

LIKUTEY MOHARAN #5¹

“*B’chatzotzrot* (With trumpets) and the sound of the shofar shout out before God, the King.”

(Psalms 98:6)

Now, each person must say: “The entire world was created only for my sake” (*Sanhedrin* 37a).² Consequently, because the world was created for my sake, I must constantly look into and consider

1. **Likutey Moharan #5.** Rebbe Nachman taught this lesson on Monday, Rosh HaShanah 5563 (September 27, 1802), shortly after he had taken up residence in the city of Breslov. On Sunday of the previous week (September 19), the man who was to become Rebbe Nachman’s closest follower and scribe, Reb Noson, met the Rebbe for the very first time. The text of the lesson is *leshon Rabbeinu z’l* (see end of first note to Lesson #2 where this terminology has been explained). From the Rebbe’s own testimony we know that within its sections are concealed the mystical intentions relating to *tefilin* (see *Likutey Moharan* I, 38:end, in note). Indeed, Reb Noson later composed his own discourse explaining the concepts of *tefilin* based on this lesson (see *Likutey Halakhot, Orach Chaim, Tefilin* 4). The main themes of the lesson are: mitigating decrees; performing the mitzvot with joy and the reward for the mitzvot; intense prayer; cleansing one’s mind of undesirable thoughts; and strife between tzaddikim. Reb Noson once said that the inspiration and guidance he drew from this lesson, the first full discourse he heard from Rebbe Nachman, served him throughout his life.

At the time Rebbe Nachman gave the lesson, decrees were very much an issue in the Jewish communities under Czarist rule. Being considered were several new enactments by the Czar’s “Committee for the Amelioration of the Jews.” In time, these decrees would lead to enforced secular education, the Cantonist Edicts and ultimately to the establishment of the Pale of Jewish Settlement. In 1802, the Jewish leadership convened to seek ways to avert these disastrous decrees. Their efforts, however, met with much resistance, in particular because of the support the Russian government received from the burgeoning Jewish enlightenment movement known as the *Haskalah*.

Reb Nachman of Tcherin writes: I heard from my father (Reb Zvi Aryeh, son of Reb Aharon of Breslov) that Rebbe Nachman hinted at the time that the verdict had already been issued in Heaven. Even so, the Rebbe worked the entire year to somehow mitigate these decrees. (Several other of the Rebbe’s lessons given in the year 5563 (1802-1803) also relate to the concept of mitigating decrees, e.g., *Likutey Moharan* I, #10, #49.) Some of the other chassidim remember the Rebbe commenting, “If all the tzaddikim joined me in this, I could overturn these decrees completely. As it is, I’ve pushed them off for some twenty-odd years.” This turned out to be precisely what happened.

Through Rebbe Nachman’s prayers these decrees were deferred. It was not until 1827, twenty-five years after the Rebbe had taught this lesson, that the Czarist government, under Czar Nikolai I (the “Iron Czar”), revived the matter and the authorities decided to enforce

ליקוטי מוהר"ן סימנו ה'

לשון רבינו, זכרונו לברכה

בְּחִזְצָרוֹת וּקְול שָׁופֵר הָרִיעוֹ לִפְנֵי וּכְוֹ: (תהלים צח)

א. **כִּי צָרִיךְ כֵּל אָדָם לְוָמֵר** (סנהדרין לו.): **כִּל הָעוֹלָם לֹא נִבְרָא אַלְאֵ**
בְּשִׁבְבִּילִי. **נִמְצָא,** **כַּשְׁהָעוֹלָם נִבְרָא בְּשִׁבְבִּילִי,** **צָרִיךְ אָנִי לִרְאוֹת וְלִעְזֹזָן**

a series of social and educational reforms. The Cantonists kidnapped twelve-year-old (and even younger) Jewish boys, forced them to eat unkosher and baptized them, and then, at age eighteen, conscripted them into the Czar’s army for a period of twenty-five years! In addition, conniving with the *Haskalah*’s proponents, the Russian government succeeded in foisting secular education upon the Jewish youth and thus uprooting whole segments of Jewish society from their heritage (see *Through Fire and Water*, Chapter 32). It was to mitigate these decrees that Rebbe Nachman taught this Torah lesson, “*B’chatzotzrot* (With Trumpets),” which alludes to these reforms (*Tzaddik* #127; *Parparaot LeChokhmah; Siach Sarfei Kodesh* 508, 1-31).

Typical of well nigh all of Rebbe Nachman’s teachings, this lesson relates to the general as well as the particular, the communal as well as the personal. Thus, aside from decrees, the topic with which the lesson opens, Rebbe Nachman also discusses the need for being free of undesirable thoughts that sour the mind like *chametz* (§4). While this is a clear reference to the *Haskalah*’s efforts to instill alien philosophies and ideologies into Jewish minds and hearts, on the more individual level, it also pertains to being free to concentrate one’s thoughts and feelings when praying. At the time, this was of particular importance to the Rebbe’s newest follower, Reb Noson. He had long found it difficult to stay focused while praying and was looking to Rebbe Nachman for guidance on this matter.

Nor was focusing in prayer the only matter troubling Reb Noson that Rebbe Nachman addressed in his lesson. Reb Noson hailed from a family of *mitnagdim* (opponents to Chassidism). His father-in-law, Rabbi Dovid Zvi Orbach, though renowned for his piety and a well respected halakhic authority in the Podolia region, was a staunch *mitnaged*. It was therefore with no small degree of personal disquiet that Reb Noson decided to take up the chassidic way, which he did sometime in 1796, at the age of sixteen. Now, some six years later, he was still sensitive to the criticism raised against the path established by the Baal Shem Tov. Not only had the opposition to Chassidism from without not abated, but even worse, for Reb Noson, was what seemed to be the constant in-fighting among the various tzaddikim themselves. At that very time, Rebbe Nachman’s move to Breslov had further fueled what proved to be a relentless and vicious campaign by the Shpola Zeida to discredit the Rebbe. Reb Noson was having trouble comprehending how such righteous individuals, whose entire lives were dedicated to serving God, could be involved in such contentiousness and conflict. Rebbe Nachman also addresses this in his lesson (§4), advising Reb Noson not to pay attention to the disputes between tzaddikim because they involved matters more lofty than most people are able to perceive.

2. **only for my sake.** The Talmud teaches that at Creation, everything—all the fish, birds, animals, etc.—was created male and female. The one exception to this was man, Adam. He

ways of making the world better; to provide what is missing in the world and pray on its behalf.³

{"The verdict is decreed by the destroying angels, and the request is through the *maamar* of the holy ones" (Daniel 4:14).}

And in the matter of prayer,⁴ there are two approaches. Before the decree has been issued we follow the regular order of prayer and there is no need to veil the prayers.⁵ But after the decree has been issued our prayers have to be disguised <within stories>, so that the <accusing angels> standing to the left do not understand and protest.⁶ As is written, "The verdict is decreed by the destroying angels"⁷—i.e., when it is after the decree has been issued—then, "the request is through the *maamar*⁸ of the holy ones"—then the tzaddikim disguise their requests in a *maamar*.⁹

was created alone, and from him God formed woman, Chavah. Why? Our Sages explain that this was to teach that each individual is considered an entire world in his/her own right. Each person can therefore say that the world was created only for him. In addition, this is to show that each person is born with the innate ability to choose between right and wrong; the extent to which we are influenced by inherited, predetermined qualities in no way denies us our free will (*Maharsha, loc. cit. s.v. l'phikhakh*). See next note.

3. **I must constantly look...on its behalf.** Rebbe Nachman adds a deeper dimension to "The entire world was created only for my sake." He says: If it is for *my* sake, then it is *my responsibility*. It is specifically up to me to see that the world becomes a better place. And, conversely, because the world is *my* responsibility, I must see to flee from all evil—whether in thought, word or deed. This is because all wrongdoing brings harm in its wake, harm that is up to me to prevent (*Mai HaNachal*; see also *Rashi, loc. cit., s.v. bishvili*).

4. **matter of prayer.** Rebbe Nachman will show that the main means by which a person can improve the world is prayer, when coupled with fear of God. Reb Noson writes that without the fear of God the world is incomplete, as we can understand from the converse (Psalms 34:10), "Those who fear Him lack nothing." This indicates that it is the fear of God that makes the world a better place to live (*Likutey Halakhot, Harshaah* 3:20).

5. **no need to veil the prayers.** God created the world with the intention that mankind would serve Him. Towards this end, God prepared man's needs and then gave him the channel of prayer by which man could ask for whatever he might need and thereby directly communicate with Him (see *Rashi, Genesis* 2:5). This was how it was meant to be as long as the channel stayed open. However, as mankind has discovered, sin and iniquity cause the prayer-channel to become clogged and obscured; such as occurred at the decree of the Flood (see below, §2), and again when the decree to destroy the Holy Temple was implemented. Concerning the latter Scripture states (Lamentations 3:8), "Though I would cry out and plead, He shut out my prayer." From this we learn that there is a difference between before and after the decree has been issued. Prior to the decree, the channels are open and one can pray in the usual manner.

6. **angels standing to the left...protest.** The prophet Mikhayhu said (I Kings 22:19), "I saw God seated on His throne, with all the host of heaven standing in attendance to His right and

בְּכָל עֵת בַּתְּקוֹן הַעוֹלָם וְלִמְלָאוֹת חִסְרוֹן הַעוֹלָם, וְלַהְתִּפְלֵל בַּעֲבוּרָם. וְעַבְנָנוּ הַתִּפְלָה הָן בְּשַׁנִּי פָנִים. הִנֵּנוּ קָדָם גָּזָר דִּין מִתְפָלִין כִּסְדָּר הַתִּפְלָה, וְאֵין צָרִיךְ לְהַלְבִּישׁ הַתִּפְלָה, אֲכָל לְאַחֲרָ גָּזָר דִּין צָרִיךְ לְהַלְבִּישׁ הַתִּפְלָה, כִּדְיַ שְׁלָא יִבְנֵנוּ הַמְלָאכִים הַעוֹמְדִים לְשֶׁמֶאל, וְלֹא יִקְטְּרָגוּ. כְּמוֹ שְׁכֹתּוֹב (דָנִיאֵל ד): "בְּגִנּוֹת עִירֵין פְּתַגְמִין", הִנֵּנוּ לְאַחֲרָ גָּזָר דִּין, אָזִי "בְּמַאֲמָר קְדִישֵׁן שְׁאַלְתֵּן", אָזִי הַצָּדִיקִים מְלַבְּשִׁים שְׁאַלְתֵּם בְּמַאֲמָר.

to His left." Rashi asks: Is there [a right or] a left above? No, but there are those [angels] who incline to the right and those who incline to the left. Those to the right speak favorably, whereas those to the left find fault (*loc. cit.*). The angels on the left, the prosecuting angels, are created by man's sins. They criticize and fault a person's prayers, saying: "This person has sinned. He does not deserve to have his prayers answered!" When this happens, a person must camouflage and disguise his prayers in order to hide them from the prosecuting angels.

7. **decreed by the destroying angels.** That is to say, the verdict has been issued due to the prosecuting angels (*Metzudat David*). It is then made known to the destroying angels, the messengers who are appointed to mete out the punishment decreed by the Holy One (*Parparaoth LeChokhmah*).

8. **maamar.** The word *maamar* has several usages. Literally, it connotes any sort of utterance. Thus, in the verse quoted from Daniel, it indicates a decree that is by the word of God. It can also refer to a spoken phrase, an oral discourse on a Torah subject, plain conversation, or even the telling of a story. These are all the different forms the tzaddikim use to disguise their prayers (see n.177).

In general, Rebbe Nachman's intention is for every person to exercise his power of prayer for the benefit of the world. Yet, when the Rebbe speaks about disguising the prayers, he is referring to the tzaddikim, those who know that they must camouflage their prayers in order for them to be effective. In the course of the lesson, once the Rebbe explains how one knows whether it is before or after the decree has been issued, it will become clear that only the very great tzaddikim can attain this knowledge in full. Still, there are many aspects of this teaching that apply to everyone, each in accordance with the spiritual level he has attained. And these aspects make it imperative that each person engage in praying for the world as best he can, and in every manner available. This is especially possible through the practice of *hitbodedut*, the personal, secluded prayer that Rebbe Nachman so strongly advocated (see *Outpouring of the Soul, passim*; *Crossing the Narrow Bridge*, Chapter 9; *Under the Table*, Chapter 6). Formulating one's *hitbodedut* prayers in one's native tongue, in accordance with the dictates of each new day, allows a person the freedom to pray in either a straightforward manner or in a veiled manner, depending upon what the particular situation calls for. In this way, the Rebbe's teaching applies to all people, and not just to the tzaddikim.

9. **in a maamar.** In review: Every person is responsible to make the world a better place. He can do this by praying for the world's benefit, as prayer has the power to mitigate decrees.

2. But how do we know whether it is before the decree has been issued or after the decree has been issued? We can determine whether it is before the decree or after the decree by means of the mitzvot we perform.¹⁰

And this is specifically when a person performs the mitzvot with such great joy, that he has no desire for any reward in the World to Come.¹¹ Instead, his only desire is that the Holy One provide him with the opportunity to do another mitzvah as a reward for the first mitzvah. As in the saying of the Sages: The reward for a mitzvah is a mitzvah (*Avot* 4:2)—for he derives pleasure from the mitzvah itself.¹²

This is the difference between the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu and the prophecy of the other prophets.¹³ It is similar to Rashi's commentary to, "Moshe spoke to the tribal heads of the Children of Israel, saying, 'Zeh hadavar (This is the word) God has commanded'" (Numbers 30:2).¹⁴ Rashi explains: All the prophets prophesied with "Koh (Thus) says God." Moshe achieved even more than they in that he prophesied with "Zeh hadavar." For *koh* corresponds to a dull looking-glass, whereas *zeh hadavar* corresponds to a clear looking-glass.¹⁵

However, when decrees are extant and man's prayers are obscured by his sins, he has to disguise his prayers in a *maamar*.

10. **But how...mitzvot we perform.** Having taught that prayer has the power to mitigate decrees but that it must take on a different form once the decree has been issued, Rebbe Nachman now shows how one can tell whether it is before or after the decree has been issued. This entails performing the mitzvot with joy, as the Rebbe next explains, and being sensitive to the constructs of World-Year-Soul, as he explains below.

11. **with such great joy....** The first element in discerning the state of the decree is performing the mitzvot with pure joy, solely for the sake of performing the mitzvot.

12. **The reward for a mitzvah....** The simple explanation of the Mishnah is that God rewards the performance of a mitzvah by providing the person with the means for performing yet another mitzvah and thereby merit even greater reward for his efforts (*Rabbeinu Yonah, loc. cit.*). Rebbe Nachman's interpretation is that the person doing the mitzvah has no desire for reward other than another mitzvah to do. For such a person, the reward is felt in the performance of the mitzvah itself. This is certainly a most exalted spiritual level; a state of awareness that is by no means common in the world. Reb Noson describes it as having reached the ultimate level of perfection (*Torat Natan* #2). Therefore, with this as a prerequisite for determining whether it is before or after the decree has been issued, it is understandable why most people are never capable of such discernment. Nevertheless, this is not to say that the common man has no role to play in mitigating heaven's decrees. On the contrary, the greater the level of joy a person reaches in performing the mitzvot, the greater the level of his prayers and their effectiveness, albeit indirectly, in mitigating a decree.

ב. אבל איך ידעינו בין קדם גור דין לבין אחר גור דין? על-ידי המצוות שאנו עושים, יכולין אנחנו לידע בין קדם גור דין לבין אחר גור דין.

ודוקא כשהעושים המצוות בשמה גדולה כל כך, עד שאין רוץ בשום שבר עולם הבא, אלא הוא רוץ שיזמין לו הקדוש-ברוך-הוא מצוה אחרת בשבר מצוה זאת, כאמור חכמיינו, זכרונם לברכה (אבות פרק ד משנה ב): 'שבר מצוה - מצוה', כי הוא נהנה מהמצוה עצמה.

וזהו החלוקת שבין נביות משה רבינו לבין נביות שאר נביאים, בפירוש ר'ש": "וירבד משה אל ראש המטויות וככ' זה הדבר אשר צוה ה'", פירוש ר'ש" (בمدבר ל): כל הנביאים נתנו בא ב'כה אמר ה'", נספה עליהם משה, שהתנו בא: ב'זה הדבר". כי בחינת כה" הוא אספקלריא שאינה מארה, ו'זה הדבר" הוא בחינת אספקלריא המארה.

13. **Moshe...other prophets.** Rebbe Nachman gives Moshe as an example of someone who performed the mitzvot without seeking reward. In this he surpassed all the other prophets, just as he surpassed all the other prophets in prophetic ability. As we will see, the Sages associate prophecy with reward. In our context, this implies that just as prophecy enables one to foresee the future and discern impending decrees, so, too, the reward for performing mitzvot for their own sake is the ability to know whether it is before or after the decree has been issued. The Rebbe elaborates:

14. **Zeh hadavar....** This was said to the heads of the tribes regarding the laws of vows. See below, note 21.

15. **Koh...zeh...looking-glass.** Moshe was the greatest of all prophets, and the clarity of his revelations has never been equaled (*Yevamot* 49b). God Himself attests to this: "If someone among you experiences divine prophecy, then when I make Myself known to him in a vision, I will speak to him in a dream. This is not true of My servant Moshe...With him I speak face to face, in a vision not containing allegory, so that he sees a true picture of God" (Numbers 12:6-8). Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto writes: Yet even in Moshe's case, the Glory could only be revealed to the extent that he was able to accept it. Even he could not see the Glory directly, but only as an image formed in a mirror, since without this, no human being can have a perception of the Creator. The image that Moshe saw, however, was one that was complete and clear, just like an image seen through a highly polished and clear looking-glass, without a trace of dullness.... This was not true of any other prophet, since none could attain

These two aspects of prophecy are also found in our service of the Creator.¹⁶ There is the person who does the mitzvah for the reward of the World to Come—he has no enjoyment from the mitzvah itself. If he were not given the World to Come as a reward, he would not do it.¹⁷ This corresponds to *koh*, a dull looking-glass. Just like the person who sees something from a distance, so, too, he performs the mitzvah for the reward it will bring at a distant time, after this world.

{“He who goes weeping on his way carrying a seed-bag, *yavo verina nosay alumotav* (will come back with songs of joy, carrying his sheaves)” (Psalms 126:6).}

And the payment of reward is called *navy* (prophet). This is because the first letters of “*Yavo Verina Nosay Alumotav*” <spell NAVY>.¹⁸

The payment of reward is also alluded to in the verse itself. <As Rashi explains:> “He who goes weeping on his way carrying a seed-bag”—he is pained by the [mitzvah’s] performance. “He will come

even such a vision adequately (*The Way of God* 3:5:5, translated by Aryeh Kaplan, Feldheim Publishers).

Rashi points out that the difference in the quality of prophecy between Moshe and the other prophets is indicated by their choice of words. Moshe introduces his vision by using the word *zeh*, which indicates precision: “precisely this.” The clarity of his vision can be likened to looking into a highly polished and clear looking-glass. Other prophets introduce their visions by using the word *koh*, which indicates imprecision: “approximately thus.” The lack of clarity of their visions can be likened to looking into a dull and blurred looking-glass. The other prophets all prophesied with *koh* because their visions lacked Moshe’s clarity (see *Rashi* on Numbers 30:2, and *Siftei Chakhamim*, *ad loc.*)

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds: We can now better appreciate Moshe’s desire enter the Holy Land. Not only did he want to enter the Land, a mitzvah unto itself, but he also very much wanted to be able to perform those mitzvot that are only applicable in the Land of Israel. Thus, the reward for the mitzvah of entering the Land would have been the ability to perform more mitzvot.

16. service of the Creator. Reb Noson explains that ideally each person must strive to unite the two aspects of *koh* and *zeh*. He should attach himself, his *koh*, to the true tzaddikim, who have attained the level of *zeh*. This is what the prophets themselves did. It was forbidden for them to derive new laws based on their prophetic visions (*Shabbat* 104a). Rather, they all sought to strengthen the observance of the Torah as Moshe taught it, as in (Malachi 3:22), “Remember the Torah of Moshe.” This united the prophets/*koh* with Moshe/*zeh*, the two aspects becoming one. Now, in every generation there are great tzaddikim whose perception of Godliness is on the level of *zeh* (see *Sukkah* 45b). Everyone else must attach themselves to these tzaddikim. By doing so, evil is subdued, decrees are mitigated, and whatever was lacking is lacking no more. Everyone then serves God with true joy (*Torat Natan* #3). The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds: Moshe has a portion in every mitzvah that a Jew performs (because through him the Jews received the commandments). Inversely, when

וְאֶלְוּ הַשְׁתִּי בְּחִינּוֹת נְבִיאוֹת יִשְׁ בַּעֲבוֹדַת הַבּוֹרָא. יִשְׁ אָדָם הַעֲוֹשָׂה הַמְצֻוֹה בְּשִׁכְרָר עַולְם הַבָּא, שְׁאַינְנוּ נְהַנָּה מִהַמְצֻוֹה בְּעַצְמָה, אֲלֹו לֹא הִי נוֹתַנִּין לוּ עַולְם הַבָּא בְּשִׁכְרָה, לֹא הִי עֲוֹשָׂה אֹתָה, וְזֹה בְּחִינּוֹת “כָּה”, אַסְפָּקָלְרִיא שְׁאַיְנָה מְאִירָה. כְּמוּ אָדָם שְׁרוֹאָה אַיִלָּה דָּבָר מַרְחֹקָה, כִּן הוּא עֲוֹשָׂה הַמְצֻוֹה בְּשִׁכְרָה הַבָּא לְעֵת רְחוּקָה, הַיָּנוּ אַחֲרָ עַולְם הַזֹּה.

