



*Breslov Shavuot Booklet*  
*Rebbe Nachman's Torah on Shavuot*

## Kitzur Likutey Moharan I – Lessons That Pertain to Shavuot

### 56 — “On the day of the first fruits” (Numbers 28:26)

1. Each Jew has his own, individual sphere of kingship and dominion. One person may rule in his house, another over a greater sphere, while yet a third may rule over the entire world. Moreover, this aspect of kingship that each person possesses exists both on the revealed level and the hidden level (see more in this lesson in *Likutey Moharan*). However, each person must be extremely careful not to use the kingship and dominion that he possesses for his own personal enjoyment or needs. Rather, he should employ it solely in the service of God – in other words, to admonish and to rebuke all those who are subordinate to him and to bring them back to God. If a person rules only in his house, he must admonish and reprove his family members regarding the service of God. If his dominion extends further than that – each one according to his own level – so is it incumbent upon him to admonish and rebuke that many more people. This obligation applies to each person in accordance with whatever dominion he possesses.

2. When a person does not admonish and reprove those that he should, given the dominion that he possesses, he is punished on their behalf and his days are cut short, God forbid. About such a person, it is said, “Woe to authority, for it buries the one who possesses it!” (*Pesachim* 87b). On the other hand, when a person does rebuke and admonish others about the service of God, he thereby attains life and longevity.

3. However, it is impossible to properly rebuke and admonish people except through engaging in Torah study. This enables one to rebuke each and every person, even those who are very far from him and even if he does not know what they require. The reason for this is that through engaging in Torah study, a person merits that even those who are very far away will hear the voice of the Torah which constantly proclaims and cries out, “How long will you fools love foolishness?” (*Proverbs* 1:22) – and in this way, they will all return to God.

4. Through engaging in Torah study, a person also attains long life. This is because through Torah study, he calls, so to speak, the Life of life, may His Name be blessed, and he draws life and longevity from Him. A person must be sure, however, to study Torah with his mouth and to pronounce the words of Torah out loud. Then he merits to call God [with these words] and to draw life and longevity from Him.

5. There are two levels of concealment of God – there is a single concealment and there is a “concealment within a concealment.” Now, when God is hidden from a person by a single concealment, then it is also very difficult to find Him. Nevertheless, it is still possible to toil and strive until he finds God, since at least he is aware that God is concealed from him. But when God is hidden [from a person] by a concealment within a concealment – in other words, when the concealment itself is hidden from the person, and he is completely oblivious to the fact that God is concealed from him – then it is impossible for him to find God, since he is totally unaware that God even exists in the first place.

Know that when a person commits a transgression and repeats it, God forbid, he falls into the single concealment. At that point, although it is indeed difficult to leave [the concealment] and to return [to God] – since God is already hidden from him and his transgression has already become like something permitted – nevertheless, he is conscious of the concealment. In other words, he knows that his sin has become like something permitted. Consequently, it is still possible for him to reflect

upon this – namely, that he has fallen and entered this concealment, whereby God and the Torah are hidden from him to the point that his sin has become for him like something permitted – and accordingly, he can seek and strive until he emerges from there. But if, God forbid, after a person has sinned twice, he goes on to commit further transgressions, may God save us, he thereby falls into the concealment within the concealment. Then God and the Torah are hidden from him to the point that he is totally unaware that such things are even prohibited or that they have become like permitted things. Rather, all of the evil things have become totally indistinguishable for him, and it is as if the concept of “prohibited” does not even exist, God forbid.

Nevertheless, there is no such thing as despair. Even when a person has fallen into the concealment within the concealment, there, too, God’s vitality is cloaked. For without God’s vitality, absolutely nothing in the world can exist. Even the deepest forces of impurity and even sins – even the concealment within the concealment – also receive their vitality from God. A person who merits to know this fact has all the concealments nullified for him. He then merits to hear the grand proclamation of the Torah, which constantly and resoundingly proclaims, “How long will you fools love foolishness?” and he will merit to return to God.

The way to attain this knowledge is through the Torah. For by engaging in Torah study, it is possible to awaken even a person who is in the concealment within the concealment, and to let him know about God and that he too has hope, until he returns to the truth and draws close to God. For through the power of the true tzaddikim, it is possible to draw close to God any time and in any place, no matter what. Whatever a person may have done, whatever place he may have fallen to, God forbid, there, too, God’s vitality is cloaked, because “He gives life to everything” (cf. Nehemiah 9:6). Then a person can return from wherever he is and he can merit to hear the voice of the Torah. For the reason that people do not hear the grand proclamation of the Torah is because of the many concealments generated by their many sins. Because of our many sins, God is presently hidden from us in the concealment within the concealment, as described by the verse, “I will surely conceal My Face” (Deuteronomy 31:18; in this verse, the Hebrew word for “conceal” is written twice, signifying the two concealments). But by engaging in Torah study, a person eliminates the concealments until he enables even those who are extremely far away to hear the grand proclamation and the reproof of the Torah,\* until they all return to God.

\*That is, when thoughts of repentance occur to a person from the concealment of the Torah that is cloaked within the transgressions and the concealments (*Be’ibey HaNachal*). See further that this is the concept of “Where penitents stand, even perfect tzaddikim cannot stand” (*Berakhot* 34b), and “sins are transformed into merits” (*Yoma* 86b).

6. There are people who have grown distant from God, who leapt and jumped away from the Ubiquitous One. There are others who were close to God for a little while, but who have already forgotten about it. Then there are people who remember God even now, but their inner strength has failed them and they do not succeed in overpowering their evil inclination. By engaging in Torah study, all these people will return to God.

7. In very lowly places and in places that are very distant from God, precisely there is cloaked an extremely high level of Godly vitality, which is identified with the secrets of the Torah [as opposed to the Torah’s revealed teachings]. Therefore, a person who has fallen very far must know that there, in that very place, he can draw close to God the most. For precisely there is concealed an extremely high level of Godly vitality. And when that person does merit to return to God, there will be revealed specifically through his agency a high level of Torah – namely, the secrets of the Torah.

8. The desire for money gives power, God forbid, to the Kingdom of Evil. This is the Kingdom of Haman-Amalek, which constantly pursues the Kingdom of Holiness. The Kingdom of Holiness draws its vitality from knowledge, which is the Torah. The Kingdom of Evil is the antithesis of this, since it constantly hungers to amass wealth and it swallows up the sparks of holiness that are hidden in money, which is rooted in the supernal colors. To the degree that each person breaks his desire for money and draws himself to the Torah and to holy knowledge, so does he extract the sparks of holiness from the Kingdom of Evil. All this is accomplished through the power of the true tzaddikim who truly engage in Torah study. For they have the power to subjugate the Kingdom of Evil, to extract all the sparks of holiness and all the money from there, and to make Torah out of them. It is imperative that a person overpower and break his desire for money.

9. To the degree that a person is steeped in the desire for money, so is his knowledge, his life and his longevity diminished; and he does not merit to hear the grand proclamation of the Torah, which is constantly calling him to return to God. As a result, he is forced to toil for his livelihood with much struggle, and his sustenance reaches him onerously and in meager proportions. But when a person prevails to reach a higher level of understanding and he thinks only about the Torah, and when he breaks his desire for money, his livelihood will thereby come to him easily. He also merits to hear the hints and proclamations of the Torah – which are the good thoughts that are constantly entering his mind about returning to God – until he merits to truly draw close to Him.

