

LIKUTEY MOHARAN II #4¹

“On the day of the first fruits, when you bring an offering of new-meal to God on your Shavuot Festival, you shall observe an occasion proclaimed sacred; you shall not do any mundane work.”²

(Numbers 28:26)

“*V’et HaOrvim Tziviti LeChalkelekh* (And I Have Commanded the Ravens to Feed You)” (1 Kings 17:4)—this alludes to charity.³ Initially, when a person begins donating charity, he has to break his heartlessness and turn it into compassion.⁴ This is the essential devotion

1. **Likutey Moharan II #4.** Rebbe Nachman taught this lesson on Shavuot, 5569 (May 21, 1809). The previous evening the Rebbe spoke at length with his followers, and mentioned a number of salient points addressed in this teaching (*Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #51; see also nn.83, 202 below). Shavuot was one of the three fixed times in the year when the Rebbe’s disciples would gather by him and he would deliver a major lesson. (The other two times were Rosh HaShanah and Shabbat Chanukah.) That year, when the Rebbe’s followers from the town of Ladizin arrived, they informed him that one of their group, Reb Getzel, had fallen deathly ill. Reb Getzel was a close follower of Rebbe Nachman and the Rebbe wove the issue of his healing into the lesson (see §12 and n.189 below; *Parparaot LeChokhmah*; *Magid Sichot*; *Until the Mashiach*, p.166). The main themes of the lesson are: charity (§1-§2, §9); beginnings (§2); God’s abundant lovingkindness (§3); fear of Heaven (§4); Divine Will (§5); the proclamations of the Three Festivals, and Divine providence vs. determinism (§6); *Metzach haRatzon* and *Metzach haNachash* (the Brow of Divine Will and the Serpent’s Brow §7); worthy and unworthy elders (§8); and healing (§12).

2. **On the day of the first fruits...** This opening verse is from the Torah portion read on Shavuot. Rebbe Nachman likewise expounds the verse in two other lessons, *Likutey Moharan* I, 56:12 and 67:10.

3. **I have commanded the ravens to feed you...charity.** During the reign of the idolatrous King Achav (Ahab) of Israel, Chiel of Bet El set about rebuilding the city of Jericho. Centuries earlier, when Yehoshua first conquered the city, he put a curse on anyone who would restore Jericho: “With his oldest he will lay its foundation and with its youngest he will set up its gates.” The city was to be left desolate (Joshua 6:26; and see *Radak*, Joshua 6:17). At the beginning of construction, Chiel’s eldest child died, and with the completion of Jericho’s rebuilding his youngest passed away. Achav, together with the prophet Eliyahu, came to console the bereaving father. “Who was greater, Moshe or Yehoshua?” Chiel asked them. Eliyahu replied that he considered Moshe the greater of the two. “If so,” Chiel asked, “why was Yehoshua’s curse

ליקוטי מוהר"ן סימן ד'

וּבְיוֹם הַבְּכוּרִים בְּהַקְרִיבְכֶם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַה' בַּשָּׁבֳעֲתֵיכֶם,
מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל מְלֶאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: (במדבר
כח)

א. “וְאֵת הָעֹרְבִים צִוִּיתִי לְכַלְכֵּלְךָ” (מלכים א' יז) – זֶה בְּחִינַת צְדָקָה.
כִּי בְּתַחֲלָה כְּשֶׁמִתְחִילִין לְהַתְנַדֵּב לְצְדָקָה, אֲזִי צְרִיכִין לְשַׁבֵּר אֶת
הָאֲכֹזְרוּת שְׁלוֹ לְהַפְכוֹ לְרַחֲמָנוּת, וְזֶהוּ עֵקֶר עֲבוֹדַת הַצְּדָקָה. כִּי

effectual and Moshe’s not?” Moshe had warned that on account of the sin of idolatry the land would be cursed; rain would not fall (Deuteronomy 11:16-17). And yet, although nearly all the Israelites under Achav’s rule worshipped idolatry, God never withheld rain from the ten tribes of the northern kingdom. Hearing this, Eliyahu swore by God that Moshe’s curse would indeed be effected. The land would see no rainfall unless he, Eliyahu, decreed otherwise. Three years of drought followed (see 1 Kings, Chapters 16-18). During this time, Eliyahu was forced to flee from the idolatrous King Achav, who sought to take the prophet’s life as punishment. God advised Eliyahu to seek refuge near a certain brook, whose waters would sustain him and where “I have commanded the ravens to feed you.” Twice each day, the ravens would fly off from the royal kitchens with bread and meat, which they delivered to Eliyahu at his hiding place (see *Radak*, 1 Kings 17:4). Why the ravens? Our Sages teach that the raven is a cruel bird, one that does not provide food even for its own young (*Rashi* and *Metzudat David*, Psalms 146:9; cf. *Ketuvot* 49b). God specifically sent a cruel bird to feed Eliyahu to hint to the prophet that, although the Jewish people were undeserving, he should not treat them cruelly. Just as the ravens showed him compassion, he should show the people compassion by charitably rescinding his decree of no rainfall (*Metzudat David*, 1 Kings 17:4).

Reb Noson explains that Rebbe Nachman begins with this verse about the ravens to introduce the lesson’s focal point, the mitzvah of charity, through which the various rectifications mentioned over the course of the lesson are made possible (*Torat Natan* #1).

4. **break his heartlessness...turn it into compassion.** It is in a Jew’s nature to be compassionate, as the Talmud notes: Jews are “compassionate people, descendants of compassionate people” (cf. *Yevamot* 79a). What then is the nature of the cruelty and heartlessness to which Rebbe Nachman refers? The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains that when a Jew is approached for charity, his compassion wells up first and foremost for himself and his family. His immediate concern is for his own needs, and this causes his heart to harden toward anyone who petitions him for charity. It then becomes very difficult for him to part with his money. Therefore, each person, according to his situation and standing, has to break his negative feelings for the petitioner and transform his heartlessness into compassion. The compassion he awakens in himself for the poor should

of charity. When someone naturally compassionate gives charity purely out of his compassionate instinct, it is not an act of devotion⁵—there are <also animals> that are compassionate by nature. Rather, the essential devotion is transforming cruelty into compassion.⁶

This is the meaning of “And I have commanded the ravens to feed you.” The raven, cruel by nature, turned compassionate in order to feed Eliyahu.⁷ It must be the same with charity. And even those who are benevolent—all who are generous must first undergo this process of “And the ravens.” In other words, in order to donate charity they first have to break their heartlessness—their initial tendency to be cruel—and turn it into compassion.⁸

2. Beginning the devotion of charity is very difficult and demanding.⁹

be so powerful that whatever cruelty and heartlessness he feels, he redirects toward himself and his family, as it were. When his pity and concern for the poor matches his feelings toward those close to him, he will be able to cut back on his own expenses in order to spread the benefits of his wealth more widely.

5. **not an act of devotion.** Giving charity is a great mitzvah, even when motivated by one’s inherent feelings of compassion. Nevertheless, the giving of charity by someone who is naturally compassionate cannot be called a “devotional practice.” The Hebrew term for “devotion,” *avodah*, also means “work” or “labor.” *Avodat HaShem*, one’s worship or devotional service of God, must entail a measure of self-sacrifice and even struggle. By definition, giving charity becomes a devotional practice when it entails reversing one’s tendency to respond cruelly and turning that initial instinct into compassion.

This reversal of one’s natural tendencies is related to the concepts of determinism, the natural order, and free will, which Rebbe Nachman will discuss below (in §3 and §5-§8). As we shall see, a person’s primary objective should be to recognize and reveal that whatever transpires is God’s Will—i.e., governed by Divine providence and not the dictates of nature. The way to accomplish this is through charity and the other devotions discussed in the lesson.

6. **there are also animals that are compassionate by nature....** The Hebrew term for “kindness” is *CheSeD* (חסד). Rabbi Yehudah taught: “The *chasidah* [listed in Leviticus 11:19] is the white *dayah*. Why is it named *ChaSiDah* (חסידה)? Because it does kindness with its fellows” (*Chullin* 63a). Commenting on the verse in Leviticus, Rashi identifies the *chasidah* as the stork, whose *chesed* is that it shares its food with other birds of its kind (see also *Rashi, Chullin, ad. loc., s.v. chasidut*).

In Lesson #2:4 earlier in this volume (and see nn.55-60), Rebbe Nachman taught that charity is an expression of man’s humanity: “It is intrinsic to human nature to do kindness, which is not the case for animals.” As explained in the notes there, human kindness is distinct in that it is an expression of free will, a trait that animals lack. Although, as the Rebbe cites here from the Talmud, certain animals are compassionate by nature and act charitably to their own

מי שהוא רחמן בטבעו ונותן צדקה מחמת רחמנות שבטבעו, אין זה עבודה, כי יש גם כמה חיות שהם רחמנים בטבעם, רק עקר העבודה - לשבר האכזריות להפכו לרחמנות.

ונה בחינת: “ואת הערבים צויתי לכלכלך” פי העורב הוא בטבעו אכזרי, ונתהפך לרחמנות לכלכל את אליהו. כמו-כן צריכין בצדקה פנ”ל. וכל הנדיבי לב, כל מי שהוא נדבן, צריך לילך ולעבר בתחלה דרך בחינה זו, בחינת: “ואת הערבים הנ”ל. דהינו שפתחלה צריכים לשבר האכזריות שלהם, מה שיש להם אכזריות בתחלה, להפכו לרחמנות, להתנדב לצדקה פנ”ל:

ב. ובחינה זו, דהינו התחלת הצדקה, היא קשה וכבדה מאד.

kind, they do not choose to do so and cannot choose to do otherwise. Nor are they capable of transformation. Whereas humans have the capacity to break a tendency to be cruel and turn it into compassion and kindness, animals are incapable of such change.

It is worth noting that the Talmud’s list of twenty-four non-kosher birds includes the stork (*Chullin* 63a; see also Leviticus 11:13-19 and Deuteronomy 14:13-18). Despite its charitable nature, the stork’s born tendency for kindness does not earn it the status of a kosher bird. It is suited neither for consumption nor for offering as a sacrifice to God in the Holy Temple. Similarly, Rebbe Nachman teaches that charity motivated by innate compassion lacks self-sacrifice and, although a mitzvah, is not considered an act of devotion to God.

7. **I have commanded the ravens...cruel by nature...to feed Eliyahu.** In section 5 below, Rebbe Nachman will explain the fallacy of the philosophical doctrine known as determinism, showing instead that everything which transpires in the world is governed by Divine providence. That Eliyahu was brought food by the ravens, a cruel bird which does not provide food even for its own young (see n.3 above), proves this. The ravens were in no way being true to their own nature or to the dictates of the natural order in showing compassion for God’s prophet. They did so only, as Scripture states, because “I have commanded the ravens to feed you”—i.e., it was God’s Will.

8. **and turn it into compassion.** As explained by the *Parparaot LeChokmah* cited above, in note 4.

In review: In order for giving charity to be a devotional practice it must entail breaking one’s cruelty and turning heartlessness into compassion.

9. **demanding.** The literal meaning of *kaved* is “heavy.” Having shown in the previous section that in order for giving charity to be a devotional practice it needs to be a transformational act, Rebbe Nachman teaches here that initiating this giving can be difficult and demanding. When a

All devotions and all acts of repentance—whatever act one wants to carry out in service of God—must be preceded by many cries of “*Oy vavoy!*” and many groans, genuflections and gesticulations {i.e., the contortions which the God-fearing make during their devotions}.¹⁰ This is mainly at the beginning, for it is very difficult then, because all beginnings are difficult (*Mekhilta: Bachodesh 2*).¹¹ One needs many cries and sighs, etc., before <giving birth to any act>.¹²

Afterwards as well, after the beginning, service of God does not come easily. As mentioned above, it takes much effort and many contortions, before one can do something in an exemplary manner.¹³ Nevertheless, the beginning is extremely difficult. The reason is that good deeds are the primary progeny of the righteous (*Midrash Tanchuma, Noach 2*). It follows that mitzvot, good deeds and all devotions to God signify a birth. Before the birth, how many times does a woman cry out, how many labor-pangs and contractions does she have until she bears the progeny!¹⁴

This is especially so for a first-time birth, because a woman’s first delivery is very difficult for her, as it is written, “in anguish, like she that

person is not in the habit of being charitable, or even if only at that particular moment he is not feeling very generous, the moral obligation to part with one’s wealth to benefit the poor can feel burdensome and more of a demand than one can handle.

10. **many cries of Oy vavoy...during their devotions.** Embarking upon any enterprise or activity presents its share of demands and obstacles. Each new undertaking—by the very nature of its newness—is difficult at first. This is certainly the case with each new devotional practice a person undertakes in his service of God. The God-fearing will therefore raise their voices and move their bodies in odd ways in order to motivate themselves and help shake off the inertia and sluggishness inherent in all corporeality.

11. **all beginnings are difficult.** In *Likutey Moharan I*, 62:5, where Rebbe Nachman likewise cites this teaching, he explains that beginnings are difficult because “beginnings entail going from one extreme to the other.” Commenting on the verse, “Now if you obey Me...” (Exodus 19:5), Rashi cites the *Mekhilta*: If now you take it upon yourselves, it will hereafter be pleasant for you; for all beginnings are difficult. Observing the Torah’s commandments might initially be difficult, but once a person begins, he finds that it becomes easier and more pleasant as time goes on. God said this to the Jewish people at the time they were “going from one extreme to the other”—from being slaves in Egypt to becoming a sovereign nation, servants only to God.

12. **giving birth to any act.** This insert is from the manuscript version of *Likutey Moharan* and does not appear in the printed editions. In the context of our lesson, “giving birth” connotes initiating some enterprise or activity, anything new that one has not done before. As with

כי כל העבודות וכל התשובות, כל מה שרוצין לעשות איזה עבדא בעבודת השם, כמה קלין של אוי ואבוי וכמה גניחות וכמה בפילות וכמה הטיות (הינו תנועות משנות שעושין יראי ה' בעבודתם) צריכין לעשות קדם שעושין איזה עבדא. ועקר בהתחלה, שאז קשה מאד, כי 'כל התחלות קשות' (מכילתא פרשת יתרו, והובא בפירש"י שם), וצריכין כמה קלין וכמה גניחות וכו' קדם שמתחילין איזהו התחלה.

וגם אחר כך, לאחר ההתחלה גם פן אינו בא בנקל עבודת השם, וצריכין כמה יגיעות וכמה תנועות כנ"ל קדם שזוכין לעשות איזה עבדא, שיהיה לה הדור. אך ההתחלה קשה מאד כנ"ל, כי עקר תולדותיהן של צדיקים - מעשים טובים (תנחומא פרשת נח והובא בפירש"י שם) נמצא שהמצוות ומעשים טובים וכל עבודת השם הם בחינת הולדה, וקדם ההולדה כמה קלין וכמה חבלים וצירים יש להיולדת קדם שמוולדת ההולדה.

ובפרט מבכירה, דהינו הולדה ראשונה של אשה, שאז קשה עליה מאד, כמו שכתוב (ירמיה ד): "צרה כמבכירה", שזה בחינת

childbirth, this “delivery” too is preceded by birth pangs and by the cries and sighs of the one giving birth. In *Likutey Moharan II*, 20, Rebbe Nachman relates “giving birth” to the concept of introducing into the world a new path in serving God.

13. **not come easily...an exemplary manner.** A good example of this is prayer. Someone who is unaccustomed to addressing God and unacquainted with the prayers will, in the beginning, find praying difficult. However, after spending some time performing this devotion, growing familiar with the liturgy, he will be able to devote more attention to the meaning of the words. Praying will gradually become easier, though, as Rebbe Nachman teaches here, “afterwards as well...service of God does not come easily.” Although no longer a beginner, he is still a long way from praying with the consummate concentration that transforms his prayer into a perfect offering to God.

14. **good deeds are the primary progeny of the righteous....** Commenting on the verse, “These are the offspring of Noach...” (Genesis 6:9), Rashi brings this Midrashic teaching that the tzaddik’s primary progeny are his good deeds. Rebbe Nachman applies this to all of a person’s devotions in the service of God. The beginnings, or births, are always difficult. As in childbirth, there are labor-pangs which make a person contort his body and cry “*Oy vavoy!*” before the devotional practice is carried out in the world.

gives birth for the first time” (Jeremiah 4:31). This is a beginning, <which is very difficult, as in,> “all beginnings are difficult.”¹⁵

And charity is always a beginning, as in (Deuteronomy 15:8), “open, you shall open [your hand to him].”¹⁶ Even where an opening and a beginning already exist, charity opens more and more, widening the opening further.¹⁷ When a person wants to embark upon a particular path and devotion in worshipping God, he needs to make an opening in order to enter that path. This is as in “all beginnings are difficult,” because at the beginning one must break through and open a new entrance. It is therefore very difficult. Yet the remarkable power of charity is that it can widen and open the opening more and more. When we make an opening in some devotion and give charity, the charity opens and widens the opening more and more. This is because charity is the beginning of all beginnings, for it opens and widens all the entrances.¹⁸

And in charity itself there is also a beginning. This is when one begins to give charity, which is “And I have commanded the ravens.”¹⁹ Beginning the devotion of charity is therefore very difficult and demanding, for it is the beginning of all beginnings.²⁰

15. **in anguish, like she that gives birth for the first time...beginnings are difficult.** The prophet Yirmiyahu laments the destruction of Jerusalem, likening the people’s anguished cries to the cries of a woman giving birth for the first time. Since it is a *first* birth it is more difficult than those which follow.

In Hebrew, the word for a woman giving birth for the first time is *maVKiRah* (מבכירה), which has the same root letters as *BiKkuRim* (בכורים), the first-fruits offering. Rebbe Nachman will relate to this below, in section 13 (and see n.191), where he shows how the concepts of this lesson are alluded to in the opening verse.

16. **open, you shall open your hand to him.** Scripture states concerning the importance of giving charity to the poor: “Do not harden your heart and clench your hand against your needy brother. But you shall surely open your hand to him” (Deuteronomy 15:7-8). More literally, *patoach tiptach* (“you shall surely open”) means “open, you shall open.” Rashi (*ad. loc.*) says that this repetition of the word *p tach* (open) teaches that we are obliged to give again and again.

In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman reads the word *PaToaCh* (פְּתוּחַ, open) as *PeTaCh* (פְּתַח), which means “an opening” and “a beginning.” The subject of the verse in Deuteronomy (*loc. cit.*) is charity, and so the Rebbe understands it as teaching that “charity is always a beginning.”

17. **widening the opening further.** The repetition, “*patoach tiptach* (open, you shall open),” teaches that giving charity “opens the openings” even wider. Even where an opening already exists, giving charity is beneficial. It makes that entrance wider so that one can pass through, as Rebbe Nachman now explains.

הַהֲתַחֲלָה, בְּחִינַת: ‘כָּל הַתְּחִלּוֹת קְשׁוֹת’ כַּנִּלְ.

וְצָדָקָה הִיא תְּמִיד הַתְּחִלָּה בְּבְחִינַת (דְּבָרִים טו): “פְּתוּחַ תִּפְתָּח” שְׂאֵפְלוּ כְּשֵׁי שׁ פֶּתַח וְהַתְּחִלָּה, הַצְּדָקָה הִיא פּוֹתַחַת יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר וּמְרַחֶבֶת הַפֶּתַח יוֹתֵר, כִּי כָּל דְּבָר וְדָבָר מֵעֲבוּדַת הַשֵּׁם, כְּשֶׁרוֹצִין לְכַנֵּס בְּאוֹתוֹ הַדְרָךְ, וְאוֹתוֹ הָעֲבוּדָה, צְרִיכִין לְפִתַח שָׁם פֶּתַח לְכַנֵּס בְּאוֹתוֹ הַדְרָךְ, וְזֶה בְּחִינַת: ‘כָּל הַתְּחִלּוֹת קְשׁוֹת’, מִחֲמַת שֶׁבְּהַתְּחִלָּה צְרִיכִין לְשַׁבֵּר וּלְפִתַח פֶּתַח מִחֲדָשׁ, עַל-כֵּן קֶשֶׁה מְאֹד. וּסְגִלַת כַּח הַצְּדָקָה - לְהִרְחִיב וּלְפִתַח הַפֶּתַח יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר, שְׂכֵשְׁעוּשִׁין אֵיזְהוּ פֶּתַח בְּאֵיזְהוּ עֲבוּדָה וְנוֹתְנִין צְדָקָה, אֲזִי הַצְּדָקָה פּוֹתַחַת וּמְרַחֶבֶת הַפֶּתַח יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר, כִּי צְדָקָה הִיא הַהֲתַחֲלָה שֶׁל כָּל הַהֲתַחֲלּוֹת, כִּי הִיא פּוֹתַחַת וּמְרַחֶבֶת כָּל הַפֶּתַחִים כַּנִּלְ.

וְגַם בְּצְדָקָה עֲצֻמָּה יֵשׁ הַתְּחִלָּה, דְּהֵינּוּ כְּשִׁמְתַחֲלִין לְתֵן צְדָקָה, שְׂזֶה בְּחִינַת: “וְאֵת הָעֲרֵבִים צְוִיתִי” כַּנִּלְ, וְעַל כֵּן הַתְּחִלַּת הַצְּדָקָה הִיא קֶשֶׁה וּכְבֵדָה מְאֹד, כִּי הִיא בְּחִינַת הַתְּחִלָּה שֶׁל כָּל הַהֲתַחֲלּוֹת כַּנִּלְ:

18. **and give charity...for it opens and widens all the entrances.** The practical advice we derive from Rebbe Nachman’s words is that whenever a person begins anything new, and especially some new devotion, he should first give charity. Beginnings are difficult and charity “carves out” an opening in the thing he seeks to carry out. Giving some more charity then widens the opening, and so facilitates his way into that new endeavor. This applies to all undertakings, from starting a new program of Torah study or *hitbodedut* (secluded, personal prayer to God) to beginning a new job, entering into marriage, or, as mentioned above, having a child. Each time a person begins something new in life, he should immediately give charity, even if only a small contribution, to widen the entrance and ease his way through. (See also Lesson #2:3 earlier in this volume, which likewise links charity with birth.)

19. **begins to give charity...ravens.** In section 1, Rebbe Nachman taught that from God’s commanding the raven to feed Eliyahu we learn that the essence of giving charity is breaking one’s inclination for cruelty and heartlessness (and see nn.3-4 and 7). He connects this here with charity being both an opening into one’s devotional practices and the means for widening the opening. Charity begins, or opens, with the breaking of one’s propensity for cruelty. The Rebbe likens the difficulty a person experiences in beginning the devotion of charity to his difficulty in breaking his cruelty before he can genuinely enter the path of generosity and compassion.

20. **Beginning the devotion of charity...the beginning of all beginnings.** In addition to being the “opener” for other devotions to God, giving charity has its own opening or beginning. As the

3. Nevertheless, the benefit of giving charity is extremely great, as charity helps always.²¹ The body's needs are numerous. Even the essentials—<such as> eating, drinking, clothing and shelter—are numerous and vast. One can spend all one's days and years on the necessities alone, and they considerably hinder a person's service of the Creator.²²

This is so even though [all our efforts in pursuit of these needs] are themselves the service of God. They are the concept of an arousal from below, for through an act below there is an arousal on high.²³ Whatever labors and works people engage in awaken the supernal form of that work in the Act of Creation. It also brings vitality and illumination to the supernal form of that work associated with the Act of Creation on high, which parallels that labor and work a person engages in below, in this world.²⁴

“beginning of all beginnings,” giving charity is extremely demanding and burdensome. Aside from the difficulties which beginning to give to charity itself poses, as the “opener” it bears also the difficulties of the other devotions. Giving charity is therefore an extremely difficult mitzvah to perform properly. The obstacles are many: To whom to give? How much to give? When to give? (See *More Blessed to Give*: Rebbe Nachman on Charity, Breslov Research Institute.)

In review: In order for giving charity to be a devotional practice it must entail breaking one's cruelty and turning heartlessness into compassion (§1). All beginnings are difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new opens the way to one's accomplishing it. Beginning to give charity is therefore the beginning of all beginnings and hence extremely demanding and difficult (§2).

21. **benefit of giving charity is extremely great...helps always.** Rebbe Nachman has explained that giving charity opens doors and widens existing doors into whatever endeavor or spiritual devotion a person might undertake. Nevertheless, because all beginnings are difficult, and charity is the beginning of all beginnings, it follows that giving charity is especially difficult. Concomitantly, the Rebbe teaches, “the benefit of giving charity is extremely great.” Although here he does not state what that benefit is, the Rebbe devotes the rest of this section to the topic of God's lovingkindness that sustains the creation and eliminates the need for people to labor for their livelihood. At the conclusion of section 9, the Rebbe states explicitly that this is charity's benefit (see also n.39 below).

In *Torat Natan* #1, where Reb Noson outlines this teaching, he begins as Rebbe Nachman does, with the topic of charity. However, Reb Noson then presents the other major themes not in the sequence they appear in the lesson, but reversed, as successive stages following on from giving of charity. 1) Giving charity rectifies the blemished days of unworthy elders (§9); 2) causing the influence of worthy elders to increase (§7-§8); 3) thereby revealing that everything is governed through Divine Will and providence (§6); 4) thus producing fear of Heaven (§5); and 5) creating a container to receive lovingkindness (§4), so that all of creation is perpetuated and sustained solely by means of His lovingkindness (§3).

ג. אך התועלת של הצדקה גדול מאד מאד, כי הצדקה מועלת תמיד, כי צרכי הגוף הם רבים מאד, ואפלו ההכרחיות הם רבים וגדולים מאד: אכילה ושתיה ומלבושים ודירות, שיכולין לבלות ימיו ושניו אפלו על ההכרחיות לבד, והם מונעין את האדם מאד מעבודת הבורא.

ואף-על-פי שגם הם בעצמן הם גם כן עבודת הבורא יתברך, כי הם בחינת אתערותא דלתתא, כי 'בעבדא דלתתא אתער לעלא', כי על-ידי כל עסקים ומלאכות שעושין בני אדם, על-ידי-זה נתעורר אותו הציור של אותו המלאכה למעלה במעשה בראשית, ומביא חיות והארה לאותו הציור של אותו המלאכה של מעשה בראשית שלמעלה, שהוא מכוון כנגד אותו העסק והמלאכה, שהאדם עושה למטה בעולם הזה.

22. **hinder a person's service of the Creator.** Human beings were created to serve God. Yet, as Rebbe Nachman points out, a person's physical needs are very many. Why would God create a world that requires a person to spend the major part of his days pursuing material needs when the true purpose of creation is to further humanity's spiritual development? The Rebbe will explain that, on the contrary, everything a person does—even his material pursuits—is meant to further creation's true purpose.

23. **through an act below there is an arousal on high.** The *Zohar* teaches that in the reciprocity relationship between God and humanity, in order for there to be “an arousal from on high,” there must first be “an arousal from below.” In Kabbalistic terminology, an arousal from below is the concept of *mayin nukvin*—i.e., an awakening of spiritual energy from this world through the human being's performance of mitzvot. This awakening generates a reciprocal arousal from on high, *mayin dukhrin*—i.e., the flow of bounty and blessing that God benevolently provides for humankind and the world (see *Zohar* I, 77b; *ibid.* 86b). God created the world *ex nihilo* (“out of nothing”). Prior to that, nothing existed to initiate the process of creation “from below,” by raising *mayin nukvin*. Rather, the Act of Creation began with an arousal from on high, as the unmediated Will of God. Nevertheless, it was always God's intention that, post-Creation, human beings would be responsible for initiating the process through which God's bounty and blessing descend to sustain the world.

In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman equates people's everyday activities while pursuing their needs to “an arousal from below.” This is because the mundane things we do *are* what bring to “an awakening on high.” Therefore, these mundane acts are also counted as devotions to God, as the Rebbe will clarify next.

24. **Whatever labors...awaken the supernal form...on high...below, in this world.** Having explained the nature of the reciprocal relationship between God and humanity, Rebbe Nachman

The labors and works that we engage in create “the Tabernacle.”²⁵ All works are included in the thirty-nine-works, namely, the primary works. “Primary” implies that there are “derivatives” (*Bava Kama* 2a).²⁶ All the types of work and labor that people engage in are included in the thirty-nine-works. These [thirty-nine] are the primary ones; the rest are derivatives.²⁷

And the thirty-nine-works correspond to the works of the Tabernacle, as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught: What do the forty-less-one primary works parallel? They parallel the works of the Tabernacle (*Shabbat* 49b),²⁸ for the forms of the Tabernacle resembled the forms of the Act of Creation (see *Tikkuney Zohar*, Introduction, p.13a).²⁹ And [they parallel] the human <who does> the work, for the form of the [human] body resembles the form of the Tabernacle (*ibid.*).³⁰ It follows that by

adds here that, in fact, every human action in this world has a corresponding archetype in the Act of Creation. Consequently, man’s actions below bring about an arousal on high, in the corresponding supernal forms of those actions. The *mayin nukvin* generated by engaging in the works and deeds of this world vitalizes and illuminates their matching supernal forms, and arouses a reciprocal flow of *mayin dukhrin*—i.e., the bounty and blessing that God benevolently provides for the world.

25. the Tabernacle. To further develop the connection between the mundane works of human beings and the Divine works of the Act of Creation, Rebbe Nachman introduces the Kabbalah’s teaching that the design of the Tabernacle and the form of the human body are both patterned after the Act of Creation (see below). Having shown that human actions are linked with the works and labors that comprise the Act of Creation, the Rebbe now ties this to the construction of the Tabernacle. (As in the Talmud, our lesson speaks of the Holy Temple and the Tabernacle interchangeably; see *Eruvin* 2a.)

