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THE WEISS EDITION

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שבועות

*Shavuos*



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The Rule of Three

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The Choicest Choice

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Outside Influences

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Ladies First

*Light*  
*points*

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON THE  
WEEKLY TORAH PORTION

# Lightpoints

לזכרון ולעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ח הרה"ת הרה"ג ישעיהו זושא  
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם  
נלב"ע ביום ד' שבט התשפ"ב  
תנצב"ה

Dedicated in loving memory of  
**Avraham Leib** ben **Yaakov Gralnik** A"H  
In honor of his yahrzeit on 5 Sivan, 5775  
And in loving memory of  
**Ephraim Fishel** ben **Zev Wolf Kisin** A"H  
In honor of his yahrzeit on 5 Sivan, 5750  
And in loving memory of  
**Yaakov** ben **Avraham Gralnik** A"H  
In honor of his yahrzeit on 13 Sivan, 5753  
May we be speedily reunited with them and all our loved ones  
with the geula shlaimah Now!  
by the Hayman and Gralnik Families

לעילוי נשמת  
שלום דובער ב"ר גרשון חנוך העניך הכהן ע"ה אייכהורן  
נלב"ע א' סיון

נדפס ע"י בתו מרת ליבא הינדא ומשפחתה שיחיו טיפענברון

לעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ת שלום דובער בן הרה"ח דוד (הארדעקער) ע"ה קיבמן  
נלב"ע ביום כ' ניסן ערב שש"פ ה'תשס"ז  
ולעילוי נשמת זוגתו מרת דבורה בת הרב יהושע אשר ע"ה  
נלב"ע ביום ד' ניסן התשנ"ט

בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁלִישִׁי לְצֵאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ  
 מִצְרַיִם בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה בָּאוּ מִדְּבַר סִינַי

*In the third month of the Children of Israel's departure from Egypt, on this day they arrived in the desert of Sinai.*

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שמות י"ט, א | 19:1 Shemos

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## *The Rule of Three*

The Talmud takes note of a recurrence of the number three in connection with the Torah:

Blessed is the all-Merciful One, Who gave the three-fold Torah: (Torah, Nevi'im, and Kesuvim,) to the three-fold nation: (Kohanim, Leviim, and Yisraelim) ... in the third month (Sivan).<sup>4</sup>

Seemingly, we would expect the Torah to be identified with the number one, unity, in keeping with the verse, "One Torah shall be for you..."<sup>5</sup> and likewise, with our mission as Jews to reveal G-d's Oneness — "One G-d"<sup>6</sup> — on earth!

Why then is the number three uniquely associated with the Torah?

Unity, and particularly the revelation of G-d's Oneness, can take a variety of forms.

The first is when the uniqueness of the One and Only is so manifest that it cannot be challenged.

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4. Shabbos 88a.

5. Shemos 12:49

6. Devarim 6:4.

The second is when we encounter a perceived reality that suggests that other beings have some degree of individual existence, but our conviction is strong enough to dispel that mistaken perception.

The deepest level of unity, however, is when the perceived “other” itself becomes a vehicle by which G-d’s Oneness is revealed.

Torah study is particularly related to this final form of unity. It is the means by which the “independent” intelligence of the human being encounters the wisdom and will of G-d revealed in the Torah. The goal of study is for the individual to internalize its principles to the point that the human mind itself identifies with the wisdom found in the Torah, achieving, in the words of the Tanya, “a most wonderful unity, to which there is no unity similar or parallel in the physical realm” — that is, of two things as disparate as human intellect and G-d’s own intellect, Torah, — “that they should actually become one and united from every side and angle.”<sup>7</sup>

In other words, when these two intellects — that of G-d and that of humankind — unite, we achieve a new, third, and greater form of Oneness, as the Oneness of G-d permeates and becomes one with the intelligence of man.

To underscore this objective of true unity, expressed in the number three, the Torah was given not in the first month, nor the second, but in the third.

