Jewish content. Much clarification, however, is required, for how are these different from the other extrapolations of names made by our Sages? Note the quote from *Midrash Sechel Tov* on *Bereishis 46:9*.

[Trans. Note: In the original, this footnote was a bracketed passage in the body of the *sichah* and the passage marked by an asterisk, a footnote.]

17. See the commentary to *Bereishis Rabbah, loc. cit.*, ascribed to *Rashi* which states: "Previously, they were not revealed."

18. Some are cited in the *Tanach* (see *Talmud Yerushalmi, Rosh HaShanah, loc. cit.*; the commentary of Rav Avraham Ibn Ezra, *loc. cit.*). With regard to the name Av, see the *Mishnah, Taanis 4:5-6; Targum\* Sheni to Megillas Esther 3:7; Targum Yonason ben Uziel, Bamidbar 13:25*.

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\* For this principle can also be applied to the *Targum* since it was also given to Moshe at Sinai (see *Shulchan Aruch HaRav 285:2*; note also the sources cited; see also *Toras Shlomoh*, the Appendix to Vol. XVII, sec. 23, subsec. 2, the beginning of Vol. XXIV). Since these names are cited in the *Targum*, they have a meaning in *Lashon HaKodesh*.

19. Even according to the commentaries who maintain that the names are of Chaldean (or Persian) origin (see fn. 10), it is possible to offer the explanation offered by the *Shelah* (p. 409b):

When you see our Sages interpret a word and say that it originated in Greek or in another secular language... do not think that the Torah employed any language other than *Lashon HaKodesh*. Instead, the intent is that when the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, there was only *Lashon HaKodesh*. In the Generation of the Dispersion [after the construction of the Tower of Bavel], when G-d mixed together all the languages, these words from *Lashon HaKodesh* became mixed into Greek, Catpian, or African.

See also *Divrei Torah* by the author of the text *Minchas Elazar* (Vol. II, sec. VII).

20. On this basis, we can appreciate that we find several acronyms in *Lashon HaKodesh* with regard to the name Elul (see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IX, p. 296ff., and the sources mentioned there; see also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 162); *Or HaTorah* (*Terumah*, p. 1527) with regard to the name Adar(אדר)[that it alludes to] אדר, [that G-d's Infinity dwells]. See *Toras Shlomoh* as cited in fn. 10.

21. See the *maamar* entitled *Nachamu*, 5670, sec. 10; see also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 1080ff.

22. See the sources cited in the previous footnote. Note also the *Maharil*, at the beginning of *Hilchos Tishah BeAv*, who says, “May the Father show mercy on them.”

23. See the sources quoted in *Taamei Minhagim, Inyonei Tishah BeAv* (secs. 632-633) with regard to the rationales for the name *Menachem Av*.

24. *Berachos* 3a.

25. *Dikdukei Sofrim* also quotes a slightly different version: “Woe to the Father...” This version is cited in many sources.

26. [When citing this quote,] *Ein Yaakov* adds “among the idolators.”

27. See *Tur, Orach Chayim*, sec. 56. That text, however, a) states “Woe are the children...” before “What will be with a Father...”; and b) changes the text somewhat. This is not the place for further discussion of the matter.

28. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, *loc. cit.*; *Sefer HaArachim Chabad*, Vol. I, *erech Av*. Note the sources cited there.

29. *Bamidbar* 31:2.

30. *Ibid.*:3.

31. Commenting on the verse; see also *Rashi's* commentary to the verse; *Bamidbar Rabbah* 22:2; *Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Matos*, sec. 3; and the discussion of the concept in fn. 74.

32. *Bamidbar* 35:34.

33. See *Rashi's* commentary to the verse.

34. See also *Megillah* 29a; *Rashi's* commentary to *Devarim* 30:3, *et al.*

35. See sec. II and the sources mentioned there.

36. See *Tanya*, ch. 10, which explains that this thrust characterizes the Divine service of “men of ascendancy.”

37. The *Mussaf* liturgy for the festivals.

38. See *Likkutei Torah, Devarim*, p. 98b.

39. *Iyov* 31:2. *Tanya*, ch. 2, adds the term “actual.”

40. *Or Torah*, the beginning of *Parshas Vayigash*. See also the section *Aggados Chazal*, entry *Ein Omdin* (p. 108c in the Kehot edition); see also the conclusion of the *maamar* entitled *Al Taas* (p. 115d); *Likkutei Amarim*

of the Maggid, sec. 12 (in the Kehot edition), *Or HaTorah, Ki Sisa* (Vol. VIII), p. 30098ff. See also *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5665, p. 190ff., the series of *maamarim* entitled *BeShaah SheHikdimu*, 5672, Vol. II, p. 901, and several of the *maamarim* entitled *Ein Omdim* from the Rebbeim.

41. *Berachos* 5:1.

42. See *Tanya*, ch. 28.

43. *Or Torah*, the beginning of *Parshas Vayigash*.

44. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 9:1.