26. thirty-nine works...Primary implies that there are derivatives. Shabbat is the Day of Rest, when all work is forbidden. The Hebrew term for “work,” *melakhah*, should not be mistaken as referring exclusively to strenuous physical activity, implying that only such labor is prohibited. Rather, as our Sages teach, the work that is forbidden on Shabbat consists of those activities which were necessary for the construction and functioning of the Tabernacle (see n.28). These activities and their derivatives are considered creative acts and are therefore proscribed on the day which God Himself, as it were, rests from creating the world. The Mishnah (*Shabbat* 73a) lists “forty minus one” such *melakhot* (works). Each of these thirty-nine works is actually a category of labor with subcategories not specified by the Mishnah. The thirty-nine source labors are called “primary works” (אבות מלאכה), whereas their offshoots are known as “derivative works” (תולדות). Rebbe Nachman cites the Talmud (*Bava Kama*, *loc. cit.*), that the fact that the Sage speaks of primary categories implies that there are subcategories, or derivatives. Thus, for example, planting seeds is a primary *melakhah*. Watering the garden, which causes the seeds to grow, is a derivative *melakhah* (see *Rambam*, *Yad Hachazakah*, *Hilkhos Shabbat* 8:2). Both

כי על-ידי העסקים והמלאכות שעושים, נעשה על-ידי-זה בחינת משכן. כי כל המלאכות כלולים בל”ט מלאכות שהם אבות מלאכות, אבות מכלל דאיכא תולדות’ (בבא קמא ב.), כי כל מיני מלאכות ועסקים שעושין, כלם כלולים בל”ט מלאכות שהם האבות, והשאר הם תולדות.
ול”ט מלאכות הם כנגד מלאכת המשכן, כמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה (שבת מט:): ‘אבות מלאכות ארבעים חסר אחת – כנגד מי, כנגד מלאכת המשכן’. ‘וציורא דמשכנא כציורא דעבדא דבראשית’ (תיקוני-זהר דף יב בהקדמה), והאדם עושה המלאכה, ‘וציורא דגופא כציורא דמשכנא’ (בהקדמת התיקונים

are prohibited on Shabbat. Just as a person who plants seeds on Shabbat must bring a sin-offering to atone for his action, so too, the one who waters the seeds, as there is no difference in the stringency between primary *melakhot* and derivative *melakhot* (see *Shabbat* 68a, which discusses the practical distinction between them).

27. All the types of work...are included in the thirty-nine-works...the rest are secondary. In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman equates all the different acts that people engage in—all the labors and business activities in pursuing their everyday needs—with the primary and derivative *melakhot*. The Rebbe next shows how this relates to the mundane acts awakening and illuminating their corresponding supernal forms in the Act of Creation; a power we would normally attribute only to our spiritual devotions.

28. They parallel the works of the Tabernacle. In their discussion of the Mishnah’s teaching that “the primary *melakhot* are forty minus one,” the Sages ask: To what do they correspond? Rabbi Chanina bar Chama answered: They correspond to the works of the Tabernacle—i.e., the thirty-nine activities that were part of the construction and functioning of the Tabernacle (*Shabbat*, *loc. cit.*). These thirty-nine were accorded the status of primary *melakhot* that are forbidden on Shabbat (see *Rashi*, Exodus 35:2; see also *Shabbat* 73b).

29. the form of the Tabernacle resembled the form of the Act of Creation. The *Tikkuney Zohar* (*loc. cit.*) teaches that the Tabernacle’s design was patterned after, and therefore aligned with, the design of Creation and of the Garden of Eden (see also *Shemot Rabbah* 35:6; cf. Lesson #1 and n.181 earlier in this volume, where Rebbe Nachman reads this teaching somewhat differently). The *Zohar* teaches that the Tabernacle was patterned after heaven and earth, and the functions performed there mirror those which transpire on high...the purpose being to bring God’s Divine Presence to dwell in this world (*Zohar* II, 231b).

30. the form of the human body resembles the form of the Tabernacle. The same passage from the *Tikkuney Zohar* quoted in the previous note speaks in detail of the alignment between several of the Tabernacle vessels and the different parts of the human body. For example, the

a person engaging in work and labor, a Tabernacle is created.³¹ When he performs the work and labor fittingly, the way he should,³² he gives vitality to the Act of Creation and illuminates it, and [his labor] is the world's mainstay. It follows that this, too, is the service of God.³³

Even so, if He were to pour His lovingkindness upon us, we would have no need for all this.³⁴ For how did God create the entire world out of the absolute nothingness, when there was no existent through which to effect an arousal from below? Yet He created worlds such as these, and did so entirely by means of His lovingkindness, without any arousal from below whatsoever, as in “The world is built on lovingkindness” (Psalms 89:3).³⁵

Considering that God could have created worlds such as these solely by means of His lovingkindness, without any arousal from below, He can certainly sustain and perpetuate the worlds solely by means of His

Table corresponds to the heart, and the seven-branched Menorah corresponds to the head with its seven apertures. The commentaries explain that both the Tabernacle and the human form align with the array of the Ten *Sefirot* (*Tikkuney Zohar*, Introduction, p.13a-b, and *Matok Midvash*; see Appendix: The Structure of the Sefirot).

31. **engaging in work and labor, a Tabernacle is created.** Rebbe Nachman has shown that the mundane actions human beings engage in to procure their everyday necessities are included in the thirty-nine primary works prohibited on Shabbat, which themselves are derived from the Tabernacle. It follows, therefore, that by engaging in these works and labors a person constructs a Tabernacle—i.e., a sanctuary in which God's Divine Presence, the *Shekhinah*, may dwell!

32. **fittingly, the way he should.** That is, he engages in the mundane activities for the sake of spiritual improvement and growth. “Fittingly, the way he should” relates to Rebbe Nachman's earlier discussion of performing one's devotions in an exemplary manner (see §2 and n.14). Reb Noson explains “fittingly, the way he should” as referring to conducting one's business affairs with honesty, always being true to one's word, and with the intention of giving charity from the profits. This enables even simple people, those who know nothing of the Torah's mysteries, to construct “a Tabernacle” through their business affairs and physical labor. Reb Noson adds that a person should do his best to see that his charity goes to worthy recipients, such as those who spend their time serving God, and especially to the true tzaddikim who help spread awareness of God in the world. This person is truly constructing a dwelling place for the Holy One (*Torat Natan* #3).

33. **this, too, is the service of God.** “This” refers here to all the labors and works that people engage in. Rebbe Nachman has shown that all human endeavors—even for material and physical needs—are necessary for the construction of the Tabernacle. These activities, too, are devotions in the service of God. A person who works and labors “the way he should” is engaged in the Act of Creation. Just as God created the world and sustains it with bounty and blessing, so too, one who works the way one should. As a co-creator with God, he too plays an indispensable role in providing bounty and blessing for the entire world.

שם). נמצא, שעל ידי האדם שעושה המלאכה והעסק, על-ידי-
זה נעשה בחינת משכון, כשעושה המלאכה והעסק כראוי, כמו
שצריך לעשות, ועל-ידי-זה נותן חיות והארה למעשה בראשית,
והוא קיום העולם. נמצא, שגם זה הוא עבודת הבורא:
אף-על-פי-כן אם היה שופע עלינו חסדו, לא היינו צריכים לכל
זה, כי הלא איך ברא השם יתברך את כל העולם כלו אחר העדר
הגמור, שלא היה שום הויה, שיהיה על ידה אתערוותא דלתתא,
ואף-על-פי-כן ברא עולמות כאלו. והכל בחסדו, בלי אתערוותא
דלתתא כלל, בבחינת (תהלים פט): “עולם חסד יבנה”.
ומאחר שהוא יתברך היה יכול לברא עולמות כאלו בלי אתערוותא
דלתתא כלל, רק על-ידי חסדו, בודאי הוא יכול להחיות ולקיים
העולמות רק על-ידי חסדו, ולא היינו צריכים לעשות כלל שום

34. **have no need for all of this.** Even though the mundane activities we engage in vitalize and illuminate the Act of Creation and are themselves the service of God, were the Holy One to relate to the creation solely with His quality of lovingkindness, *chesed*, there would be no need for even minimal human endeavor to secure life's necessities. All our activities would be of a spiritual nature and we would have no reason to engage in any mundane work. For the remainder of this section, Rebbe Nachman will explain the import for humanity of God's sustaining the world on Divine lovingkindness, without any arousal from below. This idea reflects the concept of Divine Will superseding the natural order, which dictates that humans have to work for their sustenance and livelihood. The Rebbe will address this at length below, in sections 5-8 (see also n.5 above).

35. **no existent through which to effect an arousal from below...world is built on lovingkindness.** Earlier in this section, Rebbe Nachman cited the Kabbalistic teaching that an arousal on high has to be precipitated by an arousal below. He then explained this in the context of the work humans engage in to earn their sustenance and how these activities correspond to the works that comprise the Act of Creation. At the time of Creation, however, nothing existed to initiate that arousal from below by raising *mayin nukvin* (see n.23 above); there was nothing to awaken God's Will to create the world. The fact that worlds do exist—this world, the celestial world, the transcendental world and beyond—is therefore proof that the Act of Creation was fueled solely by God's lovingkindness. The Rebbe's proof-text for this is from Psalms (*loc. cit.*): “The world is built on lovingkindness.” The simple meaning of this verse is that God's kindnesses will endure for as long as the world exists. In our context, Rebbe Nachman reads it as teaching that God created the world as an expression of His *chesed*, without any arousal from below.

lovingkindness.³⁶ Then we would not have had to engage in any labor or work whatsoever, as even the [work for one's] necessities would be done by others,³⁷ as it is written (Isaiah 61:5-6), "Foreigners will stand and pasture your flocks, and the sons of the stranger will be your ploughmen and your vineyard workers. And you will be called 'priests of God.'"³⁸ Specifically "priests of God," which is the concept of lovingkindness, as in "The world is built on lovingkindness." In other words, they will be called "priests of God"/<God's> lovingkindness, for they will not have to engage in any <labor or> work. The world will sustain itself solely by His lovingkindness.³⁹ But when the lovingkindness is held back <with

36. **He can certainly sustain and perpetuate....** In creating the world solely by means of His lovingkindness, God has already shown that He has no need for an arousal from below to effect His Will. That being so, there is certainly nothing preventing Him from perpetuating and sustaining His creation without first receiving *mayin nukvin* from that creation below.

37. **not have had to engage in any labor...necessities would be done by others.** In the previous paragraph, Rebbe Nachman taught that "if He were to pour His lovingkindness upon us, we would have no need for all this (i.e., work)." We would not have to work for life's necessities, and would instead be able to spend our time engaged in spiritual endeavors—e.g., studying Torah, praying to God, and performing acts of kindness. What then of working for our necessities to create an arousal from below? The Rebbe teaches here that others will do that work for us. *Their* physical labor will bring forth the arousal that supplies us with bounty from on high. With our necessities provided for, we will then be free to pursue our spiritual devotions and through them bring a greater awareness of God to the world.

Reb Noson asks: What difference does it make if a person works or he prays and studies? Rebbe Nachman has shown that it is all service of God! However, although a person can serve God by engaging honestly in business and work and with the intent of giving charity, the devotions of Torah study, prayer and cleaving to God are more exalted. Whereas the former involve maintaining a strong connection to the material world, the latter practices are of an entirely spiritual nature, similar to the manner in which we will serve God in the World to Come. Every person's goal in this world should therefore be to serve God through these spiritual practices (*Torat Natan* #16). See also *Likutey Moharan* I, 25:3; *ibid.* 280:3, where the Rebbe likewise contrasts business activity and working for one's living, the "external devotions," with Torah study, prayer and mitzvot, the "inner devotions."

Rebbe Nachman's teaching here gives rise to another question. Since God can provide for the world without an arousal from below, what need is there for *others* to work for our necessities? Let everything come directly from God's lovingkindness! The answer is that at Creation, God was obliged, so to speak, to create everything solely through His lovingkindness. Nothing else existed then, and so there could be no arousal from below. Nevertheless, God designed the world to operate on the principle of "an arousal from below causes an arousal from on high." God's intention was that humanity should be afforded free will; that a person should have the possibility of choosing between good and evil, and so be deserving of reward for preferring the former or of punishment for pursuing the latter. By choosing the good and

עֶסֶק וּמְלָאכָה, וְאֶפְלוּ הַהֶכְרָחִיּוֹת הָיוּ נַעֲשִׂין עַל-יְדֵי אַחֲרִים, כְּמוֹ שְׁפָתוֹב (ישעיה סא): "וְעַמְדוֹ זָרִים וְרָעוּ צֹאנֶכֶם, וּבְנֵי נֹכַח אֲכָרִיכֶם וְכֹרְמֵיכֶם, וְאַתֶּם כֹּהֲנֵי ה' תִּקְרְאוּ." "כֹּהֲנֵי ה'" דִּיקָא, בְּחִינַת חֶסֶד, בְּחִינַת: "עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה", הִינוּ שְׂיֵהוּ נִקְרְאִים "כֹּהֲנֵי ה'", בְּחִינַת חֶסֶד, שְׂאִין צְרִיכִים לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּם מְלָאכָה, רַק הָעוֹלָם מִתְקַיֵּם בְּחֶסֶדוֹ כִּנ"ל. אַךְ כְּשֶׁהַחֶסֶד נִתְעַכֵּב, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם,

engaging in positive acts, human beings produce the arousal from below that evokes bounty and blessing from God. The greater the good they do, the greater the *mayin nukvin* they raise from below and the greater the *mayin dukhrin* that descends for the world. This is the reason there must be an arousal from below, and why when *we* choose the path of spiritual work, *others* must do the mundane work that generates our material bounty.

38. **Foreigners will stand...priests of God.** To show that when God relates to the creation solely with His quality of lovingkindness those who serve Him with spiritual devotions will not have to work for their necessities, Rebbe Nachman brings Yeshayahu's depiction of the messianic era, when the Jewish people will return to Zion. The prophet foretells that the Jews will not have to work then, and other nations will do their work for them. Instead, they will be "priests of God," free to pursue their spiritual devotions and bring greater awareness of God to the world.

39. **Specifically, priests of God...built on lovingkindness....** The *Zohar* (III, 306b) links the priest (*kohen*) with the right side of the *sefirah* configuration, the side associated with *Chesed*, Lovingkindness. This is in contrast to the Levites, whom the *Zohar* links with the left side, the side associated with the *sefirah* *Gevurah* (see Appendix: The Structure of the Sefirot; see also Lesson #2:7 and n.141).

In the context of our lesson, Yeshayahu foresees that in messianic times the Jews will be called "priests (*kohanim*)" because they will be the ones to benefit from God's lovingkindness, receiving His bounty and blessing without having to physically labor to first generate an arousal from below. They will be like the priests who served in the Tabernacle and later in the Holy Temple, whose necessities were provided for by the work of others (see *Siftei Chakhamim*, Numbers 3:9). What's more, Rebbe Nachman's teaching appears to be hinting to a way in which one might have this prophecy manifest even now. As mentioned in note 21 above, after opening the lesson with a discussion about charity, and stating at the outset of this section that "the benefit of giving charity is extremely great," the Rebbe does not explicitly address the topic until section 9 below. Nevertheless, charity seems to be directly related to his discussion here of sustaining the world on lovingkindness. When a person gives charity, he is, in effect, bestowing *chesed* on the poor person. As the Rebbe will explain in the sections below, this God-like act of kindness brings a revelation of Divine Will and enables him to receive the flow of God's *chesed* without having to labor for it, similar to the way all Jews will be sustained in messianic times. His charity thus renders him worthy of being counted among the "priests of God" (cf. *Parparaot LeChokhmah*; see also the following note). This, in fact, is what the Rebbe means by his statement that "the benefit of giving charity is extremely great."

God>, God forbid, so that He does not bestow His lovingkindness upon us, it is necessary to act to effect an arousal from below.⁴⁰

This is the meaning of “Yours, O God, is lovingkindness, for You pay each man commensurate with his deeds” (Psalms 62:13).⁴¹ When the lovingkindness is held back with God, that is, “Yours, O God, is lovingkindness,” for the lovingkindness is held back with God and He does not bestow it upon us—then “for You pay each man commensurate with his deeds,” i.e., God repays <him> commensurate with his actions and labors. His actions must be specifically <in order to effect an arousal>, because the lovingkindness is held back with God and He does not bestow it upon us.⁴² If, however, He would bestow the lovingkindness upon us, we would not have to act at all. Then, “for You pay each man as if his deeds” would be fulfilled—it would be *as if* he acts, for we do not have to do anything when He bestows His lovingkindness.⁴³

40. **lovingkindness is held back...it is necessary to act to effect an arousal from below.** Reb Noson explains that as long as a person does not merit a constant flow of God’s *chesed*, he must work for a living, honestly and with the intent to give charity, as explained above (n.32). For few are the tzaddikim and Torah scholars whom God grants a taste of the manner in which He will govern the world in the future, when “Foreigners will stand... And you will be called ‘priests of God.’” As for the rest of the Jewish people, we have to earn our living honestly and give charity to support the truly worthy tzaddikim and Torah scholars who bring greater awareness of God into the world. Commensurate with the charity we give, we sanctify the “thirty-nine works” through which we earn our livelihood, until such time that we, too, will merit being counted among God’s priests (*Torat Natan* #4).

41. **Yours, O God, is lovingkindness....** The verse appears to contradict itself. First it states that God manifests His quality of lovingkindness, obviating the need for human endeavor, but then concludes that He repays a person commensurate with *his deeds*, an expression of justice and the reverse of lovingkindness. Rashi (*loc. cit.*) explains that it is an expression of God’s lovingkindness that although He could repay a person for his deeds, He does not. Instead, He acts with lovingkindness and compassion (see *Likutey Moharan* I, 165). In *Likutey Moharan* I, 187, Rebbe Nachman takes this one step further and explains that the judgment *is* lovingkindness. Unlike his reading of the verse in those earlier lessons, here the Rebbe’s interpretation inverts its simple meaning, so that “Yours, O God, is lovingkindness” indicates that God withholds His lovingkindness from mankind and instead employs the attribute of justice in order to repay “each man commensurate with his deeds.”

42. **God repays him commensurate with his actions...does not bestow it upon us.** Rebbe Nachman explained above that were God to pour His *chesed* upon us, we would have no need for even minimal human endeavor to secure life’s necessities. Here the Rebbe adds that, conversely, when God withholds His *chesed*, each person earns his livelihood “commensurate

וְאִין מְשַׁפֵּיעַ עֲלֵינוּ חֶסֶד, אֲזִי צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּשִׁבִיל אֲתֵּירוֹתָא דְלִתְתָּא כַּנֵּ"ל.

וְזֶה בְּחִינַת (תהלים סב): "וּלְךָ ה' הַחֶסֶד, כִּי אַתָּה תִשְׁלַם לְאִישׁ כְּמַעֲשָׂהוּ." הֵינּוּ כְּשֶׁהַחֶסֶד נִתְּעַב אֶצְלוֹ יִתְּבַרְךָ, שְׂזֵה בְּחִינַת: "וּלְךָ ה' הַחֶסֶד" - שֶׁהַחֶסֶד נִתְּעַב אֶצְלוֹ יִתְּבַרְךָ וְאִין מְשַׁפֵּיעוֹ עֲלֵינוּ, אֲזִי: "כִּי אַתָּה תִשְׁלַם לְאִישׁ כְּמַעֲשָׂהוּ", הֵינּוּ כְּפִי הַעֲשִׂוֹת וְהַעֲסָקִים שְׁעוֹשָׂה, כֵּן הוּא יִתְּבַרְךָ מְשַׁלֵּם. כִּי צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת דְּוָקָא, מִחֲמַת שֶׁהַחֶסֶד נִתְּעַב אֶצְלוֹ יִתְּבַרְךָ וְאִינוּ מְשַׁפֵּיעוֹ עֲלֵינוּ, אֲבָל אִם הָיָה מְשַׁפֵּיעַ עֲלֵינוּ הַחֶסֶד, לֹא הֵינּוּ צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלָל, וְאֲזִי הָיָה נִתְּקִים: "כִּי אַתָּה תִשְׁלַם לְאִישׁ כְּמַעֲשָׂהוּ", כְּאֵלוֹ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה, כִּי אִין צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּלָל, כְּשׁוֹפֵעַ חֶסֶדוֹ כַּנֵּ"ל:

with his deeds.” He has to work and labor for life’s necessities, effecting an arousal from below that elicits a commensurate flow of bounty from God on high.

43. **commensurate with his deeds...as if he acts....** The verse which Rebbe Nachman cites here from Psalms states: “for You pay each man *k’maaseihu* (כמעשהו; commensurate with his deeds).” When the letter *khaf* (כ) appears as a prefix, it generally stands for *k’mo*, which means “like,” or *k’phi*, which means “according to.” Hence the translation here is “commensurate with.” Alternatively, the *khaf* (כ) of *k’maaseihu* can be understood as standing for *k’elu*, “as if.” In our context, the quote from Psalms would then read: “for You pay each man as if he performed his deeds.” If God were to pour His *chesed* upon us, people would not have to work. It would be *as if* each person acts to raise *mayin nukvin*, and receives a commensurate flow of *mayin dukhrin* in return.

There are thus two readings of this verse. The first is, “Yours, O God, is lovingkindness”—i.e., when the *chesed* is held back and remains *Yours*—“You pay each man commensurate with his deeds,” obliging a person to work for that lovingkindness and the bounty it generates. The second is, “Yours, O God, is lovingkindness”—i.e., when You relate to the creation from Your quality of *chesed*—“You pay each man *as if* he had performed his deeds” and effected the required arousal from below.

In review: In order for giving charity to be a devotional practice it must entail breaking one’s cruelty and turning heartlessness into compassion (§1). All beginnings are difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new opens the way to one’s accomplishing it. Beginning to give charity is therefore the beginning of all beginnings and hence extremely demanding and difficult (§2). All our efforts in pursuit of life’s necessities are devotions in the service of God. Even so, were we able to induce God to relate to the world with His quality of *chesed*, our work and the arousal from below that it generates would be unnecessary. We would be free to serve God through spiritual practices, as others would work for our material needs (§3).

4. However, one has to take in the lovingkindness gradually. This is because it is impossible to receive lovingkindness in abundance, as this would cause one to cease to exist—[as in:] They cannot bear an abundance of good (*Taanit* 23a).⁴⁴ One has to create a container and a conduit through which to receive the lovingkindness.⁴⁵ This is accomplished through fear of Heaven,⁴⁶ which makes a *ChaKiKah* (engraving) and a conduit through which to take in the lovingkindness, as in “and a *m’ChoKeK* (lawgiver) from between his feet” (Genesis 49:10).⁴⁷ “Feet” alludes to fear of Heaven, which signifies the end, as it is written “In the end,

44. take in the lovingkindness gradually...They cannot bear an abundance of good.

Lovingkindness is by definition boundless and continuous giving. Scripture lists Divine lovingkindness as one of God’s Thirteen Attributes of Mercy: “*YHVH, YHVH, the Lord, Compassionate and Gracious, Slow to Anger, Abounding in Lovingkindness (rav chesed) and Truth...*” (Exodus 34:6). Nevertheless, when the recipient is incapable of bearing the measure of lovingkindness he receives, that same lovingkindness becomes overwhelming and, possibly, even destructive. Rebbe Nachman teaches here that there is even a danger that the recipient will cease to exist. The Talmud’s (*loc. cit.*) example of this is rainfall. Whether as the water we drink or irrigation for our food-crops, rain is life-giving. On the other hand, a superabundance of rain causes flooding, and in the form of an overflowing river or sea of mud can wipe off entire cities from the face of the earth. In order for rainfall—indeed, any flow of *chesed—to be beneficial, its recipient* must have a container capable of holding it, as the Rebbe explains next.

45. One has to create a container and a conduit.... Rebbe Nachman now begins a series of proof-texts to show that fear of Heaven creates a container in which to receive God’s *chesed*. In the text that follows, the Rebbe will also refer to this container, *kliy* in Hebrew, as *chakikah*, an “engraving.” The image here is of one’s carving out the inside of a block of wood or stone in order to create a vessel. The Rebbe thus speaks of creating a *chakikah* in which to take in and hold abundant lovingkindness. He also introduces a second element, a *tzinor*, which means a “conduit” or “channel.” The Rebbe never fleshes out the purpose of this conduit. Nevertheless, it seems obvious that in order for God’s lovingkindness, which is boundless, to even reach the *kliy’chakikah* that will contain it, it must first be contracted and passed through a *tzinor*.

46. fear of Heaven. *Yirah* here refers to *yirat Shamayim*, fear of Heaven, the reverence and awe a person has for God. This fear generally takes one of two forms. The first, more primary form is known as *yirat ha’onesh*, fear of punishment. Rebbe Nachman explains this in *Likutey Moharan* I, 185: “*Yirat ha’onesh* is when a person is afraid of an animal or an official...and through this he becomes aware, and attains fear of God.” Oftentimes, *yirat ha’onesh* begins as one’s fear of something “external,” in which case it is lacking holiness, and so is known as *yirah chitzonit* (“extraneous fear”; see *Likutey Moharan* I, 5:4), or *yirah nefulah* (“fallen fear”; see *ibid.*, 154), or simply as *p’chadim* (fears or anxieties; *Likutey Moharan* I, 15:1, and see n.7). If, however, a person with *yirah nefulah* recognizes that, in fact, the dangerous animal or figure of authority who has the power to cause him harm is nothing other than an agent of God—that it is the Hand of God manifesting in the object of his fear, to keep him from sinning or to exact

ד. אך צריך לקבל החסד בהדרגה, כי רב החסד אי אפשר לקבל, כי היו בטלים במציאות מחמת רב החסד, כי אין יכולין לקבל רב טובה (תענית כג.), וצריך לעשות כלי וצנור לקבל על ידו החסד. וזה נעשה על-ידי יראה, כי על-ידי יראה נעשה חקיקה וצנור לקבל על ידו החסד, בכחינת (בראשית מט): “ומחוקק מבין רגליו”. רגל הוא בכחינת יראה שהיא בכחינת סוף, כמו שכתוב

judgment from him because he has transgressed His Will—this realization elevates his *yirah* to a level of holiness. Alternatively, his fear may be of Gehennom or any of the other forms of punishment for sin that the soul must endure after a person passes away. By focusing on the true cause of his fear, rather than its external trappings, he transforms his fear and anxiety into *yirat ha’onesh*; he recognizes the real source of his *p’chadim* and so comes to fear God, not His messenger.

The higher form of fear of Heaven is called *yirat ha’romimut*, fear of His exaltedness. This is the reverence and awe a person feels for God on account of His sublime greatness, “for He is Master and Ruler and the Supreme Source of all that exists” (*Zohar* I, 11b). A person who has advanced to this level does not refrain from sin because he fears Divine retribution, but rather because he has attained such an overwhelming reverence for the Holy One—and, consequently, such a clear perception of his own insignificance—that he is too embarrassed, too awed, to do anything that would transgress the Master’s Will. In its highest form, fear of God’s exaltedness is found with those who are intensely conscious of His greatness and have incorporated this awareness into every facet of their being, so that at all times they feel as if they are standing in His very presence. So pervasive is this awe and reverence that the possibility of consciously transgressing God’s Will is inconceivable. (A fuller discussion of the different forms of *yirat Shamayim* can be found in *Likutey Moharan* I, 15:3 and n.21; see also *Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #5.)

It is important to add that although *yirat ha’romimut* should be one’s ultimate goal, even the lesser level of fear of Heaven, *yirat ha’onesh*, contributes to receiving God’s *chesed*. As a rule, Rebbe Nachman’s teachings speak of spiritual practices and devotions in their most perfected form. This is because the closer one comes to achieving the ideal, the greater the rectifications (*tikkunim*) one generates. Nevertheless, fear of punishment is essential, since without it one cannot grow spiritually to attain the loftier *yirat ha’romimut* (*ibid.*).

47. ChaKiKah...m’ChoKeK (lawgiver) from between his feet. At the end of his life, Yaakov blessed each of his sons. Of Yehudah he prophetically said: “The scepter will not depart from Yehudah, nor a lawgiver from among his descendents.” In Hebrew, the combined root letters *Chet-Kuf-Kuf* (ח-ק-ק) connote both “legislation” and “engraving” or “inscribing.” The Midrash therefore reads *m’chokek* in Yaakov’s blessing as referring to judicial scribes who would inscribe the law (*Bereishit Rabbah* 98:8). The Hebrew expression *me-bein raglav*, translated here according to *Targum Onkelos* as “from among his descendents,” literally means “from between his feet.” In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman brings this proof-text to show the connection between *ChaKiKah/m’ChoKeK* (חקיקה/מחוקק) and the feet.

all things having been considered: Fear the Lord” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).⁴⁸ In other words, fear of Heaven, which corresponds to the feet, creates an engraving and conduit in order to receive the lovingkindness.⁴⁹

This is the meaning of “and behold! the staff of Aharon of the house of Levi had blossomed” (Numbers 17:23).⁵⁰ The lovingkindness, Aharon’s trait, has to be received by the container, which conceptually is fear of Heaven, the side of Levi, as in “with the saving strengths of His right arm” (Psalms 20:7).⁵¹

5. Fear of Heaven comes about mainly through the revelation of *Ratzon* (Divine Will), as in “Divine Will creates the God-fearing” (Psalms 145:19)—the revelation of Divine Will creates fear of Heaven.⁵² In other words, fear of Heaven is produced by revealing that everything is governed through

48. **Feet...the end...Fear the Lord.** The feet are the body’s lowest extremity and as such correspond to “the end.” Citing as proof this verse from Ecclesiastes (*loc. cit.*) which connects “the end” with “fear of the Lord,” Rebbe Nachman links fear of Heaven with the feet.