10. Depression results from the excessive struggle for and pursuit of wealth. This is the pollution of the snake, and through it, all of a person's limbs grow heavy and his pulse – upon which his vitality depends – is weakened. The weaker the pulse gets, the heavier the limbs grow – which, in turn, weakens the pulse even more – until a person can literally lose his life through his preoccupation with making money, which is the primary source of worry and depression.

11. Through holy sighing – whereby a person sighs out of his longing to return to God – the pulse thereby regains its strength, vitality returns to him, and he is rescued from the depression caused by the struggle for and preoccupation with making a living. He also merits to attain high levels of knowledge and to receive words from Heaven.

12. The greater a person's knowledge, the easier his livelihood comes to him. Conversely, the more a person lacks understanding, the more he toils and struggles for his livelihood.

13. The greater the prevailing level of understanding, the more peace is increased. This is because strife, anger and cruelty all stem from lack of knowledge. The more that knowledge increases, the more anger is nullified and compassion, loving-kindness and peace are increased. Therefore, by engaging in Torah study – through which a person gains knowledge – anger is nullified, compassion and peace are evoked, and healing comes.

14. Immersing in a mikvah saves a person from all troubles and purifies him from all pollution and sins – because the mikvah evokes extremely exalted levels of knowledge and loving-kindness. Furthermore, by immersing in a mikvah, a person merits an easy livelihood, healing, life and longevity, and he merits to arouse other people toward God. Strife and anger are also nullified, and he merits peace, compassion and great knowledge.

15. Immersing in a mikvah on the Festival of Shavuot involves exalted levels of loving-kindness, great compassion, and wondrously sublime levels of knowledge. This is because Shavuot is identified with a highly refined, exalted and sublime level of intellect which is associated with

enormous loving-kindness and compassion – since compassion is always directly proportionate to understanding, as explained elsewhere. Fortunate is he who merits to receive the holiness of Shavuot, and particularly, the mikvah of Shavuot that emanates from the Fiftieth Gate! For it is from the mikvah of Shavuot that holiness and purity are then drawn upon the Jewish people.

16. Peace is a function of knowledge, while conflict is the opposite of knowledge. However, there exists such a thing as “a conflict for the sake of Heaven,” which is actually very great knowledge – even greater than the knowledge that brings peace. For this kind of conflict is actually great love and peace. In Egypt, when knowledge was in exile, there certainly did not exist any conflict for the sake of Heaven, since this is a function of knowledge. Subsequently, however, when the Jews were redeemed from Egypt through the agency of Moses – who was the embodiment of knowledge – they then merited to attain the knowledge required for a conflict for the sake of Heaven, which is actually the ultimate form of peace.

### **30 — “A garden of knives” (*Bekhorot* 8b)**

1. Perceptions of Godliness can be grasped only through many constrictions, from the First Cause down to the “caused” and from the “upper intellect” down to the “lower intellect.” This is like a teacher who first supplies his student with introductory information and easier ideas so that through this, he can give him to understand the intended subject, which is itself a lofty and great insight. Each person needs to seek and to search diligently, and to pray to God a great deal, that he should merit to draw close to the true tzaddik who will be a suitable *Rav* [for him] and who will be so great and awesome a teacher, at such an exalted [spiritual] level, that he will be able to illuminate for him, to instill in him and to explain to him so lofty and great an insight as a perception of Godliness. For the attainment of such perceptions is a person’s primary goal and purpose in this world.

2. A person must seek out the greatest possible *Rav*.\*

\*Copier’s note: The Sages taught, “‘You shall vehemently pursue justice’ (Deuteronomy 16:20) – this means that a person should go to the finest court of law – to Rabbi Eliezer in Lod or to Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai in Beror Chayil” (*Sanhedrin* 32b). The Maharsha in his commentary explains this to mean that “one should go to the finest court in that generation.” It is known that these two rabbis were unique in their respective generations. Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was the president and head of the Great Sanhedrin, as stated in *Sefer Yuchsin* (“Book of Genealogies,” 4:12 and 4:35). Similarly, Rabbi Eliezer the Great was the greatest student of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, as stated in *Sukkah* 28a that all of Rabbi Yochanan’s practices – such as not speaking about worldly matters at all and not walking more than four ells without learning Torah or wearing *tefilin* – were adopted by his student, Rabbi Eliezer. See also the *Or HaChaim* on this same verse, where he explains that the verse comes to instruct the people to seek out the most outstanding sages among them and not to be satisfied with those of lesser quality. Rather, [when appointing judges,] they should seek after and go to great lengths to find the judges who are best qualified.

The reason for this is that a person needs a very great *Rav* indeed who can explain exalted concepts of Godliness and who can illuminate and enlighten even him. The more lacking a person is and the more distant he is from God, the greater the *Rav* he needs. We saw an example of this in Egypt, where the Jewish people were sunken in the Forty-Nine Gates of Impurity. They needed an awesomely great *Rav* – namely, Moses our teacher. For the sicker the patient, the greater the doctor he requires. Therefore, do not make the mistake of saying, “It is good enough for me to be a follower and student of a worthy, simple man who is accepted as God-fearing and respectable. Why should I am so high and specifically seek out the great tzaddik? Would that I might first be like this simple, worthy man!” (as many people erroneously think). Do not make the mistake of saying this. For to the contrary, to the degree that a person knows inside himself the extent of his unworthiness and his remoteness from God, so does he need to draw close to the true *Rav* who is at the highest possible [spiritual] level. [He needs] the greatest spiritual healer who is such a wondrous master of his craft that he is

able to “dress up” such exalted insights as perceptions of Godliness [to present them] to someone as lacking and distant as he.

3. All this is connected to the spiritual nature of the hair – specifically, to how the illuminations from the mind go out through the hairs. For the upper intellect – which is the actual perception of Godliness – is “dressed up” in the lower intellect. The hairs (*Se’aRot*) [which correspond to the lower intellect, as they receive from the brain – that is, the upper intellect] – are analogous to “the precise measures and shapes (*Shi’uRa*) of the letters of the Torah” (*Tikkuney Zohar* #70). For the *mitzvot* express the wisdom of the Creator; each and every mitzvah has different measures and parameters, as well as different letters, words and themes that are constrictions in which the wisdom of the Creator is contracted. Thus, the *mitzvot* are [like] “garments” [which “dress up” the Creator’s wisdom], by which it is possible to grasp perceptions of Godliness; and each letter of the Torah and each mitzvah is one of these “constrictions.” Therefore, through the fulfillment of the Torah and *mitzvot*, a person brings down perceptions of Godliness.\*

\*Copier’s note: Following are the words of the Mishnah: “The laws of Shabbat, Festival offerings, and the embezzlement of sacred property are like mountains hanging on a hair” (*Chagigah*, end of *Perek Aleph*). Rabbi Ovadiah of Bartenura explains this to mean that these laws each hang upon a tiny hint in the Scriptures, like a mountain hanging upon the hairs of the head.