45. See *ibid.*, *Hilchos Tefillah* 1:2: “This is the obligation of this *mitzvah*:... To ask for the needs that one lacks with appeal and supplication.” See also the commentaries to this ruling and the statements of the *Tzemach Tzedek* at the beginning of the *maamar* entitled *Shoresh Mitzvas HaTefillah* in *Derech Mitzvosecha*.

46. The portion entitled *Choshen Mishpat, Hilchos Nizkei Guf ViNefesh*, subsec. 4.

47. See *Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Rotzeach U'Shemiras Nefesh* 1:4; the gloss of *Radbaz* to *Hilchos Sanhedrin* 18:6; the commentary of *Or HaChayim* to *Bamidbar* 16:24.

48. *Zohar* III, 152a.

49. See fn. 45.

50. Note the well-known statement (the Responsa of *Rivosh*, Responsum 157, quoted by the *Tzemach Tzedek* in *Shoresh Mitzvas HaTefillah*, sec. VIII): “I pray with the intent of a child.” It can be said that this concept relates only to the idea of praying “to Him, and not to His attributes.” (See sec. VII of that text.)

51. *Or Torah, Parshas Vayigash*. There the *Zohar (Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 6, p. 22a)* is cited, that one should not be like “those who act for their own sake and cry ‘Give, give.’”

52. [Trans. Note: The key to the resolution offered by the Rebbe is that a person should not see his needs and G-d’s needs as two separate matters. Since, as explained in detail in the following sections, G-d’s essence identifies, as it were, with the bodily concerns of the Jewish people, paying attention — and praying — for such concerns is paying attention to the lack felt Above.]

53. With regard to the concepts that follow, see *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XVIII, p. 409, fns. 70 and 71 and the sources mentioned there.

54. *Tanya*, ch. 2.

55. *Ibid.*, ch. 49 (p. 70a).

56. *Ibid.*, (p. 69a ff.).

57. See *Toras Shalom*, pp. 11, 120, 122.

58. See *Tanya, Iggeres HaKodesh*, Epistle 20 (p. 130a ff.).

59. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, pp. 1309, 1340ff.

60. For even simple, unqualified light [has a definition. It] is light, not the essence, nor is it influence or darkness.



61. The concept of G-d's choice of the Jewish people is explained in several sources. [There it is explained] that the true source of the Jewish people is G-d's essence, for they are His sons, as it were (see *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5659, p. 14ff.; the *maamar* entitled *HaMichaseh Ani MeiAvraham*, 5672; *Toras Shalom*, p. 220, *et al.*).

It is obvious that G-d's choice of the Jewish people refers to the Jews as their souls are encloded within bodies. There are, however, two aspects of this choice:

a) the source of G-d's choice as it exists within His essence. On this level, "It is I and not any other" — there is no room for any other existence at all. This level relates to the souls as they are "sons of G-d," the essence of the Father; see secs. 11-12.

In contrast, as the soul exists as a conscious entity, and in particular, as it descends to the material plane, the choice of G-d's essence is not apparent within it, instead [what is perceptible is influence from] the revealed levels [of Divine light].

b) the revelation of G-d's choice is within the body, which in its material state resembles the bodies of the gentiles (note *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 282).

Therefore it is the soul that [imparts] G-d's choice to the body and establishes it [as a factor defining the body's inner nature]. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XVIII, *loc. cit.* Clarification is still required with regard to all these matters. This, however, is not the place for further discussion of the issue.

62. The term "drawn down" is being used in a figurative [and not exact] sense. For [in truth,] the essence cannot be drawn down. See the *maamar* entitled *Tiku*, 5694 (printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711), sec. 2.

63. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XI, p. 5ff.

64. See related concepts in *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 295ff., based on the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov.

65. See *Tanya*, the conclusion of ch. 41.

66. See *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5665, *loc. cit.*, p. 193, which explains the Maggid's teaching concerning the *mishnah*: "One should stand in prayer only with an attitude of earnest reverence," and states: "This is the concept of *Tikkun Chatzos* (the midnight mourning prayers) that must precede prayer. [The intent is] to feel the bitterness of the exile of the Divine presence."

67. *Tanya*, ch. 41 (p. 57b).

68. [The expression "as it were" is employed] because the concept of actual exile applies only with regard to [the *Sefirah* of *Malchus*], the lower *Hei* [of G-d's name] (*Tanya*, *Iggeres HaTeshuvah*, ch. 6, *et al.*). See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IX, p. 179ff., and, in particular, p. 182, which explains *Rashi's* commentary to *Devarim* 30:3: "He dictated exile for Himself," which implies that His essence [is in exile, as it were].

69. See *Kuntreis U'Maayan*, *Maamar* 3, and the sources cited there.

70. Commenting on *Bamidbar* 35:34 as quoted above.

71. Our translation follows the wording of the first printing of the *Sifri*. See the *Yalkut Shimoni* and the *Hagahos HaGra* which offer slightly different versions of the text.

72. *Vayikra* 16:16.