49. **fear of Heaven...the feet, creates an engraving and conduit...lovingkindness.** Rebbe Nachman’s first proof-text, from Genesis, links the feet with *chakikah* (engraving). The feet, in turn, correspond to “the end,” which the Rebbe’s second proof-text connects with the fear of Heaven. Fear of Heaven is therefore a *chakikah*, the container needed for receiving God’s abundant *chesed*.

Kabbalistic teaching associates fear of Heaven with the *sefirah Gevurah*, which itself connotes boundaries and constraint. If all Rebbe Nachman sought to prove here is that fear of Heaven creates the *chakikah* and *tzinor* for containing and channeling abundant lovingkindness, citing this teaching would have sufficed. The complex set of proofs he brings linking the concepts of container/*chakikah* with the feet and the feet/end to fear of Heaven seems unnecessary. However, as we shall see, *regel* (רגל), the Hebrew term for “foot,” also applies to other concepts discussed in the lesson—e.g., the *regalim*, pilgrimage festivals (see §6 and nn.65, 70), and *raglai*, causes or reasons (see §7 and n.92).

50. **staff of Aharon of the house of Levi had blossomed.** The tribe of Levi was chosen to serve God in the Tabernacle, and later the Holy Temple. Of the Levites, only Aharon and his descendants were selected to be *kohanim* (priests). This angered Korach, also a Levite, who felt that he, too, deserved to be part of the priestly class. Korach assembled two hundred and fifty of the most esteemed sages of his time and instigated a rebellion against Moshe and Aharon. After the rebellion had been quashed, God provided a proof that He had chosen Aharon as the High Priest (*Kohen Gadol*) in order to prevent future recurrences of such a rebellion. Each of the princes of the twelve tribes was instructed to place his staff before the Holy Ark. The next morning, Aharon’s staff had blossomed with almonds, a sign from Heaven that he was indeed the chosen one. In the context of our lesson, *chesed*, represented by Aharon’s staff, is able to

(קהלת יב): “סוף דבר הכל נשמע, את האלקים ירא,” הינו שעל ידי יראה, שהיא בחינת רגל, נעשה חקיקה וצנור לקבל בתוכו את החסד.

וזה בחינת (במדבר יז): “והנה פרח מטה אהרן לבית לוי” הינו שהחסד – בחינת אהרן, צריך לקבלו על-ידי הכלי, שהוא בחינת יראה סטרא דלוי, וזה בחינת (תהלים כ): “בגבורות ישע ימינו”:

ה. ועקר היראה נעשה על-ידי התגלות הרצון, בבחינת: “רצון יראיו יעשה” (תהלים קמה), שעל ידי התגלות הרצון נעשה יראה, הינו על-ידי שנתגלה שהכל מתנהג ברצונו יתברך, כי הוא

blossom only as a result of the “house”—i.e., the conduit and container—that the Levites, from the side of *Gevurah*, create.

51. **lovingkindness, Aharon’s trait...fear of Heaven, the side of Levi...the saving strengths of His right arm.** The psalmist says that “saving,” or salvation from God, comes about when His acts of strength emanate from His “right arm.” Kabbalah teaches that acts of strength (*gevurot*) are associated with the *sefirah Gevurah* (Strength) on the left side of the *sefirah* configuration. These acts effect salvation when they are subsumed in the *sefirah Chesed* (Lovingkindness) on the right side. Rebbe Nachman brings this proof-text to show that for salvation to be complete—i.e., for the *chesed* and good to truly be beneficial (as discussed earlier in this section, and see n.44)—it has to be accompanied with elements from the side of strength and the fear of Heaven.

In review: In order for giving charity to be a devotional practice it must entail breaking one’s cruelty and turning heartlessness into compassion (§1). All beginnings are difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new opens the way to one’s accomplishing it. Beginning to give charity is therefore the beginning of all beginnings and hence extremely demanding and difficult (§2). All our efforts in pursuit of life’s necessities are devotions in the service of God. Even so, were we able to induce God to relate to the world with His quality of *chesed*, our work and the arousal from below that it generates would be unnecessary. We would be free to serve God through spiritual practices, as others would work for our material needs (§3). However, without a container to receive it, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create this container and conduit for God’s *chesed* through our fear of Heaven (§4).

52. **Divine Will creates the God-fearing....** This translation follows Rebbe Nachman’s exposition of the verse. The commentators’ more straightforward reading of the psalmist’s words—as “He fulfills the will of those who fear Him”—has human *ratzon* (will and desire) as its subject. The Rebbe’s homiletical reading—as “Divine Will creates the God-fearing”—sees the verse as referring to God’s *Ratzon*. In the context of our lesson, this teaches that it is the revelation of Divine Will which leads to fear of Heaven.

the Will of God—that God created everything through His Will, without any obligation to do so,⁵³ and He gives life and sustains everything through His Will, without any determinism at all.⁵⁴ For then there is reward and punishment, and fearing Heaven applies,⁵⁵ as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught: “Yaakov was filled with fear”—he said: “Perhaps the sin has caused [me to lose my protection]” (*Berakhot* 4a).⁵⁶

But when Divine Will is concealed and people presume that there is determinism, God forbid—as if everything is governed by the laws of nature, God forbid—fear of Heaven has no application.⁵⁷ This is because there is no reward and punishment, God forbid, since everything is determined by nature’s dictates, God forbid. It follows that fear of

53. **without any obligation to do so.** Literally, “without any inevitability whatsoever.”

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds: Reading the verse as “*Ratzon* creates the God-fearing,” Rebbe Nachman teaches that fear of Heaven is created by revealing that everything is governed solely by Divine Will, without any dictates or inevitability of nature. Therefore, those who fear God certainly believe in Divine Will, as it is by virtue of this Will that they achieve fear. God rewards their faith by altering nature to fulfill *their* will—i.e., “He fulfills the will of those who fear Him.”

54. **determinism....** The Hebrew expression translated here as “determinism” is *chiyuv hativ’iy* (literally, “natural dictate”). Determinism, and in particular causal determinism, is the thesis that every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions combined with the laws of nature. The doctrine of determinism, popular among the philosophers of Greece and their followers, evolved over many ages and entered the modern world through the philosophy of Descartes and the physics of Newton. It reached its height during Rebbe Nachman’s lifetime through the teachings of the French mathematician and astronomer, Pierre-Simon Laplace. Deterministic ideology asserts that nature follows exact laws, so that events which seem to occur by chance are, in fact, inevitable consequences that can be fully explained, and even predicted, if more was known about them. According to the deterministic world-view, the universe is no more than a chain of events following one after another according to the law of cause and effect (Newton’s “clockwork” universe). In taking issue with this point of view, the Rebbe argues that there is nothing inevitable about nature (anticipating quantum physics by 200 years). Rather, all that transpires in the world is the manifestation of God’s Will. Through *Ratzon* (Divine Will), God will either allow the creation to follow the natural order—which He designed as a means for concealing Divine providence—or allow it to transcend nature’s laws, in the form of miracles, such as the splitting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) and the sun standing still in the sky (Joshua 10). Thus Judaism teaches that all the forces of nature are actually the hidden Hand of God. This is alluded to by the Hebrew word *HaTeVA* (הטבע), “the nature,” which has a numerical value of 86, the same as God’s Holy Name *ELoHYM* (אלהים). Although God directs the world through Divine providence, He masks His guiding Hand within the forces of nature since this hiddenness affords human beings the ability to exercise free will (see also *Likutey Moharan* II, 17).

יְתַבְרַךְ בְּרָא הַכֹּל בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ בְּלִי שׁוּם חַיּוּב כְּלָל, וּמַחֲיָה וּמְקִיָּים הַכֹּל
בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ יְתַבְרַךְ, וְאֵין שׁוּם חַיּוּב הַטְּבְּעִי כְּלָל, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה נַעֲשֶׂה
יְרָאָה, כִּי אֲזִי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר וְעֵנָשׁ, וְשִׂיךְ לְהִתְיָרָא מִפְּנֵי יְתַבְרַךְ, כְּמוֹ
שֶׁאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנָם לְבִרְכָה (ברכות ד.): “וַיִּירָא יַעֲקֹב מְאֹד” -
אָמַר: שְׂמָא יְגַרְם הַחֲטָא’.

אָבֵל כְּשֶׁאֵין נִתְגַּלָּה הַרְצוֹן וְסוֹכְרִים שִׂישׁ חַיּוּב הַטְּבְּעִי, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם,
וּכְאֵלוֹ מִתְנַהֵג הַכֹּל עַל-פִּי הַטְּבְּעִי, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, אֵין שִׂיךְ יְרָאָה
כְּלָל, כִּי אֵין שָׂכָר וְעֵנָשׁ כְּלָל, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, מֵאַחַר שֶׁהַכֹּל מִתְנַהֵג

55. **For then there is reward and punishment, and fearing Heaven applies.** Belief in a deterministic world obviates not only the possibility of miracles but also the principle of reward and punishment. After all, if everything we do is predetermined—necessitated by antecedent causes, including the laws of nature—there is no reason for “good” or “bad” actions to result in like consequences. Conversely, believing that the world is governed not by the dictates of a natural order, but by Divine Will, renders reward and punishment from God especially relevant. As mentioned previously, God designed the world to operate on the principle of “an arousal from below causes an arousal from on high.” His intention was that humanity should be afforded free will; that a person should have the possibility of choosing between good and evil, and so be deserving of reward for preferring the former and of punishment for pursuing the latter. The Torah is replete with exhortations that behavior consistent with Divine Will brings reward, whereas transgression of that Will results in retribution from on high. This, in turn, is the cornerstone of man’s fear of Heaven, as in the example Rebbe Nachman cites next from the Talmud.

56. **Yaakov was filled with fear....** In this passage, the Sages provide a number of examples of sin causing someone to lose (or presumably lose) reward previously earned through mitzvot. Rabbi Yaakov bar Idi points out the following contradiction: On the one hand, Scripture states that God promised Yaakov: “Behold! I am with you and will protect you wherever you go” (Genesis 28:15). Yet the verse quoted in our lesson relates that as Esav and his army approached, Yaakov was filled with fear despite God’s promise. Rabbi Yaakov bar Idi explains that it was not Esav that Yaakov feared, but sin; that, having transgressed God’s Will, he would no longer be deserving of His protection. In our context, Yaakov’s fear was the fear of Heaven. Believing that the world is governed solely by Divine Will, he was concerned that sin had rendered him deserving of punishment rather than reward.

57. **people presume that there is determinism...fear of Heaven has no application.** As explained above, believing life’s occurrences to be predetermined precludes belief in the principle of reward and punishment. When God’s Will is concealed from people, they presume that their actions, good and bad, are without consequence. Therefore, for them, fear of Heaven has no application.

Heaven is mainly the result of the revelation of Divine Will—<that everything is governed solely by God’s Will>.⁵⁸

6. Now, revelation of *Ratzon* is through the festivals.⁵⁹ Each festival announces, proclaims and reveals Divine Will—that everything is governed solely by His Will—as in “an occasion proclaimed sacred” (Leviticus 23:7). The festival calls out and proclaims Divine Will.⁶⁰ On each festival God performed awesome miraculous signs on our behalf; contradictions of nature that reveal Divine Will—that everything takes place through His Will and there is no determinism at all.⁶¹

Pesach recalls the exodus from Egypt; that God took us out through awesome miraculous signs.⁶²

Shavuot recalls the giving of the Torah; that He gave us the Torah through awesome miraculous signs.⁶³

Sukkot recalls the envelopment in the Clouds of Glory.⁶⁴ Thus

58. **the revelation...that everything is governed solely by God’s Will.** When Divine Will is revealed, people recognize that the world is governed and guided by Divine providence. And the greater a person’s recognition that everything is under God’s direct rule, the greater is his fear of Heaven—whether his *yirat Shamayim* is the lower level fear of punishment or the more exalted fear one attains when recognizing that “He is Master and Ruler and the Supreme Source of all that exists” (see n.46 above).

Reb Noson explains that when God’s Will is revealed and recognized, it is the source of all élan vital in the world. A person who believes that God sustains everything through His *Ratzon* and that all life-force comes from Him, is himself filled with vitality and life! He recognizes the Hand of God even in the inevitable trials and tribulations that living life brings his way, and knows that “whatever the Compassionate One does is for one’s benefit” (*Berakhot* 60b). On the other hand, when a person attributes all that happens to the laws of nature, his life is no life. He lacks vitality and life-force, and if beset by any of life’s many difficulties, has nowhere to turn for consolation (*Torat Natan* #6; see *Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #102). Reb Noson explains further that although we generally distinguish between human *ratzon* and God’s *Ratzon*, the two are intimately connected. Whoever truly believes that everything is governed solely by Divine Will, will certainly direct his own will toward God, with a deep and powerful yearning (*Torat Natan* #7).

In review: The essence of giving charity is to break one’s cruelty and turn it into compassion (§1). The devotion of charity is extremely difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new widens the doors of opportunity and allows the person to enter more easily (§2). All our efforts in pursuit of life’s necessities are devotions in the service of God. Even so, were we able to induce God to relate to the world with His quality of *chesed*, our work and the arousal from below that it generates would be unnecessary. We would be free to serve God through spiritual practices, as others would work for our material needs (§3). However, without a container to receive it, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create this container and conduit

רק כפי חיוב הטבע, חס ושלום. נמצא שעקר היראה - על-ידי התגלות הרצון:

ו. והתגלות הרצון הוא על-ידי ימים-טובים, כי כל אחד מהימים-טובים מכריז וקורא ומגלה את הרצון, שהכל מתנהג רק על פי רצונו בלבד, בבחינת (ויקרא כג ג): “מקרא קדש”, שהיום-טוב קדש קורא ומכריז את הרצון כנ”ל, כי בכל יום-טוב ויום-טוב עשה השם יתברך עמנו אותות נוראות, שהם הפך הטבע, שעל ידי זה נתגלה הרצון, שהכל ברצונו, ואין שום חיוב הטבע כלל. בפסח - יציאת מצרים, שהוציאנו ממצרים באותות נוראות. בשבועות - מתן תורה, שנתן לנו התורה באותות נוראות. בסוכות - הקף ענני כבוד. ועל כן כל יום-טוב ויום-טוב מכריז

for God’s *chesed* through our fear of Heaven (§4). Fear of Heaven comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Revealing that everything is governed by God’s Will contravenes determinism and generates belief in reward and punishment, thus producing fear (§5).

59. **revelation of Ratzon is through the festivals.** Having taught in the previous section that revealing Divine Will produces fear of Heaven, Rebbe Nachman now explains that we bring about that revelation of *Ratzon* by observing the Three Festivals. Reb Noson writes that the essence of this observance is our receiving the festivals with purity and great joy (*Likutey Tefilot*; see also n.66 below). The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds that the joy should stem from our recognition that God has chosen us as His nation and that He performed the miracles which the festivals celebrate in order to reveal to us that everything is governed by His Divine Will.

60. **an occasion proclaimed sacred...The festival calls out...** Rebbe Nachman reads Scripture’s depiction of each of the Three Festivals as “an occasion that proclaims sacred.” Each festival calls out and declares that God created, gives life to and sustains everything through His Divine Will. The Rebbe next explains how.

61. **takes place through His Will...** That is, the particular miracles associated with each festival proclaim Divine Will and, as supernatural acts of a Divine Agent, contradict the laws of nature.

62. **Pesach recalls...miraculous signs.** The miracles of Pesach include the Ten Plagues through which God punished the Egyptians, the Exodus and the Splitting of the Red Sea.

63. **Shavuot recalls...He gave us the Torah through awesome miraculous signs.** The miracles we recall on Shavuot include God’s revelation on Mount Sinai and the Giving of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19-20).

64. **Sukkot recalls...Clouds of Glory.** God miraculously enveloped the Jewish people in the

each festival announces and proclaims Divine Will, as in “an occasion proclaimed sacred.” The festivals are therefore called “*regel*,” which signifies fear of Heaven. Through the festivals, which reveal Divine Will, fear of Heaven is created.⁶⁵

However, we do not always hear the festival’s proclamation, through which Divine Will is revealed. This can be sensed in the joy of the festival. Each person experiences the joy of the festival commensurate with the degree that he feels and hears the festival’s proclamation calling out and proclaiming Divine Will.⁶⁶

When *Ratzon*—that everything takes place through God’s Will—is revealed, then people know that God will take revenge against the nations for all the servitude and exile and all the adversities we suffered at their hands, and He will redeem us from their hands.⁶⁷

But if we think that everything is determined by the laws of nature, God forbid, revenge against them has no application, since everything is governed solely by the dictates of nature, God forbid.⁶⁸

Clouds of Glory to protect them from harm while journeying through the wilderness on their way to the Holy Land. In addition to the six clouds that surrounded them, one on each side, one above and one below, a seventh cloud traveled before the nation, straightening the terrain to ease their way and shielding them from snakes and scorpions (*Rashi*, Numbers 10:34). Sitting in the *sukkah* on the seven days of Sukkot in particular commemorates the miracles God performed for us with those seven clouds.

65. **The festivals...called regel...signifies fear of Heaven....** Rebbe Nachman previously showed the connection between *ReGeL* (foot, רגל) and fear of Heaven (see §4 and nn.48-49). Here he links this with the pilgrimage festivals, the *ReGaLim* (רגלים), when all Jewish males would ascend on foot to the Holy Temple (see n.70 below). Honoring the *regel* (festival) strengthens one’s faith and increases one’s recognition that God rules the world through Divine providence. The *Shalosh Regalim*, the Three Festivals, thus proclaim the Will of God. As we have seen, revealing Divine Will contravenes determinism and promotes fear of Heaven—i.e. the *regel*.

66. **the joy of the festival...commensurate with the festival’s proclamation....** Rebbe Nachman now teaches that despite the festivals proclaiming God’s rule, not everyone hears their call. The litmus test for just how sensitive a person is to the proclamation is the measure of joy he experiences on the festival. The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains that if a person does not “hear” the festival’s proclamation, then it stands to reason that his joy would be constricted. Why should one celebrate events that one’s forebears experienced so long ago? Of what significance is it to us today that several thousand years ago we rejoiced when God redeemed our ancestors from Egypt? Are the Jews not presently still in exile? Is there anywhere in the world that Jews live, that anti-Semitism does not rear its head? However, if a person does hear

וְקוֹרֵא אֶת הַרְצוֹן בְּכַחֲנִית מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ כַּנִּלְ. וְעַל כֵּן הַיָּמִים-
טוֹבִים נִקְרָאִים רְגֵל, שֶׁהִיא בְּחִינַת יְרָאָה כַּנִּלְ. כִּי עַל-יְדֵי יוֹם-
טוֹב, שֶׁהוּא הַתְּגָלוֹת הַרְצוֹן, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה נַעֲשֶׂה יְרָאָה כַּנִּלְ:
אֲךָ לֹא תָמִיד שׁוֹמְעִין אֶת קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב, שֶׁמְגַלֶּה
אֶת הַרְצוֹן כַּנִּלְ, וְזֶה נִכְרַ בְּשִׂמְחַת יוֹם-טוֹב, כִּי כָל אֶחָד לְפִי מָה
שֶׁמְרַגֵּשׁ וְשׁוֹמֵעַ אֶת קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב, שֶׁמְכַרִּין וְקוֹרֵא
אֶת הַרְצוֹן, כַּמּוֹ-כֵן יֵשׁ לוֹ שִׂמְחַת יוֹם-טוֹב.
כִּי כְּשֶׁנִּתְגַּלֶּה הַרְצוֹן, שֶׁהַכֹּל בְּרָצוֹנוֹ יִתְבַּרַךְ, אֲזִי יוֹדְעִים, שֶׁכָּל
הַשְּׁעִבּוּדִים וְהַגְּלוֹת וְכָל הַהִכָּפְרוֹת שֶׁל הָעַכּוֹנִים, שֶׁהֵם מְכַבְּדִים
עָלֵינוּ - עַל כָּלֵם יִנְקָם בָּהֶם הוּא יִתְבַּרַךְ וַיִּגְאָלֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.
אֲבָל כְּשֶׁסּוֹבְרִים, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, שֶׁהַכֹּל עַל פִּי חַיּוֹב הַטָּבֵעַ, אֵין שִׁיךְ
נִקְמָה בָּהֶם, מֵאַחַר שֶׁהַכֹּל מִתְנַהֵג רַק עַל פִּי סֹדֵר הַטָּבֵעַ, חַס
וְשָׁלוֹם.

the festival’s proclamation—its testimony that *Ratzon*, not determinism, governs the world—then he believes that just as God miraculously redeemed our ancestor’s from Egypt, He will in the future perform great and wondrous miracles to redeem us from exile and exact punishment from our oppressors. This is the source of the joy we feel on the festivals.

Rebbe Nachman next explains why recognition of Divine Will is not as commonplace as one would think. For although God performed many miracles in the past, people’s belief in determinism, in natural causes and a world run by the laws of nature, brings to His Divine Will being concealed.

67. **God will take revenge against the nations...redeem us from their hands.** This is the principle of reward and punishment mentioned above (§5 and nn.55-56). The manifestation of God’s Will reveals that there is a purpose to all of one’s suffering, and that in the end he will be rewarded for the affliction he has endured. Furthermore, those responsible for his suffering will be punished, for nothing is overlooked.

68. **revenge...has no application....** As explained previously, when all that occurs is the inevitable consequence of antecedent events and conditions combined with the laws of nature, the principle of reward and punishment does not apply. Without the free will to choose right from wrong, overcoming one’s cruel instincts in order to give charity (see §1) becomes meaningless. Revenge certainly has no place, since one’s oppressors do not deserve to be punished any more than the inanimate object on the ground that causes one to stumble and fall. Moreover, in a deterministic world where the rules of reward and punishment do not apply, there is nothing to motivate one to fear of Heaven.

{“The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge, he will bathe *p’amav* (his feet) in the blood of the wicked one. Men will say, ‘There is, indeed, reward for the righteous; there is, indeed, a God Who judges the land’ (Psalms 58:11-12).⁶⁹}

This is as in “The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge, he will bathe *p’amav* (his feet) in the blood of the wicked one.” Specifically *P’AMav*—i.e., by means of “three *P’AMim* (times) in the year” (Deuteronomy 16:16).⁷⁰ This refers to the festivals through which Divine Will is revealed. As a result, “The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge.”⁷¹

This is also as it is written, “Men will say: There is, indeed, reward for the righteous; there is, indeed, a God Who judges the land.” <When> it is revealed that there is a God who judges as He wills, and that there is “reward for the righteous” and He will take revenge against [those that afflicted] them, <then> “The righteous one will rejoice.” This is the joy of the festivals—i.e., the revelation of Divine Will, revealed on the festival through the proclamation, for the festival announces and proclaims Divine Will.⁷²

However, not everyone hears the festival’s proclamation,⁷³ on

69. **The righteous one will rejoice....** King David calls on God to exact revenge against the wicked, likening their venom to that of a snake, and their teeth to a lion’s fangs. King David concludes the psalm expressing his hope that “The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge....” for then “men will say” that God rewards the righteous and there is Divine Justice on earth.

70. **P’AMav...three P’AMim in the year.** Regarding the Three Festivals, Scripture states (*loc. cit.*): “Three *p’amim* (times) in the year—on the Festival of Matzot, on the Festival of Shavuot, and on the Festival of Sukkot—all your males shall appear before God your Lord in the place that He chooses.” All adult Jewish males are commanded to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to appear in the Holy Temple. The Talmud refers to this mitzvah as *re’iyah*, seeing the face of God (*Chagigah* 2a). It is also known as *aliyah l’regel* (ascending for the festival), which is also understood as “ascending by foot,” for the main mitzvah was to *walk* up to the Holy Temple. Having previously linked festivals (*regalim*) with foot (*regel*), Rebbe Nachman cites the Talmud’s teaching (*ibid.* 3a) which proves their connection based on the etymological similarity between *P’AMim* (times, פעמים) and *P’AMav* (his feet, פעמיו).

71. **The righteous one will rejoice....** Rebbe Nachman has explained that the measure of joy we experience on the festivals is commensurate with how clearly we hear the proclamation of the *p’amim* (*regalim*, the festivals) attesting to the rule of Divine providence. The Rebbe teaches here that the joy we feel when we hear the festival’s proclamation revealing Divine Will is analogous to the joy the righteous experience when God’s Divine providence exacts revenge from the wicked.

Reb Noson adds: Someone whose faith in God’s *Ratzon* is complete—he believes beyond any shadow of a doubt that all that occurs is Divine providence—experiences great joy. The fear

וְזֶה בְּחִינַת (תהלים נח): “יִשְׂמַח צְדִיק כִּי חָזָה נָקָם, פְּעָמָיו יִרְחַץ בְּדַם הָרָשָׁע.” “פְּעָמָיו” דִּיקָא. הֵינּוּ עַל-יְדֵי “שְׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בְּשָׁנָה” (דברים טז), שְׁהֵם הַיָּמִים-טוֹבִים שֶׁעַל יָדָם נִתְגַּלָּה הָרָצוֹן, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה: “יִשְׂמַח צְדִיק כִּי חָזָה נָקָם” וְכוּ’ כַּנֶּלֶךְ.
 וְכִמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (תהלים נח): “וַיֹּאמֶר אָדָם אֶךָ פְּרִי לְצְדִיק, אֶךָ יֵשׁ אֱלֹקִים שְׁפָטִים בְּאָרֶץ.” דְּהֵינּוּ, שְׁנִתְגַּלָּה שִׁישׁ אֱלֹקִים שׁוֹפֵט בְּרָצוֹנוֹ, וַיֵּשׁ פְּרִי לְצְדִיק וּבָהֶם יִנָּקֶם, וְעַל-יְדֵי-זֶה: “יִשְׂמַח צְדִיק.”
 וְזֶה בְּחִינַת שְׂמִיחַת יוֹם-טוֹב, עַל-יְדֵי הַתְּגַלּוֹת הָרָצוֹן, שְׁנִתְגַּלָּה בְּיוֹם-טוֹב עַל-יְדֵי קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה, שֶׁהַיּוֹם טוֹב מְכַרִּיז וְקוֹרָא אֶת הָרָצוֹן כַּנֶּלֶךְ.
 אֶךָ לֹא כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד שׁוֹמֵעַ קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה הַזֶּה לְשַׁל יוֹם-טוֹב,

of Heaven that *Ratzon*’s revelation awakens in him brings him to real joy, as the psalmist says: “Serve God with fear, and rejoice with trembling” (Psalms 2:11). All his fears and anxieties are transformed into joy because he understands them as God’s Will, as an opportunity to repent and return to Him. The reverse of this is someone whose faith is lacking, who sees the world as deterministic, governed by the dictates of nature, and not God’s Will. The difficulty and vexation that fill his days seem insurmountable, and even worse, without meaning or purpose (*Torat Natan* #8).

72. **Who judges the land...righteous one will rejoice...joy of the festivals....** When God avenges the persecution of the righteous by exacting punishment from the wicked, it becomes clear to all that there is a Judge “Who judges the land.” Rebbe Nachman teaches here that God’s execution of justice in effecting reward and punishment as deserved—i.e., the revelation of fear—is the reason that “The righteous one will rejoice.” As the Rebbe has shown, his joy is akin to the joy of the festivals, because both the revenge that God takes from His enemies and the miracles He performs for those He loves are proclamations of Divine Will.

Thus, in the context of our lesson, these verses translate as follows:

The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge — Seeing God punishing the wicked, the righteous rejoice.

He will bathe *p’amav* (his foot) in the blood of the wicked one — Testimony to this reward and punishment comes from the *p’amim*, the Three Festivals, which commemorate the miracles that proclaim Divine Will. This revelation of Divine Will produces fear of Heaven/feet, i.e., a container in which to receive God’s abundant *chesed*.

Men will say, “There is, indeed, reward for the righteous; there is, indeed, a God Who judges the land” — God’s rewarding the righteous with *chesed* and exacting justice from the wicked cause people to recognize that everything takes place through His Will and there is no determinism at all.

73. **not everyone hears the festival’s proclamation.** Earlier in this section, Rebbe Nachman

account of the wild animals that claw at and tear apart their prey. These are the deterministic scientists who demonstrate through their erroneous ideologies that everything is caused by the laws of nature, as if there is no Divine Will <whatsoever>, God forbid.⁷⁴ Even the awesome miraculous signs that God has performed on our behalf, they associate with nature. These scientists are like wild animals; they prey upon many of our fellow Jews, who mistakenly follow them and think like them, as if [it were true that] everything is determined by the dictates of nature, God forbid.⁷⁵ And when they grow strong, the roaring sound <of those wild animals> drowns out the festival's proclamation, which proclaims Divine Will. As a result, the joy of the festival ceases, God forbid, because the main joy of the festival comes about through the revelation of Divine Will.⁷⁶

This is the meaning of “Your enemies roared inside *Mo'ADekha* (Your meeting place), they made their signs for signs” (Psalms 74:4).⁷⁷

taught that the proclamation of the festival through which Divine Will is revealed is not always heard. Here he explains why not everyone hears it, even though we celebrate the Three Festivals every year.