4. Now, the only way to attain this lower intellect is by “despising monetary gain.” In other words, a person must absolutely abhor money. The explanation for this is that the lower intellect corresponds to “black hair” (*Tikkuney Zohar* #70) and to the “pupil of the eye” – namely, to the black part of the eye, alluded to in the verse, “I am black but comely” (*Song of Songs* 1:5). For the nature of blackness is that it gathers together and constricts all large objects, which then become included in it and can be seen within it; and in this way, we see and grasp that which we see. The lower intellect corresponds to and possesses this quality of blackness in that it constricts within itself the “comeliness” and beauty of the upper intellect. “Black hair” and “despising monetary gain” are from the side of Malkhut. Furthermore, the lower intellect corresponds to Malkhut in that it is the lowest level of wisdom present in each of the [spiritual] worlds, and it is also the wisdom that directs each particular world. But through the love of money, a person falls to the blackness of the Other Side, which is “Saturn, a black earthen vessel” (*Tikkuney Zohar* #70), and depression, as in, “In sorrow shall you eat” (*Genesis* 3:17). He then falls from this intellect into mad foolishness, folly and depression, and the forces of impurity and the Other Side surround him with the encirclements of the Other Side. This is all alluded to in the verse, “The people wandered around (*ShaTu*) and gathered it” (*Numbers* 11:8) – [that is,] “in their foolishness (*beSheTuta*)” (*Zohar* II, 62b). This foolishness, whereby a person wanders around [chasing] after money, is the exact opposite of wisdom.

5. According to the level of lower wisdom that each person possesses – since every person has some degree of Malkhut and lower wisdom – so does he need to infuse it with life and vitality. The essence of vitality, in turn, comes from the “Light of the Face,” as in the verse, “In the Light of the Face of the King is life” (*Proverbs* 16:15). Therefore, we were commanded, “Three times a year [at Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot], each of your males shall appear before God’s Face” (*Deuteronomy* 16:16) – [namely,] in order that we might receive the “Light of the Face” that radiates during the Three Festivals. It is this light that gives life and vitality to the intellect, through which a person attains perceptions of Godliness. Through the joy of the Three Festivals, a person merits the “Light of the Face,” since the essence of the “Light of the Face” is joy, as it is written, “A joyous heart makes a good face” (*Proverbs* 15:13).

6. The more *mitzvot* that a person performs during the course of the year, the greater the joy he experiences on the Three Festivals. To explain: The main source of joy is from the *mitzvot*, and joy is

felt primarily in the heart. To whatever degree that a person understands in his heart the greatness of the Creator, His Oneness and His Unity, so is it appropriate that he should rejoice exultantly over each and every mitzvah that he performs, in that he thereby merits to carry out the will of God, the Creator, the Unique, the First and the Eternal, may His Name be blessed forever. Now, the joy over all the *mitzvot* that a person performs throughout the year is primarily felt in the heart, as it is written, “You placed joy in my heart” (Psalms 4:8). And the heart of the entire year is the Three Festivals, which is hinted at in the phrase “these are the Festivals of God (*Eileh Mo’adei YHVH*)” (Leviticus 23:4), whose initial letters spell out the word *EMY* (my mother). *Eim* (mother) corresponds to [the *sefirah* of Binah, and] “Binah is the heart” (*Tikkuney Zohar*, introduction). Thus, all this joy [from the *mitzvot*] accumulates in the heart – that is, in the Three Festivals – and this is why the Festivals are times of particular joy. Each person must strive greatly to draw upon himself the holy joy of the *mitzvot* – which are the joy of the Festivals – throughout the entire year, and especially on the holy Festivals themselves, when we are obligated to rejoice greatly, as it is written, “You will rejoice on your Festival” (Deuteronomy 16:14). For then, on the Festivals, the joy of all the *mitzvot* is accumulated – and this joy is absolutely without measure or limit, according to what each person experiences in his own heart. Through the joy of the Three Festivals, a person merits to attain perceptions of Godliness. This is the meaning of the injunction, “A person is obligated to receive the countenance of his *Rav* on the Festival” (*Sukkah* 27a) – [namely,] in order that he should receive the “Light of the Face” and infuse Malkhut with life and vitality.

7. Real intellect is the true intellect of the true tzaddikim, by which they attain perceptions of Godliness and instill those perceptions in all those who follow them. Compared with this intellect, all outside, secular wisdom is utter foolishness. Sometimes because of our many sins, when this true intellect falls to the gentiles and to the Other Side, the gentiles become predominant with their wisdom and their rulership. Then, God forbid, the rulership of the gentiles gains the upper hand, when they draw more sustenance than is appropriate for them, God forbid, from the true intellect. This true intellect corresponds to the Kingdom of Holiness, to the lower wisdom present in each of the four [spiritual] worlds, which is the wisdom that directs each of these worlds. All of the various [secular] wisdoms of the gentiles are beneath this lower wisdom and draw their sustenance from it. Who can bear to hear the terrible cries and screams when Malkhut – that is, the true intellect – falls into them? This corresponds to “The scream of one who rules among fools” (Ecclesiastes 9:17). For the fool (who is “the old and foolish king” [ibid., 4:13], the evil inclination and the rulership of the Other Side, as explained above in Lesson #1) wishes to become wise. They endeavor to draw into their wisdom – which is, in fact, foolishness – the aspect of true wisdom, which is the true intellect, consisting of perceptions of Godliness. They say that they are the only ones who are wise and that no wisdom is greater than their misguided “wisdom.” [But in fact, all their wisdom merely] leeches its sustenance from the fall of the true intellect. The Holy One Himself, so to speak, roars over this, as in, “He will roar mightily over His habitation” (Jeremiah 25:30) – that is, “over *His* habitation” (*Zohar* III, 74b), referring to Malkhut, which falls, God forbid, into the exiles of the Four Kingdoms of the Other Side; these are the four exiles [that the Jewish people have endured].

8. Each person must be certain to sever, to separate and to elevate true wisdom from the four exiles, and to return it to its root. This is achieved through the charity that he gives and the acts of loving-kindness that he performs. Through charity and acts of loving-kindness, a person elevates the true intellect from its exile, and he suppresses the rulership of the gentiles. Therefore, each person in his own particular way must constantly strive and make it his task to bring the Divine Presence – which is this true intellect – out of its exile through acts of loving-kindness. In this way, outside, secular forms of wisdom are suppressed, the Jews are rescued from the yoke of the Kingdom of Evil, and a person merits to receive perceptions of Godliness.