וְשַׁלּוּם שְׁכָר נִקְרָא בִּשְׁמָ נְבִיא, כִּי רְאֵשִׁי תְּבוֹתָ שֶׁל: יִבְאָ בְּרִנָּה נְשָׂא אַלְמֹתִי.

וְשֵׁם בְּפָסֹוק הַזֹּה נְרָמֶז עַל שַׁלּוּם שְׁכָר: “הַלּוֹךְ יַלְךְ וּבְכָה נְוַשָּׂא מִשְׁדֵּ הַזָּרְעָ”, שְׁמַצְטָעֵר בְּעַשְׁיַתָּה, “בָּא יִבְאָ בְּרִנָּה נְשָׂא אַלְמֹתִי”,

doing a mitzvah, especially when we do it with great joy, we draw from the clarity of vision that Moshe had. Each of us, commensurate with the spiritual level we’ve achieved, is then included in Moshe’s *zeh*.

17. no enjoyment...would not do it. It is not the most virtuous of intentions to serve God only for the ultimate reward. Still, the person who does so is considered one who serves God. It is also a fact that the mitzvot provide tremendous reward for those who fulfill them. Then again, the mitzvot are Divine proclamations, and in recognition of this the Jews have historically fulfilled His Will even in the most trying times. That being so, why does Rebbe Nachman say, “If he were not given the World to Come as a reward, he would not do it?” It must therefore be that the Rebbe is in fact referring to someone whose primary enjoyment when performing the mitzvot stems from the ultimate reward that he knows awaits him. In his case, “If he were not given the World to Come...he would not do it” means that he would not do it with any joy and satisfaction in his heart but solely out of obligation (*Parparaot LeChokhmah*).

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* also offers another explanation for “If he were not given the World to Come as a reward....” He writes: Certain mitzvot are conditional. For example, *tzitzit* are required only on one’s four-cornered garments. A person who has no four-cornered garment is exempt from the mitzvah. If, despite this, he acquires a four-cornered garment so that he might don *tzitzit*—i.e., for the sake of the mitzvah itself—his act is indeed a most worthy one. But if his motivation in acquiring the four-cornered garment and affixing the *tzitzit* is so that he will be rewarded in the World to Come, then it is as though he were looking through a dull looking-glass: he looks into the distance, lacking clarity of vision.

18. Yavo Verina Nosay Alumotav...NAVY. Aside from the direct connection that the verse has with reward (see next note), in the context of the lesson the letters also hint to reward, or more specifically to prophecy, which Rebbe Nachman has just connected to reward. As the Rebbe points out, the Hebrew term for prophet *navy* (נְבִיא) forms an acrostic for the phrase *yavo verina nosay alumotav* (יבא ברנה נשא אלומותוי).

back with songs of joy, carrying his sheaves”—he will rejoice in the Future, when he will receive reward for the mitzvot.¹⁹

But the prophet²⁰ who prophesies with *zeh hadavar* does not desire the reward of the mitzvot. Rather, he desires the mitzvah itself. He rejoices so much in its performance that he rejects any kind of reward. We see, then, that his World to Come is in the mitzvah itself.

This is therefore the concept of *NAVY*—i.e., the payment of reward—corresponding to *zeh hadavar*, a clear looking-glass. Just like the person who sees something from up close, with a splendidly clear view, so, too, he enjoys the mitzvah itself and his reward is right before his eyes.²¹

And it is the person who is on this level—who performs the mitzvah with such great joy that he has no desire for any reward of the World to Come in return—who is able to differentiate between before the decree has been issued and after the decree has been issued.²²

This is because the mitzvot form a complete construct.²³ And they

19. **The payment...for the mitzvot.** Often time the opportunity to do a mitzvah comes with some difficulty or hardship. This is the implied meaning of “He who goes weeping....” But Scripture assures that this person “will come back with songs of joy, carrying his sheaves.” Moreover, his reward will be in proportion to the effort expended and the suffering endured, so that his joy will be that much greater (cf. *Metzudat David*).

The question is, how is it that people are able to rejoice in the moment, in this world, when at the very same time they are suffering from the difficulties (physical, psychological and/or monetary) they encounter in the performance of the mitzvot? For we see that Jews are indeed happy to merit performing God’s commandments even when they see no tangible reward for their efforts. Where does this joy come from? However, to quote the Talmud, if the Jews are not prophets, they are certainly the descendants of prophets (*Pesachim* 66a). As the Sages taught: Even though a person might not see, his guardian angel sees (*Megillah* 3a). The soul of each Jew is acutely aware of the wonderfully sweet portion reserved for the person who succeeds in doing a mitzvah. This is, “*Yavo Verina Nosay Alumotav*”—*NAVY*. In the sense that he is a “prophet,” each Jew is able to perceive the spark and illumination of the future reward for the mitzvot.

Today, this type of perception is the one aspect of prophecy we have left. But even in this respect there are two levels. Some people’s joy is only that their soul senses the great reward it will receive in the World to Come. This corresponds to the dull looking-glass. Others, however, succeed in rejoicing in the mitzvah itself. This corresponds to the clear looking-glass, a prophetic vision in the aspect of *zeh*. And although in its fullest such awareness is certainly beyond human comprehension in this world, it does presently exist in the form of a holy spark; a spark incomprehensibly derived from genuine prophecy (*Parparaot LeChokhmah*).

שִׁשְׁמָח לְעַתִּיד, כַּשִּׁקְבֵּל שְׁכָר הַמְצֻוֹת. רָאשֵׁי תְּבוֹתָה שֶׁל יָבָא בְּרִנָּה נְשָׂא אַלְמֹתִיו, רָאשֵׁי תְּבוֹתֹת נְבִיא.

אֲבָל נְבִיא שְׁמַתְנֵבָא בְּ”זָה הַדָּבָר”, שְׁאַינָּו רֹצֶח בְּשְׁכָר הַמְצֻוֹת, אֶלָּא רֹצֶח בְּמִצְוָה בְּעִצְמָה, שְׁהִיא מִשְׁמָח כָּל כֵּה בְּעִשְׁתָּה, עַד שְׁמַמָּאָס בְּכָל מִין שְׁכָר, נִמְצָא שְׁעוֹלָם הַבָּא שְׁלִוּ בְּהַמִּצְוָה בְּעִצְמָה.

וְזֹה בְּחִינַת נְבִיא, הַינּו שְׁלָום שְׁכָר, בְּבִחִינַת: “זָה הַדָּבָר”, בְּבִחִינַת אַסְפָּקְלָרִיא הַמְאִירָה, כַּמוֹ אָדָם הַרוֹאָה דָבָר מִקְרָוב בַּרְאִיא יְפָה וּבְרָה, כַּמוֹ כֵן הוּא נַהֲנָה מִהַמִּצְוָה בְּעִצְמָה, וּשְׁכָרָו נִגְד עִינָיו. וּמִי שְׁהִוא בְּמִדְרָגָה הַזֹּאת, שְׁעוֹשָׂה הַמִּצְוָה בְּשִׁמְחָה גִּדּוֹלָה כָּל כֵּה, עַד שְׁאַינָן רֹצֶח בְּשָׁוָם שְׁכָר עוֹלָם הַבָּא בְּשִׁבְילָה, הוּא יִכְלֶל לִידְעָה בֵין קָדָם גָּזָר דַיָּן לְאַחֲרָ גָּזָר דַיָּן.

כִּי הַמִּצְוֹת הֵם קָוָמָה שְׁלִמָה, וְהֵם מַחְיִין אֶת כָּל הַקּוֹמוֹת, הֵן

20. **But the prophet.** Based on what he has said, Rebbe Nachman here uses the term “prophet” to refer to anyone who performs mitzvot. There are those who prophesy with the indeterminate and anticipatory *koh*—i.e., they perform mitzvot for future reward in the World to Come. And, there are those who prophesy with the precise and immediate *zeh*—i.e., they perform mitzvot without any thought of future reward. This, as mentioned, was the level of Moshe’s service of God.

21. **reward is right before his eyes.** We can now appreciate why Rashi’s explanation of *zeh* and *koh* appears specifically in connection with the verses in Numbers that deal with vows (see nn.14-15). When a person takes a vow, he, for reasons of his own, voluntarily obligates himself to do something that he is not required to do. Nonetheless, the Torah stipulates reward for the person who fulfills his self-imposed obligation. Based on Rebbe Nachman’s insights, we can say that even in the case of vows Moshe advises the Jewish tribal leaders to volunteer only for the aspect of *zeh*, without any interest in future reward (*Parparaot LeChokhmah*).

22. **And it is the person who is on this level....** This is the second element in knowing whether it is before or after the decree has been issued (see n. 10).

23. **mitzvot form a complete construct.** There are 248 positive commandments, corresponding to the 248 limbs of the human body. And there are 365 prohibitive commandments, corresponding to the 365 veins and sinews of the body (*Mai HaNachal*). It is therefore said of the mitzvot that they form a complete body, or construct.

give life to all other constructs; whether it be the construct of Man, or the construct of World, or the construct of Year.²⁴ For World-Year-Soul²⁵ receive vitality from the mitzvot, as in (Psalms 33:4), “All His work is done with faith,” and also (*ibid.* 119:86), “All Your mitzvot are faith.”²⁶ Thus, the Holy One is in simple unity with the mitzvot.²⁷

Therefore, when the Holy One’s works are as they should be and in proper order,²⁸ the Holy One is happy with them and delights in them, as is written (Psalms 104:31), “God rejoices in His works.”²⁹ Like a craftsman who makes some vessel. If the vessel is beautiful, then he delights in it. And the joy of the Holy One is clothed in the mitzvot, because they are His unity.³⁰

Now, when the person who performs the mitzvah with a joy derived from the mitzvah itself enters into the joy of the mitzvah, he

24. **give life to all other constructs....** Through the mitzvot spiritual vitality is drawn into all the 248 limbs and 365 sinews and veins that make up the construct of the human body. From the teachings of the Kabbalah we know that the World too is a construct, made up of a head, a heart, and all the other limbs (cf. *Kohelet Rabbah* 1:9; *Sefer Yetzirah* 3:4, 4:5-11, 5:2). Similarly, the Year is a construct, with a head, a heart, etc. (e.g., *Rosh HaShanah* is the “head” of the year, and the Three Festivals are its “heart”; *Likutey Moharan* I, 30:5). All three of these constructs receive their vitality from the joyous performance of the mitzvot (*Mai HaNachal*). See following two notes.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* points out that the letters of the name *Moshe Rabbeinu* (משה רבינו, Moshe our teacher) have a numerical value of 613, equivalent to the total number of mitzvot in the Torah (*Megaleh Amukot*, Section 113). This alludes to the fact that Moshe himself corresponds to the entire construct of the mitzvot. His prophetic level was therefore *zeh*—clarity, and joy in the mitzvot. Reb Noson adds that this is why the tzaddik who performs the mitzvot with great joy—thus becoming an aspect of Moshe—has the ability to bring the entire world to serve God. Through him all the constructs are rectified and all that is lacking in the world is made whole (*Torat Natan* #1).

25. **World-Year-Soul.** In Hebrew, *Olam-Shanah-Nefesh*. Every being—*nefesh*—exists at a particular time—*shanah*—in a particular place—*olam*. In this way the concept of World-Year-Soul encompasses all of creation.

26. **work...mitzvot...faith.** God’s creation, which is “all His work,” is established with faith, which is synonymous with the mitzvot, as in, “All Your mitzvot are faith.” The mitzvot, as a complete construct, correspond to all the different constructs—i.e., they are the vehicle through which God provides spiritual vitality to all His creations.

27. **in simple unity with the mitzvot.** All the many elements and objects that make up the creation can be broken into smaller components. This, however, cannot be said of the Creator, Whose unity is absolute. One ramification of this is that, unlike man, God and His will are one: neither duality nor change are features of His will (cf. Lesson #4, n.146). It is therefore impossible to separate the will of God or His thoughts from God Himself.

קּוּמַת אָדָם, הַז קוּמַת עַולְם, הַז קוּמַת שְׁנָה, כִּי עַולְם שְׁנָה נֶפֶשׁ, הַז מְקֻבְּלִין הַחַיּוֹת מִהְמִצּוֹת, כִּמוֹ שְׁכָתוֹב (תְּהִלִּים לג): “וְכָל מַעֲשָׂהוּ בְּאָמוֹנָה”, וּכְתִיב (שם קיט): “כָּל מַצּוֹתָךְ אָמוֹנָה”. וְהַקְדּוֹשֶׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הָוּ אֲחִידוֹת פְּשׁוֹט עִם הַמִּצּוֹת.

וְכַשְׁמַעַשָּׂה הַקְדּוֹשֶׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הָוּ בְּתַקְוִנָּן וּבְסִדְרוֹן, אָזִי הַקְדּוֹשֶׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הָוּ מִשְׁמָח בְּהָם וּמִתְעַנֵּג בְּהָם, כִּמוֹ שְׁכָתוֹב (שם קד): “יִשְׁמַח הָה בְּמַעַשָּׂיו”. כִּמוֹ בָּעֵל-מְלָאכָה, שְׁעֹשָׂה אֵיזָה כָּלִי, וְהַכְּלִי הָוּא יִפְהָה, אָזִי הָוּ אַמְתַעַג בָּה, וְהַשְּׁמַחָה שֶׁל הַקְדּוֹשֶׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הָוּ הִיא מַלְכָבֵשָׂת בְּהַמִּצּוֹת, כִּי הֵם אֲחִידוֹת.

וְמַיְ שְׁעֹשָׂה הַמִּצּוֹה בְּשְׁמַחָה מִהְמִצּוֹה בְּעַצְמָה, נִמְצָא בְּשִׁנְכִּנָּס

The same applies to the commandments of the Torah, the mitzvot, which are the spiritual expressions of God’s will. This is the reason the Holy One is said to be in simple unity with the mitzvot (*Rabbi Yaakov Meir Shechter*).

The *Mai HaNachal* adds: The Talmud mentions several different methods by which the letters of the Hebrew alphabet can be interchanged. One such method calls for exchanging the first letter, *aleph*, with the last letter, *tav*, and the second letter, *bet*, with the penultimate letter, *shin*, and so on (see *Shabbat* 104a). Using this alphabet, the first two letters of the word *mitzvah* (מצוֹה), the *mem* and the *tzadi*, become a *yod* and a *heh*, respectively. These are the first two letters of God’s Holy Name *YHVH* (יהוה). And, since the last two letters of *MiTZVaH* and *YHVH* are the same, we can say that they are one.

The *Biur HaLikutim* provides a deeper insight into what it means to experience one’s World to Come in the mitzvah itself. The ultimate reward, the reward of the World to Come, is man being given a greater awareness of God so that he might draw closer to Him (see *Likutey Moharan* I, 21). Now, because God and His mitzvot are one, when a person performs the mitzvot with complete joy, he can, even in this world, get a glimpse of this awareness. He is therefore able to enjoy a taste of the joy and reward of the World to Come. As will be explained, in the terminology of the Kabbalah this is known as ascending to the *sefirah Binah*, which corresponds to the World to Come (*Etz Chaim* 15:5, see *Likutey Moharan* 15:5, n.46). When a person performs the mitzvot with great joy, he ascends spiritually to the level of *Binah* (see below, n.167).

28. **proper order.** That is, when people perform mitzvot and keep from committing sins.

29. **God rejoices in His works.** The verse begins, “Let the honor of God be forever.” When man performs the mitzvot and keeps away from sin, he honors God. Then, “God rejoices in His works.”

30. **...mitzvot...are His unity.** That is, God’s joy is felt through the mitzvot, which bring vitality to all parts of the creation.

enters into the joy of the Holy One, who rejoices in His works. This corresponds to “Israel rejoices in its Maker” (Psalms 149:2).³¹

We find, therefore, that if there is any misfortune or harsh decree affecting World-Year-Soul, then certainly the joy of the Holy One is lessened, as in (Genesis 6:6), “He grieved in His heart.”³² As <the Sages taught: When a person sins,> what does the *Shekhinah* say? “My head is heavy! My arms are heavy!” (*Sanhedrin* 46a).³³

Thus, this person who has entered into the joy [of the mitzvah] will certainly know, by the state of the joy, whether it is before the decree has been issued or after the decree has been issued.³⁴ He can also discern the part of the structure against which the judgment has been decreed. He knows this based on the structure of the mitzvot. If he cannot joyfully perform the “head” of the mitzvot—i.e., those mitzvot that relate to the head—he will know that a judgment has been decreed against the “heads” of World-Year-Soul. And it is likewise for the rest of the structure of the mitzvot.³⁵

31. **enters into the joy of the mitzvah....** His joy is found in that mitzvah itself. In this sense, he becomes united with the mitzvah—i.e., with God Himself. Reb Noson adds that the tzaddikim, by performing the mitzvot with great joy, elevate the entire structure of the world so that it becomes united with God (*Torat Natan* #5). This is how God, the mitzvot, and the entire world become a single unity.

32. **He grieved in His heart.** This verse refers to God’s decision to destroy the world by flood in the time of Noach. In contrast to the joy of the mitzvot, which sustains the constructs, the sadness brought about by mankind’s sins led to the near total destruction of all the world’s constructs.

33. **My head...arms are heavy.** The Talmud teaches that when a death sentence is carried out against an evildoer, God’s Divine Presence suffers along with the sinner, even though he brought the suffering upon himself. This shows that when suffering and misfortune—i.e., decrees—beset the world, God’s joy is incomplete. And this lack of joy is felt in all His works, the constructs of World-Year-Soul.

Rebbe Nachman has brought two proof-texts, one indicating that God’s anguish is in His heart, the other that it is in His head and arms. This adds support for the Rebbe’s next statement, that from the different parts of the mitzvah construct which are lacking joy—be it head, heart, arm, etc.—one can tell which parts of the World-Year-Soul constructs have been affected by a decree.

The *Biur HaLikutim* adds: As mentioned, Rebbe Nachman included this lesson among those in which he alluded to the mystical intentions of *tefilin* (see n.1). An obvious example is this proof-text the Rebbe brings concerning the head and the arm, which clearly connects to the head *tefilin* and the arm *tefilin*. Then, too, the arm *tefilin* are placed next to the heart, which is the subject of his earlier proof. See *Likutey Halakhot*, *Tefilin* 4, on how this lesson contains the intentions of *tefilin*.

34. **certainly know by the state of the joy....** The person who performs a mitzvah is

בְּהַשְׁמָחָה שֶׁבְּמִצְוָה, הוּא נָכַנֵּס בְּשִׁמְחַת הַקָּדוֹשׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הוּא, שֶׁמְשָׁמַחַ בְּמַעַשֵּׂיו, וַזָּה בְּחִנּוֹת (שם קמט): “יִשְׁמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַוְשָׂיו.” נִמְצָא, כְּשִׁישׁ אֵיזֶה צָעֵר וְדִין בְּעוֹלָם שָׁנָה נֶפֶשׁ, אֹזִי בְּנוֹדָאי נְגַרְעַ מִשְׁמָחַת הַקָּדוֹשׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הוּא, כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוֹב (בראשית ו): “וַיַּתְעַצֵּב אֶל לְבָבוֹ”, וּכְמוֹ שָׁאָמַרְוּ (סנהדרין מו): “שְׁכִינָה מָה אָמַרְתָּ - קָלַנִי מַרְאֵשִׁי וְכֹו’.

וַזָּה שָׁגַנְכָנֵס בְּתוֹךְ הַשְׁמָחָה, יִכּוֹל בְּנוֹדָאי לִיְדָעַ לְפִי עֲנֵין הַשְׁמָחָה אִם הוּא קָדָם גִּזְרָה דִין, אִם הוּא לְאַחֲרָה גִּזְרָה דִין. גַּם יִכּוֹל לִיְדָעַ עַל אֵיזֶהוּ חָלֵק מִהְקָומָה נְגַזֵּר דִין, כִּי יִדְעַ לְפִי קּוֹמַת הַמִּצְוֹת. אִם אֵין יִכּוֹל לְעַשּׂוֹת בְּשִׁמְחַת רָאשֵׁי הַמִּצְוֹת, הִנּוּ מִצּוֹת הַתְּלוּיִים בְּרָאשָׁה, יִדְעַ שְׁהָדִין נְגַזֵּר עַל רָאשֵׁי עֲוָלָם שָׁנָה נֶפֶשׁ, וְכֹן בְּשָׁאָר קּוֹמַת הַמִּצְוֹת.

connected to God and to His joy clothed in the mitzvot. Therefore, if he is able to perform the mitzvah with joy, he knows that the decree has not been issued. But once the decree has been issued, the joy of the Holy One, which is clothed in the mitzvot, is lessened, and so it will be impossible for him to perform the mitzvah with complete joy. This is how it is possible for a person to know for certain whether it is already after the decree has been issued (*Mai HaNachal*).