74. wild animals...deterministic scientists.... Rebbe Nachman will next explain why he likens deterministic scientists, *chakhmey hateva* (literally, “nature scholars”), to wild animals, *chayot ra'ot* (literally, “evil beasts”). The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* comments that the word *chayah* (“animal” or “beast”) is also the Hebrew term for the fourth level of the soul. In Kabbalistic teaching, *chayah* (“living essence”) parallels the *sefirah Chokhmah*, Wisdom (see Appendix: Levels of Existence). The Rebbe calls the determinists *chayot ra'ot* to call attention to the wisdom they possess. Although they are wise, they are also evil. Their wisdom therefore leads them—and others—away from God, as they attribute everything to nature rather than Divine Will and providence.

75. they prey upon many of our fellow Jews.... The Hebrew expression *dorsim v'torfim*, rendered here as “they prey upon,” literally means “they trample and tear apart.” At first blush, Rebbe Nachman's likening the scientists and philosophers who espouse a deterministic worldview to predatory beasts who “claw at and tear apart their prey” may seem a bit hyperbolic. However, even a cursory look at the history of the late 18th and early 19th centuries makes it clear that the Rebbe's analogy is entirely appropriate. Rebbe Nachman lived at the beginning of the 19th century (1772-1810), a time when a tidal wave of atheism was flooding the western world. It was the dawn of both the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment, two primary causes of the massive flight from traditional values and faith. As scientists and philosophers alike delved deeper into the workings of nature, they began “disproving” God as the Source of all life and attributing to nature a power of its own. As mentioned above (n.54), it was in this period that determinism achieved widespread acceptance through the teachings of Pierre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827). For the Jews across Europe, this was manifested by the inroads

כִּי יֵשׁ חַיּוֹת רָעוֹת דּוֹרְסִים וְטוֹרְפִים, וְהֵם חֲכָמֵי הַטֵּבַע, שְׁמַרְאִין בְּחֻמְתָּם הַמְטִיעִית שֶׁהַכֹּל עַל פִּי הַטֵּבַע, וּכְאֵלוֹ אֵין שׁוֹם רְצוֹן, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם, וְאַפְלוֹ הָאוֹתוֹת נוֹרְאוֹת שֶׁעָשָׂה עִמָּנוּ הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ, מְשִׁימִים הַכֹּל בְּתוֹךְ דְּרוֹךְ הַטֵּבַע. וְהַחֲכָמִים הִלְלוּ הֵם בְּחִינַת חַיּוֹת רָעוֹת, וְהֵם דּוֹרְסִים וְטוֹרְפִים רַבִּים מִבְּנֵי עִמָּנוּ, שֶׁטּוֹעִים גַּם כֵּן אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְסוֹכְרִים כְּמוֹתָם, כְּאֵלוֹ הַכֹּל עַל פִּי חַיּוֹב הַטֵּבַע, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם, וּכְשֶׁהֵם מְתַגְבְּרִים, אֲזִי קוֹל שְׁאֲגָתָם עוֹלָה וּמְתַגְבֵּר עַל קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב, שֶׁקוֹרָא אֶת הַרְצוֹן, וְאֲזִי נִשְׁבֵּת שְׂמִיחַת יוֹם-טוֹב, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם, כִּי עַקֵּר שְׂמִיחַת יוֹם-טוֹב - עַל-יְדֵי הַתְּגַלּוֹת הַרְצוֹן כַּנִּלְכָּד.

וְזֶה בְּחִינַת (תהלים עד): “שֶׁאֲגוּ צִרְרִיךָ בְּקִרְבְּךָ מוֹעֵדְךָ, שָׁמוּ אוֹתָתָם

the *Haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) movement made against traditional Torah Judaism. The heretical ideas preached by those who saw the need for Jews to “expand their horizons” and adjust to the changing world around them threatened the very core of Jewish belief. Rebbe Nachman recognized this and foresaw the massive assimilation and flight from Torah that would result from the *Haskalah's* so-called enlightenment and its endorsement of deterministic ideology.

76. they grow strong...drowns out the festival's proclamation which proclaims Divine Will.... Whenever deterministic ideology grows in popularity, Divine Will is concealed and the joy produced by its revelation ceases. This is because the roaring of the “wild animals” drowns out the call of holiness. Determinism's scientific proofs and philosophical arguments that the world is governed by natural law silence, as it were, the proclamations of the Three Festivals.

Rebbe Nachman mentions the concept of contrasting sounds in several of his lessons. In *Likutey Moharan* I, 22:6-7, the Rebbe differentiates between the holy sound and the echo that counters it. In *Likutey Moharan* I, 17:5, the Rebbe speaks of the need to make the air tranquil and pure so that one can hear the tzaddik's words. This counterbalance of holy and unholy, pure and impure, is essential to existence, and in particular to humanity having free will. God wants humans to be the creators of their own good and the masters of their own perfection. For this to happen, we need free will—i.e., the ability to choose between good and evil, and so, being accountable for our actions, be deserving of either reward or punishment. However, the balance between the call of holiness and the call of unholiness is a delicate one. It is easily upset, as when the roaring of the wild animals drowns out the festival's proclamation attesting to Divine Will. Nevertheless, a person who is attentive can hear the call of holiness and exercise free will even then.

77. enemies roared inside Your meeting place...made their signs for signs. The “enemies” of whom the psalmist speaks are the Babylonians, particularly their king, Nevuchadnezzar, who

The roar of the enemies—i.e., the sound of the wild animals, i.e., the deterministic scientists⁷⁸—literally penetrates the *Mo'ED* (festival), namely their proclamation, which announces and proclaims Divine Will. The roar of the enemies literally enters them, so that they roar loudly <and demonstrate> that everything is determined solely by the laws of nature, God forbid, according to the order of the heavenly signs.⁷⁹ This is “they made their signs for signs”—they turn the heavenly signs into signs, saying that everything is caused by the heavenly signs as determined by nature, God forbid. <This is the reason that not everyone is able to hear the festival’s proclamation.>⁸⁰

destroyed the First Temple. Prior to initiating his campaign against Jerusalem, Nevuchadnezzar sought an omen portending his success. “The king of Babylonia stood at the crossroads...to perform divination. He shot arrows, consulted *terafim*-idols and looked into the liver” (Ezekiel 21:26). The commentators explain that Nevuchadnezzar shot arrows skyward and they all fell facing Jerusalem. The Babylonian king saw a clear sign in this and the other magic he practiced that he was indeed destined to destroy the Holy City and God’s Temple (see *Rashi* and *Radak* there; see also *Midrash Tehillim* 74).

78. **enemies...wild animals...deterministic scientists.** Although the simple meaning of “Your enemies roared inside Your meeting place” refers to the Babylonian destruction of the Temple, Rebbe Nachman applies the psalmist’s words to those he calls “wild animals”—i.e., the determinists. Reb Noson explains that, in fact, they are conceptually one and the same. Just as the Babylonians roared and shouted when they destroyed God’s House, the determinists publicly proclaim their heretical declarations against belief in Divine Will. In essence, the Temple’s destruction came about on account of the negation of Divine Will—i.e., a denial of faith, as our Sages taught: Jerusalem was only destroyed when there were no longer any men of faith (*Shabbat* 119b; see also *Tanchuma, Beshalach* 10). And because the revelation of Divine Will is the root of all joy (see above and n.66), the Temple’s destruction, being the concealment of Divine Will, ensures that joy in this world can never be whole (*Torat Natan* #9).

79. **inside Mo’ADekha...penetrates the Mo’ED....** The Hebrew term *yaad* (יָעַד), from which the word *mo’ed* (מוֹעֵד) is derived, means “appointed” or “designated.” Thus in the verse cited here, *mo’ed* refers to God’s “designated place of meeting,” the Holy Temple (see also *Rashi* and *Metzudat David*). In the same chapter of Leviticus (23) cited at the outset of this section, Scripture repeatedly employs the word *mo’ed* to refer to “designated time,” i.e., the festivals (see verses 2, 4, 37). In the lesson, Rebbe Nachman links the two meanings. He explains that when the enemies entered the Temple—“Your meeting place (*Mo’ADekha*, מוֹעֵד),” to which the Jews came to experience God’s Divine Presence and witness His miraculous signs—their roaring and shouting penetrated the proclamations of the *Mo’ED*. The unholy sounds of the enemies’ deterministic ideology drowned out the holy call of Divine Will.

80. **their signs for signs...turn the heavenly signs into signs...as determined by nature....** As mentioned above, Nevuchadnezzar performed several forms of divination, including shooting arrows in all different directions, in the hope of receiving a sign instructing him on

אתות – שְׁשֹׂאגַת הַצּוֹרְרִים, דְּהִינּוּ קוֹל הַחַיּוֹת רָעוֹת, שֶׁהֵם חֲכָמֵי הַטְּבַע, נִכְנָס בְּקֶרֶב הַמוֹעֲדִים מִמֶּשׁ, הִינּוּ בְּתוֹךְ קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב, שֶׁמִּכְרִיז וְקוֹרֵא אֶת הַרְצוֹן כִּנְל, וְשֹׂאגַת הַצּוֹרְרִים נִכְנָס בְּתוֹכָם מִמֶּשׁ, וְשׂוֹאגִים בְּקוֹלָם, שֶׁהִכַּל רַק עַל פִּי חַיּוֹב הַטְּבַע, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, כְּפִי סֵדֶר אוֹתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם. וְזֶה: “שָׂמוּ אוֹתָתָם אֶתוֹת – שֶׁמְשִׁימִים אוֹתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם לְאוֹתוֹת, שֶׁאוֹמְרִים שֶׁהִכַּל רַק עַל פִּי אוֹתוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּפִי חַיּוֹב הַטְּבַע, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם:

how to proceed with his military campaign. After completing the mission, Nevuchadnezzar and the Babylonians attributed their success to natural causes—i.e., the power from the sign they had received. In the words of the psalmist: “they made their signs for signs” (see *Rashi* and *Metzudat David, loc. cit.*). In the context of our lesson, Nevuchadnezzar and the Babylonians were determinists. They roared while destroying the Holy Temple, declaring for all to hear that nature determines everything which happens in the world. Their aim was to silence the proclamations of God’s *mo’ed* (meeting place/festival) that Divine Will governs all. Interpreting the sign they received as “their signs” rather than as a sign from Heaven, confuted the principle of reward and punishment in their eyes. From their mistaken perspective, they were thus absolved of any responsibility for the destruction of God’s House and the devastation of His chosen nation—indeed, of believing in God at all.

In the context of our lesson, the verse thus translates as: **Your enemies roared inside Your meeting place** — God’s enemies silenced the proclamations of His Temple/festivals attesting to Divine Will; **they made their signs for signs** — in order to advance their deterministic ideologies and confute reward and punishment, and so render fear of Heaven irrelevant.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* cites additional verses from Psalm 74 which similarly align with Rebbe Nachman’s teaching. In the lesson we have seen that the festivals are the primary time for the revelation of Divine Will. The primary place is the Holy Temple. The psalmist alludes to both in verse 3, where he calls upon God to “Lift up *p’amekha* (Your feet) to wreak eternal ruin, [to avenge] all the enemy’s outrages in the Sanctuary.” As mentioned earlier in this section (and see n.70), the Hebrew term *p’am* links the concepts of foot and festival, alluding to the Three Festivals, when Jews made the pilgrimage to the Temple where Divine Will was manifest. Just as the Temple was the site of awesome miracles (see *Avot* 5:5), each festival is associated with its own miraculous signs (§5 and nn.62-64 above). In verse 13, the psalmist calls particular attention to the miracles God performed in splitting the Red Sea: “It was You Who shattered the Sea with Your might, Who smashed the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.” This relates to the Rebbe’s teaching that miracles, being proof of Divine providence, reveal Divine Will. Yet, even the natural order is God’s—as in verse 16, “Yours is the day; Yours is the night”—masking His guiding Hand in order that human beings might have free will (see n.54 above). Finally, in verse 18 and 19, the psalmist adds: “Remember how the enemy reviled God...Do not deliver the soul of Your dove to the wild beast...”—i.e., do not let the determinists devour the souls of the Jews, who, despite the long exile, remain faithful to God, like the dove to her mate (and see *Rashi* there).

7. Overcoming these wild animals, the deterministic scientists, is through a great and holy sage.⁸¹ He is able to bind all wills to the root of Divine Will,^{82 83} which conceptually is the level at which Moshe

In review: The essence of giving charity is to break one's cruelty and turn it into compassion (§1). The devotion of charity is extremely difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new widens the doors of opportunity and allows the person to enter more easily (§2). Were God's *chesed* to descend, we would not have to work. We have to see to constantly draw God's *chesed* and not have it held back with Him (§3). However, without a container to receive it, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create this container and conduit for God's *chesed* through our fear of Heaven (§4). Fear of Heaven comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Revealing that everything is governed by God's Will contravenes determinism and generates belief in reward and punishment, thus producing fear (§5). Divine Will is revealed through the Three Festivals, whose miracles proclaim the rule of God's providence. But not everybody hears these proclamations, which are drowned out whenever deterministic ideology prevails (§6).

81. **Overcoming...the deterministic scientists, is through a great and holy sage.** In the previous section, Rebbe Nachman spoke of the determinists and the damage they cause to a Jew's fear of Heaven and belief in Divine Will. Here, he teaches how to overcome these "wild animals." Although determinists are genuinely learned and scholarly, and frequently have great expertise in their respective fields, their knowledge is also heretical. It is knowledge of the physical world that, at best, neutralizes God's influence—"Yes, God created everything that exists, but, being transcendent, He does not directly influence what occurs in the world." At worst, their scientific knowledge of the world causes them to deny Divine Will altogether; may God spare us from such mistaken, and even deleterious, ideas.

In *Likutey Moharan* II, 91:1, the Rebbe distinguishes between Upper Wisdom and Lower Wisdom. He explains that while Lower Wisdom is the source of all the wisdoms of this world, Lower Wisdom itself is derived from and dependent upon Upper Wisdom—i.e., the Torah. It follows that the wisdom in the various sciences and philosophies of our material world must be bound up with Torah wisdom. Otherwise, that wisdom becomes a catalyst to distance a person from God. Earlier we saw that the principle of reward and punishment is contingent upon people having the free will that comes from this world being a counterbalance between holy and unholy, pure and impure (see n.76). This applies as well to wisdom. There must be a balance between holy Torah wisdom and unholy heretical wisdom, between the knowledge of God and the revelation of Divine Will, on the one hand, and the roaring of the wild animals that drowns out the festival's proclaiming Divine Will, on the other. The Rebbe will shortly introduce a further counterbalancing: between the element of holiness that refutes deterministic ideology through the *chakham d'kedusha*, a great and holy sage, and the element of unholiness that is the root of all heretical teachings and the source of their influence through the *chakhmei hateva*, the determinists.

82. **bind all wills to the root of Divine Will.** Rebbe Nachman has thus far spoken exclusively of Divine Will (cf. n.52 above). Here, the Rebbe introduces the concept of "all wills," which he next qualifies as "the wills of this world" and "the lower will." The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* interprets "all wills" in two complementary ways. The first reads it as referring to God's Will enfolded in nature and the physical laws that govern the world. All of nature is actually the

ז. וְהִכְנַעְתָּם שֶׁל אֱלוֹ הַחַיּוֹת רָעוֹת, חֲכָמֵי הַטְּבַע, הוּא עַל-יְדֵי חֲכָם גָּדוֹל שֶׁבְקִדְשָׁה, שֶׁיִּכּוֹל לְקַשֵּׁר כָּל הָרְצוֹנוֹת בְּשֶׁרֶשׁ הָרְצוֹן, שֶׁשָּׁם הוּא בְּחִינַת הַסֵּתְלָקוֹת מְשָׁה, כִּידוּעַ (זהר פרשת יתרו פה: ועיינ

manifestation of God's Will, for it was His Will to create heaven and earth and everything in them. Whatever occurs in His creation is therefore a necessary consequence of His Will. But because He concealed His Will in a natural order, leaving all things to operate in strict compliance with its rules, the determinists have free choice to believe in Divine Will or deny it, God forbid. Therefore, the great and holy sage who can bind all the wills in the world is one who finds God's Will even in nature. Because he is bound up with God's Original Will in Creation—i.e., the root of all wills enfolded in the natural order—he is able to counter deterministic teaching and reveal that everything is governed solely by Divine Will.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah's* second interpretation of "all wills" is that it refers not to God's *Ratzon*, but to the *r'tzonot* (wills) of the Jewish people. The root of everything in creation can be found in Divine Will, *even* all the thoughts and ideas in the world, since it is *Ratzon* that wills everything into existence. Therefore, by binding all wills in the world—i.e., all the wills of all the Jews—to the root of Divine Will, the *chakham d'kedusha* is able to counter the ideas and teachings of the determinists who deny God's Will. When deterministic ideology is proven false, no Jew's *ratzon* is drawn to it. Rather, his *ratzon* is to be bound with and included in the root of Divine Will. This itself is proof that whatever occurs is determined by the root of *Ratzon*, the source of all things. If it were not so, but as the *chakhmei hateva* claim, that the world follows the dictates of nature, then how could the holy sage turn people away from determinism and bind them through faith to Divine Will? He accomplishes this not by means of persuasive arguments and reasoning, but by connecting people's wills to the root of all wills. This alone is sufficient to enable everyone to see deterministic ideology negated and Divine Will revealed.

83. **the root of Divine Will.** In Kabbalistic teaching, *Keter*, the highest of the *sefirot*, consists of an upper and a lower half (see Appendix: The Divine Personas). Lower *Keter* corresponds to the Divine persona *Arieh Anpin*. Upper *Keter* corresponds to the Divine persona *Atik Yomin*, a spiritual dimension unfathomable to the human mind and transcendent of all created reality. The Kabbalists associate Divine Will with the level of *Arieh Anpin*, and the even higher level, the root of Divine Will, with *Atik Yomin*. The force of holiness needed to defeat the determinists who oppose Divine Will stems from the level of *Atik Yomin*. Through this level of Upper *Keter*, at which the laws of nature are non-existent (e.g., the force that miraculously split the Red Sea emanated from *Atik Yomin*; *Zohar* II, 52b), it is possible to show that everything in creation is governed by Divine Will. And only the great and holy sage, the *chakham d'kedusha*, can reveal this, by binding all the wills of this world to the root of Divine will.

Central to Kabbalistic teaching is the axiom "As Above, so below." The *sefirot* and Divine personas are reflected in the human being, and in this way he partakes of the Divine. Thus, just as *Ratzon* corresponds to the highest of the *sefirot* and Divine personas, the highest faculty of a human being is *ratzon*. A person's will, his most basic internal volition and inner longings and desires, is the ultimate determinant of all his thoughts, feelings and actions. Therefore, Reb Noson explains, it is essential that a person's *ratzon* be constantly bound to the root of Divine Will. He has to will himself to desire and yearn for God and His Torah, and to feel these longings at all times. In the conversation Rebbe Nachman had with his followers

passed away, as is known (*Zohar* II, p.88b).⁸⁴ This is the Brow of *Ratzon*, as in “and it shall be on his brow <always> to bring them *ratzon*” (Exodus 28:38).⁸⁵ ⁸⁶ He must bind all the wills of this world to the root of Divine Will. This strengthens <and empowers the lower will by means of the root of Divine Will>, and it overcomes and refutes the ideology of the deterministic scientists who heretically deny Divine Will.⁸⁷

However, opposing [the Brow of *Ratzon*] is the Serpent’s Brow, which is the root of determinism.⁸⁸ For everything has its root, and the root of determinism is *MeTZaCh haNaChaSh* (the Serpent’s Brow).

before delivering this teaching (see n.1 above), he said that anyone who recognizes even a bit of God’s greatness knows how impossible it is for humans, or even angels, to claim that they truly serve Him. Therefore, the Rebbe teaches: “The main thing is *ratzon*. A person’s desire to come closer to God must always be strong” (*Rabbi Nachman’s Wisdom* #51; and see n.202 below). The Rebbe spoke often of the great value of *ratzon* in serving God. And even if a person does not merit achieving all that he desires, the most important thing is remaining resolute; that no matter what, he is determined to draw closer to Him (*Torat Natan* #11). From Reb Noson’s words we learn that the more one’s *ratzon* is firmly directed toward God, the more his entire being is drawn into the root of that will—i.e., the closer he comes to the root of Divine Will.

84. **which conceptually is the level at which Moshe passed away, as is known.** The Kabbalah (*Zohar* II, 88b) teaches that Moshe passed away at Minchah-time of Shabbat afternoon, the time of the week’s highest spiritual revelation and greatest inflow of Divine Favor. The Hebrew equivalent of *Raava d’Raavin*, the Aramaic name for this time, is *Ratzon HaR’zonot*, “Will of Wills” or “Favor of Favors” (see also *Zohar* III, 129a). In the context of our lesson, the great and holy sage who attains the root of Divine Will (*Raava d’Raavin*) is analogous to Moshe. Even while alive, Moshe was able to transcend nature to reveal Divine Will through the miracles he performed.

85. **ratzon.** Thus far, the Hebrew term *ratzon* has been translated as “will” (and “desire”). In Scripture, *ratzon* connotes “favor” (see *Rashi*, Deuteronomy 33:16, *s.v. ratzon*). Their meanings are interrelated. The favor one person shows another is an expression of his goodwill toward him. Similarly, when Divine Will is positively inclined toward the Jewish people, God bestows them with Divine Favor. The interplay between these two meanings of the word *ratzon/Ratzon* will be made clearer below, at the end of section 8.

86. **it shall be on his brow...ratzon.** This verse from Exodus (*loc. cit.*) refers to the *tzitz*, the frontlet worn by the *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) while performing the Temple service. Engraved on this plate of pure gold were the words *Kodesh l’YHVH* (קדש ליהוה), “Holy to God.” Scripture states that the *tzitz* would effect forgiveness for sins of ritual impurity. When the *Kohen Gadol* wore the *tzitz* on his brow (*metzach*), it would elicit *ratzon*, favor, from on high (see v.38 there). In the context of our lesson, the *Kohen Gadol* is the great and holy sage who, by attaining the level of *Ratzon*, counters the impurity of the determinists. This is the concept of *Metzach haRatzon* (the Brow of Divine Will), the element of holiness that refutes deterministic ideology through the *chakham d’kedusha* (see n.81).

זהר נשא קכט.). והוא בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַרְצוֹן, בְּחִינַת (שמות כח): “וְהָיָה עַל מִצְחוֹ לְרָצוֹן.” וְצָרִיךְ לְקַשֵּׁר כָּל הַרְצוֹנוֹת שֵׁישׁ בְּעוֹלָם לְשֵׁרשׁ הַרְצוֹן, וְעַל-יְדֵי-זֶה הוּא מִתְגַּבֵּר וּמְכַנְיֵעַ וְסוֹתֵר דְּעוֹת חֲכָמֵי הַטְּבַע, שְׂכּוֹפְרִים בְּרָצוֹן.

אך כְּנֶגְדֵּי זֶה יֵשׁ בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, שֶׁהוּא שֵׁרשׁ חֲכָמַת הַטְּבַע, כִּי כָּל דָּבָר יֵשׁ לוֹ שֵׁרשׁ, וְשֵׁרשׁ חֲכָמַת הַטְּבַע הוּא בְּחִינַת מִצַּח

The *Zohar* (III, 129a) explains that the *tzitz* is worn on the brow because, of the different parts of the human body, it is specifically the human forehead that corresponds to the spiritual level from which the light of Divine Favor radiates. It was worn by the *Kohen Gadol* because, as a priest, he is the personification of *chesed*, whose flow is dependent on the revelation of Divine Will (see §4 above).

87. **overcomes and refutes the ideology....** As explained in the preceding notes, at the level of the root of Divine Will, the laws of nature are nullified. In attaining this level, the great and holy sage is able to reveal *Ratzon*—that whatever occurs in this world is governed solely by Divine providence, and that the forces of nature are subordinate to His Will. This enables him to direct people’s wills to God. And by binding all these lower wills of this world to the root of Divine Will—i.e., the Brow of *Ratzon*—he overcomes and refutes the ideology of the determinists.

88. **the Serpent’s Brow...root of determinism.** As mentioned earlier (see n.76), existence is predicated on the counterbalance in the world between holiness and unholiness. Concerning this Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto writes: God decreed that the universe contain both good and evil, and therefore arranged that evil should be able to exist on every level where it possibly can... It was therefore arranged that every good concept have its counterpart in evil. This is the meaning of the verse (Ecclesiastes 7:14), “God made one to contrast the other” (*The Way of God* 3:2:8, Feldheim Pub., 1983). Rebbe Nachman quotes this verse repeatedly in *Likutey Moharan*, and explains that for each element and force in creation God created a corresponding counter-element or counterforce in order to afford humanity free will—i.e., the capacity to choose between good and evil, right and wrong, holy and unholy. For example, as mentioned above (n.76), in *Likutey Moharan* I, 22:6-7 the Rebbe differentiates between holy and unholy sound. Whenever a holy sound is heard, an echo can be heard countering it. Conversely, as long as the forces of the Side of Holiness are inert, the forces of the Other Side also remain dormant (see also *Likutey Moharan* I, 47:12 and n.117; *ibid.* 63:5 and n.68; *ibid.* 112:1 and n.3).

Having shown that the root of Divine Will is the Brow of *Ratzon* from the Side of Holiness, Rebbe Nachman adds here that the counter to this is determinism’s root, which is likewise an aspect of *metzach*. The root of deterministic ideology is *Metzach haNachash*, the Serpent’s Brow. Like the Brow of *Ratzon*, the Serpent’s Brow is associated with *Keter* and *Atik Yomin*, with one major difference—it corresponds to *Keter* and *Atik Yomin* of the *Sitra Acher*; the Other Side. The Rebbe will show that, as the root of deterministic ideology, *Metzach haNachash* is the element of unholiness at the heart of all heretical teachings and the source from which the *chakhmei hateva* derive their influence (see also n.81 above).

This is alluded to in what was said of Goliath: “[He had] *MiTZChat NeChoShet* (greaves of copper) on his legs” (1 Samuel 17:6)—i.e., the aforementioned concept of the Serpent’s Brow.⁸⁹ Goliath was a heretic. He wanted to demonstrate that all causality is dictated by nature, God forbid, this being the concept of the Serpent’s Brow.⁹⁰

“His legs” alludes to causes, as it is written (Genesis 30:30), “God blessed you at my feet”⁹¹—because of me. For that is the explanation there: Yaakov told Lavan that God had caused [Lavan] to be blessed through and because of him. It follows that the foot/leg alludes to causes.⁹² Whereas Yaakov attributed all causes to God, as discussed above,⁹³ Goliath would attribute all his causes to *Metzach haNachash* (Serpent’s Brow)—i.e., the dictates of nature, “a *mitzchat nechoshet* on his legs,” as discussed above.⁹⁴

Now, there are times when the influence of the Serpent’s Brow

89. **MeTZaCh haNaChaSh...Goliath...MiTZChat NeChoShet on his legs....** Describing the armor worn by Goliath the Philistine when he brazenly challenged the entire Jewish army in battle, Scripture relates: “He had a copper helmet on his head, and wore an armor of mail.... He had greaves of copper on his legs, and a copper neck-guard between his shoulders” (*loc. cit.* 17:5-6). The Hebrew expression for “greaves of copper,” *MiTZChat NeChoShet* (מצחח), shares the same letters as *MeTZaCh haNaChaSh* (מצחח הנושח), the Serpent’s Brow. See the following note.

90. **Goliath was a heretic....** After his challenge to the Israelite forces went unanswered, Goliath declared: “I have defied the battalions of Israel this day” (1 Samuel 17:10). The Midrash teaches that Goliath’s defiance was really directed at God Himself (*Midrash Tehillim* 22, *s.v. v’anokhi tolaat v’lo ish*). Later in that same chapter, David describes Goliath as one who “has defied the battalions of the Living God” (*ibid.* :26; see also §11A and n.135 below). Having linked Goliath’s greaves with the Serpent’s Brow, the root of deterministic ideology, Rebbe Nachman will show that Goliath’s heresy was his belief in causal agency and a world run by the laws of nature.

91. **God blessed you at my feet.** Scripture relates that after Yaakov had worked fourteen years for Lavan, he sought his father-in-law’s permission to return home. “But Lavan said to him, ‘If I have found favor in your eyes, *nichashti* (I have learned through divination) that God has blessed me because of you. Specify the wages due from me, and I will pay you” (Genesis 30:27-28). In response, Yaakov reminds his father-in-law how faithfully he worked for him all those years and how the little wealth Lavan possessed before his arrival had grown substantially, “for God blessed you at my feet”—i.e., on the heels of my coming (*Rashi* on verse 30).

92. **...because of me...foot/leg alludes to causes.** Rebbe Nachman’s reading of “at my feet” (*l’raglai*) as “because of me” can be found in *Tana deBei Eliyahu Rabbah* 24:5. The Rebbe brings this here to point to the link between feet/legs and the concept of causal agency—i.e., the

הַנְּחָשׁ, בְּחִינַת (שמואל א' יז): “וּמְצַחַת נְחָשֶׁת עַל רַגְלָיו”, הַנְּאָמַר בְּגַלְיָת, הֵינּוּ בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ הַזֶּה, כִּי גַלְיָת הָיָה כּוֹפֵר, וְהָיָה רוֹצֵה לְהִרְאוֹת, שְׁכָל הַסְּבוֹת הַכֹּל עַל פִּי הַטְּבַע, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם, שְׁזָה בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ כֵּן”ל.