9. Corresponding to the Four Kingdoms of Holiness in each of the four [spiritual worlds] (namely, *Atzilut*, *Beri'ah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*), there issued from Abraham our father, “the man of kindness,” four sons who, in turn, parallel “The Torah speaks of four sons: the wise son, the wicked son, the simple son and the son who does not know how to ask” (Passover Haggadah). Isaac corresponds to the wise son, as it is written, “A wise son makes his father rejoice” (Proverbs 10:1) [the Hebrew word *Yitzchak* means “he will laugh”]. Esau is the wicked son. Jacob is the simple son, as it is written, “Jacob was a simple man” (Genesis 25:27). And Ishmael corresponds to “the son who does not know how to ask,” as in a person who repents and asks God for atonement for sins he does not know about [Ishmael repented at the end of his life (see *Bava Batra* 16)]. Indeed, this is the essence of repentance, as expressed in the verse, “That which I did not steal, I must then return” (Psalms 69:5). All this is alluded to in the concept of “Abraham instituted the Morning Prayer (*Shacharit*),” since the word *ShaChaRYT* is an acrostic for *She'aino Yodei'a* (Who does not know), *Chakham* (Wise), *Rasha* (Wicked) and *Tam* (Simple) – and these four sons correspond to the Four Kingdoms.\*

\*Copier's note: *Atzilut* (Nearness) corresponds to the *sefirah* of Chokmah and to Isaac. *Beri'ah* (Creation) corresponds to the *sefirah* of Binah, to repentance, and to Ishmael, since “Ishmael repented,” as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught (*Bava Batra* 16b). *Yetzirah* (Formation) corresponds to Jacob, [who was] a “simple man”; to truth, as in, “Truth to Jacob” (Micah 7:20); and to the letter *Vav*, as is known. And *Asiyah* (Action) corresponds to Esau, since for the most part [in this world, which is the world of *Asiyah*], the forces of impurity and the wicked dominate, as is known.

Furthermore, *ShaChaRiT* (the Morning Prayer) is associated with *ShaChaRuT* (blackness) [see paragraph #4, above], both of which correspond to the lower intellect, which Abraham merited to rectify by the fact that he “despised monetary gain.” For Abraham rejected the money of Sodom, as it is written, “If I take as much as a thread or a shoelace” (Genesis 14:23), and he constantly performed acts of loving-kindness to elevate the Kingdom of Holiness from the Other Side. Therefore, Abraham chased after the four kings (see Genesis 14) in order to subdue them – since these four kings are the aspect of the Four Kingdoms of the Other Side.\*

\*Copier's note: He [Abraham] raised up the Kingdom of Holiness from their midst. As our Sages, of blessed memory, state in the Midrash on *Parashat Lekh Lekha*, and as is brought in the commentary of Rashi, that all the nations agreed and they crowned Abraham as their spiritual leader and chief (*Bereshit Rabbah* 43:5; Rashi on Genesis 14:17).

10. Corresponding to the Four Kingdoms of Holiness, each of the Festivals has four *mitzvot* that serve to elevate the letter *Dalet* [which has the numerical value of four] – representing the Kingdom of Holiness – from the Other Side, and to nullify the Four Kingdoms of the Other Side. On Passover, [these *mitzvot*] are the Four Cups of Wine; on Shavuot, they are “the order of the Mishnah,” whereby the Torah was originally learned four times by each person, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said (*Eruvin* 54b); and on Sukkot, they are the Four Species. All these correspond to the Four Kingdoms of Holiness which must then be elevated to the “Light of the Face” through the joy over the *mitzvot* that is accumulated within the Three Festivals. In order to really accomplish this, a person must return to God in sincere repentance amidst joy on the Festivals, and in this way, he hastens the Redemption.

11. The main revelation of loving-kindness comes through receiving rebuke and moral instruction from the true tzaddikim, even though their rebuke sometimes entails their belittling us. In this way, a person merits to perform acts of charity and loving-kindness.

12. We must accept rebuke from the tzaddikim even though they sometimes belittle us in the process. For we must judge them favorably, since “A person is not held responsible [for what he says] in his pain” (*Bava Batra* 16b) – and indeed, the tzaddikim suffer great pain from us. The explanation for this is that all of our mundane activities and conversations are certainly evil as far as the tzaddikim are

concerned. But even our good – namely, our prayers, which for us would be considered good\* – these are also bad relative to the tzaddikim. This is because our prayers greatly distract and confuse the tzaddikim, insofar as they are intermixed with extraneous thoughts, distractions and confusion of all kinds; and these prayers, along with all their attendant confusion, come to the tzaddikim to be elevated. Therefore, the tzaddikim sometimes rebuke us in a humiliating manner. Nonetheless, we have to accept their rebuke.

\*Copier's note: As it is written, "Take good" (Hosea 14:3). Rashi explains this to mean: " 'Accept thanksgiving from us,' as it is written, 'It is good to give thanks to God' " (Psalms 92:2). Our Sages, of blessed memory, also teach, "*Tov* (Good) has the numerical value of seventeen, and the *Amidah* prayer has nineteen blessings. If you subtract the blessing concerning the heretics that was added in Yavneh, and the blessing 'Cause the scion of David, Your servant, to sprout' which was added for 'Examine me, God, and test me' (Psalms 26:2), [you see that the two correspond]" (*Midrash Tanchuma, Korach*).

13. This explains why confusion and distractions are called *TeHiLaH*, as it is written, "All His angels he charges with *TaHaLaH* (folly [i.e., confusion])" (Job 4:18) – because they all come precisely at the time of praise (*TeHiLaH*) and prayer. [These distractions attack a person during his prayers] for one of two reasons. The first possibility is that they come to be rectified – since now is the time for this [i.e., when a person is praying with proper concentration], and these distracting thoughts contain certain holy sparks which are in need of rectification (also see above, Lesson #26). Another possibility is that these thoughts come to distract a person from his prayers because he is not fit to pray. A person needs to strive with enormous energy to overcome the confusion and extraneous thoughts that attack him at the time of prayer. For all the foolish and inane thoughts that a person entertains now and then, and all the mental confusion that a person experiences at various points throughout the day, all come to him precisely when he is praying. It is just then that they all sound themselves off, and they confuse a person's thoughts precisely when he is praying; they occur to him specifically at that time. Therefore, one must invest enormous effort and energy into overcoming these thoughts and distractions. Complete with all these extraneous thoughts, the prayers then come to the tzaddikim to be elevated, as expressed in the verse, "For the sake of My praise, I will restrain (*eChToM*) My anger for you" (Isaiah 48:3). For all prayers come to the tzaddik, who is associated with Mashiach, and Mashiach, in turn, is associated with the nose (*ChoTeM*), as in the verse, "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed one (*mashiach*) of God" (Lamentations 4:20). [The underlying connection is that] "Mashiach will judge by his sense of smell" (*Sanhedrin* 93b), as in, "He [Mashiach] will breathe of the fear of God" (Isaiah 11:3); and ["the fear of God" alludes to] prayers, as in, "The fear of God, that is to be praised" (Proverbs 31:30). For the tzaddik smells and senses in the prayers he receives from people the spiritual state of each and every one of them as he is – since each person's confusion and distractions are contained within his prayers.

14. The tzaddik knows which prayers come from worthy people and which prayers come from the others, and through this, he knows to rebuke them. For according to the boldness and the Torah wisdom of each person, he knows whether that person's prayers were proper or not. The explanation is that there exist two types of boldness: there is holy boldness and then there is the boldness of the Other Side. It is impossible to attain Torah knowledge except through holy boldness – [that is,] by being "bold as a leopard" (*Avot* 5:20) against [one's] impeters and opponents, as it is written, "One must not be bashful in the face of scoffers" (*Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 1). And according to the amount of holy boldness [that a person has], so does he merit Torah wisdom and to receive and to draw new, true Torah insights into the world. On the other hand, a person who possesses the boldness of the Other Side receives his Torah from the Other Side. According to the Torah that a person receives, given the boldness that he has, so does he merit to pray. For the quality of one's prayers is also a function of holy boldness, in that a person must exhibit a certain brazenness toward God and he must ask Him for everything that he needs – even to [ask Him to] perform miracles with him. For if a

person wanted to be bashful before God – [as might be appropriate,] given his actions and the greatness of the Creator – he would certainly be unable to open his mouth to pray at all. Therefore, in accordance with the holy boldness that he exhibits in the face of those who wish to thwart him [in his spiritual work], so does he merit to attain the true Torah, and likewise, to pray with concentration and feeling. Therefore, the tzaddik, who sees the boldness and the Torah wisdom of each and every person, thereby knows which prayer it was that disturbed and distracted that person and whose prayer it was – and he thereby knows how to rebuke that person.