The *Mai HaNachal* adds: By including the phrase “the state of the joy,” Rebbe Nachman seems to be implying that it is also possible to determine the severity of the judgment once it has been decreed. Thus, if a person sees that he can perform a certain mitzvah joyously, but his joy is incomplete, he can conclude that although the decree has been issued, it is not a particularly harsh one. If, on the other hand, he encounters tremendous difficulty in performing the mitzvah joyously, to the extent that he feels little or no joy at all, he can safely assume the decree is a harsh one. In this way, the performance of each mitzvah serves as a barometer for measuring the extent to which the world has been beset by decrees.

35. **World-Year-Soul...mitzvot.** It is also possible to determine the specific part of the construct against which the decree has been pronounced. In general, World-Year-Soul receive their spiritual energy from the mitzvot. Specifically, the heads of the different constructs receive vitality from those mitzvot that relate to the head, the arms from those mitzvot that relate to the arm, and so on. So, for example, putting *tefilin* on the arm and head provide spiritual vitality not only for the corresponding parts of that person’s Soul construct, but also for the corresponding parts in the constructs of World and Year. And this is equally true for all the other limbs, because the construct of mitzvot and the constructs of World-Year-Soul are aligned and spiritually connected (see *Tikkunei Zohar* #70, p.131a; *Sefer Charedim*, by Rabbi Elazar Azikri, explains how all the mitzvot are applicable today and how they correspond to the various parts of the body: e.g., listening to the blowing of the

This is the meaning of what the Sages said concerning Shabbat: Remember it from the first day of the week (*Mekhilta, Yitro 7; Beitzah 16a*).³⁶ The joy and pleasure of the World to Come, which is an aspect of Shabbat,³⁷ should be experienced during the six days of work. [These six weekdays] correspond to the performance of the mitzvot, because World-Year-Soul were created on them.³⁸

{“You must pay him his wages on the same day, before the sun sets” (Deuteronomy 24:15).}

This is, “You must pay him his wages on the same day”³⁹—the person’s reward will come from the mitzvot themselves. “Before the sun sets”—because he does not perform the mitzvot for the reward of the World to Come, which is after his “sun sets,” after his death.⁴⁰

3. Now, the essence of joy is found in the heart, as is written (Psalms 4:8), “You have put joy in my heart.”⁴¹ But it is impossible for the heart to rejoice unless a person removes the crookedness in his heart,⁴² so that he might have a straight heart. Then he will merit <true> joy, as is written (*ibid. 97:11*), “and joy for the straight of heart.”⁴³

shofar, to the ear; walking to synagogue, to the feet; giving charity, to the hands; praying and studying Torah, to the mouth; etc.; *See Anatomy of the Soul*). Therefore, when one cannot joyously perform the mitzvot that relate to the head, he knows a decree has been issued against the heads of World-Year-Soul, and likewise for the remaining parts of each of the different constructs (*Mai HaNachal*).

36. **Remember it....** Our Sages teach that as soon as one Shabbat ends, we are to start thinking about the next one and begin preparing for it. Though we have the whole week ahead of us, our longing for Shabbat should be such that we are always mindful of Shabbat, even during the weekdays. The Rebbe now shows how this ties in with our lesson.

37. **an aspect of Shabbat.** The Talmud states: Shabbat is one-sixtieth of the World to Come (*Berakhot 57b*). The joy of Shabbat is a taste, an experience in this world, of the joy and reward of the World to Come.

38. **were created on them.** World-Year-Soul, that is, everything, was created during the Six Days of Creation. As explained earlier (nn.24-26), these constructs correspond to the construct of the mitzvot. By performing the mitzvot with joy—joy in the mitzvot themselves—a person draws his ultimate reward/Shabbat into the Six Days of Creation—i.e., into all the aspects of this world. Through this he can know whether it is before or after the decree (*Mai HaNachal*).

39. **his wages on the same day.** In its plain meaning, this verse prohibits employers from delaying payment to their workers. If the arrangement between them calls for the employee to be paid for each day’s labor by the end of that day, the employer may not put it off

וזהו שאמרו רבותינו, זכרונם לברכה (מכילתא ועיין ביצה ט): בשבת – זכרהו מאחד בשבת, הינו שמחת ותענוג עולם הבא, שהוא בחינת שבת, ירגע בששת ימי המעשיה, שנ בחינת מעשה המצוות, שפחים נבראו עולם שנה נפש.

[זזהו] (דברים כד): “ביומו תתן שכרו”, שיהא שכרו מהמצוות בעצמן, “ולא תבוא עליו השם”, שלא יעשה המצוות בשכר עולם הבא, שהוא אחר ביתאת שמו, אחר מותו.

ג. ועקר השמחה הוא בלבד, כמו שכתוב (תהלים ד): “נתה שמחה בלביו”. וαι אפשר ללב לשמח, אלא עד שישיר עקומותיו שבלבו, שיהא לו ישרות לב, ואז יזכה לשמחה, כמו שכתוב (שם צ): “ילישרי לב שמחה”.

(see *Rashi, loc. cit.*). From the Ari we learn that the first letters of *B’yomo Titain Secharo* (“You must pay him his wages on the same day,” spell *ShaBbaT* (שבת) (*Shaar HaPesukim*, p.198). See next note.

40. **sun sets...death.** Rebbe Nachman explains the connection between Shabbat and paying wages in the context of our lesson: A person should seek his wages/reward/Shabbat for performing the mitzvot “on the same day”—i.e., from the mitzvot themselves—rather than waiting until after “the sun sets,” after his passing—i.e., in the World to Come.

In review: Every person is responsible to make the world a better place. He can do this by praying for the world’s benefit, as prayer has the power to mitigate decrees. However, when decrees are extant and man’s prayers are obscured by his sins, he has to disguise his prayers in a *maamar* (§1). To know whether it is before or after the decree one must perform the mitzvot with joy—with no expectation of future reward, but feeling reward in the performance itself. Then, the degree to which he succeeds in feeling joy is indicative of whether God, Whose own joy is clothed in the mitzvot, is joyous or the decree has already been issued (§2).

41. **joy in my heart.** Having taught that joy is the key for discerning the state of the decree, Rebbe Nachman now teaches how to attain it.

42. **crookedness in his heart.** Crookedness of the heart refers to the perversity and bad character traits that possess a person’s heart. As in King David’s prayer (Psalms 101:4), “A perverse heart will depart from me; I will know no evil” (*Mai HaNachal*). The Rebbe will shortly explain how one can make straight the heart’s crookedness.

43. **straight of heart.** Because of his heart’s uprightness, he will be able to perform the mitzvot with a joy derived from the mitzvah itself. This is the level of the clear looking-glass, mentioned above (*Mai HaNachal*). Reb Noson adds that this is the main vitality and joy of the heart: its uprightness (*Torat Natan* #6).

And the heart's crookedness is made straight by means of thunder. As our Sages taught: Thunder was only created to straighten the crookedness of the heart (*Berakhot* 59a).⁴⁴ Thunder corresponds to the voice⁴⁵ a person releases <with great force> while praying. From this [voice], thunder is generated.⁴⁶

As stated in the *Zohar* (III, 235b)⁴⁷: When the voice is released and encounters the rain clouds, the voice is transmitted to the creation—and this is thunder. For thunder is essentially from *gevurot* (severities), as is written (Job 26:14), “Who can understand the thunder of His *gevurot* (strength)?”⁴⁸

This is the why [when hearing thunder] we recite the blessing “... for His might and *gevurah* fill the universe.”⁴⁹ These *gevurot* are an

44. **Thunder...of the heart.** After stating which blessing to recite when hearing thunder, the Talmud (*loc. cit.*) provides a short discussion on the nature of thunder and the purpose it serves. Our Sages say that thunder was created in order to bring fear into people's hearts, as in (Ecclesiastes 3:14), “The *Elohim* (Lord) made [everything] in order that mankind fear Him.” Maharsha explains that on the face of it, the world has no real benefit from thunder. Why, then, did God include it in His creation. The conclusion is that it was created to shake up and “straighten out” those hearts that have no fear of God (*s.v. lifshote*). This is indicated by Scripture's choice of God's Holy Name *Elohim*, which itself alludes to judgment—the severities from the *sefira* *Binah* soon to be discussed in our text.

45. **voice.** The Hebrew term *kol* has alternatively been translated in our text as “sound” and “voice.” There are a number of instances where another term—such as “blast” for the *kol* of a shofar, or “rumble” for the *kol* of thunder—might have been a more appropriate choice. However, in order to highlight the connections that Rebbe Nachman makes between all these various “voices” the translation of *kol* has been limited to the former two.

46. **great force while praying...thunder....** Literally, *b'koach* means “with strength” or “forcefully,” and can be understood as praying with such intense fervor and enthusiasm that the sound of his voice rumbles and roars like thunder. For there is another kind of thunder, akin to the natural phenomenon we call thunder, through which it is possible to come to true joy. Rebbe Nachman explains that commensurate with the energy a person puts into reciting the words of prayer, the resultant “thunder” has the power to straighten the crookedness of his heart and so cause him to merit joy. The Rebbe now explains how this works.

47. **stated in the Zohar.** Rebbe Nachman refers to this passage from the *Zohar* (*loc. cit.* and *Raaya Mehemehah*, *ibid.*) in both this section of the lesson and the next. Although the following translation includes all the pertinent concepts he will mention (based on the commentary of *Matok Midvash*), individual explanatory notes are provided only at the point each concept appears in the text. The *Zohar* states:

The six rings of the larynx (henceforth, windpipe) correspond to six levels of angels that join together and are called “*bnei aylim* (powerful ones)” (Psalms 29:1; see *Metzudat David*). These angels, which come from the side of *Gevurah* (Strength; see next note), give forth the wind that blows in the world. (A relaxed windpipe emits a quiet sound, whereas a “joined” or contracted windpipe emits a loud sound.) When the angels/six rings unite, the loud shofar-like

עֲקָמִימִוֹת שֶׁבֶלְבָּב מִפְשִׁיטֵין עַל יְדֵי רַעֲמִים, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמַרְנוּ חַכְמֵינוּ זָכְרוֹנָם לְבָרְכָה (ברכות נט). לֹא נִבְרָאוּ רַעֲמִים אֶלָּא לְפִשְׁתַּעַקְמִימִוֹת שֶׁבֶלְבָּב. וּרְעֲמִים הַוֹּא בְּחִינַת קֹול שָׁאָדָם מַזְכִּיא בְּכָחָבְתָּלָתוֹ, וּמֹזָה נָעָשָׂה רַעֲמִים.

כִּי אִתָּא בְּזָהָר (פִּינְחָס רְלָה): 'כְּדֹקְלָא נְפִיק וְאַעֲרָא בְּעַבִּי מַטְרָא אֲשַׁתְמָעַ קְלָא לְבָרִיתָא וְדֹא אַיְנוֹן רַעֲמִים', וְעַקְרָבְרַעֲמִים הֵם מְגֻבָּרוֹת, כְּמוֹ שְׁפָתּוֹב (איוב כו): "וְרַעַם גְּבוּרוֹתִיו מַיְתְּבּוֹן". וּבְשִׁבְיל זֶה אָנוּ מִבְּרָכִין 'שְׁפָחָו גְּבוּרָתָו' וּכְוֹ. וְהַגְּבוּרוֹת הֵם

sound they emit resembles the shofar blast of the *AyIL* (אֵיל, ram) of Yitzchak (see n.69)—corresponding to the *bnei AyLIm* (אֲלִים). This powerful sound that the *bnei aylim*-angels emit encounters the rain clouds and is transmitted to the creation. Concerning this it is written, “Who can understand the thunder of His strength?” (explained in next note). For they certainly are from the side of *Gevurah*. This is (Psalms 29:3), “The voice of God is upon the waters, the God of Glory thunders....” No one understands the source of this shofar for it stems from *Binah* (Understanding), and “who can understand the thunder of His strength?”

Now, the windpipe encompasses three elements: the first is the flaming of the heart (the hot air expelled by the windpipe, corresponding to the *gevurot*, severities), the second is the cool air drawn in by the windpipe (which corresponds to the *sefira* *Tiferet*), and the third is the moisture drawn into the lungs that are attached to the windpipe (water corresponding to the *chasadim*, benevolences). The combination of these forces—water, wind and fire—produces the *kol* (voice).... When the flames of the heart encounter the moisture of the lungs, this is, “Who can understand the thunder of His *gevurot*?” This [thunder] brings understanding to the heart, which is in *Binah*. For the [flames of the] heart are the *gevurot* to the left; whereas the moisture of the lungs is the *chasadim* to the right (see nn.48 and 114). The source of these *chasadim* is *Chokhmah* (Wisdom), the intellect, from which flows “A garden spring, a well of fresh water, and drops from Lebanon” (Song of Songs 4:15)—this being the *libuna* (whiteness) of the mind dripping on the windpipe of the lungs (see n.53).... *ChoKhMaH* (חַכְמָה): *koach* in the heart, *mah* in the mind. And *kaneh* (windpipe) is *Tiferet*, corresponding to the six *sefirot* of *Z'er Anpin* (see Appendix: The Divine Persona)...and so, “*K'neh* wisdom, *k'neh* understanding” (see n.94).

The Rebbe shows how these concepts apply in the context of our lesson.

48. ...the thunder of His *gevurot*. All natural phenomena evolve from corresponding spiritual elements. Thunder derives from the spiritual forces known as *gevurot* (severities). The source of these *gevurot* is the *sefira* *Binah*, although they permeate the entire left side of the *sefira* structure (see Appendix: The Structure of the *Sefirot*), which in general the *Zohar* refers to as the side of *Gevurah* (as in previous note).

49. **gevurah fill the universe.** See *Berakhot* 54a, 59a; *Orach Chaim* 227:1. Aside from the obvious connection to *gevurot*, Rebbe Nachman implies that the very act of reciting a blessing over thunder, or even any blessing, is to be equated with prayer.

aspect of might and strength. A person releases the voice with great force,⁵⁰ and this voice strikes the rain clouds—i.e., the aspect of *<upper> mentalities*⁵¹ from where drop after drop descends.⁵² As is brought in the *Zohar* (III, 235b): “a well of fresh water, and drops from LeBaNon” (Song of Songs 4:15)—from the *LiBuNa* (whiteness) of the mind.⁵³

And when [this voice] strikes the rain clouds, then “the voice is transmitted to the creation”—i.e., the aspect of thunder.⁵⁴ This is the meaning of “The sound of Your thunder was in the sphere” (Psalms 77:19)—i.e., in the sphere of the mind.⁵⁵ For when it encounters the skull, the voice is converted into thunder and is transmitted to the creation.⁵⁶

{“My mouth will speak wisdom and the meditation of my heart will be understanding” (Psalms 49:4).}

This *<corresponds to>* “My mouth will speak wisdom....” The speech that leaves my mouth strikes wisdom—i.e., the sphere of the mind. As a result, “the meditation of my heart will be understanding”—i.e., *<the heart>* will be stirred by the thunder. *<This is because>* the voice stimulates *kavanah* (*Berakhot* 24b).⁵⁷

50. **great force.** As mentioned, this refers to praying with intense fervor and enthusiasm—*koach* (see n.46; see also n.67 that the *geborei koach* are those God-fearing people who voice their prayers with great strength).

51. **rain clouds...upper mentalities.** The Kabbalah refers to the upper *sefirot* of *Chokhmah* and *Binah* as mentalities—*mochin* in Hebrew. More generally, *mochin* indicates a person’s intellect and mental capacity. Water, as rain or in any of its other forms, often symbolizes *mochin* and intellect, as in the verse (Isaiah 11:9), “As the water covers the sea, so will the earth be filled with the knowledge of God.” The symbol of water appears throughout this lesson, with the Rebbe referring to the sea of wisdom; “the sea returned to its might”; the Waters of Conflict; and “let the sea roar.”

52. **drop after drop descends.** As indicated in note 47, these raindrops are the *chasadim* that stem from *Chokhmah*/mentalities. They are the moisture that tempers the flames of the *gevurot*. (See below, note 99, where the nature of these drops is further explained.)

53. **whiteness of the mind.** Brain matter is basically white. In nature, when vapors from the earth rise and encounter rain clouds, thunder is generated and people become frightened. Likewise, when a man prays loudly, with power and strength (the flames of his heart), his voice strikes his mind (the moisture) and thunder is generated (in the windpipe, from which the voice emanates). See also *Likutey Moharan* I, 29 and notes 56 and 57, that the “whiteness of the mind” connotes a pure mind and so is likened to the clean waters of Lebanon.

54. **the voice is...thunder.** That is, when one’s burning desire to serve God is channeled into awareness while praying—so that his prayers are a combination of intense concentration upon the words he recites and the intense fervor with which he recites them—then thunder is produced.

בְּחִנַּת כַּח וְגִבּוֹרָה, שֶׁאָדָם מֹצִיא אֶת הַקּוֹל בְּכַח גָּדוֹל, וְהַקּוֹל הַזֶּה פּוֹגֵעַ בַּעֲבֵי מַטְרָא, הַיְנֵה בְּחִנַּת מַחַיִן, שֶׁמְשָׁם יוֹרְדִין טְפִינִין, כְּמוֹ שְׁפָתּוֹב בְּזֹהֶר (פִּנְחָס ח' ג' רְלָה): “בָּאֵר מִים חַיִים וּנוֹזְלִים מִן לְבָנוֹן” – ‘מַן לְבָנוֹן דְּמַחָא’.

וְכַשְׁפּוֹגֵעַ בַּעֲבֵי מַטְרָא, אָזִי אֲשֶׁתְמַעַן קָלָא לְבִרְיַתָּא, הַיְנֵה בְּחִנַּת רַעֲמִים, וְזֹהוּ (תְּהִלִּים ע'ז): “קּוֹל רַעֲמָה בְּגִלְגָּלָתָא דְמַחָא, כְּדֵא עֲרָא בְּגִלְגָּלָתָא דְמַחָא, נָעֵשָׂה מַהְקּוֹל רַעֲמִים, וּנְשַׁמֵּעַ לְבִרְיַתָּא. וְזֹה (תְּהִלִּים מ'ט): “פִּי יְדַבֵּר חֲכָמוֹת”, הַיְנֵה הַדְבּוּר הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּי פּוֹגֵעַ בְּחַכְמָה, הַיְנֵה בְּגִלְגָּלָתָא דְמַחָא, וּעֲלֵלִיְדִּיזָה: “וְהִגּוֹת לְבִי” וּכְיוֹן, הַיְנֵה שְׁפָה עֹזֶר עַלְיִדִּיזָה הַרְעָם, נְתַעֲזֵר הַלְּבָב, כְּמוֹ שָׁאָמָרוּ: ‘קּוֹל מַעֲזֵר הַכּוֹנֶה’

55. **sphere of the mind.** In our context, the sphere refers to that place where a person’s voice, his heart’s enthusiasm, encounters his intellect. In the physical, this is the skull, which houses the mind. The thunder is generated there.

56. **transmitted to the creation.** People hear that person praying earnestly, and his voice of thunder arouses them to fear of Heaven (see n.44). This brings all of creation closer to God (*Mai HaNachal*).

On a deeper level, one sees that Rebbe Nachman has introduced two phases of thunder: potential and actual. The thunder of one’s voice as he recites the prayers is potential thunder; the thunder generated when his voice strikes the mind, the thunder transmitted to the creation, is actual thunder. The difference is that the voice only turns to thunder after it reaches the mind. Yet, even beforehand, by safeguarding his mind a person rectifies the *gevurot* (as will be explained in §4) and so his voice already has the element of thunder in potential (*Biur HaLikutim*).

57. **the voice stimulates kavanah.** The Hebrew term *kavanah* is generally translated “concentration” or “directed consciousness” both of which are associated with the mind. However, the term often appears in the writings of the Sages (e.g., *Berakhot* 13a,b; *Zohar* I, 72a) and afterwards as “*kavanah* of the heart.” In that case *kavanah* might likewise be translated as “fervor” or “inspiration.” The fact is that when a person prays with fervor, his mind is concentrated. As Rebbe Nachman teaches here, lifting one’s voice in prayer, by being an aspect of thunder, stirs the heart so that a person can truly focus on what he himself is saying. The inner depths of the words straighten the inner crookedness of his heart and he merits joy (*Mai HaNachal*). See also *Likutey Moharan* I, 20:10, and note 81. Elsewhere, Rebbe Nachman teaches that just as the voice awakens *kavanah*, *kavanah* awakens the voice (*Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #293).

