

# SICHA STORY

PROJECT LIKKUTEI SICHOS | 5783 - YEAR OF HAKHEL



*Likkutei Sichos, Volume 15*

## Lech Lecha, Sicha 5 (*First Sicha of the week*)

- Rabbi Yossi Nemes, Metairie, Louisiana

*The Sicha discusses our ownership of Eretz Yisroel. The story about Teshuva is connected to Seif Ches*

### Make here Eretz Yisroel – the deeper meaning

A chassid once asked the Tzemach Tzedek whether he should settle in the Holy Land so that he could devote his life there to Torah study and the service of G-d. The Tzemach Tzedek replied, "Make this place Eretz Yisrael."<sup>2</sup>

The Tzemach Tzedek's response conveys more than a reply to the chassid's question about his future. For us, its meaning extends far beyond the question of whether one should live in Eretz Yisrael. Instead of being seen only in that limited context, it should also be understood as alluding to the path through which all the members of our people, whether in the diaspora or in Eretz Yisrael, can come to a true and complete appreciation of our Holy Land.

What is Eretz Yisrael? — A place where G-dliness, holiness, and Yiddishkeit are openly revealed. In an ultimate sense, this will be realized in the Era of the Redemption when the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt and the observance of all the mitzvos associated with the holiness of the land will be restored.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, not only will we fulfill all of the mitzvos in that era, but we will appreciate the bond with G-dliness that will be established through this observance.<sup>4</sup>

This is the essence of the Redemption: the relationship between man and G-d will no longer be based on faith alone, but will also be nourished by a firsthand awareness of G-d's Presence here on earth...

*(Based on Sicha Re'eh, 5751)*

## Doing Teshuva the way the Rebbe wants!

*Harav Ezra Schochet – Rosh Yeshivas YOEC:*

Before entering a private audience with the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, of righteous memory, it was customary to write a note wherein one would detail all that he or she wanted to discuss in the audience, as well as anything for which he or she wanted a blessing.

During one of my private audiences, after the Rebbe read and responded to everything in my note, he lifted his head, looked me in the eyes and asked, "Do you have anything else to ask?"

I would always try to include everything I wanted to discuss or ask in my note, and here the Rebbe is looking at me waiting to hear any other questions I might have... My heart began to race; what did I leave out? My mind went blank.

The Rebbe gently asked me a second time, "Do you have anything else to ask?"

I was totally shaken; I could not think of anything else.

Then a third time: "Do you have anything else to ask? I want to finish answering all your questions before I begin to speak about matters that I wish to discuss..."

This time I broke down sobbing. I couldn't think of anything to ask... What, then, could I say that is all encompassing? Between tears I blurted out, "Help me, Rebbe, to do teshuvah!"

To which the Rebbe responded, "It looks like you do not wish to repent out of happiness!"

Then the Rebbe immediately turned to the other matters that he wanted to discuss.

Later I wrote to the Rebbe the following question: Isn't crying totally appropriate when you do teshuvah and feel total remorse for past deeds?

The Rebbe responded (paraphrased):

"Every single mitzvah that we merit to do must be performed with joy. Repentance is a mitzvah like any other, and therefore must be done with joy."

The Rebbe continued saying that, in fact, repentance is greater than every mitzvah. Its purpose is to correct the transgression of all other commandments, it must fill the spiritual "gap" that the lack of observance engendered. Teshuvah's ability to do so stems from the fact that it emanates from a higher spiritual source than all the others (as explained at length in the chassidic texts). And "the greater the mitzvah, the greater the joy."

*(Chabad.org)*

## Supplement: We are the children of Israel, not the friends of Israel

The first part of the article described how David Nesenoff recorded Helen Thomas sentiments about Jews and Israel and the storm that followed: The video of that conversation was posted online and quickly went viral, with media reps and reporters condemning Thomas, while contacting Nesenoff with interview requests.

Ari Fleischer, former press secretary to President George W. Bush, called Nesenoff and told him it was important to find a “message” to go with the story.

But what, Nesenoff wondered, was the right message? His son asked him, “You can speak to anyone in the world – who do you want me to call?”

Nesenoff’s first choice, Elie Wiesel, said he’d read about Nesenoff’s habit of davening with Chabad. Find out what the Rebbe would have said about putting a message to the story, Wiesel suggested.

Nesenoff contacted Chabad Rabbi Abraham Shemtov, who had known the Rebbe well.

What the Rebbe would have advised, said Shemtov, was something like this: **“We are not the friends of Israel; we are the Children of Israel. Sometimes we were away for a little while in galus or sometimes we were forced to be away by our enemies. But we are still the Children of Israel. Israel, our land, and the Children of Israel are one – forever.”**

Nesenoff repeated the Children of Israel message on CNN’s “Reliable Sources” program a couple of weeks after his encounter with Thomas.

Yale University professor Charles Asher Small was near the TV when the CNN show aired. Based on this message Small asked Nesenoff to be the keynote speaker at Yale’s inaugural 2010 Symposium on Global Anti-Semitism..

*<https://www.jewishpress.com/indepth/opinions/the-way-to-fight-anti-jewish-is-by-doing-jewish-what-david-nesenoff-learned-from-his-infamous-encounter-with-helen-thomas/2016/07/20/>*

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