15. From a person's voice, it is possible to know the aspect of Malkhut that he possesses. For each and every person has some degree of Malkhut, and this quality may be recognized in his voice. For there is "the voice of might and victory" [and there is "the voice of weakness and defeat"] (Exodus 32:18) – all in accordance with the aspect of Malkhut that each person has. This is how Saul understood from King David's voice that the latter was strong in Malkhut, and therefore, he asked him, "Is that your voice, my son, David?" (I Samuel 24:17). For Saul was surprised by King David's voice; he understood that it was literally the voice of a king. He wanted to lift up and to raise his own voice higher than David's, but he could not. This is the meaning of "Saul raised his voice and cried" (ibid.) – that is, his voice was low, as with the [hushed] sound of crying. Then he said to David, "I know that you will certainly rule" (ibid., 24:21) – since he knew this through the voice.

### **135 — "When I seize the appointed time" (Psalms 75:3)**

1. An efficacious method for being saved from the trait of haughtiness is to honor the Festivals and to welcome them in joy, happiness and a spirit of gladness; and to delight in them with the appropriate food, drink and special clothing in accordance with one's means.

2. Attachment to the tzaddik also nullifies haughtiness. Therefore, a good indication as to whether a person is genuinely attached to the tzaddik is if he is humble.

3. The essence of attachment to the tzaddik is love. That is, a person should have such total love for the tzaddik, and his soul should be so intimately bound up with the tzaddik's soul that his love for the tzaddik totally nullifies his love for women, as in, "Your love was wonderful for me, more than the love for women" (II Samuel 1:26).

4. When a person welcomes the Festivals properly, it is as if he visited his *Rav* on the Festival, even though his *Rav* might actually be many miles away. Conversely, if a person is attached to the tzaddik, he can then feel the holiness of the Festivals. In turn, he elevates the Kingdom of Holiness from amidst the forces of impurity, the Kingdom of Evil then falls, and the power of the kingdom of the nations is nullified.

5. On the Festivals, it is necessary to return to God in repentance amidst joy, since on each of the Festivals, the world is judged, as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught, "At four junctures, the world is judged – at Pesach ... at Shavuot ... at Rosh HaShanah ... and at Sukkot" (*Rosh HaShanah* 16a). Therefore, it is necessary to return to God in repentance [at those times]; and through this, the Kingdom of Holiness emerges from amidst the forces of impurity and the Redemption draws near.

1. The Torah is received on Shavuot, and at that time, it is possible to receive new vitality and to bring healing to the lungs.

## **Kitzur Likutey Moharan II**

### **1 — “Sound the shofar” (Psalms 81:4); Dominion**

1. A Jew was created to have dominion over the angels. This is the ultimate purpose and destiny of the Jewish people, and each Jew must see to it that he reaches this goal. However, the angels are extremely jealous of a person like this who has dominion over them. Therefore, one must guard himself vigilantly and be certain that he has the power to maintain this dominion, so that the angels in their jealousy do not knock him down, God forbid.

2. The way to insure this is to bind oneself to all Jewish souls. Now, all Jewish souls are grouped under all the leaders of the generation, since each leader of the generation has a certain number of individual souls for which he is responsible. Therefore, a person must bind himself to all the leaders of the generation, and in turn, he will automatically be bound to all the individual souls of Israel. As a result, he will be rescued from the jealousy of the angels and his dominion over them will endure.\*

\*Copier's note: It appears from this that the angels have power only to wage war with an individual Jewish soul. But with all the Jewish souls as a collective – for whom the entire world was created, as is known – they have no power whatsoever to wage war [which is an indication of the power of unity].

3. It is necessary, however, to know and to recognize who these leaders are. For there are many leaders whose rank and dominion is entirely the result of their brazenness, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “Brazenness is kingship without a crown” (*Sanhedrin* 105a).

4. The way to be able to recognize these false leaders is to merit the building of Jerusalem (*YeRuShaLaYiM*), which is conceptually associated with the perfect fear and awe of God (*YiRah ShaLeM*). In other words, a person must attain perfect fear and awe of God, which is dependent on the heart, as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “Concerning matters which are entrusted to the heart, the Torah says, ‘You shall fear your Lord’ ” (*Kiddushin* 32b). Once a person has attained this perfect fear and awe of God, the brazenness of these leaders falls before him and he can then bind himself to those [true] leaders under whom all the souls of Israel are grouped. Then he will automatically be bound to all the souls of Israel, and his dominion over the angels will thereby endure.

5. Through the cravings for wealth, sexual pleasure and food – which are all rooted in the heart – the fear of God that is seated in the heart is undermined and blemished.

6. The intensity of a person's sexual desire is determined by the milk he nurses in his infancy. Therefore, it is necessary to exercise great care that an infant should nurse only from a modest woman. For when an infant nurses from an immodest woman, his sexual craving [in adulthood] is then very powerful, God forbid, which undermines the fear of God in his heart. Conversely, when a child nurses from a modest woman, he does not burn ardently with this desire, but he has only the little bit necessary to fulfill the Creator's commandment [to procreate].

7. When a person falls, God forbid, into these three cravings [for wealth, sexual pleasure and food], his fear of God is thereby undermined. Then the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits and roars like a lion [in pain] over this.

8. By properly honoring the Three Festivals with food, drink and fine clothes to the best of one's ability, with holiness and purity of thought, with joy and gladness, with focused and earnest prayer, and with all the other things connected with the holiness and joy of the Festivals – especially with the various holy *mitzvot* that are associated with each Festival – a person thereby attains knowledge of God and he merits to draw this knowledge into his heart. In this way, he rectifies the heart and purifies it of the three evil cravings, and he merits to attain the perfect fear and awe of God which is dependent on the heart. This is the most important thing of all, because this is what will bring him to a Jew's ultimate goal, which is that his dominion over the angels should endure.

9. On each and every one of the Three Festivals, one of the three cravings is rectified. To wit: On Pesach, the craving for wealth is rectified; on Shavuot, the craving for sexual pleasure is rectified; and on Sukkot, the craving for food is rectified. (Therefore, the word *SUKkaH* has the same numerical value as *Ma'AKhaL* [food].) Accordingly, a person must be exceedingly careful about the way he performs the *mitzvot* associated with each and every one of the Festivals, and he must greatly honor each one of the Festivals so as to merit to break free of these three harmful cravings. For the whole essence of Judaism is to fear God's revered Name and to escape the jealousy of the angels – lest they tumble a person into sins, God forbid – and that his dominion over the angels should endure. All this depends solely on the rectification of these three evil cravings.