Thus, thunder in the sphere of the mind is not only transmitted outward to the creation, but also inward—to enhance one’s own *kavanah* and purify one’s own heart. Elsewhere

This is what our Sages taught: When a person has fear of Heaven, his words are heard (*Berakhot* 6b).⁵⁸ For when someone possesses fear of Heaven, his voice is converted into thunder. This is because thunder is from the side of Yitzchak, as in, “the thunder of His *gevurot*.⁵⁹ This causes his words to be heard—i.e., “the voice is transmitted to the creation.”⁶⁰ For hearing is linked to [the fear of Heaven], as is written (*Habakkuk* 3:2), “O God, I heard of Your message; I feared” (*Zohar* III, 230a).⁶¹

And this is the explanation of “*geborei koach* (mighty ones) who do His bidding, hearkening to the sound of His word” (*Psalms* 103:20).⁶² [As] the *Zohar* (I, 90a) states: “They merit hearing voices from Above.”⁶³ In other words, by means of the *gevurot*, thunder is generated.⁶⁴ This causes the heart to hear—i.e., “the meditation of my heart will be understanding”⁶⁵—as is written (1 Kings 3:9), “Give Your servant a hearing heart [to judge Your people].”⁶⁶ And then his words

(*Likutey Moharan* I, 270), Rebbe Nachman teaches that sometimes a person prays with inspiration as a result of seeing someone else praying with *kavanah* (i.e., hearing his voice of thunder). Other times, he draws inspiration from his own prayers; he begins praying with a bit of enthusiasm and, stimulated by his initial modest success, puts even greater effort into his devotions.

58. **fear of Heaven...words are heard.** A person who rebukes others when he himself is not free of sin has little chance of being listened to. But when a person fears Heaven, he is free of sin, and so his words are heard (*Iyun Yaakov*, *loc. cit.*). Rebbe Nachman adds another dimension to this Talmudic assertion.

59. **Yitzchak...of His gevurot.** The *Mai HaNachal* explains: It is a person’s fear of Heaven that enables him to pray with a powerful voice—i.e., thunder. This is because the voice of *koach* and the fear of Heaven are both from the *gevurot*, the side of *Gevurah* (see nn.48-50). And the paragon of the God-fearing tzaddik, Yitzchak, also corresponds to the side of *Gevurah*. Hence, Scripture refers to the fear of Heaven as “Yitzchak’s fear” (*Genesis* 31:42).

60. **causes his words to be heard....** As explained above, notes 54-56.

61. **hearing...I feared.** The *Zohar* (*loc. cit.*) links Yitzchak/fear with hearing, and teaches that hearing (i.e., accepting) another’s words or rebuke only comes when there is fear. In our context, a person’s intense and fervent prayer corresponds to the flames of the *gevurot*. His voice is thus the thunder that can be heard by others and instill in them fear of Heaven (see *Biur HaLikutim*). Hence, that which our Sages said, “When a person has fear of Heaven, his words are heard,” can be understood as: When a person has fear of Heaven, when he has aroused the *gevurot*, he can pray intensely and his voice is heard by the creation. As explained, this instills in them fear of Heaven, making straight the heart’s crookedness.

Incidentally, we learn from this that outright rebuke is not always necessary. By praying

וזה שאמרו חכמינו, זכרונם לברכה (ברכות ו): ‘מי שיש בו יראת שמים, דבריו נשמעין’, כי מי שיש בו יראת, קולו נעשה רעמים, כי רעם מסתרא ד יצחק, כמו שכותב: “ורעם גבורותיו”, ועל-ידי-זה דבריו נשמעין, הינו משתמע קלא לבריתא, כי תמן תלייה שמיעה, כמו שכותב (חבקוק ג): “ה, שמעתי שמעך יראתי”.

וזה פרוש (תהלים ג): “גבורי כה עושי דברו לשמע בקול דברו.” איתא בזוהר (לך דף צ): “זכין למשמע קלין מלעילא’, הינו על ידי הגבורות נעשה רעמים, ועל-ידי-זה הלב שומע, והינו: “זהות לב תבונות”, וכן שכותב (מלכים א ג): “ונתת לעבדך לב שומע”,

properly and intensely one’s voice is transformed into thunder, so that those who hear him are naturally aroused to return to God and serve Him.

62. **geborei...sound of His word.** The “mighty ones” to whom the verse refers are the angels. They do God’s bidding not for reward, but solely to hearken to the word of God (*Metzudat David*). In our context, this refers to the person who performs mitzvot without seeking reward. The term *GeBoRei koach* (גבורי כח) connotes *GeVuRot* (גבורות), which the Rebbe earlier called “an aspect of *koach* and strength.” Rebbe Nachman explains this further and shows how it is in line with our lesson.

63. **hearing voices from Above.** The *Zohar* (*loc. cit.*) teaches that the “mighty ones” of whom the Psalmist speaks are actually the tzaddikim who use their inner strength to totally subdue their evil inclination. In our context, “Above” can be understood as alluding to the upper *mochin*, the intellect (see n.51). These mighty ones/tzaddikim, who use the flaming of their heart for serving God (while subduing their burning desire for the mundane), merit to hear the voice as it strikes the sphere of the mind. See also next note.

64. **gevurot, thunder is generated.** Subduing the evil inclination requires strength. The tzaddikim, who with their fear of Heaven/*gevurot*/strength subdue their evil inclination, are thus able to generate thunder.

65. **heart will be understanding.** For when the voice is transmitted and strikes the mind (see n.57), it brings fear into the heart.

66. **a hearing heart....** This was King Solomon’s prayer: he wanted a heart that would both hear and understand. On the simple level, Rebbe Nachman brings this proof-text to show that the heart hears. Yet, it also teaches that just as King Solomon *prayed* for a “hearing heart,” a person must pray if he wants to attain fear of Heaven. That is, though it takes fear of Heaven to pray with fervor, true fear of Heaven only comes when a person prays for it. This is a classic example of *hitbodedut*, the special type of prayer the Rebbe so strongly promoted (see n.8).

are “transmitted to the creation”; this being “hearkening to the sound of His word.”⁶⁷

This also corresponds to the sound of the shofar⁶⁸—i.e., the shofar-horn of the ram, the ram of Yitzchak (*Zohar* III, 235b)—which is an aspect of “the thunder of His *gevurot*.⁶⁹

This, then, is the meaning of (Psalms 89:16), “Happy is the nation who knows the shofar’s blast.”⁷⁰ Specifically “knows,” because the voice hits the mind—corresponding to rain clouds—and is converted into the aspect of thunder.⁷¹ And whoever hears the shofar blown by a man who is God-fearing and pious, will certainly have no fear of thunder the entire year.⁷² As it is written: “With sounds [of thunder] and lightning You revealed Yourself to them, and with the shofar-sound You appeared to them.” You appeared to them through the sound of the shofar, [protecting them] from thunder and lightning.⁷³

67. hearkening to the sound of His word. Thus, Rebbe Nachman interprets this verse in two different ways. First, the *geborei koach* are those God-fearing people who voice their prayers with great strength. They are said to be “hearkening to the voice of His word” because their hearts are attentive to the meaning of the words of prayer. The other interpretation of “hearkening to the voice of His word” is that other people also hear and are affected by the sound of his prayer, because his voice generates thunder that is “transmitted to the creation” (*Mai HaNachal*).

68. the sound of the shofar. Here, Rebbe Nachman shows that the thunder generated by a God-fearing person corresponds to the blast of the shofar.

This lesson was given on Rosh HaShanah (see n.2). As is evident from the collected teachings of many a chassidic leader, it was customary for the rebbes to discourse on the “subject of the day.” It seems surprising, therefore, that our lesson makes no mention of the holy day. However, as was often the case in his lessons, Rebbe Nachman here alludes to “subject of the day” without mentioning it specifically. Thus, he makes a number of connections to Rosh HaShanah, starting with this reference to the shofar.

69. ram of Yitzchak...thunder.... This refers to the ram sacrificed by Avraham after he was commanded not to harm Yitzchak (Genesis 22:13). Our Sages teach (*Rosh HaShanah* 16a): Why do we blow a ram’s horn? It is because God said, “Blow a ram’s horn before Me so that I will recall the *akedah* of Yitzchak, when he was bound to the altar.”

As quoted earlier from the *Zohar* (n.47), this ram’s horn corresponds to the thunder of the *gevurot*: “...the loud shofar-like sound they emit resembles the shofar blast of the ram of Yitzchak.... This mighty sound that the *bnei aylim* emit encounters the rain clouds and is transmitted to the creation. Concerning this it is written, ‘Who can understand the thunder of His *gevurot*?’”

Thus, the thunder generated by the voice of a person who fears God parallels the shofar/ the ram of Yitzchak—Yitzchak personifying the fear of Heaven (see n.59; *Mai HaNachal*). Yitzchak, the voice of thunder, is thus symbolic of the fear that is aroused by intense prayer.

70. knows the shofar’s blast. Scripture is referring to the Jewish people. By blowing the shofar,

וְגַם דְּבָרָיו נִשְׁמַעַן לְבִרְיתָתָא, וַזְהָוֶ: “לְשִׁמְעַ בְּקוֹל דְּבָרָוֶ.”
וַזְהָוֶ בְּחִינַת קֹול הַשׁוֹפֵר, דָא שׁוֹפֵר שֶׁל אַיִל, אַיִלּוֹ שֶׁל יִצְחָק,
בְּחִינַת: “וְרֻם גְּבוּרוֹתָיו.”

וַזְהָוֶ (תְּהִלִּים פט): “אֲשֶׁרִי הַעַם יְדַעֵי תְּרוּעָה”, “יְדַעֵי” דִּיקָא,
שִׁיפְגַּע הַקֹּול בְּמַחָ, בְּחִינּוֹת עֲבֵי מַטָּרָא, וַיְהִי בְּחִינַת רַעֲמִים,
וּמַי שְׁשֹׁמֵעַ תְּקִיעַת שׁוֹפֵר מַאֲישׁ יְרָא וְחֶרֶד, בּוֹדָאי לֹא יְדַאֲג
כָּל הַשָּׁנָה מַרְעָמִים, בָּמו שְׁבַתּוֹב (בְּתִפְלִית מַוְסִיף שֶׁל ר”ה): “בְּקוֹלוֹת
וּבְרָקִים עַלְיָהֶם נְגִילָת, וּבְקוֹל שׁוֹפֵר עַלְיָהֶם הַוּפָעָת”, שְׁבָקוֹל
הַשׁוֹפֵר הַוּפָעָת עַלְיָהֶם מַקוּלוֹת וּבְרָקִים.

they know how to arouse God’s compassion on Rosh HaShanah and mitigate the decrees (*Rashi, loc. cit.*). The Midrash also speaks of the shofar’s ability to abolish harsh decrees, as we find, “God said, ‘When you stand before Me on Rosh HaShanah, take shofars and blow them. And even if there are many adversaries speaking against you, they will all be destroyed’” (*Pesikta d’Rav Kahane*). Rebbe Nachman will now connect the shofar to intense prayer, as both have the ability to mitigate decrees.

The *Biur HaLikutim* points out that the very next verse in Psalms (89:17) states: “They rejoice in Your name all day long....” That is, when a Jew arouses the voice of thunder, he merits rejoicing in God—i.e., feeling the joy of the mitzvot.

71. Specifically knows...thunder. That is, the shofar’s sound/intense prayer strikes the mind and awakens the intellect, which then arouses fear in the heart. This makes straight the heart’s crookedness, enabling it to feel joy. And through the joy of his “straightened heart,” a person knows the nature and state of the decree and can effectively pray to mitigate it.

72. And whoever hears the shofar...no fear of thunder.... Both the voice of the God-fearing person and the sound of the shofar possess the potential aspect of thunder. In reward for listening to them and being moved to divine service, God protects a person from being harmed by any external manifestation of thunder (*Mai HaNachal*).

73. As it is written.... This stanza, which is part of the Rosh HaShanah Mussaf liturgy, does not appear in the manuscript version of *Likutey Moharan*.

In review: Every person is responsible to make the world a better place. He can do this by praying for the world’s benefit, as prayer has the power to mitigate decrees. However, when decrees are extant and man’s prayers are obscured by his sins, he has to disguise his prayers in a *maamar* (§1). To know whether it is before or after the decree one must perform the mitzvot with joy—with no expectation of future reward, but feeling reward in the performance itself. Then, the degree to which he succeeds in feeling joy is indicative of whether God, Whose own joy is clothed in the mitzvot, is joyous or the decree has already been issued (§2). To feel this joy, one must have a straight heart, a heart whose crookedness has been eliminated by thunder—i.e., a revelation of intellect. This thunder is generated by arousing the fear of Heaven through intense prayer (§3).

4. But it is [first] necessary⁷⁴ to clear the mentalities of secular wisdom and undesirable thoughts—of *chametz*.⁷⁵ A person must not sour his wisdom with secular wisdom or <evil> passions,⁷⁶ so that the voice emerges <pure and clean.> It will then strike the <upper mentalities> and be converted into thunder. But when the sphere of the mind is clogged with impurity—as in (Leviticus 11:43), “...because *nitmeitem* (you will be made unclean) by them”⁷⁷—then his voice is not heard.⁷⁸

He must also safeguard his fear of Heaven—from which the voice emerges, as in, “the thunder of His *gevurot*”—so that he has no extrinsic fears <but only a fear of the Holy One>.⁷⁹ This is: Where there is no wisdom, there is no fear of Heaven; where there is no fear of Heaven, there is no wisdom (*Avot* 3:21).⁸⁰

And <this corresponds to that which our Sages taught: When King Shlomo married Pharaoh’s daughter,> the angel GaVRiel descended and plunged a reed into the sea (*Shabbat* 56b; *Sanhedrin* 21b).⁸¹ The explanation

74. **But it is first necessary.** Having established that a person must awaken a burning desire in his heart to serve God, so that it will in turn arouse his intellect and generate thunder, Rebbe Nachman now advises against those elements that interfere with the *mochin* (mentalities) and even harm a person’s chances of attaining intellect.

75. **chametz.** *Chametz* (leaven) is symbolic of man’s inner inclination towards evil. As taught in the Talmud (*Berakhot* 17a): When Rabbi Alexandri finished praying, he would say: “Master of all the worlds, it is revealed and known to You that our desire is to do Your will. What prevents us? Only the leaven in the dough (the evil inclination).”

The *Biur HaLikutim* adds: Although Rebbe Nachman has just taught that the heart’s crookedness needs to be made straight, he will next explain that what is most essential is the guarding of the mind. This shows that everything actually stems from the mind (*Chokhmah*) and then descends to the heart (*Binah*). The initial step must therefore be to eliminate anything that might sour the mind.

76. **secular wisdom or evil passions.** These are actually two separate concepts, corresponding respectively to the mind and the heart. Over-indulging one’s natural desire for food, sex, etc. turns these needs into what in our lesson the Rebbe calls evil passions. Controlling them is therefore known as subduing the evil inclination; rather than accommodating his burning desire for the mundane, he employs the flaming of his heart to serve God (see n.63). Conversely, the secular wisdom that distances people from God relates to the intellect, from which wisdom is drawn. Thus, in order for a person’s voice to generate thunder, he must purify both his mind and his heart, as the Rebbe now explains.

77. **made unclean by them.** Rebbe Nachman alludes here to the Talmudic teaching that points to the similarity between the words *NiTMeiTEm* and *NeTaMTEm* (literally, “you will be clogged up”). Our Sages teach (*Yoma* 39a): Sins clog a person’s heart. We learn this from the verse, “Do not defile yourselves with [non-kosher foods], because *nitmeitem* by them.” Do not read *NiTMeiTEm* (נִטְמַאֵתֶם) but *NeTaMTEm* (נִטְמַתֶּם)—they will make you spiritually

ד. אבל צריך לפנות את המהין ממחמות חיזוניות וממחשות זרות, מחייב, שלא יחמיר את חכמו במחמות חיזוניות ובתאות, כדי בשיוץ את הקול ויפגע במוחו, יתעדר ממנה רעם, אבל כשהגללה דמיה אטום בטמא, כמו שכותב ויקרא יא): “ונטמתם בם”, אזי אין קולו נשמע.

גם ישמור יראתו, שמננו תוצאות הקול, כמו שכותב: “ירעם גבוריתיו”, שלא יהיה לו יראה חיזונית, וזה (אבות פרק ג משנה י): ‘אם אין חכמה אין יראה; אם אין יראה אין חכמה’.

וזהו (שבתנו; סנהדרין כא): ירד גבריאל ונען קנה בים. פרוש: מה שטלטלות הגבירות, הינו יראה חיזונית, נען קנה בים החרמה.

insensitive (see *Living Torah*, on Leviticus 11:43). If either of the two channels—the mind or the heart—is clogged by impurities, the voice cannot penetrate the sphere of the mind and so thunder cannot be generated.

78. **his voice is not heard.** This indirectly explains why so many of those who presume to have influence over others are not really very effective: They lack true fear of Heaven. Because they have yet to subdue their own evil inclination, and because their secular wisdom and passions distance them from God, their words are not heard or hearkened to.

The *Biur HaLikutim* explains that defiling the mind with impurity leads to its becoming clogged and insensitive. In response, God, as it were, clogs His ear and makes Himself insensitive to that person’s prayers. And this leads to decrees, God forbid.

79. **no extrinsic fears....** A person should never fear anything except God (*Advice*, p. 119). If all he ever fears is the Holy One, then even when something peripheral causes him to be afraid, he is fully aware that these fears are actually a reminder for him to fear only God (*Likutey Halakhot, Pesach* 9:15-17). Fearing extrinsic fears, on the other hand, automatically undermines one’s fear of Heaven.

80. **no wisdom...no fear...no wisdom.** Man must always safeguard both his heart (fear) and his intellect (wisdom). Each complements and depends upon the other. Thus: when his mind is exposed to secular wisdom, the fear in his heart becomes tainted; and when the fear in his heart is caused by extrinsic fears, the intellect turns to secular wisdom and the mind becomes clogged (*Parparaot LeChokhmah; Mai HaNachal*). This explains why later on in the lesson both Rebbe Nachman and the commentaries quoted in the notes include evil passions as one of the mind’s enemies, even though, like fear, these passions are actually rooted in the heart.

Rebbe Nachman now brings a proof-text showing the connection between the heart/fear and the mind/wisdom.

81. **Gavriel...reed into the sea.** When King Solomon married Pharaoh’s daughter, Gavriel descended and plunged a reed into the sea. Around this reed a swamp gathered and upon this

is: From the devolution of the *GeVuRot*⁸²—<which correspond to gold dross,> extrinsic fears⁸³—he “plunged a reed into the sea” of wisdom. A *kaneh* (reed) is the aspect of the voice released from the *kaneh* (windpipe).⁸⁴ Thus, <because of the secular wisdom and> extrinsic fears, the voice remains plunged in the mire of the intellect and will not be transmitted to the creation.⁸⁵

But the most important thing is that a person safeguard his mind from becoming *chametz*.⁸⁶ This is (Psalms 68:31), “Rebuke *ChayaT* (the beast of) the reed.”⁸⁷ As the *Zohar* (III, 252a) states: Break the reed of the *CheT* and make it a *heh*, thus transforming the letters *ChamEtZ* into *MatZaH*.⁸⁸ Your wisdom will then not turn sour.⁸⁹

This is the connotation of “rebuke,” which conveys conflict.⁹⁰ For the word *MatZah* also implies conflict: the *tzaddikim* engage

swamp rose the city of Rome (*Shabbat*, *loc. cit.*, and *Rashi*; Rome is representative of the fourth and final exile of the Jewish people.)

82. **devolution of the gevurot.** The angel GaVRiEL (גַּבְרִיאֵל)—*GeVuRah EL* (גַּבְרָה אֵל, the Might of the Almighty)—corresponds to the *GeVuRot* (גַּבְרּוֹת). His having descended is thus depicted as the devolution of the *gevurot*, indicating that there has been a decline in spirituality. These corrupted *gevurot* become enclothed in extrinsic fears rather than a direct fear of God.

83. **gold dross, extrinsic fears.** From the Kabbalah we learn that gold corresponds to the aspect of fear and the *gevurot* (cf. *Zohar* II, 90b; *Tikkunei Zohar* #24, p.69b). The impurities that form on the surface of gold—gold dross—is thus an aspect of extrinsic fears (*Mai HaNachal*).

84. **kaneh, reed...kaneh, windpipe.** Rebbe Nachman connects the *kaneh* of Gavriel with one’s personal *kaneh*, the windpipe. In the Talmud we find: The voice is released through the *kaneh* (*Berakhot* 61a); the windpipe being a sort of reed or shaft through which the air in the lungs is passed on to the larynx, where it is transformed into the sounds of the voice.