וְזָהוּ: “רַגְלָיו”, בְּחִינַת סְבוֹת, כְּמוֹ שְׁכָתוֹב (בראשית ל): “וַיְבָרֶךְ ה' אוֹתָךְ לְרַגְלֶיךָ” - בְּסְבוֹתֶיךָ, כִּי כֵן הוּא הַפְּרוֹשׁ שָׁם, שְׁיַעֲקֹב אָמַר לְלָבָן, שֶׁהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ הָיָה מְסַבֵּב אֵלָיו הַבְּרָכָה עַל יָדוֹ וּבְסִבּוֹתוֹ. נִמְצָא שְׁרַגְלֵי הוּא בְּחִינַת סְבוֹת. רַק שְׁיַעֲקֹב תָּלָה כָּל הַסְּבוֹת בְּהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ כֵּן”ל, וְגַלְיָת הָיָה תּוֹלֵה כָּל הַסְּבוֹת שְׁלוֹ בְּמִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, דְּהֵינּוּ בְּחִיּוֹב הַטְּבַע, וְזָהוּ: “וּמְצַחַת נְחָשֶׁת עַל רַגְלָיו” כֵּן”ל: וְלַפְעָמִים מִתְגַּבֵּר בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ בְּפִעֵל, דְּהֵינּוּ עַל-יְדֵי אִישׁ

“causes” or “reasons” why things occur. Earlier, we saw that feet corresponds to fear of Heaven (see §4 and nn.48-49). When a person attributes the cause of everything to God’s Divine Will, he merits fear of Heaven through which to receive God’s lovingkindness. Conversely, when a person attributes everything that occurs to causality and the dictates of nature, he conceals Divine Will and so is subject to Divine Wrath (as Rebbe Nachman will explain in §8 below).

93. **Yaakov attributed all causes to God, as discussed above.** See section 5 (and n.56), where Rebbe Nachman explained the verse “Yaakov was filled with fear” as his having attained fear of Heaven as a result of his belief that everything is governed by Divine providence. From Scripture we see that Yaakov attributed all causes to Divine Will. In the context of our lesson, he is the great and holy sage who binds all wills to the Brow of *Ratzon*, the root of Divine Will. Lavan, Yaakov’s counterpart, personifies the holy sage’s counterpart—i.e., the determinist who turns people away from God and, instead, binds their wills to the *Metzach haNaChaSh* (הנושח). Scripture alludes to this in Lavan’s words cited in note 91: “*NiChaShti* (נחשתי) that God has blessed me because of you.”

94. **Goliath would attribute all his causes to the Metzach haNachash...as discussed above.** Rebbe Nachman has shown that opposing the great and holy sage, the *chakham d’kedusha*, are the determinists, the *chakhmei hateva*. Exemplar of the latter is the heretical Goliath, who used his wisdom to defy Divine Will and instead attribute everything that occurs to the laws of nature. As we have seen, this is the deeper meaning of Goliath had “*mitzchat nechoshet* on his legs”—he was a believer in causality, imputing all causes (feet/legs) to *Metzach haNachash*. King David, Goliath’s counterpart, personifies the determinist’s counterpart—i.e., the holy sage who turns people away from determinism and binds them through faith to *Metzach haRatzon*.

becomes the more dominant.⁹⁵ Some individual draws his wisdom from the Serpent's Brow, the root of determinism, and demonstrates through his wisdom that everything is due to natural causality, God forbid.⁹⁶ Occasionally, the Serpent's Brow, the root of determinism, enters [the mind of] the holy sage. This wisdom of the Serpent's Brow begins to engage him in the analysis of one deep issue after another, until he enters into a particularly subtle analysis such that it threatens to blemish the root of Divine Will, God forbid, and introduce heresy there, God forbid, as if there is no Divine Will at all, God forbid.⁹⁷

8. And know! the Serpent's Brow is nourished⁹⁸ by the generation's elders, when those of the generation with length-of-days lack wholeness.⁹⁹

95. **the influence of the Serpent's Brow becomes the more dominant.** Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananyah was considered the wisest sage of his time. He defeated in debate the Sixty Wise Men of Athens, the supreme determinist philosophers and heretics of that period. The Talmud (*Chagigah* 5b) relates that when Rabbi Yehoshua was about to pass away, the Sages said to him, "What will become of us on account of [the attacks of] the heretics?" Citing Jeremiah 49:7, Rabbi Yehoshua answered them that once "counsel is lost from the children"—i.e., the Jews—the wisdom of the nations of the world turns sour. In the context of our lesson, when the Jews no longer have the great and holy sage to bind all wills to the *Metzach haRatzon* and defend them against the arguments of the determinists, the influence that deterministic ideology derives from *Metzach haNachash* similarly ceases. Both the Brow of Divine Will and the Serpent's Brow are present in every generation. The extent of each one's influence is commensurate with the degree to which the other's influence is manifest in the world. This is the aforementioned axiom regarding each element and force in creation: "God made one to contrast the other" (see n.88). As in the Talmud's account of Rabbi Yehoshua and the Wise Men of Athens, the contrast plays out also in the counterbalance between the holy sage (Yaakov/David) and the determinists (Lavan/Goliath). Nevertheless, there are times when the influence of one or the other is more dominant. Rebbe Nachman relates here to the two different ways in which the Serpent's Brow and its concomitant heresies grow in influence.

96. **Some individual draws his wisdom....** The general way in which the Serpent's Brow becomes dominant is through the determinists spreading their ideology from person to person. An individual studies the teachings that derive from *Metzach haNachash* and then uses that wisdom to convince others that the world operates on the principle of natural causality. This concealment of Divine Will increases the influence of the Serpent's Brow. The *Mai HaNachal* cross-references here to *Likutey Moharan* I, 63:5, where Rebbe Nachman teaches that evil speech, in particular, creates the conditions that enable heretical teachings to develop and spread rapidly. In that lesson, the Rebbe equates "scholars at doing evil who study philosophy and heretical teachings" with the Serpent. He cites two verses that have relevance to our lesson as well: 1) "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jeremiah 4:22); and 2) "Now the Serpent was the most cunning of all the wild beasts" (Genesis 3:1). See also note 74 above.

פְּרָטִי, שְׂיוֹנֵק חֲכָמְתוֹ מִמִּצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, שֶׁהוּא שֶׁרֵשׁ חֲכָמַת הַטְּבַע, וְהוּא מְרָאָה בְּחֲכָמְתוֹ, שֶׁהֵכֵל עַל פִּי הַטְּבַע, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם. וַיֵּשׁ שְׂנֵנְכָנָס בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, שֶׁרֵשׁ חֲכָמַת הַטְּבַע, בְּתוֹךְ הַחֲכָם שֶׁבְּקִדְשָׁהּ, וְחֲכָמָה זֹו שֶׁל מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ מִתְחַלֵּת לְכַנֵּס עִמוֹ מַעֲיוֹן לְעִיוֹן, עַד שְׂנֵנְכָנָס בְּעִיוֹן דֵּק מְאֹד, עַד שֶׁרוֹצֶה לְהַטִּיל פָּגָם, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, בְּשֶׁרֵשׁ הָרָצוֹן וְלִכְפֹּר שָׁם, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, כְּאֵלוֹ אֵינֶן רָצוֹן כָּלֵל, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם:

ח. וְדַע, שֶׁזֶה הַמִּצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ - יְנִיקָתוֹ מִזְקֵנֵי הַדּוֹר, מִמַּאֲרִיכֵי יָמִים שֶׁבְּדוֹר, כְּשֶׁאֵינֶן בָּהֶם שְׁלֵמוֹת, מִזֶּה יוֹנֵק מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ הַזֶּה, כִּי

97. **Occasionally, the Serpent's Brow...enters the mind of the holy sage...subtle analysis....** The second way the Serpent's Brow seeks to increase its influence is both more direct and pernicious. This approach entails attacking faith and Divine Will through the great and holy sage who binds all wills to the root of Divine Will. The danger to Divine Will is thus very great and requires a very effective counter-force to overcome it. The *Mai HaNachal*'s cross-reference mentioned in the previous note applies to this point as well. In *Likutey Moharan* I, 63:6, Rebbe Nachman teaches that these philosophical investigations of the heretics and determinists are so powerful that the "sage who battles against them is greatly assailed by doubts, untrue assertions and false beliefs."

In review: The essence of giving charity is to break one's cruelty and turn it into compassion (§1). The devotion of charity is extremely difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new widens the doors of opportunity and allows the person to enter more easily (§2). Were God's *chesed* to descend, we would not have to work. We have to see to constantly draw God's *chesed* (§3). However, without a container to receive it, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create this container and conduit for God's *chesed* through our fear of Heaven (§4). Fear of Heaven comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Revealing that everything is governed by God's Will contravenes determinism and generates belief in reward and punishment, thus producing fear (§5). Divine Will is revealed through the Three Festivals, whose miracles proclaim the rule of God's providence. But not everybody hears these proclamations, which are drowned out whenever deterministic ideology prevails (§6). The determinists are defeated by the great and holy sage who binds all wills to *Metzach haRatzon*, the root of Divine Will. The contrast to this is *Metzach haNachash*, the root of determinism, from which the heretical scientists and philosophers derive their influence (§7).

98. **the Serpent's Brow is nourished.** Having introduced the two ways in which the Serpent's Brow increases its dominance over the Brow of Divine Will, Rebbe Nachman next discusses the source from which the Serpent's Brow derives its power.

99. **the generation's elders, when those of the generation with length-of-days lack wholeness.** The previously mentioned principle "God made one to contrast the other" applies

This [lack] sustains the Serpent's Brow, because "an elder is one who has acquired wisdom" (*Kiddushin* 32b).¹⁰⁰ The older a person gets, with each additional day of his life that passes he must ensure that he gains additional light of holiness and *daat* (unitive knowledge and awareness of God).¹⁰¹ This is as our Sages, of blessed memory, taught: Elderly Torah sages—the older they get, the more settled their mind becomes (*Kinnim* 3:6).¹⁰² With each passing day we have to increase our holiness and *daat*, as it is written "and the Lord called the light 'Day'" (*Genesis* 1:5)—that each day has to radiate more.¹⁰³

But when the generation's elders, those with length-of-days, spoil their days by not gaining additional light of holiness and *daat* each day, this sustains the Serpent's Brow, the <root of> determinism. {This is because the Serpent's Brow/determinism feeds off the fallen days of the elders whose minds are not becoming more settled.¹⁰⁴} Determinism, the denial of Divine Will, grows more influential, God forbid, due to the fallen *daat* and days of unworthy elders, those with length-of-days, as discussed above.¹⁰⁵

as well to the concept of elders. Rebbe Nachman will contrast the elder who has acquired the appellation merely because of his advanced age, i.e., his length-of-days, with the elder who has earned the designation by virtue of his wisdom (see the following note).

Reb Noson expands the meaning of "an elder whose days lack wholeness" to include those who, regardless of their age, lead others astray. Although they may be somewhat virtuous and believe they are serving God, if they fail to see themselves as they truly are—the bad as well as the good—they lack wholeness. The Serpent's Brow and the determinists gain in strength when such leaders use their status to influence the unsuspecting and convince them of mistaken beliefs (*Torat Natan* #13).

100. **an elder is one who has acquired wisdom.** The Talmud (*loc. cit.*) queries why "elder" appears twice in the verse: "Rise before the elder and show reverence for the presence of the elder" (*Leviticus* 19:32). Our Sages answer that the second "elder" refers to a wise and learned man, even if very young. They support this by homiletically reading the Hebrew word for "elder," *ZaKeN* (זקן), as an acronym for *Zeh KaNah chokmah* (זה קנה חכמה)—"this one has acquired wisdom." Only one who acquires wisdom and *daat*, i.e., unitive knowledge and awareness of God, deserves to be called an elder, as Rebbe Nachman explains next.

101. **each additional day...he gains additional light of holiness and daat.** *Proverbs* (10:27) states: "The fear of God prolongs one's days." In *Likutey Moharan* I, 60:3, Rebbe Nachman teaches that attaining this fear brings added holiness, which in turn extends and increases a person's days. In the lesson, the Rebbe has shown that fear of Heaven comes about through our celebration of the festivals, whose miracles reveal Divine Will—i.e., that everything is governed by Divine providence, without any determinism whatsoever (§5-§6). Attaining this fear enables a person to bring about an even greater revelation of Divine Will, which in turn

ז'קן - זה קנה חכמה' (קדושין לב:), וצריך האדם, כל מה שמזקין, כל מה שנתוסף ובא לו יום מימי חייו, להוסיף בכל יום ויום שבא אחר כך תוספות אור קדשה ודעת, וכמו שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה (קנים פרק ג משנה ו): 'זקני תלמידי חכמים - כל זמן שמזקינין, דעתן מתישבת עליהן' כי צריך בכל יום ויום שבא אחר כך להוסיף בו קדשה ודעת, כמו שכתוב (בראשית א): "ויקרא אלקים לאור יום" - שכל יום צריך שיאיר ביותר כנ"ל. אבל כשהזקנים, המאריכי ימים שבדור, פוגמים את ימיהם ואין מוסיפין אור קדשה ודעת בכל יום ויום, מזה יונק מצח הנחש, חכמת הטבע הנ"ל (כי מנפילת הימים של הזקנים, אשר אין דעתם מתישבת כנ"ל, מפגם הדעת הזה של אלו הזקנים יונק מצח הנחש, שהוא חכמת הטבע) ומתגבר, חס ושלום, דעת חכמת הטבע, שכופרים ברצון על-ידי נפילת הדעת והימים, שנופלים מהזקנים המאריכי ימים שאינם כראוי כנ"ל.

produces even more fear of Heaven. Thus, as long as a person continues to serve God and through his service reveal Divine Will, he gains additional holiness with each passing day. The Rebbe adds here that he gains additional light of holiness and also *daat*. A proof-text for each of these follows in the text.

102. **the more settled their mind becomes.** The Mishnah (*Kinnim, loc. cit.*) teaches: "The uneducated elderly—the older they get, the more their *daat* (mind) becomes unsettled, as in (*Job* 12:20), 'He distorts the speech of the trustworthy, and deprives the elders of reason.' But elderly Torah sages—the older they get, the more settled their *daat* becomes, as in (*ibid.*:12), 'In the aged is wisdom, and in length-of-days understanding.'" In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman teaches that the more a person's mind is settled, the greater his ability to attain unitive knowledge and awareness of God. This is in contrast to the determinists, whose minds, like those of elders lacking in wholeness, are never settled or tranquil.

103. **the Lord called the light Day...each day has to radiate more.** Scripture relates that on the first of the Six Days of Creation, God called the light "Day." Rebbe Nachman reads this as "Day" being the name God gave to the spiritual light of holiness and *daat*. For it to be considered a "day," it must be illuminated with the light of holiness and *daat* of God.

104. **This is because....** The text in brackets was inserted by Reb Noson to further clarify Rebbe Nachman's statement here by connecting it with his teaching in the previous paragraph.

105. **as discussed above.** The *Parparaot LeChokmah* explains that when a person believes

And this is the meaning of “short-lived and sated with vexation” (Job 14:1)—i.e., the previous two concepts.¹⁰⁶ “Short-lived” alludes to the unworthy elders who do not gain additional holiness and *daat* each day, which is the essence of old age and length-of-days. Thus when the elders spoil their days without extending them through holiness and *daat*, that is “short-lived.”¹⁰⁷ From this the Serpent’s Brow, the antithesis of the Brow of Divine Will, draws sustenance. This is “sated with vexation”—the antithesis of *Ratzon*.¹⁰⁸

However, when the elders are worthy, as in “an elder is one who has acquired wisdom,”¹⁰⁹ the revelation of Divine Will increases. This is as in “the elder and the man of esteem” (Isaiah 9:14)¹¹⁰—through the holy elder, *Ratzon*, which is esteem, grows more influential.¹¹¹ Esteem

that Divine Will alone governs the world, and that God created everything for the sake of His glory (as in Isaiah 43:7: “for My glory I have created, formed and made it”), he understands that each day, too, comes into being only so as to advance God’s glory—i.e., to add more holiness and *daat*. This is alluded to by the verse “and the Lord called the light ‘Day.’” The Holy One called it “Day” on account of the “light,” for each day must radiate with a greater light than the one which preceded it. Conversely, when a person fails to grow in holiness and *daat* each day, it seems that, like the determinists, he does not believe that Divine Will brings about each new day for the express purpose of increasing God’s glory. Rather, it appears as if he believes that each day comes and goes naturally, without any purpose or plan. And while it may well be that he never actually entertains such thoughts, his actions give the impression that he does, and so the Serpent’s Brow draws strength from the fallen *daat* of his days, and the determinists, who deny the existence of Divine Will, are able to spread their ideology.

106. **short-lived and sated with vexation.** Iyov bemoans his horrible suffering and the human condition generally: “Man born of woman is short-lived and sated with vexation.” Rebbe Nachman now adds a deeper dimension to this verse, connecting it with two of the concepts discussed in the previous paragraph.

107. **Short-lived...without extending them...** Having shown that genuine length-of-days requires that each day be filled with greater light of holiness and *daat* than the day which preceded it, Rebbe Nachman adds here that the unworthy elder who lacks wholeness is “short-lived.” No matter how many days he lives, his life is short—in light of holiness and *daat*. The Rebbe once remarked that “even if someone dies at the age of eighty it may still be that his life was cut short” (*Tzaddik* #576). In the context of our lesson, this refers to the determinists. They deny Divine Will and so do not experience God’s presence in their lives. Without holiness and unitive knowledge and awareness of God such people can live eighty years and still be short-lived.

108. **sated with vexation...antithesis of Ratzon.** As we have seen (§7), contrasting the root of Divine Will, *Metzach haRatzon*, is the root of determinism, *Metzach haNachash*. Whereas the holy sage reveals Divine Will, and so arouses fear of Heaven to create the necessary container

וְזֶהוּ בְּחִינַת (איוב יד) “קָצֵר יָמִים שְׂבַע רְגָזוֹ” הֵינּוּ שְׁתֵּי הַבְּחִינּוֹת הַנִּלְיָנוֹת. “קָצֵר יָמִים” זֶה בְּחִינַת הַזְּקֵנִים שְׂאִינָם כְּרָאוּי, שְׂאִין מוֹסִיפִין קְדֻשָּׁה וְדַעַת בְּכָל יוֹם, שְׂזֵהוּ עָקֵר הַזְּקֵנָה וְהָאֲרִיכוֹת יָמִים כִּנְיָן, וְכִשְׁהַזְּקֵנִים פּוֹגְמִים אֶת יָמֵיהֶם וְאִין מְאֲרִיכִין אֶת יָמֵיהֶם בְּקְדֻשָּׁה וְדַעַת כִּנְיָן, זֶה בְּחִינַת “קָצֵר יָמִים”, וּמִזֶּה יוֹנֵק מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, שֶׁהוּא הַפֶּךְ מִצַּח הַרְצוֹן, וְזֵהוּ: “שְׂבַע רְגָזוֹ” – הַפֶּךְ הַרְצוֹן כִּנְיָן.

אֲבָל כִּשְׁהַזְּקֵנִים כְּרָאוּי, בְּחִינַת: ‘זָקֵן – זֶה קָנָה חֲכָמָה’ וְכוּ’ כִּנְיָן, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה מִתְגַּבֵּר הַתְּגִלּוֹת הַרְצוֹן, בְּבְחִינַת (ישעיה ט): “זָקֵן וְנִשְׂוֵא פָנָיִם” – שֶׁעַל יְדֵי זָקֵן שֶׁבְּקְדֻשָּׁה מִתְגַּבֵּר הַרְצוֹן, שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת

and conduit for receiving *chesed* from God, the determinists prevent people from hearing the festival’s proclamation that reveals Divine Will (see §4-§6). Then, in place of *chesed* and Divine Favor there is vexation and Divine Wrath on high. The verse thus translates in the context of our lesson as: **Man born of woman is short-lived** — An elder who fails to add to his holiness and *daat* spoils his days, and so is **sated with vexation** — strengthens *Metzach haNachash* and conceals Divine Will.

The *Biur HaLikutim* explains how to save oneself from being “short-lived and sated with vexation.” Life is filled with hardships and misfortunes for which the determinist philosophers and all who believe in causality can find no reason or meaning. But when someone believes that whatever happens in life is determined by Divine Will, and that “all that the Merciful One does is good” (*Berachot* 60b), he bends to God’s *Ratzon* and appreciates that whatever happens is for his benefit. He recognizes, too, that even the difficulties and misfortunes he suffers at the hand of others—e.g., the servitude and exile and all the adversities the Jews have suffered at the hands of the nations (see §6 and n.67)—are from God and will be the reason for joyous celebration in the Future. Instead of a life filled with vexation and resentment, his faith in Divine Will and *daat* enable him to find meaning in all hardship and misfortune. What’s more, he is able to draw some of that joy of the Future into the here and now of his life.

109. **an elder is one who has acquired wisdom.** Rebbe Nachman quoted this Talmudic teaching at the beginning of this section; see also note 100 above. Here, the Rebbe will show that the worthy elder, having acquired wisdom, is the great and holy sage who reveals Divine Will.

110. **the elder and the man of esteem.** The prophet Yeshayahu warns that disaster awaits those of the northern tribes of Israel who fail to return to God. “God will cut off from Israel the head and the tail.... The elder and the man of esteem, he is the head; and the prophet who teaches falsehood, he is the tail” (*loc. cit.*, vv.13-14). The *Metzudat David* explains that “the elder” is someone to whom people show esteem because of his considerable importance.

111. **the holy elder, Ratzon, which is esteem...** Unlike the simple meaning of the verse, Rebbe Nachman interprets Yeshayahu’s linking the concepts of elder and esteem as referring to

signifies *Ratzon* (Divine Favor), as in Elisha's remark to Yehoram: "Were it not for the presence of Yehoshafat... whom I esteem, I would not look at you or notice you!" (2 Kings 3:14). Elisha did not want to show Yehoram any favor. It was only his esteem for Yehoshafat that caused him to be favorably inclined toward [Yehoram].¹¹² It follows therefore that esteem signifies *Ratzon*, as in "an elder and a man of esteem."¹¹³

9. Charity is beneficial in this regard. Giving charity rectifies and reverses the harm caused by the fallen days and *daat* of elders, those with length-of-days who are unworthy. The Serpent's Brow feeds off this [lack of wholeness].¹¹⁴ This is as in "Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it" (Ecclesiastes 11:1)¹¹⁵—the power of charity is found "after many days," namely, with those who have length-of-days. Giving charity reverses and rectifies the blemish they engender.¹¹⁶

a worthy elder—i.e., a sage who reveals *Ratzon*, Divine Will, and so is esteemed and venerated by those who know him. The Rebbe next connects esteem with *Ratzon*, Divine Favor. (See n.85 above, which notes the interconnectedness of the two meanings of *Ratzon*.)

112. **Elisha...Yehoram...Yehoshafat whom I esteem....** Before heading into battle against the Moabite enemy, Yehoram, the idolatrous king of Israel's northern kingdom, sought to enlist the aid of King Yehoshafat of Judah (the tribes of Yehudah and Binyamin). Yehoshafat would only commit his troops after receiving Divine instruction to proceed. Yehoram summoned the prophet Elisha, who responded: "Were it not for the presence of Yehoshafat... whom I esteem, I would not look at you or notice you." The only reason Elisha showed any favor at all to the idolatrous king was because of his esteem for the righteous Yehoshafat.

113. **Ratzon...an elder and a man of esteem.** In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman interprets Elisha's words as linking "esteem" with *Ratzon*, Divine Favor. Earlier in this paragraph the Rebbe brought Isaiah 9:14 to show that "man of esteem" is synonymous with "an elder." Thus, when elders are worthy, the revelation of *Ratzon* (Divine Will and Favor) grows stronger.

In review: The essence of giving charity is to break one's cruelty and turn it into compassion (§1). The devotion of charity is extremely difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new widens the doors of opportunity and allows the person to enter more easily (§2). Were God's *chesed* to descend, we would not have to work. We have to see to constantly draw God's *chesed* (§3). However, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create the container and conduit to receive it through our fear of Heaven (§4). Fear of Heaven comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Revealing that everything is governed by God's Will contravenes determinism and generates belief in reward and punishment, thus producing fear (§5). Divine Will is revealed through the Three Festivals, whose miracles proclaim the rule of God's providence. But these proclamations are drowned out whenever deterministic ideology

נְשׂוּאֵי-פָנִים, כִּי נְשִׂיאת פָּנִים הוּא בְּחִינת רְצוֹן, כְּמוֹ שְׂאֵמֶר אֱלִישָׁע לְיֵהוּרָם (מלכים ב' ג'): "לוֹלִי פָּנֵי יְהוֹשָׁפָט אֲנִי נֹשֵׂא אִם אֶבִּיט אֶלְיָךְ וְאִם אֶרְאֶךָ" - שְׂאֵלִישָׁע לֹא הָיָה לוֹ שׂוֹם רְצוֹן לְיֵהוּרָם, רַק עַל-יְדֵי נְשִׂיאת פָּנִים שֶׁל יְהוֹשָׁפָט, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה נִתְרַצָּה אֵלָיו. נִמְצָא שֶׁנְשִׂיאות פָּנִים הוּא בְּחִינת רְצוֹן, וְזֶה בְּחִינת זְקֵן וְנְשׂוּאֵי-פָנִים כֵּן"ל:

ט. וצדקה מועיל לזה, שעל ידי הצדקה מתקנין ומעלין פגם נפילת הימים והדעת של הזקנים מאריכי ימים, שאינם כראוי, שמוזה יניקת מצח הנחש כנ"ל, בבחינת (קהלת יא): "שלח לחמך על פני המים, כי ברב הימים תמצאנו" - שכח הצדקה מוצאין ברב הימים, דהינו במאריכי ימים, כי על-ידי הצדקה מעלין ומתקנין הפגם שלהם כנ"ל.

prevails (§6). The determinists are defeated by the great and holy sage who binds all wills to *Metzach haRatzon*, the root of Divine Will. The contrast to this is *Metzach haNachash*, the root of determinism, from which the heretical scientists and philosophers derive their influence (§7). *Metzach haNachash* acquires its strength from elders who fail to gain additional holiness and *daat* with each new day. Its empowerment enables the determinists to prevent the holy sage, the worthy elder, from revealing Divine Will (§8).

114. **Charity is beneficial in this regard....** "In this regard" refers to the elders who do not add holiness and *daat* to their days. As explained above, their fallen *daat* strengthens the Serpent's Brow and conceals Divine Will, so that they themselves are "short-lived and sated with vexation"—subject to Divine Wrath. Rebbe Nachman will next show that by giving charity it is possible to rectify the blemish which such elders engender and so overcome the Serpent's Brow.

115. **Cast your bread upon the waters....** Rashi (*loc. cit.*) explains that this verse refers to performing acts of charity and kindness. When a person gives charity, it seems as if he is giving away his livelihood—casting it into the water—and can expect nothing in return. However, in truth, charity always benefits the giver. The charitable person is assured that "after many days you will find it"—i.e., his generosity will ultimately bring reward.

116. **power of charity is found after many days....** Rebbe Nachman provides a deeper meaning for "after many days." He reads this proof-text from Ecclesiastes (*loc. cit.*) as teaching that charity itself is the concept of "many days." Giving charity is therefore a rectification for the fallen *daat* and many "short-lived" days of unworthy elders. It can even transform these days and bring them into the realm of holiness, which reveals Divine Will.

This is the meaning of “Cast your bread upon the waters”—i.e., give charity. The verse guarantees that the money you lose by giving liberally to charity, you will regain and find “after many days”—in those with length-of-days. This is because giving charity reverses the blemish of the fallen *daat* of those with length-of-days, from which the Serpent’s Brow feeds. We remove all sustenance and vitality from the Serpent’s Brow/determinism, and so the Brow of Divine Will grows stronger.¹¹⁷

As discussed above, the essential devotion of charity is “And I have commanded the ravens [to feed you],” i.e., the initial need to break cruelty and transform it into compassion.¹¹⁸ From this itself Divine Will grows more influential, for from the very forest itself comes the ax (*Sanhedrin* 39b).¹¹⁹ By overcoming one’s instinctive heartlessness and turning it into compassion, vexation is turned into favor.¹²⁰

117. **Cast your bread...giving liberally to charity...the Brow of Divine Will grows stronger.** Thus far Rebbe Nachman has explained that the container needed to receive God’s *chesed* is created through fear of Heaven produced by Divine Will being revealed. However, this revelation cannot happen when the Serpent’s Brow, the root of deterministic ideology, is empowered by unworthy elders. Then, as the Rebbe explains here, it is necessary to “Cast your bread upon the waters...” Liberally giving charity defeats the Serpent’s Brow and the determinists. When the holy sage then reveals Divine Will, the resulting fear of Heaven provides the vessel for containing the *chesed*. And through the unchecked flow of *chesed* that comes from giving liberally to charity, one’s supply of money is replenished.