10. By attaining perfect fear and awe of God in the heart, a person can thereby merit to elicit an influx of prophetic inspiration. He must be extremely careful, however, to resist the desire to be appointed as a leader and to rule over the Jewish people (which is the opposite of holy dominion, whereby a person must merit to have dominion over the angels). This is because holding a position of status and authority causes the influx of prophetic inspiration to cease.

11. Through this influx of prophetic inspiration, a person thereby attains perfect prayer. For prayer is presently in exile, due to our many sins. Prayer is something extremely exalted, yet people make light of it; and when they stand up to pray, they desire merely to get it over with. However, through the perfect fear and awe of God, which is reached by rectifying the three cravings until one thereby merits to draw an influx of prophetic inspiration – even though there is no one today who would actually prophesy – prayer is nonetheless redeemed from its exile. Then prayer reaches its ultimate perfection and is like prophecy, which is the Word of God. For God Himself then opens a person's mouth and sends him holy words to pray before Him. This phenomenon is expressed in the phrase "God, open my lips," which is said before starting the *Amidah* prayer. This is also the deeper meaning of the concept of "joining redemption to prayer" [referring to the custom of having the *Amidah* prayer follow immediately after the Blessing of Redemption] – namely, to redeem prayer from its exile.\*

\*Copier's note: This answers the question asked in the Talmud, "How can we join redemption to prayer? Didn't Rabbi Yochanan say, 'At the beginning [of the *Amidah* prayer], one should say, "God, open my lips" ' [thereby causing an interruption between the two prayers]?" (*Berakhot* 4b). The Talmud responds there by saying that since the Sages enacted that we say this phrase, it is like one long prayer. The teaching of this lesson explains the reason why this phrase is not considered an interruption at all – since the whole idea underlying redemption being joined to prayer is that one's prayers should be the Word of God – and this is the very idea expressed by the phrase "God, open my lips."

12. When prayer is released and redeemed from its exile, treatment by healers and doctors then becomes totally unnecessary, since it will be possible to be healed by whatever one eats – even by bread and water – just as a person would be cured by medicines.

13. Sometimes an illness is latent within a person and it does not reveal itself. Then no healer or doctor can possibly cure it, because they do not even know that the illness is there. But when a person merits to rectify the three evil cravings and to attain perfect fear and awe of God and perfect prayer, he can be healed even when the illness has not yet surfaced. He is cured of his illness even before it sprouts within him, and he will not be affected by the illness at all.

14. However, there are three negative characteristics that inhibit a person's ability to pray. The first is "Do not despise any person" (*Avot* 4:3) ([that is, a person should never put down another person,] even in his thoughts) – and when someone is not careful about this, his prayer is blemished. The second characteristic is damaged faith, whereby a person has imperfect, incomplete faith, which is associated with idolatry. The third characteristic is sexual blemish. When a person merits to break free of these three negative characteristics, he thereupon attains perfect prayer. Then he does not require any medicine at all, because he can be healed by whatever he eats – even by bread and water. This is the deeper meaning of what is said about Hezekiah, that he "joined redemption to prayer" – for he redeemed prayer from its exile – [and consequently,] he hid the Book of Remedies (*Berakhot* 10b).

15. When a person merits to redeem prayer from its exile – which is the concept of "joining redemption to prayer" – this constitutes a glimmering of the light of Mashiach.\*

\*Copier's note: This will allow you to understand the root of what is written in *Likutey Moharan* II, #102, that the deeper meaning of the story of Boaz and Ruth is intimately connected with the concept of "joining redemption to prayer"; see that lesson. For what transpired with Boaz and Ruth was a glimmering of the light of Mashiach, as is known.

16. When a person merits perfect prayer through all of the rectifications – namely, through the holiness of the Three Festivals, which rectify the three evil cravings for wealth, sexual pleasure and food, whereupon a person merits fear of God, to draw the influx of prophetic inspiration, and perfected prayer and healing – and when he also eliminates the three negative characteristics that inhibit the ability to pray, then the entire host of Heaven, all the stars and constellations, and all the supernal angels are subordinated to him. Then this person finds favor with all, and all things are his debtors – since they all borrow and receive their power from him, and he is the Great Creditor. Accordingly, he will then be able to recognize those leaders whose dominion is entirely through brazenness. This is because their brazenness will fall in his presence, since "A person does not act haughtily in front of his own creditor" (*Bava Metzia* 3a). Then he will know the true leaders under whom all Jewish souls are grouped, and through this, he will be able to attach himself to them and he will automatically be attached to all the souls of the Jewish people. He will thereby escape the jealousy of the angels and his dominion over them will endure.

17. When a person sits down to talk about another person, this is like Rosh HaShanah, the Day of Judgment – since in effect, this person is sitting in judgment on someone else. A person must be extremely wary of doing this, and he must look very closely at himself to see if he is fitting to judge someone else, "for judgment belongs to God" (*Deuteronomy* 1:17). Our Sages, of blessed memory, spoke in this vein when they said, "Do not judge your fellow man until you have reached his place" (*Avot* 2:4). And who can know and reach the place of his fellow man? Only God alone can do this, since "He is the Place of the world and the world is not His place" (*Bereshit Rabbah* 68:9). Every person has a place in God. He alone is able reach the place of each and every person and to judge everyone favorably.

18. A person who merits to bind himself to all the [Jewish] souls by means of all the rectifications discussed in this lesson also becomes the “place of the world,” and he, too, is able to celebrate Rosh HaShanah and to judge every person favorably.

19. Rosh HaShanah is a great kindness from God. For how could we possibly lift up our faces to ask God for atonement? Therefore, God did a kindness for us with the Day of Judgment, and He ordained that the Day of Judgment – Rosh HaShanah – should fall on the day of the New Moon. For then God Himself, so to speak, experiences regret and asks for forgiveness, as in, “Bring atonement for Me for making the moon smaller” (*Chullin* 60b) – since the diminution of the moon is the source of all sins. Consequently, we are not ashamed to regret our misdeeds and to ask atonement for them on the Day of Judgment, since on that day, God, too, feels regret and asks for forgiveness.

20. The shofar represents the concept of fear and awe of God. Furthermore, it is associated with the influx of prophetic inspiration, with prayer when it is redeemed from its exile, and with the way that all the vegetation of the field channels its power back into a person’s prayers – which is the prerequisite for being able to celebrate Rosh HaShanah [in the manner just described].

#### **4 — “I have commanded the ravens” (I Kings 17:4)**

1. The principal spiritual work involved in giving charity is for a person to break his cruelty and transform it into mercy, whereupon he then donates his money to charity. For a person who is compassionate by nature and who gives charity out of his innate compassion has not really performed the devotion of giving charity. Therefore, all who are benevolent and who wish to properly fulfill the mitzvah of charity must first pass through this stage. Namely, they must first break their natural cruelty and transform it into mercy to give charity, because this is the essence of the spiritual work of giving charity. When a person does this, God’s anger is also transformed into goodwill.