85. **voice remains plunged....** At their source, the *gevurot* emanate from an extremely lofty level: the *sefirah Binah* (Understanding; *Zohar* III, 10b; see also *Likutey Moharan* I, 41). However, as the *gevurot* descend into this material world, they assume the form of “gold dross”—i.e., secular wisdom and extrinsic fears. Either of these two evils can become the first step in a person’s falling from his devotion to God, hence, “Where there is no wisdom, there is no fear of Heaven...,” as above (see n.80; *Parparaot LeChokhmah*; *Mai HaNachal*).

The passage from *Shabbat* and *Sanhedrin* (n.81) thus reads: **When King Shlomo** — When wisdom **married Pharaoh’s daughter** — became secular wisdom, **Gavriel descended** — this caused the *gevurot* to descend into extrinsic fears, etc. **and plunged a kaneh into the sea** — and the voice that emerged from the *kaneh* became mired in the sea of wisdom, the intellect. As a result, the voice was unable to resound like thunder in order to arouse the creation to serve God.

Then, **Around this reed a swamp gathered and upon this swamp rose the city of Rome.** The reed became a post around which debris in the sea began to collect, until a swamp formed... (*Rashi*, s.v. *naatz*). That is, if a person succumbs to even one undesirable thought and

קְנֵה דָּא בְּחִינַת קֹול הַיּוֹצֵא מִהְקָנָה. הִנֵּנוּ עַל־יָדִי הַשְׁתְּלִשָׁוֹת הַגְּבוּרוֹת, שַׁהְיָא בְּחִינַת סּוֹסְפִּיתָא דְּדַהֲבָא, יְרָא חִיצוֹנִית, נְשָׁאָר הַקֹּול נָעוֹז בְּאֲטִימָת הַשְּׁכָל, וְלֹא יִשְׁפְּמַע לְבִרְכָתָא.

וּעַקְרָבָר לְשִׁמְרָד מַחְוֹ שְׁלָא יְחַמֵּץ, וַזְהָוּ (תַּהֲלִים סָח): “גַּעַר חַיַּת קְנֵה,” **כְּדָאִיתָא בְּזַהָּר** (פִּינְחָס דָּרְךָ רַבָּב): **קְנֵה חַיַּת תְּשֵׁבָר וְתַעֲשֵׂה מִמְּנָה הַאָ**, **וְתַעֲשֵׂה מִאֲוֹתִיות חַמֵּץ - מַצָּה**, הִנֵּנוּ שְׁלָא תְּחַמֵּץ חַכְמָתָךְ. **וַזְהָוּ לְשׁוֹן “גַּעַר” - לְשׁוֹן מַרְיבָּה, כִּי מַצָּה - לְשׁוֹן מַרְיבָּה.**

does not excise it immediately, that thought becomes a post to which the “gold dross” of secular wisdom and extrinsic fears are attracted. Eventually, this causes him to fall into the spiritual exile that is Rome.

86. **safeguard his mind from becoming chametz.** Understandably, never succumbing to an evil trait or never allowing a undesirable thought to enter one’s mind is an ideal. This is the ultimate level of safeguarding the mind from souring like *chametz*. Most of us, however, find ourselves easily drawn in and even overwhelmed by our traits and thoughts. What then?

87. **Rebuke the beast of the reed.** This was King David’s prayer for God to destroy the kingdom of evil. Rashi explains that the “beast” is Amalek, whom Rebbe Nachman equates with secular wisdom (see *Likutey Moharan* II, 19).

88. **As the Zohar states....** The passage in the *Zohar* reads as follows: When King Shlomo married Pharaoh’s daughter, Gavriel descended and plunged a reed into the sea...rose the city of Rome. This gave life to the Other Side. The *kaneh* (reed) refers to the life-force of the evil beast. (The Hebrew term *chayah* means both beast and life.) This is the reed that gave the forces of evil dominion over the world. Why a reed? Because a reed is easily snapped and broken. This is Egypt. The Egyptians ruled the entire world. Yet when the time came, the Egyptians, who are like *chametz*, were broken; the Jews, who are like *matzah*, were redeemed. How are the Egyptians broken? By breaking the leg of the *chet*, thereby turning it into a *heh* (*Zohar* III, 251b, 252a and *Matok Midvash* thereon). Phonetically, the Hebrew letter *CheT* (spelled חַיָּת) is similar to the word *ChayaT* (חַיָּת, the beast of). When the left leg of the letter *CheT* (חַיָּת) is separated from its roof, the letter *Heh* (הָיָה) is formed. Thus, when the *chet* in the word *ChamEtZ* (חַמֵּץ) is broken, the word *MatZaH* (מַצָּה) is formed. And the *chet* is likened to a *kaneh*, because like the reed it is easy to break. See next note.

89. **wisdom will then not turn sour.** In our context, the verse and commentary can be understood as follows: The “beast” (*chayah*) alludes to evil and specifically the evil thoughts that enter a person’s mind. The “rebuke” is a person’s cry or shout of protest against these undesirable thoughts. This breaks the beast. Thus: **Rebuke** — crying out in prayer, **the beast of the reed** — breaks and chases away evil thoughts.

90. **rebuke...conflict.** For safeguarding the mind is a constant battle. Rebbe Nachman now explains an additional significance of this battle.

in *MaTZuta* (battle)⁹¹ with the Other Side in order to keep it from approaching the dwelling place of holiness (*Zohar* III, 251b).⁹²

That is, when you protect your wisdom so that secular wisdom does not penetrate it, <and> you do not entertain evil thoughts—which is the *KaNeH* (reed) of the Other Side,⁹³ in contrast to <the *KaNeH* (windpipe) of holiness, i.e.,> “*K’NeH* wisdom, *K’NeH* understanding”⁹⁴ of holiness—you will be saved from the aspect of *chametz*, which is the side of death. As is stated (*Zohar*, ibid.): *MaChMeTZeT*—it contains <*ChaMeTZ* and *MeT*>.⁹⁵ And believe that all strife and conflict between those tzaddikim who have reached perfection is only to dispel the Other Side.⁹⁶

This is the meaning of (Proverbs 15:31), “He whose ear hears

91. **MaTZah...conflict...MaTZuta.** As in (Isaiah 41:12), “You may seek, but will not find *MaTZutekha* (those who contend with you).” Thus *matzah* (מצה), which shares the same root letters as *matzuta* (מצותה), suggests conflict and rebuke.

92. ...keep it from...holiness. As explained above (n.8), Rebbe Nachman’s lessons are simultaneously relevant to the very greatest tzaddikim and the simplest people alike. After teaching the need for battling against undesirable thoughts, he now shows that each person’s efforts in this is a microcosm of the larger battle that the tzaddikim constantly wage against the *Sitra Achra* (Other Side). The tzaddikim pray and engage in daily struggle against the forces of evil, to keep them from gaining a foothold in holiness. The person who struggles against his evil thoughts is waging the same battle, albeit on a smaller scale. And, just as it can be said that in the overall scheme of things the tzaddikim have succeeded in protecting holiness—keeping the Jewish people alive and flourishing despite a national history replete with devastating decrees—so, too, each individual, commensurate with the effort he has put into the battle, has succeeded in building and safeguarding his own “holy encampment” (see n.96)—i.e., his mind.

The *Biur HaLikutim* adds that there are times when the struggle and strife the tzaddikim engage in seems not to be with the Other Side but with each other. In truth, their intent is to banish the forces of evil—the decrees. However, because they know the decree has already been issued, they disguise their prayers and struggle in a *maamar*, giving the impression that they are at odds with each other. See text and note 96, below.

93. **KaNeH of the Other Side.** For from the *kaneh* the Other Side draws its sustenance and life-force, as in note 88 above.

94. **K’NeH wisdom...understanding.** In Proverbs (4:5), King Solomon says: “Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding.” Rebbe Nachman plays on the phonetic similarity between the words *KaNeH* and *K’NeH* (acquire). That is, by using his *kaneh* (windpipe) to cry out in prayer against the evil thoughts, a person can overcome the *kaneh* (reed) of the Other Side and *k’neh* (acquire) true wisdom and understanding. In addition, “wisdom” and “understanding” correspond to *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, the mind and the heart—i.e., the two organs which when united form the voice of holiness that arouses fear of Heaven (as above, §3 and nn.47-58).

דְּצִדְיקִיָּא עֲבָדִין מִצּוֹתָא בְּסֶטֶרִין אַחֲרַנִּין, דְּלֹא יִתְקַרְבּוּ לְמִשְׁכְּנָא דְּקָרְשָׁה.

הִנֵּנוּ כִּשְׁתַּשְׁמַר אֶת חִכְמַתְךָ שֶׁלֹּא יַכְנֵס בּוֹ חִכְמֹת חִיצְוָנִיּוֹת, שֶׁלֹּא תִּהְרַהֵר בְּהִרְהֹרִים רַעִים, שָׁהֵם בְּחִנּוֹת קְנָה דִּסְטֶרֶא אַחֲרָא, כְּנִיגְד קְנָה חִכְמָה קְנָה בִּינָה דְּקָרְשָׁה, עַל-יִדְיָה תִּנְצַל מִבְּחִנּוֹת חָמֵץ, שַׁהְיָא סֶטֶרֶא דְּמוֹתָא, כְּדֹאִיתָא: מִחְמָצָת, תִּמְנוֹן סֶטֶרֶא דְּמוֹתָא. וְתַאֲמִין, כִּי כָל מִצּוֹתָא וּמִרְיבָּה שִׁישׁ בּין הַצָּדִיקִים הַשְּׁלָמִים, אֵין זה אֲקָא פְּדֵי שִׁיגְרָשׁוּ סֶטֶרֶי אַחֲרַנִּין.

וזה פְּרוּשׁ (מִשְׁלֵי טו): “אֵין שְׁמַעַת תִּכְחַת חִים בְּקָרְבּ חִכְמִים

95. **MaChMeTZeT...ChaMeTZ...MeT.** The letters of the word *machmetzet* (מחמצת, sours or leavens) can be arranged to form the words *chametz* (חמץ, leaven) and *met* (מת, death). Thus, the letters themselves hint to the connection between leavened dough and the Other Side, the side of death (cf. *Zohar* III, 251b, “One who eats *chametz* on Pesach”). And since the Other Side is considered *chametz*, death, a person who safeguards his mind against evil thoughts has banished the Other Side and spared himself a spiritual death.

96. **to dispel the Other Side.** As mentioned at the end of note 92, it is a mistake to take the strife between true tzaddikim at face value. Rather, the battle one tzaddik wages against another is in actuality a battle, in disguised form, against the *Sitra Achra*. Then again, this is only one explanation. Further on in the lesson Rebbe Nachman will give another reason for the strife between tzaddikim (see text and nn.99, 100; see also *The Aleph-Bet Book*, Strife). It is clear, therefore, that understanding the true intentions of the tzaddikim is no simple matter. Their disputes should thus not become the concern or talk of the common folk, as is unfortunately all too common today. See also *Likutey Halakhot*, *Ribit* 5.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains this form of strife in a manner that ties together the different points of the lesson. He writes: The mind of a Jew is likened to a holy encampment. The secular wisdom that seeks to infiltrate this encampment stems from the corrupted *gevurot*, the gold dross, which are elements of the Other Side (see nn.82, 83). Their attempt at infiltration in itself denotes strife, because the intention of the Other Side is to pursue the person and oppose his striving for holiness. He, in turn, must mitigate this decree (the pursuit of the Other Side) and thereby reconnect the fallen *gevurot* to their source in holiness. This requires his using precisely the same means, namely conflict. However, in his case it is “holy conflict.” He battles against his evil inclination—against his interest in secular wisdom and his desire for evil passions—thereby transforming the forces of evil into holiness, the *chet* into a *heh*, and *chametz* (impurity) into *matzah* (holy conflict).

Unfortunately, not everyone is capable of waging this battle. It is therefore incumbent upon the tzaddikim, who can do battle, to engage in conflict against the Other Side and so prevent it from infiltrating the encampment of holiness. They battle to keep secular wisdom and heresy away from the Jews. And so people must have faith in the tzaddikim

the reproof of life *talin* (lodges) among the wise.”⁹⁷ *<TaLiN>* is similar to *TeLuNah* (complaint) and conflict.⁹⁸ When you hear the tzaddikim arguing, know that this is to let you hear reproof for having blemished the drops of your mind.⁹⁹ Concerning this it is said (Proverbs 2:19), “None that go to her return, nor do they regain the paths of life.”¹⁰⁰ You have become attached to the side of death, the

and understand that their conflicts and disagreements are only for the benefit of the Jewish people. Indeed, any suggestion that these disputes are indicative of actual enmity between the tzaddikim is in itself a foreign thought, one that only adds more strength to the Other Side (by clogging one’s mind).

97. **hears the reproof of life....** The simple meaning is that the person who is willing to listen to rebuke will be counted among the wise (*Metzudat David*).

98. **TaLiN...TeLuNah...conflict.** The *Zohar Chadash* teaches: When Yaakov lodged in Bethel on his way to Lavan’s house (Genesis 28:11), he took issue with God that Esav was being granted control over this world. We learn this from the word *LaN* (lodged), which resembles *vayaLoNu* (they argued) (*Zohar Chadash, Vayeitze*, p.27; marginal note from the Tcheriner Rav). Similarly, in our text, the Rebbe makes the connection between *talin* (תלין) and *telunah* (תלונה).

99. **drops of your mind.** Earlier in this section Rebbe Nachman spoke of safeguarding the mind from becoming *chametz*. Here, he adds another dimension: keeping the drops of the mind from becoming blemished. Essentially, this entails guarding the Covenant, i.e., refraining from sexual sin (e.g., having relations with a *niddah*, non-Jewess, or any woman one is proscribed from marrying, as well as not engaging in homosexuality or masturbation). As is taught, the origin of semen or seed is in the mind (cf. *Yevamot* 53b; *Zohar Chadash, Bereishit* 15a; see *Likutey Moharan I*, 7:3, n.39; *ibid.* 11:4, n.42; see also *Rabbi Nachman’s Tikkun*, Breslov Research Institute, 1984, especially pp.74-76). Seed is therefore known as the “drops of the mind.” As mentioned above (nn.47, 53), these drops, which descend from the whiteness of the mind, are the *chasadim* that descend from *Chokhmah* and temper the *gevurot*. A blemish of the Covenant is therefore considered a blemish of one’s intellect and an inflaming of the *gevurot*.

Now, as explained, conflict between the true tzaddikim is actually spiritual conflict, a battle against the Other Side. Therefore, when a person hears this conflict, he should realize that the strife and blemish is actually in his own mind—a dispute between the sacred and the secular, between holiness and impurity. He is being rebuked for having soured his mind with undesirable thoughts.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains this in greater depth: Had this person been worthy of defeating his evil inclination and expelling all evil thoughts—engaging the Other Side on his own—the tzaddikim would not have had to engage in conflict for his benefit. Their battles would then not pertain to him, and certainly he would not have been made to hear about them. On the contrary, he would have understood that this was not conflict and contention, but a way of mitigating decrees and overcoming the forces of evil for everyone’s benefit. But,

תלין” – לשון תלונה ומריבה. כשהאתה שומע מרביבות שבין הצדיקים תרע, שזה ממש מייען יותר תוכחה, על שפוגמת בטפי מהה, שעל זה נאמר (שם ב): “כל באיה לא ישובן, ולא ישיגו ארחות חיים”, שאתה דבוק בסטרא דמוותא, בחינת חמץ, בחינת

because this person has blemished the drops of his mind and become attached to the aspect of *chametz*, he hears of the conflict and interprets it superficially—considering it no different than the rivalry and bickering of ordinary people. However, it is precisely this interpretation that indicates that his mind is blemished. If only he would realize that he is being shown this for his own benefit, as a test. He is being given an opportunity to catch himself from falling further; a chance to turn *chametz*-thoughts into *matzah*, so that with the aspect of *matzah*—i.e., holy conflict—he himself can battle the Other Side. And, even if this proves too much for him, so that the tzaddikim are obliged to wage the battle for him, his belief in the holy intention behind their conflict is itself enough to mitigate the decrees against him. Conversely, if he chooses to not recognize his blemish and deny responsibility for the conflict between tzaddikim, then this conflict will only cause him to be even further distanced from God (see also *Torat Natan* #7).

100. **None that go...return...regain....** In its simple meaning the verse relates to immorality, yet it also refers to undesirable thoughts and heresies (*Rashi, Proverbs* 2:16). Rebbe Nachman shows that the two are actually connected. Not safeguarding the mind from secular wisdom (heresies) blemishes the mind. Sexual sin blemishes one’s fear of Heaven, which in turn blemishes the mind. The Talmud teaches that it is very difficult to repent for either of these sins (*Avodah Zarah* 17a), which is why Scripture states: “None that go...return, nor do they regain the paths of life.”

On the surface, this seems to indicate that repentance for sins associated with blemishing the Covenant (sexual purity) is well nigh impossible. Yet, from the teachings of Rebbe Nachman we know that this is certainly not so. Reb Noson explains: As mentioned, conflict between tzaddikim has the power to distance a person from God. In one sense, this is precisely the purpose of the conflict! Certain sins engender such devastating spiritual harm that, as the *Zohar* states, repentance is impossible for these iniquities (see *Zohar I*, 188a; see *Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #71). Even so, God’s capacity for compassion is unlimited and He wants everyone to repent. Repentance is therefore always possible. Why then does the *Zohar* state that one cannot repent? However, this is the same as the strife between tzaddikim. That is, by rights, when a person has sinned so terribly, he deserves to be distanced from holiness. He is therefore put to a test. It is only natural that if shown the conflict between tzaddikim, or told by the holy writings that he can never repent, he will turn even further away from holiness. This is his trial. If he refuses to be fooled and pushed away, if he stands at the gates of holiness and refuses to depart, if he cries out to God to help him regardless of his murky past and the crookedness in his heart—then even he will merit repentance. There can be no better proof of this than those very terrible sinners who have successfully repented. From their example we learn that being driven away from holiness is actually the initial stage toward repentance (*Torat Natan* #7).

aspect of *chametz*,¹⁰¹ of “Gavriel descended.”¹⁰² Know also that “a reed has been plunged”—extrinsic wisdom has been plunged—into your sea of wisdom.¹⁰³

And, certainly, if your mind had not been blemished, you would not have been given to hear the conflicts among the tzaddikim.¹⁰⁴ This conflict is only for your sake, in order that you return from death to life, from *chametz* to *matzah*, from *chet* to *heh*,¹⁰⁵ and so that you repent from unwholesome fear <to fear of His exaltedness>, from a marred voice <to a flawless voice>, from blemished wisdom <to complete and true wisdom>.¹⁰⁶

But when you guard your mind from the aspect of *chametz*,¹⁰⁷ so that it does not become clogged, then your voice will strike your skull¹⁰⁸ and be converted into thunder,¹⁰⁹ and the heart’s crookedness will be made straight. Then, you will merit joy, as in, “and joy for the straight of heart.”¹¹⁰ This is the meaning of (Psalms 81:8), “When you called in secret, I answered you thunderously; I tested you at the Waters of Conflict, Selah.”¹¹¹ The Waters of Conflict are an aspect of

101. **death...chametz.** As above, note 95.

102. ...**Gavriel descended.** See above, notes 82 and 88. As has been explained in earlier lessons, what appears to be a restatement of associations already established is actually Rebbe Nachman’s way of directly connecting yet another concept to the equation. Rebbe Nachman has already connected a blemished mind to *chametz/death*. Here, he adds the above mentioned concept of corrupted *gevurot* (Gavriel) to this equation.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds: Rebbe Nachman mentions three aspects: death, *chametz*, and the letters *chet* and *heh*. They can be understood as symbolizing three levels of spiritual decline. On one level are those whose descent is so total that they are considered spiritually dead. On a second level are those whose minds have leavened spiritually. They are linked to death, or as the Rebbe said, “have become attached to the side of death,” though not to the same degree as those on the former level. Finally, there are those who are only slightly separated from holiness, just as there is only a slight difference between the *chet* and the *heh*. What the people on these different levels have in common is the responsibility to make the world a better place (see §1). To do this, they must do their best to repent—no matter what level they are on. And by doing so, they can then merit the three positive levels (which Rebbe Nachman discusses next): fear of God’s exaltedness, a flawless voice, and complete and true wisdom.

103. **extrinsic wisdom....** As above, notes 82, 83 and 85.

104. **not have been given to hear the conflict....** The verse thus translates in our text as follows: **The ear that hears the reproof of life** — There is a personal lesson to be learned when a person hears **lodges among the wise** — the tzaddikim arguing.

ירד גָּבְרִיאֵל וְכֹו, וַתַּדַּע שְׁגַעַץ קָנָה, הִנֵּנוּ חִכְמֹות חִיצּוֹנִיות נְעוֹצִים בַּיּוֹם חִכְמַתָּה.