118. **As discussed above...transform it into compassion.** See section 1, and notes 3-4. Rebbe Nachman returns to his opening statement about the need to break one’s cruelty and transform heartlessness into compassion.

119. **from the very forest itself comes the ax.** The Talmud (*loc. cit.*) asks why God chose Ovadiah to prophesy Edom’s destruction. Efraim Mikshaah answered this by citing his teacher, Rabbi Meir: Ovadiah was an Edomite convert. This is the popular saying: From the very forest itself comes [the handle of] the ax [that will destroy it]. *Rashi* (*s.v. minei u-vei*) explains: Just as the ax handle is made from the wood of trees and the ax is used to fell trees, God chose Ovadiah, who was of Edomite lineage, to prophesy the destruction of his nation of origin.

120. **vexation is turned into favor.** As explained in note 7 above, the raven is a cruel bird. Thus, the ravens acted contrary to their true nature and the dictates of the natural order in showing compassion for Eliyahu. They did so, as Scripture states, only because “I have commanded the ravens to feed you”—i.e., it was God’s Will. In the context of our lesson, this indicates that the origin of charity is the Brow of Divine Will. It follows, therefore, that cruelty, the opposite of compassion and charity, originates from the Serpent’s Brow. Like the ravens that brought food to God’s prophet, overcoming one’s natural cruelty disproves determinism. By turning

וְזוּהוּ: “שֶׁלַח לַחֲמֶךָ עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם,” הֵינּוּ שֶׁתִּתֵּן צְדָקָה, וְהַפְּתוּב מִבְּטִיחָךְ, שֶׁהֶפְסֵד שֶׁאַתָּה מִפְּסִיד מְמוֹנָךְ, שֶׁפְּזַרְתָּ לְצְדָקָה תִּרְוִיחַ וְתִמְצָאָנּוּ בְּרַב הַיָּמִים, בְּמֵאֲרִיכֵי יָמִים כֵּן”ל, כִּי עַל-יְדֵי הַצְּדָקָה מֵעַלִּין פָּגַם נְפִילַת הַדַּעַת שֶׁל הַמֵּאֲרִיכֵי יָמִים, שֶׁמְזָה הוּא יִנִּיקַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ כֵּן”ל, וּמוֹצִיאִין כָּל הַיִּנִּיקָה וְהַחִיוּת שֶׁל מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, חֲכַמַת הַטְּבַע, וּמִתְגַּבֵּר בְּחֵינַת מִצַּח הַרְצוֹן.
כִּי עֵקֶר עֲבוּדַת הַצְּדָקָה הִיא בְּבַחֲיִנַת: וְאֵת הָעֲרֻבִים צְוִיתִי וְכוּ’ כֵּן”ל, דְּהֵינּוּ מֵה שֶׁצְּרִיכִים בְּהַתְּחִלָּה לְשַׁבֵּר הָאֲכֻזְרִיּוּת לְהַפְּכוֹ לְרַחֲמָנוּת, וּמְזָה בְּעֵצְמוֹ מִתְגַּבֵּר בְּחֵינַת הַרְצוֹן, ‘כִּי מִנֵּה וְכֵה אָבֹא לְיִזְיֵל בֵּה נִרְגָּא’ (סנהדרין לט:), מֵאַחַר שֶׁמִּתְגַּבֵּר וּמְהַפֵּךְ אֲכֻזְרִיּוּת שֶׁבְּטַבְּעוֹ לְרַחֲמָנוּת, עַל-יְדֵי-זוֹה נִתְהַפֵּךְ הַרְגֵז לְרַצוֹן.

his heartlessness into compassion, a person eliminates vexation and Divine Wrath and reveals favor and Divine Will. Just as the ax handle is made from the wood of trees and the ax is used to fell trees, cruelty stems from the Serpent’s Brow, yet cruelty-transformed-into-charity is the very thing that defeats the Serpent’s Brow. (This is interpreted somewhat differently by the *Parparaot LeChokhmah*, whose explanation appears at the end of this note.)

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* ties Rebbe Nachman’s teaching here about the fallen days and *daat* of unworthy elders to what the Rebbe taught in section 3 above. There, the lesson states: “The body’s needs are numerous. Even the essentials.... One can spend all one’s days and years on the necessities alone.... Even so, if He were to pour His lovingkindness upon us, we would have no need for all this.... But when the lovingkindness is held back with God...it is necessary to act to effect an arousal from below.” (In §4, the Rebbe explained that lovingkindness is “withheld” when one lacks the fear of Heaven needed to create the container for receiving it.) It follows, that when lovingkindness is held back, a person must spend his days and years working to earn a living. This considerably deters from his ability to serve God—i.e., as the Rebbe teaches here, he cannot use “each additional day...[to] ensure that he gains additional light of holiness and *daat*.” Rather, the Serpent’s Brow, which draws sustenance from these fallen days, ensures that when a person is preoccupied with working for a living, his life is “sated with vexation.” Then, turning cruelty into compassion—the beginning of charity—is extremely difficult.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* connects this with section 2 above, where Rebbe Nachman cites the *Mekhilta*’s teaching: “All beginnings are difficult” (and see nn.11 and 15 there). He writes: Faith in *Ratzon* is the foundation of all mitzvot and devotions in worshipping God. A person must believe that everything is governed solely by the Will of God, and that whatever happens is determined by Divine providence and not the laws of nature.... The Rebbe emphasized this point in the conversation he had with his followers before delivering this teaching (see n.1 above): “The main thing is *ratzon*. A person’s desire to come closer to God should always be

And then, once the Serpent's Brow is overcome and the Brow of Divine Will is revealed, the sound of the wild animals <is quieted> and the festival's proclamation, the revelation of Divine Will, is heard, as discussed above.¹²¹ The revelation of Divine Will then leads to the fear of Heaven, as discussed above.¹²² Fear of Heaven makes it possible to receive lovingkindness, as discussed above.¹²³ And when lovingkindness descends, we will not have to engage in any labor or work. "Foreigners will stand and pasture your flocks... And you will be called 'priests of God'" will then be fulfilled, as discussed above.¹²⁴ All this is achieved by giving charity. It follows, that the benefit of giving charity is very great.¹²⁵

strong.... The main thing is the will and longing to constantly yearn for God. And from this [place of *ratzon*], one prays, studies Torah and keeps His mitzvot" (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #51; see n.83 above). When the Rebbe then gave the lesson and spoke of revealing Divine Will, the interdependence of Divine and human *ratzon* was immediately obvious. A person who genuinely recognizes Divine Will merits the essence of *avodat HaShem*: serving God with strong *ratzon* and great longing. But because of the fallen days that provide sustenance for the Serpent's Brow and the deterministic ideology which refutes Divine Will, the beginning stages of all the mitzvot and devotions are very difficult. And even after beginning, Torah study, prayer and performing mitzvot do not come easily. A person has to strengthen his resolve and work hard before his devotions bring to an illumination of Divine Will.

It seems, the *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds, that this is precisely the concept Rebbe Nachman discussed above (§2), about having to create an opening before embarking upon a particular spiritual path or devotion. Worshipping God requires that a person be motivated by strong inner *ratzon* and longing. But because he has yet to carry out this devotional practice, or embark upon this new path, his *ratzon* for it is not as strong as it needs to be, and so he finds it difficult to begin. The solution is giving charity. As the Rebbe has explained, charity opens all doors. However, "beginning the devotion of charity is [itself] extremely difficult and demanding, for it is the beginning of all beginnings" (and see n.20). On a deeper level, the main difficulty in beginning any holy practice comes from *Metzach haNachash* overpowering *Metzach haRatzon*. *Metzach haNachash* feeds off of the fallen days and *daat* of people who spend their days and years earning a livelihood. This is why cruelty and vexation, which stem from *Metzach haNachash*, surface around the issue of money, and, especially, around giving charity (see §1). It is also the reason charity begins with breaking one's tendency to be cruel and transforming that heartlessness into compassion. A person should liberally give his hard-earned money to charity; that money gotten through "many days" of work—on account of which God's abundant lovingkindness was withheld from him and he was obliged to spend his days working for it, thereby sustaining *Metzach haNachash*, the source of cruelty and vexation. Therefore, when he breaks his heartlessness, so that he feels compassion for the poor person, *Metzach haNachash* rises against him and seeks to prevent him from giving charity. This is the reason "beginning the devotion of charity is extremely difficult and demanding." ...Nevertheless, the benefit of giving charity is extremely great. Giving charity rectifies and elevates the fallen

וְאֵזִי כְּשֶׁנִּכְנַע מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ וְנִתְגַּלָּה בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַרְצוֹן, אֵזִי נִכְנָעִים
וְנוֹפְלִים קוֹל הַחַיּוֹת רָעוֹת, וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב,
שֶׁהוּא הַתְּגִלַּת הַרְצוֹן כֵּן"ל. וְאֵזִי כְּשֶׁנִּתְגַּלָּה הַרְצוֹן, נַעֲשֶׂה יִרְאָה
כֵּן"ל. וְעַל-יְדֵי הַיִּרְאָה יְכוּלִין לְקַבֵּל הַחֶסֶד כֵּן"ל. וְכִשְׁשׁוֹפֵעַ
הַחֶסֶד, אֵזִי אֵין צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּם עֵסֶק וּמְלָאכָה כֵּן"ל, כִּי אֵזִי
נִתְקַיָּם: "וְעַמְדוֹ זָרִים וְרַעוּ צֹאנֵכֶם וְכוּ' וְאַתֶּם כֹּהֲנֵי ה' תִּקְרְאוּ"
וְכוּ', כֵּן"ל. וְכָל זֶה נַעֲשֶׂה עַל-יְדֵי הַצְּדָקָה כֵּן"ל. נִמְצָא שֶׁתּוֹעֵלַת
הַצְּדָקָה גְּדוֹל מְאֹד:

days and *daat* that come from pursuing one's livelihood...and defeats *Metzach haNachash* by turning the cruelty in a person's heart into compassion, so that Divine Will can be revealed. This is the meaning of "from the very forest itself comes [the handle of] the ax [that will destroy it]." Just as the ax handle is made from the wood of trees and the ax is used to fell trees, when a person breaks his cruelty and gives charity from the money he spent his days working for because the flow of God's lovingkindness was withheld since he lacked fear of Heaven to receive it—that very money defeats *Metzach haNachash* and reveals *Metzach haRatzon*. With this, determinism is refuted and Divine Will is revealed, producing fear of Heaven and the container in which to receive God's bounteous lovingkindness. And then, as the Rebbe taught in section 3 above, one will "not have had to engage in any labor or work whatsoever, as even the [work for one's] necessities would be done by others."

121. ...the sound of wild animals is quieted...the festival's proclamation...is heard, as discussed above. Rebbe Nachman now shows how giving charity brings about the rectifications discussed in the previous sections. The Rebbe spoke of wild animals—i.e., the determinists—and their silencing the festival's proclamation revealing Divine Will in sections 6-7 above.

122. leads to fear of Heaven, as discussed above. See section 5.

123. receive lovingkindness, as discussed above. See section 4.

124. you will be called priests of God...as discussed above. Rebbe Nachman discussed this in section 3; and see notes 38-40.

125. It follows, that the benefit of charity is extremely great. This concludes Rebbe Nachman's explication of his teaching at the beginning of section 3, that "the benefit of giving charity is extremely great." Over the course of the lesson the Rebbe has shown that giving charity effects five rectifications (see above, n.21): 1) it rectifies the blemished days of unworthy elders and so defeats the Serpent's Brow; 2) causing the influence of worthy elders to increase and so silencing the determinists; 3) thereby enabling the festival's proclamation revealing Divine Will to be heard; 4) thus producing fear of Heaven; and 5) creating a container for receiving God's lovingkindness. Thus, the benefits of charity are extremely great. Giving charity opens the channels for receiving God's blessing and creates the container for holding it. When a person turns his cruelty into compassion and gives charity, he transforms wrath and vexation into favor.

10. And this is why, when Yaakov wanted to gain Esav's favor, he said: "accept this offering from my hand; for I have seen your face as one might see the face of a Divine being, and you were favorably inclined toward me" (Genesis 33:10).¹²⁶

Even what we give to non-Jews is considered charity, as <it is written (Isaiah 60:17)>: "and [God will make] your taskmasters charity" (*Bava Basra 9a*).¹²⁷ And giving charity creates favor.¹²⁸ Thus [Yaakov] said

This begins the process that evokes God's Favor for the world, so that ultimately people receive *chesed* without having to labor and work for it. They become "priests of God," able to devote all their energy to serving Him, and lacking nothing of their livelihood in consequence.

Reb Noson writes: The main thing is one's *ratzon* for God. The soul descends to this world for the express purpose of attaining true *ratzon* from this material existence, where being so distant from its source is the very thing that makes the soul's *ratzon* stronger and more radiant. When this happens, the lower worlds become bound to the higher worlds, and the vexation and hardships of this world are elevated and transformed into favor (*ratzon*). As explained in the lesson, "all the types of work and labor that people engage in are included in the thirty-nine-works" (see §2 and n.27), and are the very opposite of *ratzon*. This is because *ratzon* is the concept of *not* working, a concept associated with Shabbat and the world as it will be in the time to come. Labor and work are the very antithesis of this, and correspond to vexation and judgment (i.e., hardship). All the different types of labor derive from Adam's sin, on account of which he was condemned to toil in the thirty-nine-works: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat..." (Genesis 3:19). Our task is to engage in these thirty-nine works in sanctity, purging them from the pollution of the Serpent, namely, the thirty-nine curses that resulted from Adam's sin (see *Tikkuney Zohar* #48, p.85). In this case, toil for livelihood is the defilement. We must draw holiness into the material world and the thirty-nine works by strengthening our *ratzon* for God. By strongly desiring God for many days and years in this world, we transform vexation into will and judgment into favor (*Torat Natan* #5).

Reb Noson goes on to clarify why charity plays such an essential role in this process. He explains that the poor can be likened to the lower, corporeal world, which has the greatest need of receiving God's *chesed*. This is why the impoverished are very often vexed and resentful, for they are associated with the judgment of Divine Wrath that metes out hardship and misfortune. The person who turns his cruelty into compassion and gives charity to the poor instills *ratzon* into the world. His favor evokes Divine Favor, which counters Divine Wrath and negates decrees of suffering issued from on high. Therefore, of charity it is written (Deuteronomy 15:10), "Give to him readily...for in return for this God your Lord will bless you in all your labors and in your every undertaking" (*Torat Natan*, *ibid.*).

The "In review" for this section is made superfluous here by this note and note 120, which between them go over the majority of the lesson's salient points. This section's summary appears in note 132 below, together with the "In review" for the following section.

126. **Yaakov...Esav's favor...inclined toward me.** This verse is from Scripture's account of Yaakov's journey home after spending twenty years with his father-in-law Lavan. Coming toward Yaakov's encampment was his brother Esav and four hundred battle-ready men. More

י. וְעַל-כֵּן כְּשֶׁרָצָה יַעֲקֹב לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן בְּעֵשָׂו, אָמַר: "וְלָקַחְתָּ מִנְחָתִי מִיָּדִי, כִּי עַל-כֵּן רָאִיתִי פָּנֶיךָ כְּרֵאת פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים וְתִרְצַנִּי" (בראשית לג).

כִּי גַם מֵה שְׁנוֹתַי לְעַכְשָׁנָה, הוּא גַם-כֵּן בְּחִינַת צְדָקָה, כְּמוֹ שְׂאֲמָרוֹ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְזָכוּרָם לְבָרְכָה (בבא בתרא ט): "וְנוֹגֵשֶׁיךָ צְדָקָה", וְעַל-יָדֵי

than two decades had passed, yet Esav had not forgotten how his younger brother had taken from him the birthright and its blessing. Hoping to appease Esav, Yaakov sent an offering of "200 she-goats and 20 he-goats; 200 ewes and 20 rams; 30 milch camels with their colts; 40 cows and 10 bulls; 20 she-asses and 10 he-asses" (Genesis 32:15-16). The Midrash reads this encounter between brothers as the archetype for the eternal struggle between Yaakov's descendants, the Jewish people, and Esav's descendants, Rome and the kingdoms it spawned. The Sages saw in Yaakov's response to Esav's threat of annihilation the prescription for his descendants' survival in exile, where the Jewish people are likened to a lone sheep among 70 wolves (*Bereishit Rabbah* 78:15; *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Toldot* 5; see also *Ramban*, Genesis 33:15).

In the context of our lesson, Yaakov personifies Divine Will. He is under constant threat of attack by Esav, the personification of the Serpent's Brow, which arouses Divine Wrath in order to conceal Divine Favor. In this, Esav represents a greater danger than Lavan, Yaakov's other nemesis, who personifies the determinist that turns people away from God and binds their will, instead, to the Serpent's Brow (see n.93 above). Rebbe Nachman next shows how Yaakov's words tie in with the lesson, and how the peace offering he sent to Esav signifies giving charity to turn wrath (cruelty) into favor (compassion).

Reb Noson adds: In our lesson we have seen that the Serpent's Brow feeds off of unworthy elders, those who are "short-lived and sated with vexation" because they spoil their days (see §8 and n.106-108). Scripture relates that Yitzchak's blessing to his son Esav included the prophetic words: "By your sword you shall live" (Genesis 27:40). Our Sages teach that the sword was created to shorten man's life (*Mekhilta*; *Rashi*, Exodus 20:22). In our context, this relates to preventing others from advancing in holiness and *daat*, i.e., rendering them short-lived. This is Esav, who personifies the Serpent's Brow (*Torat Natan* #14).

127. **and God will make your taskmasters charity.** Chapter 60 of Isaiah speaks of the Final Redemption and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple (the "place of My feet"; v.13). God promises the Jewish people that "although in anger I struck you, with My *Ratzon* (Favor) I shall show you compassion" (v.10). The Talmud (*loc. cit.*) teaches that when the Holy Temple stood, a person would donate money for the sacrifices and thereby gain atonement for his sins. Now that the Temple has been destroyed, giving charity accomplishes this same atonement. If, however, the Jews fail to contribute charity, non-Jews will come and take by force the money that should have been donated. Even so, the confiscated funds will be reckoned for the Jews as contributions to charity. This is the meaning of the prophet's words: "And [God will make] your taskmasters charity."

128. **giving charity creates favor.** The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* suggests two ways in which this happens. One is, as *Maharsha* explains the Talmud's teaching (*loc. cit.*), when non-Jews

to him, “then accept this offering from my hand”—i.e., charity, as in “presenters of an offering of charity” (Malachi 3:3).¹²⁹

“For I have seen your face as one might see the face of a Divine being”—i.e., like seeing the face of God, as in “three times each year, all your males shall thus appear before the face of God” (Deuteronomy 16:16). This refers to the festivals, through which *Ratzon* is revealed {primarily by means of charity}.¹³⁰ Similarly, [Yaakov] would gain his *ratzon* through charity, this being: “you were favorably inclined toward me.”¹³¹

take in taxes from the wealthy that the poor Jews cannot afford to pay. This is a straightforward case of charity and effects all the above-mentioned rectifications. But even when a Jew hands over his money to non-Jews in order to save his own life or to mollify their anti-Semitism (occurrences common in the Dark and Middle Ages), that, too, is charity and effects all the same rectifications. The reason is that, although such a situation has nothing to do with turning *his* cruelty into compassion, when non-Jews purloin Jewish money, *their* cruelty somewhat abates. However minimally, the Serpent’s Brow is defeated by this, and a commensurate measure of Divine Will is revealed.

This is the deeper meaning of “your taskmasters charity.” In confiscating Jewish money, the taskmasters were acting in accordance with a decree from on high. Had the Jews given charity—broken their cruelty and transformed it into compassion—they would have aroused Divine Will rather than Divine Wrath. Instead, their money was taken from them and it was reckoned as if they had given charity. Just as this gained favor for the Jews from their taskmasters—i.e., “your taskmasters charity”—it effected the rectifications discussed in the lesson and brought to a revelation of Divine Will and Favor. Rebbe Nachman equates this here with the offering (money) Yaakov sent to Esav (see the following note).

129. **offering...an offering of charity.** The prophet Malakhi foretells of the Day of Judgment, when God’s angel will destroy the evil priests who had defiled the Temple Altar and purify the righteous among the tribe of Levi. The offerings which the purified priests—“presenters of a *minchah* of charity”—then bring in the rebuilt Holy Temple will be acceptable to God (see *Radak* and *Metzudat David* there). Having shown that money given to non-Jewish “taskmasters” is reckoned as charity, Rebbe Nachman cites this verse from Malachi which links *minchah* with charity. Together, these two proof-texts provide a deeper meaning to Yaakov’s words to Esav: “accept this *minchah* (offering) from my hand.” Throughout Jewish teaching, Esav is the archetypal image of the non-Jew who rules over the Jewish people in exile. Yaakov’s offering to Esav is thus considered charity (like the money taken by the taskmasters), intended to elicit favor.

130. **seen your face...seeing the face of God...appear before the face of God....** Rebbe Nachman now shows how also the second half of Yaakov’s words to Esav alludes to our lesson. The verse cited here from Deuteronomy refers to the obligation to appear before God in the Holy Temple on each of the Three Festivals (see n.70 above). The Rebbe links the expression “before the face of God” with Yaakov’s words: “see the face of a Divine being (i.e., God).” As

צָדָקָה נַעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹן כַּנְּל. וְזֶהוּ שְׂאֵמֵר לוֹ: “וְלִקְחָתָּ מִנְּחֹתַי מִיָּדַי”,
הֵינּוּ צָדָקָה, בְּחִינַת (מלאכי ג): “מִגִּישֵׁי מִנְּחָה בְּצָדָקָה.”
“כִּי עַל-כֵּן רָאִיתִי פָנֶיךָ כְּרֹאוֹת פָּנֵי אֱלֹקִים”, הֵינּוּ כְּמוֹ רֹאוֹת פָּנֵי
אֱלֹקִים, שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת (דברים טז): “שְׁלוֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יִרְאֶה כָּל
זְכוּרְךָ אֶת פָּנֵי ה’”, דֵּהֵינּוּ יָמִים-טוֹבִים, שְׁעַל יָדָם נִתְגַּלָּה הָרְצוֹן
(וְעַקֵּר הַתְּגַלּוֹת הָרְצוֹן עַל-יָדֵי יָמִים-טוֹבִים הוּא עַל-יָדֵי הַצָּדָקָה
כַּנְּל), כְּמוֹ-כֵן יִהְיֶה נַעֲשֶׂה אֶצְלוֹ רְצוֹן עַל-יָדֵי הַצָּדָקָה, וְזֶהוּ:
“וְתִרְצַנִּי כַּנְּל.”

explained in note 80 above, the festivals are the primary time for the revelation of Divine Will, and the Holy Temple the primary place.

131. **favorably inclined toward me.** Over the course of these last two sections, Rebbe Nachman has shown that, like the festivals, giving charity effects the necessary rectifications for revealing Divine Will. Here we see that, again, like the festivals, charity is the means for “seeing the face of God”—i.e., mitigating Divine Wrath and gaining Divine Favor. Thus, after sending his *minchah*/charity to Esav, Yaakov says: “for I have seen your face as one might see the face of a Divine being, and you were *favorably* inclined toward me.”

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* contrasts Yaakov’s statement with Elisha’s remark to Yehoram, cited at the end of section 8 above. Yaakov speaks of seeing the face of God—i.e., of favor and the revelation of Divine Will. Elisha, on the other hand, says: “Were it not for the presence”—*panim*, which literally means “face”—“of Yehoshafat...whom I esteem, I would not look at you or notice you!” This is as Rebbe Nachman taught there: Elisha did not want to show Yehoram any favor. It was only his esteem—*nesiat panim*—for Yehoshafat that caused him to be favorably inclined—i.e., exhibit *ratzon*—toward Yehoram.

The verse thus translates as follows:

accept this offering from my hand — The money that non-Jews take from a Jew is reckoned as charity.

For I have seen your face as one might see the face of a Divine being — Giving charity reveals Divine Will, as happens on each of the Three Festivals when the pilgrimage is made to “appear before the face of God” in the Holy Temple.

and you were favorably inclined toward me — Giving charity therefore undoes Divine Wrath and brings Divine Favor for the giver.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds that from this we can understand why it is especially a *mitzvah* to provide for the poor on the festivals (cf. *Rashi*, Deuteronomy 16:11). When the Holy Temple stood, Divine Favor was revealed there on each of the Three Festivals. As explained above, the miracles associated with each festival call out and proclaim Divine Will. The same is true of giving charity so that the poor can celebrate the festivals. It turns wrath into favor and enables the festival’s proclamation to be heard. This is what Yaakov said to Esav: “accept this offering...”—i.e. take my charity; “you were favorably inclined toward me”—so that the cruelty in your heart will be transformed into favor.

{This is because the offering and the gift which he gave to Esav was literally considered charity, as in “your taskmasters charity,” it follows that Divine Will on high, which is revealed through charity, is revealed. And from there *Ratzon* devolves below and also creates favor in Esav.^{132}}}

11A. This relates as well to the battle between David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17).¹³³

Goliath wanted to use his wisdom to demonstrate that everything transpires according to the laws of nature. He drew sustenance from *Metzach haNachash*, as in “a *mitzchat nechoshet* on his legs,” so that he attributed all causes to the inevitability of nature, which corresponds to the Serpent’s Brow, as discussed above.¹³⁴ Thus, “he has defied the *maARKhot* (battalions) of the Living God” (ibid. v.26). [Goliath] wanted to demonstrate that everything takes place according to the *maAReKhet* (alignment of) the heavens, as dictated by the laws of nature, God forbid.¹³⁵

132. **Ratzon devolves below and also creates favor in Esav.** Reb Noson’s insertion here clarifies Rebbe Nachman’s last point. Yaakov understood that by getting Esav to accept his charity, he could mitigate Divine Wrath—which he knew to be the real force behind his brother’s threat. The *Ratzon* this would reveal on high would filter down to this world and bring Esav to be favorably inclined toward him.

In review: The essence of giving charity is to break one’s cruelty and turn it into compassion (§1). The devotion of charity is extremely difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new widens the doors of opportunity and allows the person to enter more easily (§2). Were God’s *chesed* to descend, we would not have to work. We have to see to constantly draw God’s *chesed* (§3). However, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create the container and conduit to receive it through our fear of Heaven (§4). Fear of Heaven comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Revealing that everything is governed by God’s Will contravenes determinism and generates belief in reward and punishment, thus producing fear (§5). Divine Will is revealed through the Three Festivals, whose miracles proclaim the rule of God’s providence. But these proclamations are drowned out whenever deterministic ideology prevails (§6). The determinists are defeated by the great and holy sage who binds all wills to *Metzach haRatzon*, the root of Divine Will. The contrast to this is *Metzach haNachash*, the root of determinism, from which the heretical scientists and philosophers derive their influence (§7). *Metzach haNachash* acquires its strength from elders who fail to gain additional holiness and *daat* with each new day. Its empowerment enables the determinists to prevent the holy sage, the worthy elder, from revealing Divine Will (§8). The benefit of giving charity is very great. It counters the influence of *Metzach haNachash*, as it rectifies the harm caused by unworthy elders. This reveals Divine Will, which leads to fear of Heaven and makes receiving

(כִּי מֵאַחַר שֶׁהִמְנִיחַ וְהִצְדָּקָה שֶׁנָּתַן לְעֵשָׂו הִיא בְּחִינַת צְדָקָה מִמָּשׁ, בְּחִינַת: “וְנוֹגְשֵׁיךָ צְדָקָה”, נִמְצָא שֶׁעַל־יְדֵי־זֶה נִתְגַּלָּה הַרְצוֹן הָעֲלִיּוֹן, שֶׁהוּא נִתְגַּלָּה עַל־יְדֵי צְדָקָה כַּנִּל, וּמִשָּׁם נִשְׁתַּלְּשַׁל הַרְצוֹן לְמִטָּה וְנִעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹן גַּם בְּעֵשָׂו):

יא. וְזֶה בְּחִינַת מְלַחֶמֶת דָּוִד וְגִלְיָת (שְׁמוּאֵל א' יז).
כִּי גִלְיָת הָיָה רוֹצֵחַ לְהִרְאוֹת בְּחִכְמָתוֹ, שֶׁהִכָּל עַל פִּי הַטְּבַע, כִּי הָיָה יוֹנֵק מִמִּצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, בְּבְחִינַת: “וּמִצַּחַת נְחָשֶׁת עַל רַגְלָיו”, שֶׁתָּלָה כָּל הַסְּבוֹת בְּחִיּוֹב הַטְּבַע, שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ כַּנִּל.
וְעַל כֵּן “חֲרַף מְעַרְכוֹת אֱלֹקִים חַיִּים”, כִּי הָיָה רוֹצֵחַ לְהִרְאוֹת, שֶׁהִכָּל עַל־יְדֵי מְעַרְכַת הַשָּׁמַיִם, כִּפִּי חִיּוֹב הַטְּבַע, חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם:

God’s *chesed* possible (§9). Even money taken by non-Jews is considered charity and effects a revelation of Divine Will and Favor (§10).

133. **the battle between David and Goliath.** Rebbe Nachman now shows how the concepts discussed in the lesson are alluded to in Scripture’s account of David’s battlefield encounter with Goliath. At the end of this section (11A), the Rebbe will add yet another insight into the power of charity.

134. **Goliath...attributed all causes to the inevitability of nature...as discussed above.** See section 7 (and nn.89 and 92), that the *MitZChat NeChoSheT* which Goliath wore “on his legs” alludes to *MeTZaCh haNaChaSh* and corresponds to the concept of causal agency—i.e., the “causes” or “reasons” why things occur.