2. All of a person’s *mitzvot* and good deeds and all of his service of God may be compared to giving birth, since “The main offspring of the tzaddikim are their good deeds” (Rashi on Genesis 6:9). And just as a woman in labor must endure many pangs and throes before giving birth, and she must cry out “*Ach!*” and “*Oy!*” many times, so it is in the service of God. When a person wishes to perform some spiritual devotion or to repent, he must inevitably endure many struggles. He must cry out “*Ach!*” and “*Oy!*” and groan many times, and double himself over many times, and contort himself in various ways – particularly at the beginning [of his service], when it is very difficult indeed, because “all beginnings are difficult” (*Mekhilta, Bachodesh* 2). Thus, before a person begins something new, he must then cry out and groan more than ever. Afterward, as well, even after he has begun, serving God still does not come easy and he still requires many struggles and contortions before he is worthy of performing a really fine act of holiness. However, the initial stages are difficult in the extreme. Therefore, do not let your thoughts be disturbed by everything you are going through, because you must inevitably suffer it all – and “According to the effort is the reward” (*Avot* 5:23).

3. Charity widens all the openings into holiness. In other words, when a person enters a particular pathway or devotion in the service of God, he must then create an opening there by which to enter into that pathway – and this is the reason why “all beginnings are difficult.” Through charity, one widens the opening. And even when an opening already exists, charity greatly widens and opens up all the openings into holiness. Therefore, before commencing any mitzvah or religious devotion, it is

good to give charity so as to widen the opening into holiness that a person must make with his devotion. This way, it will not be so difficult and onerous for him to enter.

4. The beginning of charity is extremely difficult and onerous, but the benefits of charity are very great indeed. The explanation for this is that the body's needs are many. Even the bare necessities such as food, drink, clothing and shelter are numerous, and [the acquisition of] these things hinders a person tremendously in his service of God. Through charity, however, all of these hindrances disappear, because by giving charity, a person merits to have God shower down His loving-kindness so that he need not involve himself in any sort of business or labor for his livelihood. Instead, his work is done for him by others and he can engage in his service of God.

5. It is impossible to receive abundant loving-kindness, because people in general cannot receive an overabundance of good. Thus, a person must create a vessel and conduit with which to receive this loving-kindness. Through fear and awe of God, a vessel and conduit is created by which to receive loving-kindness.

6. The revelation that everything happens in accordance with God's will, and that there is no such thing as [independent] natural forces, results in the fear of God. The reason is that at that time, people know that there is such a thing as reward and punishment, and as such, there is cause to fear God. But when people fall into heresy, such as [believing that] everything proceeds only according to the laws of nature, then fear of God is an irrelevant concept, God forbid.\*

\*Copier's note: See Job 15:4, where Eliphaz said to Job, who attributed everything to the dictates of the heavenly bodies, "Indeed, you are annulling the fear of God."

7. This revelation of God's will [i.e., that everything happens only because God wills it] comes about through the Festivals. This is because each of the holy Festivals proclaims, announces and reveals God's will – namely, that it is God's will alone that directs all things and that the laws of nature govern nothing at all. For on each and every one of the Festivals, God performed awesome wonders for us that directly contradict the laws of nature. At Pesach, the Exodus from Egypt occurred, when God brought us out of Egypt amidst awesome wonders. On Shavuot, the Giving of the Torah took place, when God gave us the Torah amidst awesome wonders. On Sukkot, [we recall] the Clouds of Glory that surrounded [the Jews in the desert]. All these awesome signs and wonders that God did for us on each of the three Festivals reveal that everything occurs exclusively through God's will, and that natural forces really determine nothing at all. But a person must carefully incline his ear and his heart so as to hear the sound of this holy proclamation, and then he will be worthy of rejoicing on the Festivals. For each person, commensurate with how well he hears in his heart the proclamation of the Festivals – namely, that everything occurs exclusively through God's will – thereby merits to experience the joy of the Festivals.

8. There exist dangerous, predatory animals. These are the professors and proponents of the theories of natural determinism, who wish to demonstrate with their flawed wisdom that everything occurs according to the laws of nature, God forbid. These animals have preyed upon and devoured many of our people. For many Jewish souls have sunken in this heresy, may God save us – and these souls are like birds caught in a snare. Therefore, anyone who has pity on his soul must flee and escape from these animals so that his soul should not be rent and devoured by them, God forbid. For the onslaught of these animals is very powerful indeed, and the noise of their roaring rises up and drowns out the call of the Festivals which proclaims, shouts out and reveals God's will. Therefore, God forbid that anyone should look at all at those books that enter into philosophical or scientific inquiries of this

sort. This includes even those books composed by the great men of Israel, because there is no greater evil than this.

9. When the elders of the generation lack perfection, these theories of natural determinism thereby gain power, God forbid. The explanation for this is that each person must add on additional holiness and knowledge of God with each additional day of his life, and each successive day must radiate more than the last with holiness and knowledge of God. Only a person who does this can truly be called a holy elder. But when a person blemishes the days of his life and he does not add on holiness and knowledge each day, even though he is growing older, he is not called an elder at all. To the contrary, he is said to be short-lived. And when the holy knowledge of these “elders” falls, the theories of natural determinism then leech vitality from them and they grow more influential in the world, God forbid.

10. The rectification for this is charity. This is because charity rectifies the imperfection of the elders of the generation who are not what they should be, and this, in turn, nullifies the root of the theories of natural determinism. It then becomes possible to hear the proclamation of the holy Festivals which calls out and reveals God’s will – namely, that everything is determined by God’s will alone – and in turn, one can experience the joy of the Festivals. Therefore, a person should give much charity before each of the Festivals in order to experience the joy of the Festival in all its fullness. When he merits to hear the call of the Festival proclaiming and revealing God’s will, he will thereby attain fear of God. With fear of God, he will be able to receive the influx of God’s loving-kindness so that he need not do any kind of activity for his sustenance. All of his labor will be performed by others, and he will be able to engage in his service of God with no impediments on account of his livelihood. Thus, it is evident that the benefit of charity is very great indeed both for oneself – in that it enables a person to engage unimpeded in the service of God – and for the world as a whole – in that faith in God’s will is thereby revealed in the world. Then all of the souls that are already caught in the theories of natural determinism, like birds caught in a snare, will fly out from their traps and escape to safety, all as a result of charity.

11. Sometimes even when a person suppresses the proponents of natural determinism, they still come back and raise doubts as to the absolute predominance of God’s will. Then it is necessary to once again give much charity, because charity consistently suppresses and subdues their theories, and it reveals that everything occurs exclusively through God’s will.

12. Charity is a cure for all ailments.

## **73**

1. A person who wishes to return to God in repentance should make it a practice to recite Psalms, as Psalms are most efficacious for repentance. The explanation for this is that many impediments to repentance exist. Some people have no awakening to repentance at all – and even a person who does have such an awakening may encounter any number of barriers. Many people find the gate to repentance closed before them, while other people may not know how to reach the gate that is appropriate for them, which they must pass through in order to return to God. There are also many other such barriers that impede a person from repentance, such that he could squander his entire life and die without repenting, God forbid. However, the saying of Psalms is helpful for all of them, since even a person who has no awakening to repentance will merit such an awakening by reciting Psalms. Psalms will also help him to reach the gate corresponding to his soul and to hold this gate open until

he merits to return to God in perfect repentance. This is the reason why during the month of Elul and the Ten Days of Repentance, the entire Jewish people engages in reciting Psalms – in order to merit repentance through them. Nonetheless, it is necessary to engage in the recital of Psalms all year round, as well, in order to come to repentance.