ובָּרוּדָאִ אָם לֹא הִיה נִפְגַּם מְחַק, לֹא הִיה נִשְׁמַע לְכָמָרִיבּוֹת שְׁבִין הַצְּדִיקִים, וְאַיִן הַמְּרִיבּוֹת אֶלָּא בְּשִׁבְילָה, כִּדְיַ שְׁתַשַּׁוב מִמּוֹת לְחַיִם, מְחַמֵּץ לְמַצָּה, מְחִיתָת לְהָא, וְתַשַּׁוב מִירָאָה רָעָה, מִקּוֹל פְּגּוּם, מְחִכָּמָה פְּגּוּמָה לִירָאָה טוֹבָה, לִקְוֹל טוֹב, לִחְכָּמָה טוֹבָה.

וְכַשְׁתַּשְׁמַר אֶת מְחַק מִבְחִינַת חַמֵּץ, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה אָטוֹם, אָזִי יִפְגַּע קוֹלָךְ בְּגִלְגָּלָתָה, וַיַּתְעַבֵּד רָעָם, וַיַּתְפַּשֵּׁט עֲקִמִּים יְוָנִים שְׁבָלָבָה, וְאַזְּנָה תֹּזְפָּה לְשִׁמְחָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁכַבְתּוֹב (תְּהִלִּים צ): “וְלִישְׁרֵי לְבָב שִׁמְחָה”, וְזֶה פְּרוֹשָׁה (תְּהִלִּים פא): “אָעֵנָךְ בְּסִתְרָךְ רָעָם, אָבְחַנָּךְ עַל מִרְיבָּה סְלָה”.

105. **from death to life....** See above, notes 88 and 95.

106. **This conflict is only for your sake...true wisdom.** As explained above (see n.100), a person has to understand and believe that the real reason for the tzaddikim arguing is only so as to put *him* to the test. The very fact that he hears of this discord should serve as a warning that according to the dictates of strict justice he deserves to be pushed away from holiness for having abused the drops of his intellect. If he stands up to this test by ignoring the disputes and acknowledging the gravity of his previous wrongdoing, he will be able to come closer to God rather than be rejected. For the truth is that God loves mercy and desires that those distant from Him be drawn closer, despite their being unworthy. But the only way this can happen is by their being subjected to this test. If instead of turning away from the tzaddikim because of their arguing a person draws closer to them out of a desire to repent, they will teach him how to “return...and regain the paths of life” (*Advice*, p. 203f; *Parparaot LeChokhmah*).

107. **guard your mind...chametz.** By fighting the evil thoughts and rejecting secular wisdom. As we have seen (nn.46, 89), this is best accomplished through prayer.

108. **strike your skull.** The flames of the heart strike the moisture of the mind (see n.55).

109. **converted into thunder.** As above, note 47.

110. **heart’s crookedness...straight...joy....** As in section 3, and notes 42-44.

111. **When you called...I tested you....** This verse from Psalms (*loc. cit.*) refers to the Jewish people’s bondage in Egypt. In our context, their enslavement corresponds to the implementation of severe decrees. The Psalmist says that when they prayed to God, He answered them. Rebbe Nachman, who has discussed the importance of prayer in overturning decrees, next explains how the rest of the verse corresponds to our lesson.

Interestingly, Rashi explains “I answered you thunderously” as: I openly displayed My *gevurot* and awesomeness. This supports Rebbe Nachman’s earlier statement: For thunder is

matzah, of mentalities,¹¹² through which thunder is generated.¹¹³

5. Know as well that a person must couple the *gevurot* (severities) with *chasadim* (benevolences), left with right,¹¹⁴ as is written (Psalms 20:7), “with the saving *gevurot* (strength) of His right arm.”¹¹⁵ For the main

essentially from *gevurot*, as is written, “...the thunder of His *gevurot* (strength)” (see §3 and n.48).

The *Biur HaLikutim* points out that Psalm 81 has a further link to Rebbe Nachman’s lesson in that it also speaks of Rosh HaShanah and the shofar.

112. **Waters of Conflict...matzah...mentalities.** When Miriam passed away, the well Israel was given in her merit to provide them with water in the wilderness, departed. The people began demanding water from Moshe and Aharon and demonstrating against them. The place where Israel disputed with God, where Moshe failed to sanctify God’s name by hitting the rock instead of talking to it, was called Waters of Conflict, *Mey Merivah* (Numbers 20:13). In our context, “Waters” connotes the moisture of the mind, the intellect/mochin, and “Conflict” corresponds to *matzah* (as above, nn.91, 96). Thus, “Waters of Conflict” alludes to the conflict between tzaddikim that rectifies the intellect.

113. ...**thunder is generated.** By bringing this verse from Psalms, Rebbe Nachman ties together a number of the lesson’s points: “In your distress you called out and I strengthened you. When you called in secret, I answered you thunderously...Selah.” That is, what was it that made you worthy of My answering and strengthening you when you called out to Me in distress? It was that your voice was an aspect of thunder. “I tested you at the Waters of Conflict”—i.e., I tested you with the conflict between tzaddikim and saw that your intellect was pure, an aspect of *matzah*. You were not put off or confused by their arguments. And so your voice was like thunder, straightening your heart’s crookedness. As a result, you merited joy and knew to differentiate between before and after the decree. This enabled you to pray even after the decree had been issued, by disguising your prayer in a *maamar*. This is, “you called in secret,” for the prayer is veiled and concealed in the *maamar*, and because of this “I answered you” (*Mai HaNachal*).

In particular, these last two sections of the lesson were intended by Rebbe Nachman as a guide for Reb Noson on how to remain focused while praying (see n.1). This was a major concern for Reb Noson, who had already sought help from a number of that era’s great chassidic masters (see *Through Fire and Water*, Chapters 3-6). In addition, Rebbe Nachman addressed Reb Noson’s personal dilemma regarding the ongoing conflict and strife between the leading tzaddikim of the day. We can also assume that the Rebbe’s references to secular wisdom were meant as criticism of the *Haskalah* movement, and his mention of “battles” as a possible veiled reference to the forthcoming decrees of forced conscription (see n.1).

In review: Every person is responsible to make the world a better place. He can do this by praying for the world’s benefit, as prayer has the power to mitigate decrees. However, when decrees are extant and man’s prayers are obscured by his sins, he has to disguise his prayers in a *maamar* (§1). To know whether it is before or after the decree one must perform the mitzvot with joy—feeling reward in the performance itself. Then, the degree to which he succeeds in feeling joy is indicative of whether God is joyous or the decree has already been issued (§2). To feel this joy, one must have a straight heart, a heart whose crookedness has been

”מי מִרְיבָּה” זה בְּחִנַּת מֵצָה, בְּחִנַּת מְחִין. עַל-יָדָיוֹה נָעֲשָׂה רַעֲמִים.

ה. וַתִּתְדַּע, שָׁאַרְיךָ לְשַׁתְּפַת הַגְּבוּרוֹת בְּחֶסְדִּים, שֶׁמְאַלָּא בִּימִינָא, כְּמוֹ שְׁפָתּוֹב (תְּהִלִּים כ): ”בְּגִבּוּרוֹת יְשַׁע יְמִינָו”, כִּי עַקְרָבְתְּגִלּוֹת

eliminated by thunder—i.e., a revelation of intellect. This thunder is generated by arousing the fear of Heaven through intense prayer (§3). But for thunder to be generated when his voice strikes his mind, a person must safeguard his fear of Heaven, and more importantly keep his mind free of secular wisdom and evil passions, especially blemishes of the Covenant. This battle waged by the intellect against evil thoughts parallels the one waged by the tzaddikim against the Other Side. Thus, when this latter battle manifests as conflict between tzaddikim, the person who hears it should understand that he is being advised to repent and rectify his own blemished intellect. Only then can he come to the voice of thunder that straightens the heart’s crookedness, and so perform the mitzvot with proper joy. (With this joy he can discern whether it is before or after the decree and pray properly for the world) (§4).

114. ...**chasadim...right.** Previously, Rebbe Nachman taught that a person must awaken his fear of Heaven. Here he emphasizes the importance of also serving God out of love—for Him and His commandments. In the Kabbalah, the *sefirah Chesed* (Lovingkindness), the *chasadim* (benevolences), and the qualities of love, hospitality and unconditional giving are associated with the right side (see also nn.47, 48); whereas the *sefirah Gevurah* (Strength), the *gevurot* (severities), judgments and decrees, and the qualities of fear and restriction are all associated with the left (see Appendix: Structure of the Sefirot).

As desirable as it initially seems, a world influenced exclusively by *Chesed* and the *chasadim* would not work all that well. Unconditional giving and unbounded love would be just too overwhelming. It would also result in no boundaries, and therefore no restraint, discipline or accountability. On the other hand, a world governed solely by *Gevurah* and the *gevurot* would certainly not be desirable. The constriction and judgment would be impossible to bear. Only a combination of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, a balance of *chasadim* and *gevurot*, in which the extreme qualities of each is tempered by the other, produces a workable solution for living in this world. This is the main concept of this section, a concept alluded to earlier (§3, n.47) when Rebbe Nachman spoke of the tempering of the heart’s flaming (*gevurot*) with the mind’s moisture (*chasadim*) to produce the voice (*Tiferet*). Rather than remaining separate influences, one to the right and the other to the left, the *chasadim* and the *gevurot* must be joined together to provide the world with a balance of tempered benevolences and tempered severities.

The *Mai HaNachal* adds that tempering the *gevurot*/fear with *chasadim*/joy mitigates the decrees, so that a person’s prayers—whether recognizable or disguised—can nullify them entirely.

115. **saving strength...right arm.** That is, God’s “saving,” or salvation, comes about when His acts of strength (*Gevurah/left*) emanate from His right arm (*Chesed*). The *Mai HaNachal* explains that although the angels on the left stand ready to accuse, by coupling the left/*gevurot* with the right/*chasadim*, the “right” becomes a salvation in that it prevents the angels on the left from protesting against the prayer that is veiled in a *maamar* (cf. n.6 above).

revelation comes about <through the right,> by means of *chasadim*,¹¹⁶ as is written (ibid. 110:1), “Sit at My right hand [while I make your enemies your footstool].”¹¹⁷

It is likewise necessary to couple love with fear of Heaven,¹¹⁸ in order to generate thunder.¹¹⁹ This [love] is from the right side, from “a mind as white as silver” (*Tikkuney Zohar* #70).¹²⁰

This is <the meaning of “When it turned morning, the sea returned to its might”> (*Exodus* 14:27).¹²¹ “The sea” alludes to the sea of wisdom¹²²; “when it turned morning”—this is the morning of Avraham (*Zohar* II, 170b),¹²³ corresponding to “Avraham My beloved”

116. **For the main revelation....** In general, *Keter*, *Chokhmah* and *Binah*, the upper three *sefirot*, are said to be concealed. The attributes of God that these three *sefirot* represent, *mochin* (see n.51), are for the most part not manifest. In contrast, the seven lower *sefirot*, from *Chesed* to *Malkhut*, are said to be revealed. The attributes of God that these seven *sefirot* represent are manifest. Thus, the main revelation of God begins with *Chesed*, the first of the lower *sefirot* and one situated on the right side of the *sefirah* structure (see Appendix: Structure of the Sefirot). Also in terms of the *gevurot* and *chasadim*, revelation—or in this case tempering—comes from the right. For whereas the *gevurot* descend from *Binah* to *Gevurah* along the left side, they are tempered by the *chasadim* descending from *Chokhmah* on the right. See next note.

117. **Sit at My right hand....** Rashi (*loc. cit.*) explains that here “sit” means “wait.” That is, “Wait at My right hand while I....” In our context, this refers to the *gevurot*/decrees “waiting” to become joined with *chasadim* before descending to *Gevurah*. This, so that they can be tempered and not develop into harsh decrees. The end of the verse, “while I make your enemies your footstool,” indicates this as well: “your enemies,” the decrees, will be “your footstool,” subdued and vanquished. The *Mai HaNachal* adds that “enemies” alludes to secular wisdom and one’s evil thoughts and passions, all of which sour the mind (see n.80). The Talmud teaches (*Bava Batra* 16a): “Satan is the seducer, the accuser, and the Angel of Death.” That is, the angels on the left side entice a person with physical desires and secular wisdom. Then, having seduced him into sinning, they become his accusers, calling for decrees to be issued against him for these sins. And, like the Angel of Death, they are only too willing to be the ones sent to carry out the decrees issued. The only way to counter this seduction and mitigate the decrees is through one’s love for God—an aspect of the right side—which makes it possible to pray and disguise the prayers from the angels on the left.

The *Biur HaLekutim* concurs that these “enemies” are of a spiritual nature. Specifically, they are the elements of the Other Side mentioned previously, the forces that sour and clog the mind and block its proper functioning. And although the voice of thunder and the attribute of fear do subdue these forces and open the mind, the essential means for overcoming them and achieving total purity is only the qualities that stem from the right side—i.e., love and *chesed*.

118. **love with fear of Heaven.** This is combining *Chesed* with *Gevurah*, the right with the left (*Mai HaNachal*). It is common for Rebbe Nachman to interchange the various corresponding names and attributes of a particular concept. This is an additional way to tie

על ידי החסדים, כמו שכתוב (תהלים קי): “שב לימייניו”.
וכו צרייך לשטרף האהבה עם היראה, כדי שייתעבר רעמים, וזה
(תיקון ע) ‘מסטרא דימינא, מכאן חורה פכספא’.
זה (שמות יד) “וישב חם”, הינו ים החכמה, “לפנות בקר” – דא
בקר דאברהם, בחינת (ישעה מא): “אברהם אהבי”. “לאיתנו”

together the different proof-texts and supports found throughout a lesson. Thus, the *gevurot* and *chasadim* of the previous paragraph are referred to here as fear and love, though the order is reversed (see next note).

119. **to generate thunder.** The previous “joining” taught that revelation of God’s salvation/ *gevurot* comes through the *chasadim*. This “coupling” teaches that combining love with fear generates thunder (see n.47).

120. **a mind as white as silver.** The *Tikkuney Zohar* (*loc. cit.*) applies this to Avraham, who personified *Chesed* (the *sefirah* and the attribute), love of God, and the right side generally. All the qualities associated with the right side emanate from the first right-sided *sefirah*, *Chokhmah* (Wisdom)—from the mind as white as silver, the “whiteness” of the mind (see n.53)—but are only perfected once the mind has been purged of secular wisdom, foreign thoughts and evil passions. These come from the dark side of love and are the “enemies” bent on preventing a person from developing his potential in holiness. It is necessary to rebuke and expel them, as in, “Rebuke the beast of the reed,” thereby transforming the *chametz* of the mind into *matzah* (see §4 and nn.87, 88). The strength for this stems from the love for God, holy love. This is the meaning of the verse, “Sit at my right hand while I make your enemies your footstool.” And when his love of God saves him from these enemies so that his mind is cleared of secular wisdom and evil passions, then his voice will strike the sphere of the mind and generate the thunder that will bring him to joy (*Mai HaNachal*).

121. **When it turned morning....** Earlier (see n.88), Rebbe Nachman quoted from a passage in the *Zohar* that includes the following reference to Egypt: “Why a reed? Because a reed is easily snapped and broken. This is Egypt. The Egyptians ruled the entire world. Yet when the time came, the Egyptians, who are like *chametz*, were broken; the Jews, who are like *matzah*, were redeemed.” The Rebbe also quoted Psalm 81, which refers to the Jewish people’s bondage in Egypt (see n.111), though not directly. Here, by quoting this verse from Exodus that relates to the splitting of the Red Sea, the Rebbe directly connects the Egyptians—subdued enemies of the Jewish people—to the lesson.

122. **sea of wisdom.** The Midrash teaches that the splitting of the Red Sea was a time of great judgment (*Shemot Rabbah* 21:7). In our context, it was a time of a clogging of the intellect, the sea of wisdom.

123. **morning of Avraham.** In the terminology of the Kabbalah, the attribute of *chesed* corresponds to the day, whereas the attribute of *gevurah* corresponds to the night. Thus, each morning, when night turns to day, the *sefirah* *Chesed* (Lovingkindness) is in ascendance. This corresponds to Avraham, who exemplified the attribute of lovingkindness. More specifically, the *Zohar* here adds: Avraham is symbolic of the morning, as Scripture points

(Isaiah 41:8)¹²⁴; “to its might”—this is *gevurot*, corresponding to “The sound of Your thunder was in the sphere.”¹²⁵

And this is (Song of Songs 8:7), “Many waters cannot extinguish the love.”¹²⁶ For the ability to conquer is mainly by means of love,¹²⁷ as in, “Sit at My right....”¹²⁸

And this is the explanation of (Psalms 29:3), “the *El* (God) of Glory thunders.” “*El*” is *chesed* (lovingkindness)¹²⁹; “glory” is wisdom, as is written (Proverbs 3:35), “The wise will inherit glory”¹³⁰; “thunders” alludes to the thunder.¹³¹ In other words, the *gevurot*, an aspect of thunder, must be coupled with love, so that they will strike the glory, the aspect of wisdom, and be converted into thunder. Then, you will

out (Genesis 22:3), “Avraham got up early in the morning” to do the will of the Holy One. Hence the phrase “the morning of Avraham.” The *Zohar* therefore understands “when it turned morning...” as alluding to Avraham, and says: The judgments against the Israelites at that time were so great that had God not recalled the merit of Avraham, all of Israel would have drowned in the Red Sea. It split for the Jews only in his merit, for his having gotten up early in the morning to do the will of God, and they passed through (*Zohar* II, 170b). In our context, with “the sea” connoting the sea of wisdom, God’s splitting the sea for the Israelites alludes to His opening their clogged minds and giving them minds “as white as silver” in Avraham’s merit (see n.120). See note 125 for the completion of Rebbe Nachman’s explanation of this verse.

Rebbe Nachman’s references here to Avraham, the personification of *Chesed*, is also intended to highlight the contrast between him and Yitzchak, the personification of *Gevurah*. Yitzchak’s *gevurot* are tempered by Avraham’s *chasadim*. This is especially necessary on Rosh HaShanah, when fear is the dominant attribute, for Rosh HaShanah is the Day of Judgment. The sounding of the shofar (thunder) is thus a means for arousing fear of Heaven but also love for God (cf. nn.68 and 69).

124. **Avraham my beloved.** Avraham—who is love—is God’s *beloved*.

125. **might...gevurot...sphere.** As Rebbe Nachman explained earlier: Thunder is an aspect of *gevurot*...These *gevurot* correspond to might and strength. A person releases the voice with great force and...when it encounters the skull (sphere of the mind), the voice is converted into thunder and is transmitted to the creation (see §3 and nn.48-50, 55).

Thus, although when the Jews came to the Red Sea it was a time of judgment, of fallen *gevurot*, by tempering these *gevurot* with *chasadim* the decree against the Jewish people was mitigated and all of Israel passed through the sea—the sea of wisdom, the intellect. This was because at the Red Sea the Jewish people had attained the devotions mentioned in our lesson. They separated from *chametz*/death/secular wisdom and ate *matzah*, representative of a pure intellect. Their fear of Heaven/*gevurot* “might” was also complete, as in (Exodus 14:31), “the people feared God.” With purified intellect and fear, their prayers were like thunder and so were hearkened to by God (Exodus 14:10). This also gives us a deeper understanding of Rashi’s explanation of the verse in Song of Songs (1:11), “We will make for you necklaces of gold studded with silver.” Rashi says it refers to the gold and silver booty the Jews acquired at the splitting of the Red Sea. In our context, this refers to the gold *gevurot* and silver *chasadim*, fear and love, that the Jewish people

- **דֵּא גִּבּוֹרֹת.** הִנֵּנוּ בְּחִינָּת: “**קוֹל רְעֵמָק בְּגַלְגָּל**.”

וזהו (שיר השירים ח): “**מַיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלֹו לְכִבּוֹת אֶת הָאֶחָדָה**”, כי עקר ה^תגִּבּוֹרֹת עַל יְדֵי הָאֶחָדָה, כְּמוֹ שָׁכְתוֹב: “**שָׁב לִימִנִּי**” וכיו’.

וזהו פְּרֹושׁ (תהלים כט): “**אֶל הַכְּבֹוד**”. “**אֵל**” - **דֵּא חֶסֶד**. “**כְּבֹוד**” - **דֵּא חֶכְמָה**, כְּמוֹ שָׁכְתוֹב (משל ג): “**כְּבֹוד חֶכְמִים יִנְחַלוּ**”. “**הַרְעִים**”

- **דֵּא בְּחִינָּת רָעִים**, הִנֵּנוּ הַגִּבּוֹרֹת בְּחִינָּת רָעִים, צָרִיךְ לְשַׁתְּפָה עַמְּהָם אֶחָדָה, כְּדִי שִׁיגְגֹּעַ בְּכְבֹוד, בְּבְחִינָּת חֶכְמָה, שִׁיתְעַבְדּ מֵהֶם

then attained (*Mai HaNachal*).

126. **Many waters....** The “many waters” are the many nations who attempt to overwhelm and crush the Jewish people (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 8:7). In our context, this refers to the secular wisdom and many vices that seek to drown the intellect, the holy encampment of the Jew. How can a person counter these “many waters”?