135. **defied the maARKhot...according to the maAReKhet of the heavens...God forbid.** The Hebrew term for “battalions,” *maARKhot* (מַעְרְכוֹת), is a cognate of the term *maAReKhet* (מַעְרְכַת), which means “array” or “alignment.” Rebbe Nachman reads this verse regarding Goliath’s defiant stand against King Shaul’s battalions aligned on the battlefield as alluding to the deterministic claim that whatever occurs is dictated by the (astrological) alignment of the heavens.

Citing the verse “and the Philistine approached morning and evening” (1 Samuel 17:16), the Talmud teaches that Goliath purposely timed this to coincide with the Jewish people’s reciting of the *Shema* prayer. Twice each day he stood opposite the battalions of King Shaul’s army to strike fear in their hearts and to blaspheme God at precisely the time the Jewish warriors proclaimed their faith in God. And Goliath did this for a period of forty days, corresponding to the forty days the Jews stood at Mount Sinai in preparation for receiving the Torah (*Sotah* 42b). Thus, in the context of our lesson, Goliath personifies the scientific determinist, whose aim is to conceal Divine Will and demonstrate that whatever happens is determined by the laws of nature. This is the reason he wore the *mitzchat nechoshet*—i.e., *metzach*, the concept

But David was a man of valor and stood up to him,¹³⁶ saying that he had once had an incident like this:

{“David said to Saul, ‘Your servant was a shepherd for his father’s flocks, and when the lion and the bear came and carried away a sheep from *ha’eider* (the flock), I went after it, and struck it, and rescued [the sheep] from its mouth. Then it attacked me, and I grabbed it by the *zakan* (beard) and struck it down and killed it. Your servant has slain both lion and bear; and that uncircumcised Philistine shall be like one of them, for he has defied the battalions of the Living God! ...[David] took out a stone and slung it. It struck the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank into his brow, and he fell face down upon the ground” (1 Samuel 17:34-36, 49).}

and when the lion and the bear came — This refers to the wild animals that claw and tear apart their prey. These are the deterministic scientists, as discussed above.¹³⁷

and carried it away from *ha’eider* — That is, from the absolute *he’eder* (nothingness); he carried away and removed it from the absolute nothingness. In other words, he denied that, following the absolute nothingness, God created everything through His Will, [claiming] instead that everything takes place according to the dictates of nature, God forbid.¹³⁸

I went after it, and struck it — I would overpower him; I overcame and humbled him.

Then it attacked me — Afterwards, he again came against me.¹³⁹

of brow—not on his forehead, but “on his legs”—the concept of foot. In section 6 (and see nn.59, 65), Rebbe Nachman taught that Divine Will is revealed through the festivals (*regalim*), which are the concept of foot/fear (*regel*). Goliath applied the *mitzchat nechoshet/Metzach haNachash*, the root of deterministic ideology, to the *regel*, in order to promote belief in causal agency (see n.92) and keep the *regalim* from revealing Divine Will.

Reb Noson further develops the idea that Goliath was a heretic. Scripture relates that Goliath “wore an armor of mail” on his body (see n.89 above). The Talmud equates armor of mail with charity, citing the verse “He donned charity like a coat of mail” (Isaiah 59:17; *Bava Batra* 9b). This teaches that Goliath wanted to use his element of charity to counter the charity that reveals Divine Will. It is “Goliath’s charity” when a person gives to support evil, or for his own aggrandizement. Charity is a devotion to God only when a person breaks his innate cruelty and turns vexation into compassion. For such charity has the power to defeat the Serpent’s Brow and determinism, and reveal Divine Will, as the Rebbe will show next from David’s example (*Torat Natan* #19).

136. **But David was a man of valor and stood up to him.** See 1 Samuel 16:18, where one of King Shaul’s attendants describes David as “a mighty man of valor and a warrior.” David was therefore confident of his ability to defeat Goliath.

וְדוֹד הָיָה אִישׁ חַיִל, וְעָמַד כְּנִגְדּוֹ וְאָמַר, שְׂכָבֵר הָיָה לוֹ מִעֲשֵׂה כָזוֹ
(שמואל א' יז):

וּבֹא הָאָרִי וְהַדּוֹב – דְּהִיְנוּ חַיּוֹת רָעוֹת הַנִּלְהָדוֹרְסִים וְטוֹרְפִים,
שֶׁהֵם חַכְמֵי הַטְּבַע כְּנִלְ.

וּנְשָׂא זֶה מִהָעֵדֶר – הִיְנוּ מִהָעֵדֶר הַגָּמוֹר, שֶׁנְּשָׂא וְסִלַּק זֹאת מִהָעֵדֶר
הַגָּמוֹר, דְּהִיְנוּ שְׂכָפְר בָּזָה, שֶׁהֵשֵׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ בָּרָא הַכֹּל בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ אַחַר
הָעֵדֶר הַגָּמוֹר, רַק שֶׁהַכֹּל עַל פִּי חַיּוֹב הַטְּבַע, חֵם וְשָׁלוֹם.

וַיִּצְאֵתִי אַחֲרָיו וְהִכְתִּיו – הִיְנוּ שֶׁהִיְתִי מִתְגַּבֵּר עָלָיו וְהִכְנַעְתִּי
וְהִשְׁפַּלְתִּי אוֹתוֹ.

וַיִּקָּם עָלַי – הִיְנוּ שֶׁאַחַר כֵּן הִתְגַּבֵּר עוֹד כְּנִגְדִּי.

137. **wild animals...the deterministic scientists, as discussed above.** See section 6 (and nn.74-75) above, where Rebbe Nachman likens the *chakhmey hateva* (literally, “nature scholars”) who lead Jews astray to *chayot ra’ot* (literally, “evil beasts”), the wild animals that lay waste to their prey.

138. **ha’eider...absolute he’eder....** With a change in vowelization, the letters that spell *ha’eider* (הָעֵדֶר), “the flock,” can be read as *he’eder* (הֵעֵדֶר), “nothingness.” Rebbe Nachman relates this to the absolute nothingness, or Nothingness, out of which God brought everything into existence in accordance with Divine Will. This is the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing), in contrast with the determinism’s belief in *creatio ex material*, a universe comprised of preexistent matter (see Lesson #2:6, n.107, earlier in this volume). In the context of our lesson, Goliath was determined to prove the determinists’ claim, that it was not Divine Will but the forces of nature, God forbid, which brought everything into existence.

The *Be’Ibey HaNachal* points out that conceptually these two words, *ha’eider* and *he’eder*, have antithetical connotations. His explanation, based on *Likutey Moharan* I, 64, is both long and complex, and so beyond the scope of these notes. Suffice it to say that animals are generally seen as signifying corporeal existence, a thing of substance. A flock can thus be understood as representing “thingness,” the direct opposite of “no-thingness.” He explains that this is precisely the distinction between those who believe in Divine Will (Nothingness/*he’eder*) and those who attribute everything to the forces of nature (substance/*ha’eider*). Man’s task is to recognize that all substance and natural order stem from Nothingness and are the expressions of God’s Will.

139. **he again came against me.** David reports that although he had succeeded in subduing the wild animals and taking back the sheep, they returned to attack him a second time. Rebbe Nachman relates this to the holy sage’s continuing battle against the determinists. At the end of section 7, the Rebbe explained that at those times when the Serpent’s Brow becomes dominant, determinists are able to conceal Divine Will and the Serpent’s Brow plants seeds of heresy in the Brow of *Ratzon*, the root of Divine Will. Here, the Rebbe adds that even after being

and I grabbed it by the *zakan* — That is, I understood that all his strength and sustenance stems from the Serpent's Brow, which feeds off the unworthy *ZiKNei* (elders of) the generation, as discussed above.¹⁴⁰ This is why “I would grab it by the *ZaKaN*”—I grabbed hold of and seized the source of his sustenance, the elders of the generation.¹⁴¹

and struck it down and killed it — I defeated and humbled the deterministic scientists/wild animals by grabbing hold of their *zakan*, the source of their sustenance.¹⁴² Therefore,

and that Philistine shall be like one of them — For he, too, is exactly like this. All his strength is from *Metzach haNachash*, as in “*mitzchat nechoshet...*” He is therefore like them, and so I am able to defeat and <humble him>.¹⁴³

This is as it is written: **the stone sunk into his brow** — This alludes to the Serpent's Brow, which he <humbled> by means of <*Ratzon*,> as in “a perfect stone is His *ratzon*” (Proverbs 11:1)—i.e., <the root of *ratzon*, the Brow of Divine Will>.¹⁴⁴

defeated, the determinists are able to renew their strength from *Metzach haNachash* and again attack the holy sage.

Reb Noson relates this to the new philosophies that come to light in each generation, promising a greater and brighter future for humankind (e.g., the Enlightenment in Rebbe Nachman's time, and since then the “isms” of communism, nationalism, capitalism, etc.). As soon as one of these doctrines is shown to be ineffective and useless, another false panacea rises to take its place. Their common denominator is that they all are obstacles to the spiritual life—i.e., counterforces to holiness and *daat* that conceal Divine Will and deny Divine providence (cf. *Likutey Halakhot, Beheimah v'Chayah Tehorah* 4:34; see also *Mashiach: Who? What? Why? How? Where? and When?*, Chapter 16).

140. **feeds off the unworthy...as discussed above.** See section 8 above, that *Metzach haNachash*, which gives strength to the determinists (see §7 and n.88), is itself nourished from the unworthy elders whose length-of-days lacks wholeness.

141. **ZiKNei...ZaKaN...the elders of the generation.** David relates that while fighting against the wild animal, he would grab it by its beard, *ZaKaN* (זקן). These same letters also spell *ZaKeiN* (זקי), “an elder.” Rebbe Nachman teaches that this alludes to the holy sage seizing the source of *Metzach haNachash's* strength.

142. ***zakan*, the root of their sustenance.** Having linked the unworthy elders of the generation with David's grabbing hold of the animal's beard, Rebbe Nachman teaches that this is how the holy sage defeats the determinists/wild animals. He seizes their *zakan/zakein*—i.e., the source from which *Metzach haNachash*, the root of determinism, is itself sustained.

וְהַחֲזַקְתִּי בְזַקְנוֹ – הֵינּוּ שֶׁהִבְנֵתִי, שֶׁכָּל כַּחוֹ וַיִּנְיֶקְתוּ עַל-יְדֵי מִצַּח הַנָּחָשׁ, שֶׁיּוֹנֵק מִזַּקְנֵי הַדּוֹר שְׂאֵינָם כָּרְאוּי כַּנְּל, וְעַל כֵּן הַחֲזַקְתִּי בְזַקְנוֹ, שֶׁהַחֲזַקְתִּי וְתַפְסֵתִי שָׁם בְּשֵׂרֵשׁ יִנְיֶקְתוּ בְזַקְנֵי הַדּוֹר.

וְהַכְתִּיו וְהַמִּיתוּ – שֶׁהִכְנַעְתִּי וְהַשְׁפַּלְתִּי אֶת חַכְמֵי הַטְּבַע, חַיּוֹת רְעוּת, עַל-יְדֵי שֶׁהַחֲזַקְתִּי בְזַקְנוֹ, בְּשֵׂרֵשׁ יִנְיֶקְתָם כַּנְּל. וְעַל כֵּן:

וְהִיא הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי כְּאֶחָד מֵהֶם – כִּי הוּא גַם כֵּן בְּחִינַת זוֹ מִמֶּשׁ, שֶׁכָּל כַּחוֹ מִמִּצַּח הַנָּחָשׁ, בְּחִינַת: “וּמִצַּחַת נִחְשֵׁת” וְכוּ' כַּנְּל, וְעַל כֵּן גַּם הוּא כְּמוֹתָם, וְאוֹכֵל לְהַכְנִיעוֹ וְלְהַפִּילוֹ.

וְזֶה שֶׁכָּתוּב:

וְתַטְבַּע הָאֶבֶן בְּמִצַּחוֹ – הֵינּוּ בְּמִצַּח הַנָּחָשׁ, שֶׁהִכְנִיעוֹ עַל-יְדֵי בְּחִינַת (משלי יא): “אֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה רְצוֹנוֹ” בְּחִינַת רְצוֹן כַּנְּל.

143. **that Philistine shall be like one of them...exactly like this....** David was confident that he could defeat Goliath, for he had already defeated the lion and the bear by grabbing hold of their *zakan*. In the context of our lesson, David is the holy sage, who knows that undoing the blemish and harm caused by the unworthy *zakein* will cut off sustenance from *Metzach haNachash*. He is thus confident of defeating Goliath, because Goliath is “like one of them”—i.e., the determinists, dependent for sustenance on *Metzach haNachash/mitzchat nechoshet*. This is the meaning of “he, too, is exactly like this.”

144. **the stone sank into his brow...a perfect stone is His *ratzon*....** David killed Goliath with a stone shot from his sling. Rebbe Nachman explains that the stone that penetrated Goliath's brow signifies Divine Will. The full verse which Rebbe Nachman cites here from Proverbs states: “False scales are an abomination to God; a perfect stone is His desire (*ratzon*).” God's desire and will is that people use honest weights (stones) when weighing their wares for sale. (This relates to Reb Noson's explanation of “fittingly, the way he should” as referring to conducting one's business affairs honestly and with the intention of giving charity; see §3 and n.32 above.) The Rebbe brings this proof-text to show the connection between stone and *ratzon*. Divine Will, God's *Ratzon*, is “a perfect stone.” David slung it into Goliath's brow—i.e., the root of his heresy, the Serpent's Brow. In the final paragraph of this section, the Rebbe will show that the only time the influence of the Serpent's Brow and determinism are completely eliminated is when a person's own will and his faith in God are whole, thus bringing to a perfected revelation of Divine Will.

The stone David used to kill Goliath was one of the five smooth (i.e., perfect) stones he had collected from a nearby brook (see v.40 there). The *Tikkuney Zohar* (#21, p.62a) teaches that the five stones correspond to the (first) five words of the opening verse of the *Shema* prayer, which unite and are embodied in *echad* (one), the prayer's final word. By reciting the *Shema* we declare our faith in God. In the context of the lesson, we unite the five stones, and by doing so create the perfected stone—i.e., the revelation of Divine Will.

And this is what Yishai warned David as he headed for there: “and redeem their *ARuBah* (pledges)” (1 Samuel 17:18).¹⁴⁵ This alludes to the *OReV* (raven), charity. The essential devotion of charity <is> to be like the raven, as in “And I have commanded the ravens....” By giving charity he takes away the vitality of the Serpent’s Brow, which feeds off the elders of the generation.¹⁴⁶

And know! even after a person has successfully defeated and refuted the ideologies of the deterministic scientists and has humbled them, if the revelation of Divine Will is not powerful and firm—if any doubt remains about Divine Will such that it is not decisively clear that everything is governed solely by <God’s> Divine Will—then even though the determinism has been defeated, nonetheless, since Divine Will is not yet [sufficiently] influential, there is the possibility, God forbid, that the Serpent’s Brow/determinism will reawaken and return to its original strength.¹⁴⁷ This, too, requires the power of charity,

145. **and redeem their ARuBah, pledges.** Yishai’s warning appears in the same chapter of the Book of Samuel as the verses just cited. The verse immediately preceding it lists the provisions Yishai sent to the battlefield for his sons, soldiers in King Shaul’s army. Not incidentally we are told that he sent these supplies with his youngest son, David, as this is how David, who was not one of the warriors, came to be there to confront Goliath. Yishai instructs David to inquire into his brothers’ welfare and to “redeem (literally, take) their pledges.” Soldiers in need of cash to purchase provisions would commonly pawn personal items as security. Yishai sent David with money to redeem his brothers’ pledges (*Radak* there). In our context, Rebbe Nachman has shown that David’s defeat of the lion and bear signifies the holy sage’s defeat of the determinists. Divine Will was then revealed with David’s being sent to the battlefield. The Rebbe will now show that the pledge money he took along alludes to charity.

146. **ARuBah...OReV, charity....** The Hebrew word for “pledge,” *ARuBah* (ערובה), shares the same root letters as *OReV* (עורב), “a raven” (see Appendix: Hebrew/English Transliteration Schema). As explained in the lesson’s opening section, the raven signifies charity, for charity is a devotional practice only when the giver first turns his cruelty into compassion, as the ravens did when they fed the prophet Eliyahu. In the context of our lesson, when David set out from his father’s house for the battlefield, where he encountered the defiant Goliath, Yishai warned his son to “redeem their *arubah*”—i.e., arm himself with the mitzvah of charity. As the Rebbe taught above (§9), giving charity reverses the blemish engendered by unworthy elders and so deprives the Serpent’s Brow of the vital force it needs. With the merit of this mitzvah David would be able to defeat the Serpent’s Brow and so overcome Goliath, whose own power is from there.

The *Be’Ibey HaNachal* cites the Talmud’s teaching regarding the bill of divorce King David later had his warriors write before entering into battle (so that should a warrior go missing or be taken captive, his wife was free to re-marry). David apparently learned this from his father when Yishai sent him to the battlefield to “look into your brothers’ welfare and take their *arubah*.” In response to the Talmud’s inquiry into the meaning of *ARuBah* (ערובה), Rav

וְזֶה בְּחִינַת שְׁהִזְהִיר יְשִׁי אֶת דָּוִד בְּלִכְתּוֹ לְשָׁם: “וְאֵת עֲרֻבְתָּם תִּקַּח” זֶה בְּחִינַת עוֹרֵב בְּחִינַת צְדָקָה. כִּי עָקַר עֲבוֹדַת הַצְּדָקָה - בְּבְחִינַת עוֹרֵב, בְּחִינַת: “וְאֵת הָעֲרָבִים צְוִיתִי” וְכוּ' כַּנֶּ"ל, כִּי עַל-יְדֵי הַצְּדָקָה הוּא מוֹצִיא הַחַיּוֹת שֶׁל מִצַּח הַנֶּחֱשׁ, שְׁיוֹנֵק מִזִּקְנֵי הַדּוֹר כַּנֶּ"ל:

וְדַע, שְׂאֵפְלוֹ כְּשֶׁמְכַנְיַעִין וְסוֹתְרִין דְּעוֹת חֲכָמֵי הַטֵּבַע וּמִשְׁפִּילִין אוֹתָם, אֶף-עַל-פִּי-כֵן אִם אֵין הַתְּגַלּוֹת הַרְצוֹן חֲזָק וְתִקְוָה, דְּהֵינּוּ שְׁעָדִין יֵשׁ סִפְק בְּרָצוֹן, שְׂאֵינּוּ מְבָרָר בְּבִרּוּר חֲזָק שְׁמִתְנַהֵג רַק עַל פִּי הַרְצוֹן, אֶף-עַל-פִּי שְׁחֲכַמַת הַטֵּבַע נִכְנַעַת, אֶף-עַל-פִּי-כֵן מֵאַחַר שְׁהַרְצוֹן אֵינּוּ חֲזָק, עָדִין יֵשׁ יִכְלֶת, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, לְמִצַּח הַנֶּחֱשׁ, חֲכַמַת הַטֵּבַע, שְׁיִחְזוֹר וְיִתְעוֹרֵר וְיִתְגַּבֵּר כְּבַתְחִלָּה, וְגַם עַל

Yosef says that it refers to matters that are *me'URaV* (commingled; מעורב) between husband and wife—i.e., their marriage bonds. David was to take his brothers’ *arubah* by obtaining from them bills of divorce (*Ketuvot* 9b). The *Be’Ibey Hanachal* relates this to Rebbe Nachman’s teaching here linking *arubah* with *orev* and charity. *In order for a person to liberally give away his money to charity, he has to deny his family the things they want, acting toward them with the cruelty of the raven.* This is the meaning of “matters that are commingled between husband and wife.” On account of a person’s love for his wife and children he cannot feel compassion for the poor. This is why David was charged with taking from his brothers their bills of divorce. It would teach them to be like ravens toward their families and so enable them to give abundantly to the poor. Such charity, the Rebbe has shown, defeats the Serpent’s Brow. The ensuing revelation of Divine Will leads to fear of Heaven and then a person does not have to engage in any labor or work, for he is sustained from on high by the continuous flow of God’s *chesed*. Reb Noson adds that *ARuBah* (ערובה) also alludes to *AREV* (ערב), a guarantor. Giving charity/*OReV* guarantees the revelation of Divine Will (cf. *Torat Natan* #20; see also n.135 above).

147. **...Serpent’s Brow/determinism will awaken and return to its original strength.** Rebbe Nachman returns to explain his earlier interpretation of “Then it attacked me” as “Afterwards, he again came against me.” How is it that after the determinists/wild animals have been defeated, the great and holy sage has to battle them a second time? The Rebbe explains that unless one’s faith is whole, the revelation of Divine Will it engenders is correspondingly less than perfect. And when Divine Will’s influence is anything but absolute, the Serpent’s Brow and deterministic ideology reawaken and return to their original strength. The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds that if the revelation of *Ratzon* is imperfect, the fear of Heaven it begets is deficient, and, so too, the container for receiving God’s *chesed* that this fear creates. People are then obliged to spend their days laboring to earn a living. From these fallen days not spent in the pursuit of greater holiness the Serpent’s Brow draws the sustenance it needs to return to its former strength and again attack the holy sage who seeks to reveal Divine Will (see n.120 above).

because charity is always beneficial and always counters the Serpent's Brow.¹⁴⁸

11B. This is the explanation of:¹⁴⁹

Rav Yehudah the Ethiopian related: Once we were traveling by *sefinta* (ship), and [in the water] we saw a precious stone that was being circled by a sea serpent. A *bar-amorai* (diver) descended to bring it. The sea serpent approached, wanting to swallow the ship. A *Pushkantza* bird came and chopped off its head.

Rashbam:

we saw a precious stone – in the water, with a sea serpent circling around it: Read this as **That sea serpent approached** - agitated, and wanting to swallow the ship: A *Pushkantza* came – a female raven: **and chopped**

148. **charity is always beneficial and always counters....** As Rebbe Nachman has explained (here and in §9 above), through reversing and rectifying the blemish engendered by unworthy elders whose length-of-days lacks holiness, charity cuts off sustenance and vitality from the Serpent's Brow. This, in turn, enhances the influence of Divine Will and silences the determinist's ideological challenges to faith in God.

Reb Noson writes: The strength of Divine Will's influence derives primarily from the mitzvah of charity. This is the reason we should give liberally, and keep on giving, over and over again, in order to strengthen Divine Will. Because the doubts that *Metzach haNachash* and the determinists instill in people's minds are almost without end, we have to repeatedly confront and counter them with the spiritual strength we gain from giving charity. And there is no better charity than that which is given to those poor people and worthy causes which increase holiness in the world. This includes giving charity for publishing the teachings of the holy sages and true tzaddikim. Printing books that disseminate their spiritual insights brings great benefit, as it increases people's holy *daat* and rectifies the fallen *daat* engendered by unworthy elders. The money one gives for this cause thus plays a direct role in revealing Divine Will in the world (see §7; *Torat Natan* #18). Reb Noson adds that the more charity a person gives to publish holy books, the more *Metzach haNachash* is countermanded and eliminated. This is because each additional holy book contains some new insight into God and the Torah. The Divine Will that it reveals eliminates the doubts which people have pertaining to faith and so diminishes any influence that the Serpent's Brow and determinists may have (*Torat Natan* #10).

Interestingly, the Ari teaches that all the mitzvot a person performs are inscribed on his *metzach* (brow, forehead), from where they illuminate his entire countenance. Each mitzvah has a representative letter, and it is the light of that letter which radiates from one's forehead until one performs another mitzvah, whose letter replaces that first letter. The exception to this is the mitzvah of charity, whose letter remains etched on a person's forehead for the entire week, as in "Charity remains forever" (Psalms 111:3; *Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar Shabbat* 4, p.388). We can understand this in light of Rebbe Nachman's teaching that the battle between faith and heresy is primarily a battle between the Brow of Divine Will and the Serpent's Brow. As the Rebbe has shown, the way to increase the strength and influence of *Metzach haRatzon* and overcome

זה צריכין כח הצדקה, כי הצדקה מועלת תמיד ועומדת תמיד
כנגד מצח הנחש כנ"ל:

וזה פרוש:
רב יהודא הנדואה משתעי:
זמנא חדא הוה אזלינא
בספינתא וחזינא הווא אבן
טבא דהדר לה תנינא, ונחת
בר אמוראי לאתויה. אתא
תנינא, קא בעי בלע לספינתא. אתא צפרא פושקנצא, פסקה

Metzach haNachash is by giving charity. This is indicated by the Ari's teaching that the letter representative the mitzvah of giving charity is the one that radiates longest on the brow.

In review: The essence of giving charity is to break one's cruelty and turn it into compassion (§1). The devotion of charity is extremely difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new widens the doors of opportunity and allows the person to enter more easily (§2). Were God's *chesed* to descend, we would not have to work. We have to see to constantly draw God's *chesed* (§3). However, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create the container and conduit to receive it through our fear of Heaven (§4). Fear of Heaven comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Revealing that everything is governed by God's Will contravenes determinism and generates belief in reward and punishment, thus producing fear (§5). Divine Will is revealed through the Three Festivals, whose miracles proclaim the rule of God's providence. But these proclamations are drowned out whenever deterministic ideology prevails (§6). The determinists are defeated by the great and holy sage who binds all wills to *Metzach haRatzon*. The contrast to this is *Metzach haNachash*, from which the heretical scientists and philosophers derive their influence (§7). *Metzach haNachash* acquires its strength from elders who fail to gain additional holiness and *daat* with each new day. The determinists are then able to prevent the holy sage, the worthy elder, from revealing Divine Will (§8). The benefit of giving charity is very great. It counters the influence of *Metzach haNachash*, as it rectifies the harm caused by unworthy elders. This reveals Divine Will, which leads to fear of Heaven and makes receiving God's *chesed* possible (§9). Even money taken by non-Jews is considered charity and effects a revelation of Divine Will (§10). However, if this revelation is less than complete, so that doubt remains about Divine providence's rule over all that occurs, then even though *Metzach haNachash* has been defeated, it can reawaken and regain its strength. Charity helps for this as well, because giving is always beneficial for countering the repeated attacks of *Metzach haNachash* and the determinists who would undermine faith in God (§11A).

149. **This is the explanation of.** Rebbe Nachman next shows how the concepts discussed in the lesson are alluded to in the following tale told by Rav Yehudah the Ethiopian. A composite reading of Rav Yehudah's tale based on the Rebbe's teaching appears in note 171 below.

The water turned blood red. Another sea serpent came, took [the precious stone] and hung it on [the dead sea serpent] and returned it to life. It again came wanting to swallow the ship. Again the {*Pushkantza*} bird came and chopped off its head. [The diver then] took the precious stone and threw it into the ship. We had with us *m'lichei* (salted) birds [for eating. When the diver] put the stone on top of them, [the birds returned to life,] took the stone and *parchu* (flew off) with it (*Bava Batra* 74b).

Once we were traveling by *sefinta* — This alludes to the root of Divine Will. That is where Moshe, who passed away in the root of Divine Will, is buried, as discussed above.¹⁵⁰ This is the significance of *SeFiNta*, as in “for there the lawgiver’s plot is *SaFuN* (hidden)” (Deuteronomy 33:21).¹⁵¹

we saw a precious stone — This is as in “a perfect stone is His *ratzon*,” alluding to the aforementioned Divine Will.¹⁵²

that was being circled by a sea serpent — This refers to the Serpent’s Brow, which envelops and overpowers Divine Will, as discussed above.¹⁵³

A *bar-AMoRai* descended to bring it — This alludes to the holy sage, as in “*EMoR* (Say) to wisdom: You are my sister” (Proverbs 7:4). The holy sage wants to increase his efforts and elevate will, to bind it to its root.¹⁵⁴

150. **Moshe...in the root of Divine Will...as discussed above.** See section 7 and note 84, that Moshe represents the root of Divine Will. Rav Yehudah hoped to bind his will to there.

151. **SeFiNta...SaFuN....** The Aramaic term *SeFiNta* (*SeFiNa* in Hebrew, ספינה) is etymologically similar to *SaFuN* (ספון), which means “hidden.” The verse cited here from Deuteronomy (*loc. cit.*) states that the burial site of “the lawgiver,” namely, Moshe Rabbeinu, is *safun* from the eyes of man. In the context of our lesson, this indicates that Divine Will, in whose root Moshe passed away, was concealed.

152. **a perfect stone is His *ratzon*...the aforementioned Divine Will.** This was explained above, in section 11A and note 144.