2. The forty-nine days of the Counting of the Omer correspond to the Forty-Nine Gates of Repentance, which, in turn, correspond to the forty-nine letters of the names of the twelve tribes – and it is through these letters and these gates that we must return to God. Additionally, Shavuot corresponds to the Fiftieth Gate, which embodies the idea of God's returning to us in His compassion, as expressed by the verse, "Return to Me and I will return to you" (Malachi 3:7). A person merits to reach all of these gates and to open them through the saying of Psalms. Accordingly, one must be particularly careful during the forty-nine days of the Counting of the Omer to recite Psalms with concentration and feeling, so as to thereby attain all the Forty-Nine Gates of Repentance. For these gates correspond to the forty-nine days of the Counting of the Omer, when we need to purify ourselves from our spiritual pollution and return to God – so that God will return to us on Shavuot, as in, "God descended upon Mount Sinai" (Exodus 19:20).

### **Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom – Ideas that Pertain to Shavuot**

86. The Revelation at Sinai was a wedding. It is written, "His mother crowned him on his wedding day" (Song of Songs 3:11). This is the Revelation at Sinai (*Ta'anit* 26b).

Mount Sinai is also a ladder.

Take the letters of the word *SINAI* and turn them into numbers. The *gematria* then gives you *SuLaM* (ladder).

This is the ladder in Jacob's dream. It is written, "Behold, a ladder ... and behold, angels of God went up and down on it" (Genesis 28:12).

The dancers go up and down, raising and lowering their bodies. They dance on the ladder of Sinai – the day of the wedding.

\*

It is customary for the bridegroom to give a scholarly discourse.

It is written, "His mother crowned him on his wedding day." The wedding day alludes to the Revelation at Sinai. The bridegroom speaks words of Torah, just as God did at Sinai.

\*

It is customary to present the bridegroom with gifts. These are called *Drashah Geshank* (discourse gifts).

It is written, "You have ascended on high, you have captured the prize (that is, Torah), you have received gifts from among men" (*Likutey Moharan* I, 68:19). These are the gifts given to the bridegroom.

\*

It is customary for the dancers to do somersaults.

The Revelation at Sinai was a wedding. There it is written, “Moses went up” (Exodus 19:3). It is also written, “God descended onto Mount Sinai” (ibid., 19:20).

123. The Rebbe once spoke about those who are religious for a while and then fall away. He said that even the short time they are religious is very dear to God, no matter what happens later.

It is written, “You have captured My heart with one of your eyes” (Song of Songs 4:9). God is speaking to the Jewish people, recalling the time they accepted the Torah.

The Midrash asks why the verse says, “with *one* of your eyes.” It answers that the other eye was already looking at the Golden Calf (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 1:55. Cf. *Shabbat* 88b; *Gittin* 36b).

Even when they accepted the Torah, the Jewish people already had plans to stray. Still, the short time they were close to God was very dear to Him. Therefore, God said, “You have captured My heart with one of your eyes.”

159. We were once in Zaslov after Shavuot and the Rebbe complained to me, “How is one worthy of being a Jew?”

I stood there dumbfounded. I knew the Rebbe’s greatness and the unimaginable extent of his devotions. Yet, here he felt as if he had not yet begun.

The Rebbe replied, “When I began serving God, I had no idea I would achieve what I did. There are things I know now that I did not even realize existed. I could not even begin to yearn to perceive what I know now, for I had no idea that such levels of understanding and knowledge even existed. Therefore, I did not have any concept of what to strive for.

“But the same thing is still true. Who knows what there is still to comprehend, what understanding there is still to perceive?”

Later, the Rebbe said, “My only comfort is the fact that I spend the entire day in Torah and prayer.”

256. The Rebbe highly praised the *piyut* of *Akdamut*, which is chanted before the Torah reading on Shavuot. He said, “People are so accustomed and steeped in good things that they do not realize the greatness of the praise of God in the *Akdamut*. If you were to know the high level of the *Akdamut* together with its customary melody, then you would know how wondrously unique it is.” The Rebbe then chanted a few lines of the *Akdamut*. He then said, “*Akdamut* is a song of *cheshek* – of love and devotion.” [See the story of “The Burgher and Pauper” (*Rabbi Nachman’s Stories* #10), which also discusses the song of *cheshek*.] The Rebbe spoke of this on Shavuot during the dairy meal. He had prayed early with his group, as was his custom, and had begun his meal while the second service was in progress. When he heard the *chazan* chant the *Akdamut*, the Rebbe spoke of the high level of this holy song.

## **The Fiftieth Gate – Prayers That Pertain to Shavuot**

### ***Likutey Tefilot I, 56***

Help us and deliver us, so that we may purify and sanctify ourselves at all times by immersing in the *mikvah*. Thus, may we cleanse ourselves of all forms of impurity – all sins, transgressions, and iniquities that we have committed before You, from our youth until today, and elicit great holiness through the *mikvah*.

Confer upon us higher consciousness and abundant mercy in the merit of immersing in the *mikvah*; and grant us the power to mitigate all harsh judgments against us, our offspring, and the entire House of Israel by immersing in the *mikvah*. Remove all afflictions, cancel all evil decrees, and constantly save us through the holy and awesome *mikvah*, in fulfillment of the verse, “O Hope (*Mikvah*) of Israel, its Redeemer in a time of distress...”

Grant us the privilege of drawing upon ourselves the holiness of the *mikvah* of Shavuot, which commemorates the Giving of Your Torah – when Israel came close to You, and were deemed worthy to receive the holy Torah through immersing in the *mikvah*. On Shavuot, may we all be granted the merit of being cleansed in the Supernal Mikvah: the *mikvah* of the Fiftieth Gate of Holiness, which is great and eternal mercy, sublime loving-kindness, and highly exalted consciousness.

Enable us to transmit the holiness of this *mikvah* of Shavuot to the entire year. May we purify and sanctify ourselves constantly, exit all Fifty Gates of Impurity, and enter the Fifty Gates of Holiness. As it is written, “I will sprinkle upon you pure water, that you may be cleansed; and from your contamination and from all of your idols, I will purify you!”

### ***Rabbi Ephraim ben Naftali, Tefilot HaBoker***

Master of the Universe! Give me the privilege of going to a kosher mikveh every day and immersing before prayer. By immersing in the mikveh, may I draw upon myself higher consciousness and overflowing kindness from Above, the source of which is the mikveh of Shavuot. Thus, may the holy attribute of Malkhut / Kingship attain true perfection: through the mikveh of Shavuot, which is supernal kindness and abundant mercy.

All this we may draw upon ourselves by virtue of the Torah of the true tzaddikim. Through their holy teachings, we can imbue ourselves with supernal kindness and knowledge, until we will perceive that You are present within all concealments. Thus, we will leave all places of concealment, and truly realize that You reign supreme over the entire world, and Your kingship extends over all; as it is written, “God is King forever and ever; the nations have perished from His land.”

May we be privileged to make known Your faith and Your sovereignty from generation to generation -- that “Your kingdom extends over all worlds, and Your dominion from generation to generation” — and to bring others back in perfect teshuvah. “For God is good, His kindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness is from generation to generation. God will rule forever,” amen and amen!