127. **conquer...by means of love.** That is, through acts of lovingkindness, the attribute of *chesed*. Performing the mitzvot with love and joy helps a person wage the battle against his enemies—i.e., secular wisdom and evil passions—who are constantly attempting to overwhelm him and undermine his fear of Heaven. Thus, after first developing fear of Heaven (which brings one to perform the mitzvot), a person must perform the mitzvot with joy (out of love for God). This alone will give him the ability to conquer and vanquish all the elements opposed to his spiritual development.

Rebbe Nachman’s advice applies to our daily lives as well. The key to overcoming any opposition, the source of which is the *gevurot*, is through love, the *chasadim*. This, as opposed to fighting the *gevurot* with *gevurot*, as we so often seem to do.

128. **Sit at My right.** For the “enemy,” the fallen *gevurot*/Other Side, must be tempered and conquered by love (as above, n.117).

129. **El is chesed.** God’s Holy Name *El* indicates kindness, as in (Psalms 52:3), “The *chesed* (lovingkindness) of *El* lasts throughout the day” (see Appendix: Sefirot and Associated Names of God).

130. **wise...inherit glory.** Both *Chokhmah* (Wisdom) and *Chesed* (Lovingkindness) are on the right side of the *sefirah* structure. From this verse in Proverbs we see that wisdom and glory are synonymous. Thus, when a person performs the mitzvot with joy—i.e., love/*chesed*—he merits glory—i.e., wisdom/a pure intellect.

131. **thunders...thunder.** He then merits thunder—i.e., to arouse fear of Heaven in others as well as in himself, for his intellect and fear are pure and tempered with love.

The verse thus translates in our text as follows: ***El***—When *chesed* is performed, **of glory**—one merits intellect, and so he **thunders**—his voice arouses fear of Heaven.

conquer your enemies, as in, “Sit at My right hand while I make your enemies your footstool.”¹³²

6. This is the explanation¹³³:

Rabbah bar bar Chanah recounted: One time we were traveling on a *sephinta* (ship). To sail between a fish’s two *shitzas* (fins) took the ship three days and three nights, [even though] it was swimming upwind and we were sailing downwind. And lest you think the ship was not sailing quickly, when Rav Dimi came, he said, “In the time it takes to heat a kettle of water, it went sixty *parsay* (parasangs). And a *parsha* (rider) shot an arrow, yet [the ship] preceded it.” Rav Ashi said, “This [fish] was a sea *gyldena*, which has two fins” (*Bava Batra* 73b).

sephinta — This connotes importance.¹³⁴ It corresponds to *gevurah*/fear, as is written (*Isaiah* 33:6), “The fear of God is His treasure.”¹³⁵ For [the fear of Heaven] is what is most important.¹³⁶

132. ...footstool. As explained, when a person’s love and fear of God are properly balanced, he has the weapons to battle and overcome his enemies.

In review: Every person is responsible to make the world a better place by praying to mitigate decrees. However, when decrees are extant and man’s prayers are obscured by his sins, he has to disguise his prayers in a *maamar* (§1). To know whether it is before or after the decree one must perform the mitzvot with joy—feeling reward in the performance itself. Then, the degree to which he succeeds in feeling joy is indicative of whether God is joyous or the decree has already been issued (§2). To feel this joy, one must have a heart whose crookedness has been eliminated by thunder—i.e., a revelation of intellect. This thunder is generated by arousing the fear of Heaven through intense prayer (§3). But for thunder to be generated when his voice strikes his mind, a person must safeguard his fear of Heaven, and more importantly keep his mind free of secular wisdom and evil passions, especially blemishes of the Covenant. This battle waged by the intellect against evil thoughts parallels the one waged by the tzaddikim against the Other Side. Thus, when this latter battle manifests as conflict between tzaddikim, the person who hears it should understand that he is being advised to repent and rectify his own blemished intellect. Only then can he come to the voice of thunder that strengthens the heart’s crookedness, and so perform the mitzvot with proper joy (§4). He must also have love for God and perform the mitzvot with joy. For the proper

Rashbam:

shitzas - a fin: **between two shitzas** - these are the fins on the back of the fish, one to the side of the head and one to the side of the tail: **it was swimming upwind** - it was going against the wind: **and we were sailing downwind** - in the same direction as the wind; for the waters of the sea do not flow and one sails using the wind: **In the time it takes to heat a kettle of water** - in the amount of time it would take to boil a kettle of water: **And a rider shot an arrow** - if anyone on the seashore would shoot an arrow from his bow, we would see the ship outrace the arrow:

רַעֲמִים, וַתַּגְּבֶר עַל אֹיְבִיךְ, כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתּוֹב: “שָׁב לִימִנִּי” וּכְךָ.

וזה פרוש:

אמר רבבה בר בר חנא: זימנה
חדא הוּא אַזְלִינָן בְּסְפִינְתָּא,
וְסָגַי סְפִינְתָּא בֵּין שִׁיצָא
לְשִׁיצָא דְכֹרְרָא תַּלְתָּא יוֹמָא
וְתַלְתָּא לִילּוֹתָא, אַיְהוּ בְּזַקִּיפָּוּ
וְאַנְנָן בְּשִׁפְוֹלִי. וְכֵי תִּמְאָ, לֹא
מַסְגִּי סְפִינְתָּא טוֹבָא? כִּי אַתָּא
רְבָ דִימָי אָמַר כִּמְיחַם קְמַקּוֹמָא
דִמְיאָ מַסְגִּי שְׁתִין פְּרָסִי, וְשָׁדֵי
פְּרָשָׁא גִּירָא וְקַדְמָה לִיהְיָה.
וְאָמַר רְבָ אֲשִׁי הַהוּא גִּילְדָּנָא
שִׁיצָא. (בבא בתרא עג)

סְפִינְתָּא - לְשׁוֹן חַשִׁיבות, דֹא בְּחִינַת גִּבּוֹרָה יְרָאָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתּוֹב
(ישעה לג): “יראת ה’ היא אַוְצָרוֹ”, **שהיא עקר החשיבות.**

balance between love and fear enables a person to battle his evil thoughts and desires, and even overcome them (§5).

133. **This is the explanation.** Rebbe Nachman now shows how the concepts of this lesson are alluded to within the framework of Rabbah bar bar Chanah’s story.

134. **sephinta...importance.** The Aramaic term for ship, *sephinta* (סְפִינְתָּא), resembles *sephin* (סְפִין), which is Aramaic for important. See *Moed Katan* 28a (cf. Lesson #1 and n.65).

135. **fear...His treasure.** Rashi explains that a person who fears God merits God’s treasure, and the Talmud associates God’s treasure with *gevurot geshamim* (mighty rains; *Taanit* 2a). This shows the connection between fear and *gevurot*, as above (§3).

136. **fear...is most important.** Expounding on this verse from *Isaiah*, “The fear of God...,” the Talmud states that God’s greatest treasure is the Torah. Yet when a person has Torah knowledge but lacks fear of God, he is like one who has the keys to the inner doors but has no key to open the outer gates. How can he enter? (*Shabbat* 31a). And although in our lesson

ShiTza — This connotes misfortune, as is written (Numbers 16:21), “[Separate yourselves from this congregation,] and I will destroy them in an instant.” The Aramaic translation [of “and I will destroy them”] is *v'aShayTZay yas'hone*.¹³⁷

three days and three nights — This corresponds to the mitzvot, which are [divided into three categories]: the rational, the tradition-based, and the statutes.¹³⁸ Concerning them it is written (Joshua 1:8), “You shall study [Torah] day and night.”¹³⁹

it was swimming upwind and we were sailing downwind — This corresponds to “God rejoices in His works; Israel rejoices in its Maker.”¹⁴⁰

In the time it takes to heat a kettle of water — This is the mind, as in, “and drops from Lebanon.”¹⁴¹

it went sixty parsay — This corresponds to *gevurot*¹⁴²: “sixty *geborim* (mighty men)” (Song of Songs 3:7), and “the thunder of His strength.”¹⁴³

And a parsha shot an arrow — *PaRSha* is the aspect of *chesed* (lovingkindness). It refers to someone who brings to light that which is

Rebbe Nachman has not explicitly mentioned the concept of Torah, it is implied in what he says concerning the intellect, for Torah wisdom is the very opposite of secular wisdom. Thus, just as it is impossible to have a pure intellect without fear of Heaven (see n.80), it is impossible to attain the inner depths and truth of Torah without fear of Heaven. Even if he studies Torah, his Torah is likened to secular wisdom, the side of death, *chametz*. Therefore, the Rebbe says: The fear of Heaven is what is most important. The *Mai HaNachal* adds that interpreting *sephinta* (ship) as a metaphor for fear of Heaven is most appropriate. For it is through the *sephinta*/fear that a person traverses the sea of wisdom/intellect, as in, “where there is no fear of Heaven, there is no wisdom” (as above, §4, n.80).

137. **ShiTza...v'aShayTZay yas'hone.** God said this to Moshe and Aharon when Korach led a band of his supporters to rebel against them. On the surface, their disagreement seems to be what in our lesson Rebbe Nachman calls a conflict between *tzaddikim*. However, in rebelling against Moshe, Korach blemished his mind, causing it to sour like *chametz*, and so was punished with death (cf. n.95). This is *shitza*, indicative of misfortune and decrees.

138. **the rational, the tradition-based, and the statutes.** Rational mitzvot are those commandments that are self-evident and can be arrived at intellectually, without any prophetic inspiration—e.g., honoring one’s parents and the prohibitions against murder and theft. Tradition-based mitzvot are those that are handed down, originally through prophetic inspiration, and once given are understood to be in the individual’s or nation’s best interest—e.g., celebrating Shabbat and the Festivals. Statutes are the commandments that remain

שִׁיצָא — לשׁוֹן צָרָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁבָתוֹב (במדבר ט): “וְאַכְלָה אַתֶּם כַּרְגָּעַ,” וְתַرְגּוּמוֹ: “וְאַשְׁצִי יְתָהּוֹן.”

תַּלְתָּא יְמָא וְלִילּוֹתָא — דָא בְּחִינַת מִצּוֹת, שִׁישׁ בְּהָם מִשְׁפְּלוֹת וּמִקְבְּלוֹת וְחִקּוֹת, וְכַתִּיב בְּהָם (יהושע א): “וְהִגִּת בֹּו יוֹמָם וּלְילָה.”

איָהו בְּזָקִיפּוֹ וְאַנְנָן בְּשִׁפּוֹלִי — זה בְּחִינַת: “יִשְׁמַח הַבְּמַעַשְׂיוֹ,” “יִשְׁמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעוֹשָׂיו.”

בְּמִיחָם קְמָקוֹמָא דְמִיאָ — דָא מְחָא, כְּמוֹ שְׁבָתוֹב (שיר-השירים ד): “וְנוֹזְלִים מִן לְבָנוֹן.”

מִסְגָּא שְׁתִין פְּרִסִּי — דָא בְּחִינַת גִּבּוֹרוֹת, שְׁשִׁים גִּבּוֹרִים, וּרְעָם גִּבּוֹרוֹתָיו.

וְכִי שְׁדֵי פְּרִשָּׁא גִּירָא. פְּרִשָּׁא — דָא בְּחִינַת חֶסֶד, שַׁהוּא מֹצִיא

eternally unfathomable—e.g., the Red Heifer (cf. *Yad HaChazakah, Hilkhot Me'ilah* 8:8; *Or HaChaim*, Numbers 19:2).

139. **day and night.** Thus, “three days and three nights” also alludes to performing the mitzvot.

140. **God rejoices...Israel rejoices....** This corresponds to performing the mitzvot with joy, as a result of which a person can enter into and feel the joy of God (as above, §2, nn.29-31).

141. **heat...water...mind....** As explained, the mind corresponds to moisture, the rain clouds (nn.47, 51-53). “To heat a kettle of water” thus corresponds to combining the heart’s burning desire to serve God (fear, *gevurot*) with a pure mind (intellect, *chasadim*) in order to produce thunder. See also *Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #79.

142. **sixty parsay...gevurot.** The term *parsay* is the plural of *parsa* (parasang, a Persian measure of distance) and resembles the Hebrew term for one of Persian descent, *Parsi*. The Talmud indicates that as a people, the Persians were particularly strong and mighty (cf. *Kiddushin* 72a), which in our context corresponds to the *gevurot*.

143. **sixty mighty men...thunder....** “Sixty *parsay*“ thus alludes to the “sixty mighty men” from the verse (*loc. cit.*), “Here is Shlomo’s bed, encircled by sixty mighty men....” God had given King Solomon the ability to rule over all of creation, including the demons. But after he married Pharaoh’s daughter, King Solomon was beset by extrinsic fears and so had sixty warriors stand guard around his bed (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 3:7). In our context, King Solomon’s error caused the *gevurot* to descend and assume the form of extrinsic fears. To rectify this he needed “sixty mighty men”—i.e., “the thunder of His *gevurot*.”

From the teachings of the Kabbalah we learn that each one of the *Ten Sefirot* contains

hidden, someone who *mePhaReSh* (explains) those matters which are obscure.¹⁴⁴

an arrow—As in, “Shoot Your arrows and panic them” (Psalms 144:6).¹⁴⁵ This corresponds to “Sit at My right hand while I make your enemies your footstool.”¹⁴⁶

the ship preceded it—This is the aspect of fear, which “precedes.” For fear of Heaven precedes all else, as is written (Psalms 111:10), “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.”¹⁴⁷

Rabbah bar bar Chanah recounted that he had delved so deeply into the attribute of the fear of Heaven,¹⁴⁸ and had seen the great power of this fear, that he was now able to use it to discern between before the decree has been issued and after the decree has been issued—i.e., **between two shitza**.¹⁴⁹

He then explains how he could discern: by means of the mitzvot, which are the aspect of **three days**...,¹⁵⁰ it is possible to discern. And this is only when one performs [the mitzvot] with joy; for through the joy of the mitzvot it is possible to discern. This is because the Holy One rejoices in His works and this joy is clothed in the mitzvot, as explained.¹⁵¹ And we below also rejoice in the Holy One, as in, “Israel rejoices in its Maker.” We desire no reward, even the reward of the World to Come. This is, **It was swimming upwind and we were sailing**

a measure of all the other *sefirot* (e.g., *Malkhut* consists of *Keter* of *Malkhut*, *Chokhmah* of *Malkhut*, *Binah* of *Malkhut*, and so on to *Malkhut* of *Malkhut*). In this way, the six rings of the windpipe that emit the shofar blast/thunder (see n.47), which correspond to the six *sefirot* from *Chesed* through *Yesod*, are actually sixty—i.e., the sixty strong men that rectify the corrupted *gevurot*/extrinsic fears and thereby generate a voice of thunder.

144. **PaRSha...mePhaReSh...obscure.** The *Zohar* explains: The difference between *tov* (good) and *chesed* (lovingkindness) is that the nature of *tov* is constricted, such that the good is contained within itself. *Chesed*, on the other hand, expands outward, extending beneficence to both the righteous and the wicked (*Zohar* II, 168b; see *Likutey Moharan* I, 283). This connects to what Rebbe Nachman explained earlier, that the main revelation begins with the *sefirah Chesed* (§5 and n.116). Thus, *parsha* (פָּרָשָׁה, rider) alludes to revealing the hidden, as in one who is *mepharesh* (מְפַרֵּשׁ, explains) and reveals the meaning of that which is difficult and obscure.

145. **Your arrows...panic them.** The *Metzudat David* renders “Your arrows” as “Your thunder.” Thus, King David asks God to assist him in battle: “Shoot Your thunder and panic them.”

146. **Sit...right hand....** As explained, this is the coupling of *gevurot* with *chasadim* (see

לְאָוֹר תְּעִלּוּמֹת, דְּבָרִים הַמְּצַמְּצִים הָוְאַ מִפְרָשׁ אֹתָם. גִּירָא – דָא (תַּהֲלִים קָמָד): “שְׁלַח חָצֵיךְ וְתָהַמֵּס”, דָא בְּחִינָת: “שְׁבַּלְיִמְינְךָ וּכְךָ.”

קְדָמָה לִיהְיָה – דָא בְּחִינָת יְרָאָה שְׁהָיָה קָדָם, שְׁהָיְרָאָה הִיא קְוִדּוּמָת, כְּמוֹ שְׁבָתוֹב (שם קִיא): “רְאִשְׁתְּחִמָּה וּכְךָ”. שְׁרָבָה בֶּרֶת חָנָא סְפָר, שְׁהָלָךְ כָּל כֵּד בְּמִדְתַּת הַיְרָאָה, וְרָאָה גָּדָל כַּח הַיְרָאָה, עַד שִׁכְׁלָל לְהַבִּין עַל יָדָה בֵּין קָדָם גָּזָר דִּין לְאַחֲר גָּזָר דִּין, וְזֹהוּ בֵּין שִׁיצָא וּכְךָ”.

וְהַדָּר מִפְרָשׁ אֵיךְ יָכֹל לְהַבִּין, הַיְנוּ עַל-יְדֵי הַמְּצֹוֹת, שָׁהָם בְּחִינָת תְּלַתָּא יוֹמָא וּכְךָ, יָכֹל לְהַבִּין. וְדוֹקָא כְּשֻׁעוֹשִׁין אֹתָן בְּשָׁמָחָה, וְעַל-יְדֵי שָׁמָחָת הַמְּצֹוֹת יָכֹל לְהַבִּין. כִּי הַקְּדוֹשָׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הָוָא מִשְׁמָמָח בְּמַעַשָּׂיו, וְהַשְּׁמָחָה הִיא מִלְבָשַׁת בְּמְצֹוֹת, כְּגַם, וְאַנְהָנוּ מִשְׁמָמִין לִמְתָּה גָּם כֵּן בְּהַקְּדוֹשָׁ-בָּרוּךְ-הָוָא, כְּמוֹ שְׁבָתוֹב: “יִשְׁמָח יִשְׁרָאֵל בְּעֹשָׂיו”, וְאַנְןָ רְצֹונָנוּ בְּשָׁמָר, אֲפָלוּ שָׁכָר עֲוֹלָם הַבָּא, כְּפָלָל.

§5, n.117). King David spent his life fighting Israel’s enemies. On a deeper level, his battles signified the battles tzaddikim wage against the Other Side in order to keep it from entering the holy encampment (§4). Thus, those of King David’s prayers and psalms that he composed to invoke God’s assistance in battle are also heartfelt requests for assistance in countering all spiritual opposition. This is the deeper intent behind “Shoot Your arrows...” and “Sit at My right hand...,” as well as the many other similar verses Rebbe Nachman quotes in his lessons from the Book of Psalms.

147. **preceded it...is the fear of God.** The Psalmist says that preceding wisdom—i.e., before a person can attain wisdom—he must first have the fear of God. In our context, the *chasadim*/love of God must be preceded by the *gevurot*/fear of God.

Having shown how the different elements in Rabbah bar bar Chanah’s story allude to concepts discussed in the lesson, Rebbe Nachman pauses here to tie them together by means of a review.

148. **delved so deeply into...fear of Heaven.** “One time we were traveling on a ship (fear)...” (n.134-136).

149. **discern between....** Discern between the different misfortunes, which correspond to decrees. See above, note 137.

150. **mitzvot...three days....** As above, and note 139.

151. **as explained.** See section 2 and notes 29,30.

downwind—our joy *<below>* is in accordance with His joy *<Above>*. In this way we can discern [whether it is before or after the decree has been issued].¹⁵²

[Rabbah bar bar Chanah] then explains how to achieve this joy: by means of the aspect of thunder.¹⁵³ This is, **when Rav Dimi came, he said: In the time it takes to heat a kettle of water it went sixty parsay**—i.e., corresponding to “The sound of Your thunder was in the sphere,” *<and to “The voice stimulates kavanah”>*.¹⁵⁴ **Sixty** is an allusion to *gevurot*, which strike the skull and are converted into thunder.¹⁵⁵ And then “the voice is transmitted”—this corresponds to “The voice stimulates *kavanah*,” and to “Thunder was only created [to straighten the crookedness of the heart].”¹⁵⁶

He then said that, in essence, the conquering-ability of the *gevurot* is only due to *chasadim*. Thus, it is necessary to encompass the left within the right, as explained.¹⁵⁷ But even so, a person must put the fear of Heaven first,¹⁵⁸ because “the owner of a lost object searches after what he has lost.” {As the Sages taught¹⁵⁹: It is the way of the man to search after the woman. This is analogous to a person who has lost something. Who searches after whom? Certainly, the owner of the object searches after what he has lost (*Kiddushin* 2b).¹⁶⁰ The explanation of this is: Man is the aspect of love, whereas woman is the aspect of fear, as is known.¹⁶¹ It is therefore necessary to put the fear of Heaven first, as, then, love will automatically follow. For the love [of God] constantly goes out and searches after the fear of Heaven,

152. **we can discern....** As above, section 2.

