



SICHA – 10 SHEVAT, 5743 – 1983

*Free Translation**

It is well known regarding my father-in-law the Rebbe, that immediately upon arriving here, in the United States, one of his first statements was that he had come in order to highlight, emphasize and encourage that “America is no different.” This is why, he explained, he planned to continue all activities, just as he had done overseas.

Some people wonder:

His coming to the United States was because he was forced by Divine Providence to flee from that side of the ocean, the Nazi regime, etc. The details of how he managed to escape are well known, the miracles, and how he left with the last ship, etc.

That means, in other words, why did he come here? Because America is different. Here one can be safe even through natural means, for G-d desires that the rescue to be within the laws of nature. So it would seem that this is why he came.

Yet his first statement was that he did not come here to save himself, but rather to bring with him the idea that America is no different, and to ensure that this idea was translated into practical action. This seems to be a paradox?

The answer lies in refining our perspective. When one looks at something only externally, or looks at no more than the lowest rung of practical results, it is impossible to have the right “picture” –the proper understanding– of the situation in its totality. In fact, the conclusions reached can be the exact opposite of the truth –from one extreme to another.

If we view the Rebbe’s coming to America as an isolated event, it was obviously for the purpose of his rescue through natural means. For the United States was, in fact, different from the country he left.

But when we look at the core of the issue –his overall purpose as he saw it, to sow, to spread, and to strengthen Judaism– and that was the purpose of his creation and the purpose of his stay in this world.

*) Taken from the Subtitles that appear on the screen



פרשת תצוה

In that regard the United States was just the same as overseas. Before he left as well, this was his main mission and the focus of all of his activity throughout his entire life, "he toiled in it all his days," as the Alter Rebbe writes.

So regarding this objective America is no different—it's exactly the same!

But over there, it was expressed in that situation, in ways which befit those circumstances. Therefore he was involved with spreading Yiddishkeit in accordance with the local condition amongst the Jews there.

So immediately upon arriving here he announced his principal intent, which also permeated his most minor deeds. For everything he did was infused with this idea, of spreading Judaism; the essence of Judaism, and to unite all Jews as one.

This is the translation and lesson of "America is no different" for people like ourselves, in our regular day-to-day activities:

One may argue: "When I sit down to eat, I shouldn't be disturbed by the fact that I have a mission to make the world into a dwelling place for G-d. I need to dine in peace, and I can't be interrupted with other matters. Of course, this is a very important issue, but now is not the time for it!" The same may be argued with regard to his drinking, working, giving charity, etc.

The response is, however, that "America is no different":

When you sit down to eat, he's no different than when he's standing before G-d in prayer, "like a servant before his master." The difference is only that at certain times it is obvious that he's serving G-d through prayer. When eating and drinking it may be less obvious, but he eats and drinks in a refined way, being a member of "the wise and understanding People." You are serving G-d through your eating! Proof positive: you said a blessing before beginning to eat, and after eating, too—if you ate the required amount—you will recite the after-blessing.

Then the entire day is elevated, for the entire day is permeated with the same ideal. Although Torah requires him to act differently; the activities differ only externally, but they all share the same intent and soul.