*- Based on Likkutei Sichos, vol. 2, pp. 301-303*

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7. Chapter 5.

ה' מְסִינֵי בָּא וְזָרַח מִשְׁעִיר לְמוֹ הוֹפִיעַ מִהַר פָּאֲרָן  
וְאֵתָהּ מִרְבֶּבֶת קֹדֶשׁ מִיְמִינוֹ אֵשׁ דָּת לְמוֹ

*G-d came from Sinai, He shone forth to them from Seir,  
He appeared from Mount Paran, He came with some of  
the holy myriads; from His right hand was a fiery Law  
for them.*

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דברים לג:ב | Devarim 33:2

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## *The Choicest Choice*

The Talmud remarks:

What did G-d seek in Seir, and what did He seek in Mount Paran? Said Rabbi Yochanan: This teaches us that G-d offered the Torah to every nation and every tongue, but none accepted it, until He came to the Jewish people, who accepted it.<sup>8</sup>

Why did G-d offer the Torah to the gentile nations, *knowing* that they would not accept it? The Midrash<sup>9</sup> explains that this was to refute any later claims by the nations that they would have accepted and observed the Torah if only they had been given a chance.

Alternatively, by offering the Torah to others, G-d revealed the extent to which He chooses the Jewish people as His nation—a central theme in the giving of the Torah.<sup>10</sup>

To select an item for its merits is not free choice; it is a

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8. Avodah Zarah 2b.

9. Mechilta, Yisro 5.

10. See Shulchan Aruch Admor Hazaken, Orach Chaim 60:4.

logical imperative. True “free” choice is to select between options that seem entirely equal, and to choose one of them solely because that is what you opt for, not because of any virtue or draw that particular option holds. It follows, then, that the Jewish people’s distinction as G-d’s “chosen nation”<sup>11</sup> means that G-d’s attachment to the Jew stems from a place where the individual qualities of the chosen and the unchosen are insignificant, where those who accept the Torah are as indistinctive as those who refuse it, yet G-d chooses them nonetheless.

This idea is expressed in the words of the prophet Malachi, “Was not Eisav a brother to Yaakov?’ says G-d. ‘Yet I loved Yaakov, and I hated Eisav.’”<sup>12</sup> Even where Eisav and Yaakov are brothers—equally good options—G-d still chooses Yaakov, the Jewish people.

Accordingly, we can understand why G-d offered the Torah to everyone equally before giving it to the Jewish people (in fact, *compelling* them to accept it!)<sup>13</sup> By leveling the playing field, as it were, between those who He knew would accept the Torah and those who He knew would reject it, G-d revealed that even in His very essence, before which all qualities and nations are equally insignificant, He desires and chooses the Jewish people as the lucky recipients of His Torah.

—Based on *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, pp. 1308–1309

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11. See Devarim 14:2, et al.

12. Malachi 1:2–3.

13. See Talmud, Shabbos 88a.

לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים

*You shall not have other gods.*

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שמות כ, ג | Shemos 20:3

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## *Outside Influences*

The Talmud<sup>14</sup> relates that the angels protested G-d giving the Torah to Bnei Yisrael, insisting that G-d's wisdom must not be shared with mortals of flesh and blood. In response, Moshe demonstrated that *only* humankind could fulfill the Torah's positive commands, and *only* mortal man—not perfect angels—required the Torah's prohibitive warnings.

Moshe's retorts to the angels included:

“What is written in it? ‘You shall not have other gods.’ Do you dwell among the nations that engage in idolatry?”

“What else is written therein? ‘Remember the Shabbos day, to keep it holy.’ Do you then perform work that you need to rest?”

“What else is written therein? ‘Honor your father and mother.’ Do you have fathers and mothers?”

“What else is written therein? ‘You shall not murder, you shalt not commit adultery, you shall not steal.’ Is there jealousy among you? Is there evil inclination among you?”