153. **how to achieve this joy...thunder.** Having just explained that performing the mitzvot with joy is the key for discerning whether it is before or after the decree, Rabbah bar bar Chanah’s words raise the question, Of what value is fear? He therefore makes the point that to attain joy one must have the aspect of thunder. Rebbe Nachman has explained that true joy is only possible once the heart’s crookedness has been made straight by the thunder that comes from the *gevurot*. These *gevurot*, as we have seen, are an aspect of fear. Thus fear, too, is a fundamental component in the process. And, because it is not possible to generate this thunder unless the mind has been made pure, Rabbah bar bar Chanah goes on the quote the words of Rav Dimi (*Parparaot LeChokhmah*).

154. **water...sphere...kavanah.** Rebbe Nachman has already shown that “kettle of water” alludes to a mind pure enough to generate thunder (see n.141), and so here he links it to two previously quoted verses that speak of the heart and its relationship to the thunder/voice.

155. **Sixty...gevurot...thunder.** As above, notes 142-143.

156. **voice is transmitted....** This relates back to section 3 and note 57.

וזה: **איהו בזקיפו ואנן בשפולי, לפי שמחתו בן שמחתו, ועל-ידיהם אנחנו יכולים להבין.**

והדר מפרש איך להשיג בינה שמחה, על-ידי בינה רעם. וזה: **כִּי אַתָּא רְבִּי מִי אָמַר: בְּמִיחַם קָמְקוּמָא דְמִיא וּכְוֹ'**, הינו בינה: קול רעם בגלגל. **שִׁיתֵּן זֶה בִּנְתַּתְּגָּרְתָּן, הַפּוֹגָעֵן בְּגַלְגַּלְתָּא, וַנְעַשֶּׂה מִמְנוּ רַעֲמִים. וְאַשְׁתַּמְעַקְלָא: זֶה בִּנְתַּתְּקָוֵל מְעוֹרֵר הַפְּנִינה, בִּנְתַּתְּנָה: לֹא נִבְרָאוּ רַעֲמִים וּכְוֹ'**.

והדר אמר, שעיקר התגברות הגבורות אינו אלא על-ידי חסדים. וצריך לאכלה שמאלא בימינא, כב"ל, ואפ-על-פ"כן צריך לאקדר מא את היראה, כי בעל אבדה מחזיר על אבדהו (במו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה (קדושין ב): **קדרכו של איש לחזר אחר אשה. משל לאדם, שאבדה לו אבדה וcou'.**

פְּרוֹשָׁה: **כִּי אַהֲבָה** הוּא בינה איש, ויראה היא בינה אשה, בידוע. ועל בן צריך להקדים את היראה, כי אז תבוא אליו האהבה ממילא, כי האהבה הולכת ומחרזת אחר היראה תמיד, כי בעל אבדה מחזיר אחר אבדהו, כב"ל (כח שמעתי מפיו

157. **necessary to encompass the left....** Above, section 5.

158. **fear...first.** As in note 147 above (see also n.129).

159. **As the Sages taught.** This did not appear in Rebbe Nachman’s original manuscript. Reb Nosson, who added it, writes: “I heard this example explicitly from Rebbe Nachman’s holy lips.”

160. **It is the way of man to search after....** The Talmud asks why it is that the man is the one who takes the initiative in searching for a mate. The answer, the Sages say, is that this search is like searching for a lost object. Who searches for whom? Obviously the person who lost an object does the searching and not the other way around. Well, Chavah, the first woman, was created from Adam’s rib. It was taken from him and so he must go searching for what he has lost (*Kiddushin, loc cit., Rashi, s.v. aveidah*).

161. **as is known.** Male and female correspond to the *sefirot* of *Chesed* and *Gevurah*, love and fear, right and left, respectively (see *Zohar I*, 70a).

Earlier, Rebbe Nachman taught that the main revelation begins in *Chesed* (§5). Thus, at Creation, Adam/man/*chesed* was created first. But as Scripture states (*Genesis* 2:18): “It is not

just as the owner of the object searches after what he has lost.}¹⁶² This is, **And a rider shot an arrow....**¹⁶³

Rav Ashi said, This [fish] was a sea gyldena. *Gyldena* alludes to the Holy Name *AGLA*, which is an aspect of *gevurot* in that it is an acronym for “*Atah Gebor L’olam Adonoy* (You are mighty forever, O Lord!)” (*Amidah Prayer*),¹⁶⁴ as is brought (*Zohar Chadash, Terumah*). *GYLDeNA* is made up entirely of the letters *AGL* and the Holy Name *ADoNoY*¹⁶⁵—i.e., the Holy Name *AGLA*.¹⁶⁶ <And this is what is alluded to by **two fins**.¹⁶⁷>

good for man to be alone”—it is not good for love to be without fear. God therefore followed His creation (revelation) of Adam with the creation (revelation) of Chavah/woman/*gevurah*.

162. **put the fear of Heaven first....** Similarly, the *Zohar* teaches: Fear of Heaven must precede love (*Zohar II*, 216a). Thus, although the main revelation begins in *Chesed*, and from there rectification extends to all the *sefirot* below it, love of God cannot be properly attained unless one has first achieved fear of Heaven. It is this fear, the thunder, that rouses the intellect so that thunder can be generated and heard (*Torat Natan* #9). All service of God must therefore begin with the search for fear of Heaven: man searching for woman.

163. **And a rider shot an arrow....** This is the coupling of *chasadim* (rider) and *gevurot* (arrow), man and woman...as in note 146.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds: If the *chasadim* are what give power to the *gevurot*, then we are back to our previous question (see n.153), Of what value is fear? In other words, if the primary means for overcoming evil thoughts and passions is through one’s love of God—if the left has to be encompassed in the right—then why does Rabbah bar bar Chanah emphasize the importance (*sephinta*) of fear, as if it were the key attribute for bringing a person closer to God? Rebbe Nachman’s answer is that even though the “*parsha* (rider) shot an arrow...”—i.e., love was combined with fear—“the ship preceded it.” That is, fear of Heaven must precede all else. Fear must always be the initial, primary motivating attribute if a person is to then achieve a true level of love and the subsequent rectification of his mind and intellect. As in the verse the Rebbe quoted earlier, “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God.”

164. **AGLA...Atah Gebor....** *Atah gebor l’olam*, the opening words of the second blessing of the *Amidah* prayer, recalls God’s might (*gevurot*). The blessing also recalls God’s power to provide the world with rain (sustenance) and His power to resurrect the dead. The *Zohar* teaches that the blessing *Atah Gebor* has forty-nine words (including *morid haTal*, “Who sends down the dew”). This corresponds to *Binah* (*Zohar Chadash, Terumah* p.42a), which is the source of all judgments and decrees (see n.85). A person must seek to mitigate the decrees that emanate from *Binah* with *chasadim* from *Chokhmah* (which corresponds to the first blessing of the *Amidah*). And, since this blessing corresponds to the *gevurot*, the Holy Names associated with it—*AGLA* in particular—are Holy Names of *gevurot*. The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* brings additional support to show that the Holy Name *AGLA* relates to fear/judgment. In our text, we have seen that the *gevurot* correspond to rain/sustenance (see n.135), whereas the fallen *gevurot* correspond to *chametz/death* (§4). Thus, when the *gevurot* are in a rectified state, connected to holiness, they lead a person to the fear of Heaven. He then

הקדוש בפֶּרֶשׁ. וְזֹהוּ בְּחִינַת: וּכְיַדְנָא פָּרְשָׁא גִּירָא וּכְוֹ'.
וְאָמַר רַב אָשִׁי: הָאֵי גַּלְדָּנָא דִּימָא וּכְוֹ' - גַּלְדָּנָא הוּא בְּחִינַת שֵׁם
אָגָלָא, שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת גִּבּוֹרוֹת, כִּי הוּא רַאשֵּׁי תְּבוֹתָה: אַפְתָּה גִּבּוֹר
לְעֹלָם אַדְנִי, כִּי גַּלְדָּנָא הוּא אֹתִיּוֹת אַגְלָל וּשְׁם אַדְנִי'
בְּשִׁלְמוֹת, הִנּוּ שֵׁם אַגְלָל, כְּבָבָל.

receives the blessings associated with *Atah Gebor*: sustenance, vitality, and even resurrection of the dead—i.e., restoring his intellect to holiness and breaking free of secular wisdom/*chametz*/death.

165. **AGL...ADoNoY.** The Holy Name *Adonoy* (Master) is associated with *Malkhut*, which in itself indicates judgments. *AGL* (אגל) has a numerical value of thirty-four, the number of letters in the Holy Name *ADoNoY* (אדנו) when it is expanded to the third power, or *milui-d’milui* (this is done as follows: אלף למד תי, נן = נן וא נן; יוד = יוד למד פא; דלת = דלת למד פא; אלף = אלף למד פא). The Holy Name *AGLA* (= 35) is thus the *milui-d’milui* expansion of *Adonoy* with one more added for the word itself, and therefore indicative of several judgments (see *Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar HaAmidah* #18, p.241; *Shaar HaKavanot, Inyan Kavanat HaAmidah, Drush* #5, p.225). The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains that these judgments are the decrees which emanate from *Binah*. In our context, the *several* judgments corresponds to the different decrees: those that have yet to be issued and those that have already been issued.

166. **GYLDeNA...AGLA.** The *GYLDeNA* (גַּלְדָּנָא) of Rabbah bar bar Chanah’s story thus alludes to the two Holy Names of the *gevurot* just mentioned: *ADoNoY* (אדנו) and *AGLA* (אגלא; using the נ in both).

167. **two fins.** The Kabbalah teaches that the *gevurot* from *Binah* descend as judgments all the way to *Malkhut/Adonoy*. It also teaches that where *milui-d’milui* expansion is used—as in turning *Adonoy* into *AGLA* (see n.165)—the degree of *gevurot* is all the more magnified and severe. In our context, we might therefore align the Holy Name *Adonoy* with the holy *gevurot* before they are revealed (issued), and *AGLA* with the *gevurot* after the decree has been issued. These are the two *shitza* (fins)—misfortunes/decrees—of the sea *gyldena*.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* reviews all this in the context of our lesson. He writes: Rabbah bar bar Chanah’s entire story revolves around rectifying the *gevurot* by tempering them at their source, the source of all judgments, *Binah* (see §1 and also n.85). These *gevurot* produce fear in people (§3). And if they are extrinsic fears, corrupted *gevurot*, they cause a “souring” of the mind (gold dross), making it impossible for that person to rectify his intellect (§4). Conversely, when the *gevurot* are attached to holiness, when the fear a person feels is the fear of Heaven, then he automatically merits love of God. Such love/*chesed* is indicative of a pure mind (as white as silver) (§5). This is the ultimate rectification, for then the *gevurot* are tempered with *chasadim* and so do not turn into severe judgment/decrees. Tempering these *gevurot/decrees* at their source enables a person to discern through the joy of the *mitzvot* he performs whether it is before or after the decree. And the way to come to this joy is by generating thunder, which is itself an aspect of *gevurot* (§3). Thunder makes straight the heart’s crookedness (§2). Specifically the heart, because the heart is the seat of joy and also corresponds to the source of the *gevurot*, *Binah* (see Appendix: The *Sefirot* and Man). By performing the *mitzvot* with great joy a person ascends to the level of *Binah*, and from the

7. This is the explanation [of the opening verse]¹⁶⁸:

“With trumpets and the sound of the shofar shout out before God, the King. Let the sea thunder and all within it, the *tevel* (world) and all its inhabitants. Let the rivers clap their hands, the mountains *y’rainingu* (sing joyously) together. At the presence of God, for He is coming to judge the earth” (Psalms 98:6-9).}

With trumpets and the sound of the shofar — That is, by means of the voice that is released [during prayer]¹⁶⁹

Let the sea thunder — thunder is generated. This corresponds to “The sound of Your thunder was in the sphere.”¹⁷⁰

the *tevel* and all its inhabitants — This alludes to the heart and its arteries. “Thunder was only created....”

TeVeL is made up of the letters *Tav LeV*. *TaV* connotes a mark, as is written (Ezekiel 9:4), “and *hitvita TaV* (inscribe a mark).” The voice is imprinted on the heart,¹⁷¹ as in, “Thunder was only created to straighten the crookedness of the *LeV*.¹⁷² And because of this:

extent of his joy—which mirrors the degree of joy Above—he can discern whether the decree (*gevurot*) has already been issued from *Binah*/heart or not. If the decree has yet to be issued, he can pray a regular prayer to have it overturned. Otherwise, the only way to have the decree postponed or even nullified is by disguising his prayer in a *maamar* (§1; see nn.7-8). The reason is that until the decree is issued, a person can pray openly, giving voice to the words of his prayer without concern for the accusing angels. But after the decree has been issued—corresponding to “He grieved in His *heart*” (see §2 and n.32)—one must bear the decree in thought alone. He dare not articulate it lest these messengers of the Other Side arouse further accusations. However, keeping the decree in thought is precisely what is needed to rectify the fallen *gevurot* because this returns them to their source, *Binah*—the World of Thought—and so undoes the grief of “His heart” that led to the decree in the first place. Thus, by praying in thought to nullify the decree, and in the meantime disguising his prayer in a *maamar*, a person can effect mitigation even after the decree has been issued.

Rabbah bar bar Chanah’s story thus reads as follows:

One time we were traveling on a *sephinta* — Rabbah bar bar Chanah delved into the nature of fear of Heaven and came to recognize its great importance.

between a fish’s two *shitzot* — He learned that the attribute of fear is the initial step for distinguishing between the two states of a misfortune/decree—i.e., before or after it has been issued.

To sail...took the ship three days and three nights, even though it was swimming upwind and we were sailing downwind — The way to know whether it is before or after the decree has been issued is by performing the mitzvot joyously. The joy of the mitzvot operates in two directions, up and down: our rejoicing in God and God’s rejoicing in us. Through this joy it is possible to feel whether God’s joy is complete and, if not, to gauge the severity of the decree (§2).

And lest you think the ship was not sailing quickly, when Rav Dimi came, he said: In the time it takes to heat a kettle of water it went sixty *parsay* — But to arouse joy, a person must first free his heart of crookedness. This is accomplished through an element of fear, namely the

וזה פרוש:
בחצאות וקול שופר וכו' – הינו על-ידי בחינת קול דנפיק,
כפ"ל. על-ידי זה:

רעם הים וכו', נעשה בחינת רעמים, בחינת: “קול רעם”
בגלגל.

תבל וישבי בה – דא בחינת לבא וערקין דילה, כמו שאמר: לא
נבראו רעמים וכו'.

כ תבלאות תיו לב. תיו, לשון רשימה, כמו שכתוב (יחזקאל
ט): “והתויתת תו”, שברשם הקול בלב, כמו שנאמר: לא נבראו
רעמים וכו'. ועל-ידי זה:

thunder generated when the voice strikes a mind cleansed of secular wisdom and evil passions (§3-§4). This straightens the heart by elevating the fallen *gevurot* and arousing fear of Heaven. **And a *parsha* shot an arrow** — And to generate thunder it is also necessary for the *chasadim*/love to temper the *gevurot*/fear. This gives the thunder of the *gevurot* the power it needs to overcome the mind’s enemies: secular wisdom, evil passions, and the like (§5).

the ship preceded it — Even so, the love of God must be preceded by fear of Heaven, which Scripture states is “the beginning of wisdom.”

Rav Ashi said: This fish was a sea gyldena, which has two fins — Thus, when a person tempers the *gevurot*/fear with love, he generates the thunder that produces a straightened heart so that he can then feel the joy in the mitzvot. This joy enables him to discern whether a decree has yet to be issued, in which case it can be mitigated through regular prayer, or if it has already been issued, in which case it can only be mitigated or nullified through prayer disguised in a *maamar*.

168. This is the explanation.... Rebbe Nachman now shows how the concepts of this lesson are alluded to in the opening verse.

169. sound of the shofar...released during prayer. When a person who has attained fear of Heaven prays loudly and with fervor, his voice is like a shofar, thunder (§3; *Mai HaNachal*).

170. Let the sea thunder...in the sphere. His voice thunders in the sphere of the mind, a pure intellect—i.e., the sea of wisdom (§3; *Mai HaNachal*).

171. TeVeL...Tav LeV...imprinted on the heart. The letters of the word *TeVeL* (תבל) can be understood as a compound for *Tav* (ת) *LeV* (לב). When spelled out, the letter *TaV* (ת) means a sign or mark; and *lev* is the Hebrew term for heart. *Tevel* thus alludes to an imprint on the heart—i.e., thunder.

172. crookedness of the LeV. As explained, when a person’s voice strikes his purified mind, thunder is generated. This voice of thunder purges the crookedness of his *lev* (§3).

Let the rivers clap their hands — This alludes to joy, as mentioned above: “and joy for the straight of heart.”¹⁷³ And by means of this joy...

the mountains y’RaNainu together — *RiNah* connotes prayer, as is written (1 Kings 8:28), “Hearken to the *rinah* and to the prayer.”¹⁷⁴

mountains — This alludes to tzaddikim.¹⁷⁵ By means of the heart’s joy they are able to pray, and once they realize that the judgment has already been decreed, they disguise their prayer in a *maamar*.¹⁷⁶ This is the explanation of **<mountains> together**—[the tzaddikim] disguise their prayers together with stories.¹⁷⁷

173. **joy for the straight of heart.** And with a straight heart, a person can feel joy in his heart from the mitzvot he performs (§2).

174. **y’RaNainu...RiNah....** When a person has joy in his heart, he knows in which manner to pray.

175. **mountains...tzaddikim.** Scripture often calls the patriarchs (and other tzaddikim) “mountains,” as in, “jumping over the mountains” (Song of Songs 2:8), and “Listen you mountains” (Micah 6:2; *Zinrat HaAretz*). Though Rebbe Nachman specifies tzaddikim, as mentioned earlier, every person, in accordance with the spiritual level he’s achieved, is capable of praying for the benefit of the world (as above, nn.8, 92).

176. **By means of the heart’s joy they are able to pray....** As explained above, in sections 1 and 2. Through the true joy in their hearts they are able to discern whether it will suffice to articulate a regular prayer, or only by disguising their prayers in a *maamar*—restricting the direct prayer for nullifying the decree to thought alone—will it be possible to overturn it (*Parparaot LeChokhmah*; see n.167).

177. **together with stories.** A *maamar*. They tell stories and engage in everyday conversations, yet hidden in what they say is their praise of God and their pleading for His salvation (see §1 and n.8). As our Sages taught: The ordinary conversation of the tzaddik requires study (*Sukkah* 21b).

The *Mai HaNachal* adds: Regular prayer corresponds to fear, as in (Proverbs 31:30), “The woman who fears God, she will be praised” (see note 161, that man corresponds to love and woman to fear). Prayer disguised in a *maamar*; an aspect of “together,” corresponds to love, as in (Psalms 133:1), “How good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell together.” Thus, through fear of Heaven a person can pray a regular prayer and nullify a decree, and through

נהרות ימְחָאו כְּפָר — בְּחִינַת שְׁמַחָה, פָּגַל, “וְלִישְׁרִי לְבָ שְׁמַחָה.”
ועל ידי השמחה:

יחד הרים ירְגִּנוּ — רְגָה: לשון תפלה, כמו שפתות (מלכים א' ח):
לשםע אל הרנה וכו.

הרים בוחינת צדיקים, הינו על ידי שמחת הלב יכולין להתפלל
ולhalbיש את תפלה במאמר, כשהיכינו כי גוזר הדין, וזה פרוש
יחד, שמלבישים תפלה בספורים יחד:

love of God he can disguise his prayer in a *maamar* and nullify the decree even after it has been issued. This is also the meaning of the words from the Tachanun Prayer: “Hearken to our cry”—i.e., the regular prayer—and give heed to our *maamar*—i.e., the disguised prayer.

Reb Noson explains that Rebbe Nachman’s use of the word “together” teaches that when a person performs the mitzvot with such great joy that he becomes one with Holy One (§2), he joins “his world” together with God. Then, he will certainly be able to disguise his prayers in whatever he talks about, and it can be said of him, “The entire world has been created only for his sake!” (see §1; *Torat Natan* #10).

The verse thus translates in our text as follows:

With trumpets and the sound of the shofar — When a person prays loudly and with fervor, his voice is akin to the blast of the shofar and the rumble of thunder.

Let the sea thunder and all within it — To generate this thunder his voice must issue from the flaming (fear) of his heart and resound in the sphere of his purified mind (love).

the tevel and all its inhabitants — And this thunder is the *tav* that makes straight his *lev*.

Let the rivers clap their hands — And once the crookedness of the heart has been removed, he merits to feel joy in his heart.

the mountains y’ranainu — Having achieved this level of righteousness, his personal aspect of tzaddik, he can discern through this joy if a decree is pending or if it has already been issued. He can mitigate a pending decree with regular prayer. And if it has already been issued, he can mitigate or even nullify the decree by disguising the prayer,

together — by putting it together with a *maamar*.

At the presence of God, for He is coming to judge the earth — When God comes to judge the earth—i.e., issue decrees against it—then through the concepts mentioned in this lesson the tzaddikim know how to compose their prayers for the benefit of the world (*Mai HaNachal*).