73. See the *maamar* entitled *HaMichaseh Ani MeiAvraham* cited in fn. 61.

74. It can be explained that this is the basis for the difference in the interpretation of the phrase “tak[ing] the revenge for G-d upon Midian” (*Bamidbar* 31:3; see fn. 31) by the *Sifri* and *Bamidbar Rabbah* (and *Midrash Tanchuma*). *Bamidbar Rabbah* (and *Midrash Tanchuma*) explain that the phrase “revenge for G-d” is employed “because of the Torah and *mitzvos* that were given us. Therefore executing revenge for G-d is your revenge.”

[Implied is that the focus is on] revealed levels [of G-dliness]. Since [the Jews] are connected to G-d in a revealed manner (through the Torah and its *mitzvos*), [they identify with taking revenge for G-d]. All of this applies primarily to the soul.

The *Sifri*, by contrast, focuses on the essential dimension of the Jewish people that precedes the Torah, and not on the revealed connection [to G-d] (established by the Torah and its *mitzvos*). This relates primarily to the body. Accordingly:

a) It is necessary to emphasize: “You are not taking vengeance on behalf of mortals.”

b) When stating the positive dimension: “You are taking vengeance on behalf of He Who spoke and brought the world into being,” [G-d is referred to as the Creator of] the world, [indicating an emphasis on] the body, which in its material form resembles the bodies of the gentiles.

{See also *Toras Shalom*, p. 120, which emphasizes the connection between the choice of G-d’s essence within the body and the concept that creation *yesh meiyain* (existence from nothingness) stems from the power of G-d’s essence. See also *ibid.*, p. 122, and *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5678, p. 113ff. This is not the place for further discussion of this issue.}

75. Rabbi Nassan also mentions, “Wherever they are exiled.” There is, however, a distinction between his position and that of Rebbi. For Rebbi emphasizes, “Whenever you will look for me,” i.e., at all times, not only in all places. (See the commentary of *Sifri D’bei Rav* to the above passage in the *Sifri*.)

76. [The soul is] “a garden spring, a well of living waters” (*Shir HaShirim* 4:15). {See the *maamarim* entitled *Az Yashir Yisrael* (*Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar*, p. 62b; *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5702, p. 129ff., and the *maamar* of that title of 5743; the *maamarim* entitled *Me’ein Gannim* (*Sefer HaMaamarim* 5702, p. 133; *Sefer HaMaamarim Kuntreisim*, Vol. I, p. 200a, *et al.*) [These “waters”] do not contract ritual impurity themselves. On the contrary, they purify the impure.

77. *Berachos* 22a.

78. See the passages from *Taamei HaMinhagim* (cited in fn. 23) which state that G-d comforts Himself, as it were.

79. *Sh'vuos* 48a.

80. See the series of *maamarim* entitled *Sameach TiSamach*, 5657, p. 93ff., *et al.*; *Igros Kodesh* of the Previous Rebbe, Vol. IV, p. 405.

81. See the explanations in several sources (the series of *maamarim* entitled *BeShaah SheHikdimu*, 5672, Vol. II, p. 1123ff., *et al.*) that with regard to the pleasure derived from “the acceptance of the Divine service and the *bittul* within the created beings (i.e., within the Jewish people) in a positive manner; this has a greater advantage than [G-d's] initial intent.... There is the possibility that... it will enjoy success.” See also *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XIX, p. 384ff.

82. *Bava Metzia* 59b. See the *Shelah*, *Shaar HaGadol* (p. 29b ff.) with regard to the concept of “service for G-d's sake.”

83. [*Taanis* 4:6.]

84. *Tehillim* 19:9; see *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Hilchos Tishah BeAv* (*Orach Chayim*, sec. 554).

85. Note the renowned custom of the Rebbe Rashab to conclude the study of *Talmudic* tractates during these days even though he would not eat meat or drink wine afterwards (*Sefer HaMinhagim — The Book of Chabad-Lubavitch Customs*, p. 95).

86. *Shabbos* 118b; *Rama*, *Yoreh Deah* 246:26; see the gloss *Be'er Heitev* which states: “...to the extent that meat and wine are partaken of at these feasts even during these days.” (See also *Rama*, *Orach Chayim* 551:10.)

87. See *Shaar Yissachar* (by R. Chayim Elazar of Munkatsch), *Maamarei Chodesh Tammuz-Av*, sec. 8: “The *tzaddikim* whose roots stem from the students of the Baal Shem Tov would follow the custom of concluding *Talmudic* tractates during the month of Av and would partake of meat...”

88. *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Parshas Tzav*, sec. XIV. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. XVIII, p. 412ff., and the sources mentioned there where the concept is explained at length.

89. The present tense is used. Implied also is that not only is it as *if* one is performing the deed, but that one is actively investing himself and occupied with its performance.

90. See *Rashi's* commentary to *Bereishis* 6:6, [which explains that the root **נח** can mean regret as well as comfort].

91. *Shmos* 15:17; see *Zohar* III, 221a.