In addition to successfully making the case that the Torah should be given to the Jewish people, a careful examination of

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14. Shabbos 88b.

Moshe's arguments teaches us about the remarkable character of a Jew, as reflected in his struggles.

The Jewish body is holy, chosen by G-d to be part of His nation.<sup>15</sup> Thus, despite its physical neediness, it does not directly conflict with the ideals of the Divine soul. Moshe therefore refers to the body in a positive sense: only a physical human being can fulfill the commandments to honor one's parents, observe Shabbos, and the like.

In contrast, when speaking of the prohibitions, "You shall not murder, you shalt not commit adultery, you shall not steal," Moshe attributes their relevance not to bodily temptation but to the *yetzer hara*—"Is there evil inclination among you?"—implying that the possibility of transgressing these prohibitions is not innate to the Jew's physical body, but stems from a secondary source.

Yet even the Jew's *yetzer hara* has limits. When it comes to the Torah's prohibition of idolatry, therefore, Moshe mentions neither the physical body nor the lust of the *yetzer hara*. Instead, he challenged the angels, "Do you dwell among the nations that engage in idol worship?" If not for outside influences, Moshe reasoned, the Torah's warning against idolatry would be as superfluous for a Jew as it is for an angel.

—Based on *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 8, pp. 17-19

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15. Tanya, Chapter 49.

כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יַעֲקֹב וְתִגִּיד לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

*So shall you say to the house of Yaakov and speak to the sons of Yisrael.*

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שמות י"ט, ג | Shemos 19:3

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## *Ladies First*

Before the Giving of the Torah, G-d gave Moshe detailed instructions regarding the order and method by which he was to teach the laws to the Jewish people.<sup>16</sup> He was to teach the Torah first to “the House of Yaakov” and then to “the sons of Yisrael.” The Mechilta explains: “In soft terms, tell the basic ideas to the women,” and (then), “Speak to the sons of Israel (the men) and be exacting with them.”<sup>17</sup>

What are the “soft terms” that the Mechilta refers to? Some interpret “soft terms” to mean the virtue and value of the mitzvos, and the reward for their observance, but not the consequences for disobeying them.<sup>18</sup> “Basic ideas” is understood to mean a brief summary, without the weighty details—especially considering that women are exempt from many detailed positive commandments, specifically, the time-bound mitzvos.

An alternative explanation is possible, however. According to this reading, the “basic ideas” referred to by the Mechilta<sup>19</sup>

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16. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 36, pp. 86-89.

17. Mechilta d’Rabbi Yishmael on the verse.

18. See *Yifeh Toar* (orig.) on Shemos Rabbah 28:2.

19. Whereas Rashi (ad loc.), Shemos Rabbah, and the first explanation brought in the Mechilta might follow the first interpretation of “soft terms” and “basic ideas.”

are not the abridged version, but the *general principles* underlying all of the Torah and mitzvos. The essential underpinnings of a mitzvah were taught to the women; the exacting details were then taught to the men.

Thus, the order of instruction was a matter of pedagogical method: teach the principle before the particular.<sup>20</sup> To whom should each of these be taught? To the group most suited to them. Due to the superior quality of faith and fear of G-d that is innate to Jewish women, the underlying principles of the mitzvos — all of which aim to bring us to greater fear of G-d<sup>21</sup> — resonate more naturally with women than with men.

In keeping with this interpretation, the “soft terms” referred to by the Mechilta are not additional words of persuasion that Moshe was to say, but his emphasis on the women’s unique spiritual gifts—their suitability to the Torah’s principles, due to which they were addressed first.

- Based on *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 31, pp. 93-98

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20. Indeed, the entire Torah was given in similar fashion: first the Ten Commandments, then the 613 that derive from them.

21. See Devarim 6:24, “And G-d commanded us to observe all these statutes to fear G-d.”



and for the sake of Torah.” This is true not only of the initial creation of the world, but of every event that transpires at any time thereafter. Therefore, even when seemingly Divine Providence caused a particular event to occur for other reasons, the true objective is the direct impact the event will have on the Jewish people.

