

SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



Likkutei Sichos, Volume 16

Mishpatim, Sicha 5 (*First Sicha of the week*)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

לעילוי נשמת השלוחה העניא ע"ה בת ר' ישראל שי'

The Parsha concludes that, after Matan Torah, "Moshe went into the cloud and climbed the mountain" and Rashi notes: "This cloud was like smoke, and Hashem cleared for Moshe a path to enter."

This Sicha encourages us to engage with the lowest degree of earthiness — until the fire of Kedusha will consume and affect even this Tachton, with a transformation represented by smoke.

What about our fear that engaging these lowly elements might lead us to be sullied by the soot? On this Rashi reminds us that Moshe, and the Moshe within us = the essence of our Neshama, has a clear path to remain connected and thus unaffected. Additionally, as the purpose of this lowliness is exclusively to enable us, VIA our free choice, to access additional energies of Kedusha, then in reality this world represents a positive cloud, more so than sullyng smoke.

Our Moshe clears a path for us through the smoke!

Many of the early shluchim expressed concern as to what will be with their children and the Rebbe responded, "The Chinuch of the children I take responsibility for - אויף מיינע - אפלייצעס!"

Rabbi Velvel Schildkraut was sent on shlichus by the Frierdiker Rebbe to New Haven, Connecticut. As his children began to grow, he started worrying about what would happen with their education. When he was in yechidus he expressed his concern to the Rebbe. The Rebbe responded firmly that since he is on the [Frierdiker] Rebbe's shlichus, everything will be okay with their education. "If so," said Rabbi Schildkraut, "I wish to place the responsibility of their chinuch on the Rebbe's shoulders!" The Rebbe calmly replied, "Nu, I'm accepting."

A young Shlucha, in the early years of Shlichus, attended a Bais Yaakov where her teacher challenged the institution of Shlichus and the risk it places on the Shluchim's children. The teacher added, "Even if your Yiddishkeit is very warm and strong, like hot water, if you put hot water in a bowl of cold water and continuously add cold water then the hot water eventually turns frigid cold".

The girl answered, "yes, it's true but only if the urn is not plugged into the outlet, for if it is plugged in, then even the coldest water will be heated. This is our secret, it's called hiskashrus!"

The world is a matter of perspective!

Mel Alexenberg (born February 24, 1937) is an American-Israeli artist, art educator, and writer recognized for his pioneering work exploring the intersections of art, science, technology, and digital culture. Mel created the first digital computer-generated painting in 1965.

Early in his career, Mel had a meeting with the Rebbe, which changed how he viewed art. "In Hebrew," the Rebbe pointed out, "the words for 'matter' and 'spirit' are interchangeable; that is, the letters that spell chomer, meaning "matter," also spell ruach, meaning "spirit" –all you have to do is drop the letter mem.

"What is the difference between the spiritual and material world? It is a matter of perspective. If you look at the world one way, you see a material world. But if you make a switch in your head, if you change the quality of your perception, if you look at things in a new, fresh way, then the very same world becomes spiritual. The spiritual world and

the material world are not two worlds. The quality of your relationship to the material world makes it spiritual.”

This meeting had real implications for Mel, “Because of this insight, a lot of my artwork—as a matter of fact almost all of it—begins with Hebrew words and Torah concepts. It might become high-tech stuff, but it starts there.

!בשבילי נברא העולם - The entire Tzimtzum was done for me

I heard from Rabbi Shabtai Slavaticki, Shliach in Antwerp, that Reb Mendel once mentioned, at a farbrengen in Kfar Chabad, the Mamar Chazal that a person needs to say that the world was created for me - בשבילי נברא העולם.

Reb Mendel asked “Does this not seem to be advocating an ego perspective? And even though this does help us feel a sense of responsibility, is making ourselves the center of the universe the best way to get us to take responsibility?”

At the Farbrengen there was an American older Bachur, a Mekurav, who said that at a yechidus he asked the Rebbe this very question! The Rebbe answered that one of the interpretations is - בשבילי נברא העולם היינו ההעלם - that a person is obligated to view the concealment of Hashem’s presence and the tzimtzum as done just for him, personally as an individual, so that he can transform darkness into light and bring the world to its intended purpose.

Reb Mendel excitedly farbrenged the rest of the night on this idea. At 7:00 am Reb Mendel said, “With this vort we can now go to mikvah and daven!”