Accordingly, Rashi emphasizes that G-d brought the Ten Plagues upon the Egyptians not only in retribution for their treatment of Bnei Yisrael or to make them recognize the Creator, but for the effect that the plagues would have on Bnei Yisrael themselves—they would inspire within them a more profound fear of G-d.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 36, pp. 33-36*

דָּם

*Blood*

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## *Escaping the Cold*

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Bnei Yisrael's exile in Egypt seemed interminable. Slavery was such a deep part of their identity that they refused to believe that their redemption was imminent. Egypt's oppression of Bnei Yisrael was so severe that even Moshe struggled to understand how it could be part of G-d's plan. It was only when G-d struck the Egyptians with the Ten Plagues that Egypt's grip on the Jewish people began to crumble.

“In every generation and every day, one must regard himself as though he has come out of Egypt on that very day.”<sup>17</sup> The Torah's name for Egypt, *Mitzrayim*, shares a common root with the Hebrew word *meitzar*, constraint. Accordingly, Chassidus explains that “in every generation and every day,” one must constantly strive to escape his personal “Egypt”—the internal constraints that hinder and restrain his devoted service of G-d. In this context, the Ten Plagues represent ten steps through which we can breach even the toughest internal barriers, freeing our souls to fully experience our attachment to G-d.

In the first plague, the waters of the Nile River—which the Egyptians worshipped as a god—turned into blood.

Water is naturally cold; thus, the waters of the Nile represent coolness and indifference toward things that are G-dly and holy. This attitude of coolness is the root of

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<sup>17</sup>. Mishnah, Pesachim 10:5, cf. Tanya, chapter 47.

all spiritual ills, for it is impossible for a person to remain perpetually unexcited about *both* holiness and that which challenges holiness. Consequently, even if a person observes all the mitzvos but does so coldly and apathetically, his detachment will invariably bring him to interest in and attraction to ideas that are incompatible with a life of holiness.

The first and most crucial step toward our escape from Egypt is therefore to rid ourselves of the cold waters of the Nile, and infuse our Judaism and Torah observance with passion.

—*Likkutei Sichos, vol. 1, pp. 119-124*

לזכות

הת' **חיים מאיר** שי'  
לרגל הכנסו לעול המצוות בשעטו"מ  
ביום ח' סיון אסרו חג השבועות ה'תשפ"ו

יה"ר שישגדל להיות חסיד, ירא שמים ולמדן  
לנח"ר הוריו וכל משפחתו שיחיו

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נדפס ע"י הוריו

הרה"ת **מנחם מענדל** וזוגתו מרת **סאסא** שיחיו

**קרעמער**

לזכות

**זעלדא רחל סלונים** תחי'

בת הרה"ת **לוי יצחק** וזוגתו מרת **הדסה** שיחיו  
לרגל הגיעה לגיל שנים עשרה שנה היא עונת בת מצוה  
בשעטו"מ ביום ח' סיון ה'תשפ"ו

יה"ר שתקבל על עצמה עול מלכות שמים ועול מצוות  
בלבב שלם, ותצליח בקיום המצוות מתוך יראת שמים  
ולגדול להיות בת חב"ד מתאימה לרצון נשיאנו  
ולנח"ר כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע

לעילוי נשמת  
הרה"ח אליהו  
בן הר' **יעקב קאפיל** ע"ה  
**וואגעל**  
נלב"ע ב' סיון תש"פ  
תנצב"ה  
•  
נדפס ע"י חתנו ובתו  
הרה"ת אריה וזוגתו מרת דבורה שיחיו  
סופרין

לעילוי נשמת  
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תנצב"ה

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**לוי**  
נלב"ע ביום ג' סיון ה'תשפ"ב  
תנצב"ה  
•  
נדפס ע"י בני משפחתה שיחיו



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