153. **sea serpent...Serpent’s Brow...overpowers Divine Will, as discussed above.** See the end

off its head - of the sea serpent: **The water turned blood red** - due to the abundance of blood, since [the sea serpent] was huge: **It again came wanting to swallow the ship** - the *Pushkantza* came and killed it. Then the diver went and took the precious stone and put it on top of those birds, to see if they would come alive. They returned to life: **and flew off with it** - with that stone:

דְּתַנִּינָא, אֲתַהֲפֹכוּ מֵיָא וְהוּוּ דְמָא
- מֵרַב דָּם, שְׁהָיָה גְדוֹל הַרְבֵּה:
הַדְר קָא בְעֵי לְטְבוּעֵי לְסַפִּינְתָא
- אֲתָא הָהוּא פּוּשְׁקַנְצָא וְקָטְלָהּ,
וְאַזְל בַּר אַמּוֹרָאֵי וְשִׁקְלָהּ לְהָהוּא
אַבְן טָבָא, וְתַלְיִנְהוּ לְהִנְהוּ צְפָרִי -
לְנִסּוֹת אִם יִחְיוּ וְחָיו: וּפְרַחוּ לְהוּ
בְהָרִי - הָהוּא אַבְן:

לְרִישָׁה. אֲתַהֲפֹכוּ מֵיָא וְהוּוּ
דְמָא אֲתָא תַנִּינָא חֲבֵרָה,
שְׁקִלָהּ וְתַלְיָא לָהּ וְאַחֲיָהּ. הַדְר
אֲתִי, קָא בְעֵי בְלַעַה לְסַפִּינְתָא.
הַדְר אֲתִי צְפָרָא (פּוּשְׁקַנְצָא),
פְּסָקָה לְרִישָׁה, שְׁקִלָהּ לְהָהוּא
אַבְן טָבָא, שְׁדִיָה לְסַפִּינְתָא.
הוּוּ צְפָרָא מְלִיחֵי בְהָרִין,

אוֹתְבִינְהוּ עַלְיָהוּ, שְׁקִלוּהוּ וּפְרַחוּ לְהוּ בְהָרִי: (כבא בתרא עד:)

זְמַנָּא חֲדָא אֲזַלִּינָא בְּסַפִּינְתָא - זֶה בְּחִינַת שְׁרֵשׁ הַרְצוֹן, שְׁשָׁם
קְבוּרַת מֹשֶׁה, שְׁנִסְתַּלַּק בְּשְׁרֵשׁ הַרְצוֹן כַּנִּל. וְזֶה בְּחִינַת סַפִּינְתָא,
בְּחִינַת (דְּבָרִים לֵג): “כִּי שָׁם חִלַּקְתָּ מִחֻקֵּי סֶפֶן.”

וְחִזִּינָא הָהוּא אַבְן טָבָא דְהַדְר לָהּ תַנִּינָא - הֵינּוּ בְּחִינַת: אַבְן
שְׁלֵמָה רְצוֹנוֹ, בְּחִינַת הַרְצוֹן הַנִּל.

דְהַדְר לָהּ תַנִּינָא - זֶה מִצַּח הַנְחָשׁ, שְׁמִסְבֵּב וּמְתַגְבֵּר עַל הַרְצוֹן
כַּנִּל.

וְנַחַת בַּר אַמּוֹרָאֵי לְאַתּוּיָהּ - הֵינּוּ בְּחִינַת הַחֲכָם שְׁבִקְדָשָׁה,
בְּחִינַת (מְשָׁלִי ז): “אֲמַר לְחַכְמָה אַחֹתִי אֲתָּ,” שְׁהַחֲכָם שְׁבִקְדָשָׁה
רָצָה לְהַתְגַּבֵּר וּלְהַעֲלוֹת הַרְצוֹן, לְקַשְׁרוֹ לְשְׁרֵשׁ הַרְצוֹן כַּנִּל.

of section 7, that *Metzach haNachash* engages the holy sage’s mind in subtle analysis, attempting to conceal the Divine Will hidden in nature (*Parparaot LeChokhmah*).

154. **AMoRai...holy sage...EMoR to wisdom...my sister....** Proverbs (*loc. cit.*) states: “*Emor* (Say) to wisdom, ‘You are my sister.’” A person should become as familiar with wisdom as with his closest relatives (*Rashi; Metzudat David*). Rebbe Nachman links *EMoR* (אמר), which the verse relates to wisdom, with *AMoRai* (אמוראי). He thus sees the diver of Rav Yehudah’s tale as a metaphor for the holy sage who binds people’s wills to the root of Divine Will (see §7 and n.81-82).

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains that the *bar amorai*/sage went after the precious stone/*ratzon* to raise it up to the root of *Ratzon*. Alternatively, he explains that when the Serpent’s

The sea serpent approached, wanting to swallow the ship — In other words, the Serpent's Brow, the root of determinism, came and wanted to swallow the *sefinta*, the root of Divine Will, as in “for there the lawgiver's plot is *safun*.” The Serpent's Brow wanted to also overpower the root of Divine Will and inject blemish and heresy there, God forbid.

A *Pushkantza* came — This refers to a raven.

and chopped off its head — The explanation is: The raven—which conceptually alludes to charity, since the essential devotion of charity is to be like the raven, as in “And I have commanded the ravens...”—comes to transform the instinct of cruelty into compassion.¹⁵⁵ Through this we triumph over the Serpent's Brow/deterministic ideology,¹⁵⁶ because from the very forest itself comes the [handle of] the ax, as discussed above.¹⁵⁷

This is the meaning of “A *Pushkantza* came”—i.e., a raven/charity—“and chopped off its head.” It cut off <and defeated> the head of the serpent. This refers to the Serpent's Brow, which it defeated and killed by means of charity.¹⁵⁸

The water turned blood red — In other words, overcoming the Serpent's Brow, the root of determinism, defeats and quiets the roaring of the wild animals that prey upon many of our fellow Jews. Then, the festival's proclamation, which is the revelation of Divine Will, is heard. And then, “The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge...,” as discussed above.¹⁵⁹

Brow attempts to plant heresy in a Jew and get him to deny Divine Will, the *bar amorai*/sage binds that Jew's will to the root of Divine Will, and so strengthens his faith in God.

155. **The raven...charity...transform the instinct of cruelty into compassion.** Rebbe Nachman taught this connection between the raven and charity in section 1 above.

156. **Through this we triumph over the Serpent's Brow....** In section 9, Rebbe Nachman explained that the power of charity, which is “after many days,” rectifies the fallen and blemished days of unworthy elders. Their length-of-days is the source of vitality of the Serpent's Brow. Therefore, when a person turns cruelty into compassion and gives charity, he reverses the blemished length-of-days of unworthy elders and vanquishes the Serpent's Brow.

157. **from the very forest... as discussed above.** See section 9 and notes 119 and 120, that just as the ax handle is made from the wood of trees and the ax is used to fell trees, cruelty stems from the Serpent's Brow and cruelty-transformed-into-charity is the very thing that defeats the Serpent's Brow.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains that breaking one's heartlessness and transforming

אתא תנינא קא בעי בלע לספינתא – הינו שבא בחינת מצח הנחש, שרש חכמת הטבע, ורצה לבלע הספינה, בחינת שרש הרצון, בחינת: “כי שם חלקת מחקק ספון,” כי מצח הנחש רצה להתגבר גם בשרש הרצון, להטיל פגם וכפירה שם, חס ושלום, כנ”ל.

אתא פושקנצא – הינו עורב,

פסקה לרישה – פרוש, שבא בחינת עורב, דהינו צדקה כנ”ל, כי עקר עבודת הצדקה – בבחינת עורב, בחינת: “ואת הערבים צויתי” וכו' להפך אכזריות לרחמנות, ועל ידי זה מתגברים על מצח הנחש, חכמת הטבע כנ”ל, כי מנה ובה אבא ליזיל בה נרגא כנ”ל.

וזהו שאתא פושקנצא, דהינו עורב בחינת צדקה, ופסקה לרישה, שחתך ראש הנחש בחינות מצח הנחש, שהכניעו והרגו על-ידי הצדקה כנ”ל.

אתהפכו מיא והוו דמא – הינו שעל-ידי-זה שהכניע מצח הנחש, שרש חכמת הטבע, על-ידי-זה נכנעו ונפלו קול שאגת החיות רעות, הדורסים וטורפים רבים מבני עמנו כנ”ל, ואזי נשמע קול הקריאה של יום-טוב, שהוא התגלות הרצון, ואזי “ישמח צדיק כי חזו נקם” וכו' כנ”ל.

it into compassion entails curtailing the money one spends on oneself and one's family to, instead, give liberally to the poor. This is the meaning of Rebbe Nachman's teaching that the essential devotion of charity is to be like the raven. As the Sages teach: A person should make himself as cruel as a raven toward his children and the members of his household... (*Eruvin* 22a). The difference here is that his cruelty is for the sake of feeling compassion for the poor and, ultimately, compassion for his family. And it is specifically this cruelty which defeats the Serpent's Brow, the source of cruelty.

158. **Pushkantza...raven/charity...killed it by means of charity.** Having equated the *Pushkantza* bird with the raven, which is symbolic of charity, the Rebbe explains here that “A *Pushkantza* came” alludes to giving charity to chop off the head (source) of the sea serpent/Serpent's Brow that would conceal Divine Will.

159. **overcoming the Serpent's Brow...festival's proclamation...as discussed above.** This is

“The water turned” alludes to the roaring of the wild animals, as in “my roaring pours forth like water” (Job 3:23).¹⁶⁰ “Blood red”—this is as in “The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge, he will bathe his feet in the blood of the wicked one.” By quieting the roar of the <enemies>/wild animals, “The righteous one will rejoice when he sees revenge...,” for the festival’s proclamation is heard, as discussed above.¹⁶¹

Another sea serpent came, took it and hung it on [the dead sea serpent] and returned it to life — The Serpent’s Brow came and “took it,” the precious stone. It took the precious stone, as in “a perfect stone is His *ratzon*.” “And hung it”—i.e., it raised doubt about it. This is “and hung it,” as when something hangs in doubt. It raised doubt about *Ratzon*, the “perfect stone.” Through this it “returned it to life”—determinism/the Serpent’s Brow was revived. Determinism returned and gained influence on account of the doubt raised about Divine Will, as discussed above.¹⁶² And this is:

It again came wanting to swallow the ship — The sea serpent/Serpent’s Brow again came “to swallow the ship”—<i.e., to blemish> the root of Divine Will, <God forbid>.

Again the *Pushkantza* bird came and chopped off its head — In other words, the raven/charity came back “and chopped off its head.” It killed the Serpent’s Brow and defeated it, because charity always defeats the Serpent’s Brow, as discussed above.¹⁶³

explained in detail in sections 6 and 7. People do not hear the festival’s proclamation revealing Divine Will on account of the roar of the wild animals, the determinists. But when that roar is quieted by charity’s chopping off the head of the Serpent’s Brow, people can hear each festival’s proclamation and the call of Divine Will.

160. **water...roaring of the wild animals...roaring pours forth like water.** Iyov complains that he is even denied pleasure from his food. His suffering, which flows like water, causes him to roar with anguish even when sitting at a meal (*Metzudat David*). In the context of our lesson, the roaring caused by suffering symbolizes the roaring of the wild animals that drowns out the festival’s proclamation of Divine Will. When Divine Will is concealed, Divine Wrath prevails—in the form of decrees that bring anguish and pain. Thus, “water” in Rav Yehudah’s tale alludes to the roaring of the wild animals/determinists.

161. **Blood red...blood of the wicked one...as discussed above.** As explained in section 6 above (and see nn.67-72), God’s taking revenge against the nations is the principle of reward

וְזֶהוּ 'אֶתְהַפְּכוּ מֵאֵא', הֵינּוּ שְׂאֵגַת הַחַיּוֹת רָעוֹת, בְּחֵינַת (אִיּוֹב ג'):
 "יִתְּכוּ כַמִּים שְׂאֵגְתִּי". וְהוּוּ דְמָא', זֶה בְּחֵינַת: "יִשְׂמַח צְדִיק כִּי
 חָזָה נָקָם, פָּעַמְיוּ יִרְחֵץ בְּדָם הָרָשָׁע" כַּנ"ל. כִּי עַל-יַדֵּי הַכְּנָעַת
 קוֹל שְׂאֵגַת הַחַיּוֹת רָעוֹת, עַל-יַדֵּי-זֶה: "יִשְׂמַח צְדִיק כִּי חָזָה נָקָם"
 וְכוּ', כִּי נִשְׁמַע קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב כַּנ"ל.

אֶתָּא תַנִּינָא חֲבֵרָה, שְׂקֵלָה וְתֵלֵיא לָהּ וְאַחִיָּה – שֶׁבָּא בְּחֵינַת מִצַּח
 הַנְּחָשׁ, וְשְׂקֵלָה לְאָכֵן טוֹב הֵנ"ל, שֶׁנֶּטְלָה אֶת הָאָכֵן טוֹב, בְּחֵינַת:
 אָכֵן שְׂלֵמָה רְצוֹנוֹ. וְתֵלֵיא לָהּ, הֵינּוּ שֶׁהֵטִיל בּוֹ סָפֵק, וְזֶהוּ: וְתֵלֵיא
 לָהּ, כְּמוֹ דְבַר הַתּוֹלָה בְּסָפֵק, שֶׁהֵטִיל סָפֵק בְּרָצוֹן, שֶׁהוּא בְּחֵינַת
 אָכֵן טוֹב הֵנ"ל, וְעַל-יַדֵּי-זֶה 'וְאַחִיָּה' – שֶׁחָזַר וְחִיָּה חֲכָמַת הַטְּבַע,
 מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, כִּי חֲכָמַת הַטְּבַע חָזְרָה וְנִתְגַבְּרָה עַל-יַדֵּי שֶׁהִיָּה סָפֵק
 בְּרָצוֹן כַּנ"ל. וְזֶהוּ:

הִדַּר אֶתִּי קָא בְּעֵי בְּלַעָה לְסַפִּינָתָא – שֶׁחָזַר וּבָא הַתַּנִּין מִצַּח
 הַנְּחָשׁ לְבַלַּע הַסְּפִינָה, בְּחֵינַת שֶׁרַשׁ הָרָצוֹן, חַס וְשָׁלוֹם, כַּנ"ל.

הִדַּר אֶתִּי צְפָרָא פּוֹשְׁקֵנְצָא, פְּסִיקָה לְרִישָׁה – הֵינּוּ שֶׁחָזַר וּבָא
 הָעוֹרֵב בְּחֵינַת צְדָקָה כַּנ"ל, וּפְסִיקָה לְרִישָׁה, שֶׁהִרְגָה אֶת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ
 וְהַכְּנִיעוֹ, כִּי תַמִּיד מְכַנְיַעִין אֶת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ עַל-יַדֵּי הַצְּדָקָה כַּנ"ל.

and punishment. When people see the righteous rewarded and the wicked punished—and not as the determinists claim, that everything which happens is the inevitable consequence of antecedent events and conditions combined with the laws of nature—it is clear that there is a God who judges as He wills. This silencing of deterministic ideology causes the festival’s proclamation to be heard, so that Divine Will is revealed and the righteous rejoice.

162. **Determinism returned and gained influence...as discussed above.** See the end of section 11A, where Rebbe Nachman explained that if faith in Divine Will is less than perfect, the ensuing doubts in a person’s mind revive *Metzach haNachash* and enable the previously defeated determinists to again conceal Divine Will.

163. **charity always defeats the Serpent’s Brow, as discussed above.** See the end of section 11A and note 148 above. As cited from *Torat Natan* (#18) there: The power of Divine Will’s influence derives primarily from the mitzvah of charity. This is the reason we should give liberally, and keep on giving, over and again, in order to strengthen Divine Will.

He took the precious stone and threw it into the ship — After completely subduing the Serpent's Brow/determinism, he took the precious stone/Divine Will—"a perfect stone is His *ratzon*." "And threw it into the ship"—he threw it into the root of Divine Will, in which all the wills are bound.¹⁶⁴

We had with us *m'lichei* birds. [When the driver] put the stone on top of them, [the birds returned to life,] took [the stone] and *parchu* (flew off) with it — The explanation is: "We had with us *m'lichei* birds"—this alludes to the souls of Israel, our fellow Jews who mistakenly followed after the deterministic scientists, those wild animals that prey upon many of our fellow Jews, as discussed above.¹⁶⁵

This is the meaning of "*m'lichei* birds," for they are "as birds trapped in a snare" (Ecclesiastes 9:12).¹⁶⁶ *M'LiChei* (salted) connotes *meMuLaCh*, i.e., confused.¹⁶⁷ They, too, were confused by the aforementioned wild animals and mistakenly followed after them. However, now "they flew off" and emerged safely as a result of the precious stone—i.e., Divine Will that has now been revealed <through charity>, as discussed above.¹⁶⁸

164. **threw it into the root of Divine Will....** The phrase "threw it into the root of Divine Will" signifies the holy sage binding and attaching people's faith to the Brow of Divine Will. That he "*threw* it" indicates the need for acting swiftly and vigorously. This is because when faith is less than perfect, and all the more so when it is riddled with doubt, the Serpent's Brow will use that lack of wholeness to regain influence and renew its concealment of Divine Will. The *bar-amorai*/holy sage therefore *threw* the precious stone/Divine Will into the root of Divine Will. If he was to succeed at preventing the blemish of faith that determinism's return engenders, it was imperative that he act quickly and with force to bind all wills to the root of Divine Will and by doing so silence all doubts.

165. **those wild animals that prey upon many of our fellow Jews, as discussed above.** See section 6 (and nn.74-75), in which Rebbe Nachman likens the *chakhmey hateva* who lead Jews astray to wild animals (literally, "evil beasts") that claw and tear apart their prey.

166. **as birds trapped in a snare.** Kohelet (*loc. cit.*) teaches that no human knows when his time will come. "As fish caught in a flimsy net, as birds trapped in a snare, so are men caught at a time of misfortune, when it falls upon them suddenly." In the context of our lesson, "salted birds" alludes to Jewish souls trapped in the snare of deterministic ideology (see the following note).

167. **meMuLaCh, i.e., confused.** Exodus 30:35 states that in preparing the incense that was offered on the Temple Altar, it was necessary to ensure that its eleven different spices were *memulach*. Commenting on this term, Rashi cites *Targum Onkelos* that the ingredients had to be

וְשָׁקְלָהּ לְהוּא אֶבֶן טָבָא וְשָׂדִיָּה לְסַפִּינְתָא – כִּי אַחַר שְׁהַכְנִיעַ
אֶת מִצַּח הַנָּחָשׁ, חֲכַמַת הַטְּבַע, לְגַמְרִי, אֲזִי נָטַל אֶת הָאֶבֶן טוֹב,
בְּחִינַת הָרָצוֹן, בְּחִינַת: "אֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה רְצוֹנוֹ", וְשָׂדִיָּה לְסַפִּינְתָא –
שְׁהַשְׁלִיכוֹ לְשֵׁרֵשׁ הָרָצוֹן, שְׁשָׁם מְקַשְׂרִין כָּל הָרָצוֹנוֹת כַּנִּלְ:

הָהוּ צַפְרֵי מְלִיחֵי בַהֲדָן, אוֹתְבִינְהוּ עַלִּיהוּ, שְׁקִלוּהוּ וּפְרָחוּ לְהוּ
– פְּרוּשׁ, שְׁהָיָה עִמָּנוּ צַפְרֵי מְלִיחֵי, הֵינּוּ נַפְשׁוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבְּנֵי
עִמָּנוּ שְׁטָעוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם, אַחֲרֵי חֲכַמֵי הַטְּבַע, שְׁהֵם בְּחִינַת חֵיוֹת
רְעוּת, שְׁדוֹרְסִים וְטוֹרְפִים רַבִּים מִבְּנֵי עִמָּנוּ כַּנִּלְ.

וְזֵהוּ: 'צַפְרֵי מְלִיחֵי', כִּי הֵם "כְּצַפְרֵים הָאֲחֻזוֹת בַּפֶּח" (קהלת ט).
וְזֵהוּ 'מְלִיחֵי' – לְשׁוֹן מְמַלְחָה, הֵינּוּ מִבְּלָבָל, כִּי גַם הֵם נִתְבַּלְבְּלוּ
עַל-יְדֵי חֵיוֹת רְעוּת הַנִּלְ, וְטָעוּ גַם כֵּן אַחֲרֵיהֶם, וְעַכְשָׁו פְּרָחוּ
לְהוּ וַיֵּצְאוּ לְשָׁלוֹם עַל-יְדֵי הָאֶבֶן טוֹב הַנִּלְ, עַל-יְדֵי בְּחִינַת הָרָצוֹן
שֶׁנִּתְגַּלְתָּה עִתָּה כַּנִּלְ.

"thoroughly mixed." The root letters of *meMuLaCh* (מְמַלְחָה) are the same as those of *M'LiChei* (מְלִיחֵי). In our context, Rebbe Nachman teaches that the *m'lichei* birds allude to the mixed-up and confused Jewish souls who believe in the erroneous ideas put forth by the determinists.

168. **emerged safely... Divine Will that has now been revealed through charity, as discussed above.** Rebbe Nachman interprets the *m'lichei* birds of Rav Yehudah's tale as an allusion to what happens when the principle of reward and punishment seems not to be operating in the world. When people see the wicked flourishing and the righteous suffering, they find it difficult to believe that whatever happens is governed by Divine providence, God's Will (cf. Lesson #5 and nn.333-335 later in this volume). Nevertheless, charity enables one to prevail over this confusion. As the Rebbe has explained, giving charity defeats the Serpent's Brow and quiets the roaring of the wild animals/determinists. People are then mindful of the miracles associated with each of the Three Festivals. By heeding the festival's proclamation and acknowledging the resulting revelation of Divine Will, their doubts about faith fall silent and they emerge safely from the deterministic confusion in which they would have been ensnared. In fact, Reb Noson adds, not only do the trapped Jewish souls emerge safely, but even the determinists undergo a radical transformation when Divine Will is revealed. Instead of "roaring" against the festival's proclamation and raising their voices to deny Divine Will, these heretics begin loudly declaring their belief in God and revealing His Divine Will in the world (*Torat Natan* #21).

Reb Noson clarifies Rebbe Nachman's earlier teaching (see §11A: end), that if the revelation of *Ratzon* is insufficiently powerful and firm, the Serpent's Brow reawakens and returns. The question is: Why isn't the charity that initially defeats *Metzach haNachash* enough

And when Divine Will is revealed, it leads to fear of Heaven, through which we are able to receive lovingkindness, as discussed above.¹⁶⁹ *PaRChu* (flew off) alludes to this as well, as in “and behold! the staff of Aharon the Levite *PaRaCh* (had blossomed).”¹⁷⁰ This refers to the bestowal of lovingkindness produced by the fear of Heaven when Divine Will is revealed.¹⁷¹

to eliminate it once and for all? Reb Noson explains that confused souls, though they give charity, cannot completely escape determinism’s snare because their faith and *ratzon* are still weak. They are unable to traverse the great chasm between the heresies of the Serpent’s Brow and the faith that comes when the holy sage binds one’s *ratzon* to the root of Divine Will. The solution is to again give charity. The more we give, the more powerful and firm Divine Will’s revelation becomes, until *Metzach haNachash* is eliminated entirely. In this, the process of rectification, of developing faith, resembles its counterpart, the process of becoming ensnared in the trap of heresy and losing one’s faith. No person turns into a heretic overnight. The process is a gradual one, as questions and doubts slowly build in his mind until, eventually, God forbid, he turns against God. The same is true of returning to God. Faith is built up gradually. A person gives charity and goes on giving, until, eventually, no doubts remain about Divine Will and it is decisively clear to him that everything is governed solely by God’s *Ratzon* (*Torat Natan* #17).

169. **it leads to fear of Heaven...receive lovingkindness...above.** See sections 4-5, that when Divine Will is revealed and people see the consequences of their deeds, this produces fear of Heaven. This fear, in turn, creates the container one must have in order to receive a boundless flow of God’s *chesed*.

170. **PaRChu...PaRaCh.** Rebbe Nachman explains one last allusion in the tale. Rav Yehudah relates that after the holy sage/diver put the precious stone/Divine Will on the *m’lichei* birds/confused souls, they returned to life and flew off with the stone. Their returning to life connotes the confused souls being relieved of their doubts and returning to faith in Divine Will. As explained above (see §5), this revelation of Divine Will produces the fear of Heaven a person needs to create a container with which to receive God’s *chesed*. The Rebbe teaches here that the word *PaRChu* (“flew off,” פרחו) alludes to this. He links this with his teaching earlier in the lesson (§4), that *chesed* (the *kohen*, Aharon) has to be received through the Levite (*gevurah*, fear of Heaven), as in “and behold! the staff of Aharon of the house of Levi *PaRaCh* (had blossomed, פרח).” The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds that when a person’s fear of Heaven is perfect, so that he merits receiving God’s lovingkindness in abundance, he does not have to spend all his days and years earning a living. Consequently, *Metzach haNachash* has no means of sustenance, and deterministic ideology is eliminated entirely by the holy sage who binds all wills to the root of Divine Will.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* adds the following insight: Even after his passing, Moshe continues to counter *Metzach haNachash* (i.e., heresy and idolatry), just as he did throughout his life, in order to make converts and elicit Divine Favor. As Rebbe Nachman explains in *Likutey Moharan* I, 215, this is the secret behind Moshe’s burial in the Land of Moav, opposite the idol of Baal Peor. His presence there has brought about untold *tikkunim* (spiritual rectifications), including, many generations after his passing, the rectification involving Naomi and her two Moabite daughters-in-law, the righteous Ruth and less than righteous Orpah. As told in the

וְאִזִּי כְּשֶׁנִּתְגַּלָּה הָרָצוֹן, אִזִּי נֶעֱשֶׂה יְרָאָה, וְעַל־יְדֵי יְרָאָה מְקַבְּלִין
הַחֹסֵד כִּנּוּל. וְזֶה גַם כֵּן בְּחִינַת פְּרָחוּ, בְּחִינַת: “וְהִנֵּה פָּרַח מִטָּה
אֲהָרֹן לְבַיִת לְוִי,” הֵינּוּ בְּחִינַת הַשְּׁפָעַת הַחֹסֵד עַל־יְדֵי הַיְרָאָה,
שֶׁנֶּעֱשֶׂה עַל־יְדֵי הַתְּגִלוֹת הָרָצוֹן כִּנּוּל:

Book of Ruth, when Naomi chose to return home from Moav, where she had resided for many years, Ruth converted and accompanied her mother-in-law to the Land of Israel. King David was one of Ruth’s illustrious descendants. Orpah, on the other hand, returned to her family and their idolatrous ways. The Talmud relates that Orpah later turned to harlotry. She slept with many men and gave birth to Goliath and three other giants, each of whom later fought against King David (see 2 Samuel 21; *Sotah* 42b). Moshe’s burial in Moav, from where he counters heresy and idolatry to this day, was a major influence in Ruth’s conversion, and the source of strength that enabled her descendant, King David, to defeat Goliath and silence the determinism which the Philistine sought to spread. Citing the teaching in *Kiddushin* (22b) that Rav Yehudah the Ethiopian was himself a convert, the *Parparaot LeChokhmah* suggests that this explains why his tale is about traveling in a *sefinta*—i.e., the root of Divine Will, in which Moshe passed away (§7), and from which the desire to convert arises. This is also the reason it is customary to give to charity when standing at the grave of a tzaddik. All tzaddikim are conceptually synonymous with Moshe (*Likutey Moharan* I, 2:6). Giving charity at a tzaddik’s burial site (as Rebbe Nachman suggested we do when reciting *Tikkun HaKlali* at his grave) defeats *Metzach haNachash* and reveals Divine Will and Favor in the world.

171. **when Divine Will is revealed.** In the context of our lesson, the tale told by Rav Yehudah the Ethiopian translates as follows:

Rav Yehudah the Ethiopian related: Once we were traveling by *sefinta*, and in the water we saw a precious stone that was being circled by a sea serpent — People went searching for Divine Will but found it concealed by the Serpent’s Brow.

A *bar-amorai* descended to bring it — The great and holy sage attempted to reveal Divine Will by binding all wills to the root of Divine Will.

The sea serpent approached, wanting to swallow the ship — But the Serpent’s Brow sought to thwart the holy sage by introducing heresy into the root of Divine Will.

A *Pushkantza* bird came and chopped off its head — So the people gave liberally to charity, and this countered the Serpent’s Brow and revealed Divine Will.

The water turned blood red — As a result, they heard the proclamation of the Three Festivals and were able to recognize the principle of reward and punishment operating in the world.

Another sea serpent came, took the precious stone and hung it on the dead sea serpent and returned it to life. It again came wanting to swallow the ship — However, because the influence of Divine Will was not sufficiently powerful, not everyone’s faith was perfect. The Serpent’s Brow was able to return and awaken new doubts in order to conceal Divine Will, intending to then introduce heresy into the root of Divine Will.

Again the *Pushkantza* bird came and chopped off its head — The people again gave charity and this finally put an end to the Serpent’s Brow.

12. This also relates to healing because it is a cure for all wounds. This is because all these concepts signify healing.¹⁷²

Charity is healing, as in “charity, with healing in its wings” (Malachi 3:20).¹⁷³ “An elder is one who has acquired wisdom” alludes to healing, as in “the tongue of the wise heals” (Proverbs 12:18).¹⁷⁴ *Ratzon* signifies healing, as it is written “God...has sent me to bind up the wounded of heart.... To proclaim a year of *ratzon* (favor)” (Isaiah 61:1-2).¹⁷⁵ The work of the Act of Creation is healing, as it is written “the repair work went well in their hands” (2 Chronicles 24:13).¹⁷⁶

Healing a wound entails a number of steps. To begin with, the mouth of the wound has to be opened. Then a purgative must be [applied] in order to draw out and remove the pus and infected blood from inside the wound. After that, all the blood has to be cleansed until no infections

The diver then took the precious stone and threw it into the ship — The holy sage then bound Divine Will to the root of Divine Will, so that all wills would be bound to there.

We had with us *m'lichei* birds — But there were among the people some who had mistakenly followed the deterministic scientists and been deeply confused by their teachings.

When the diver put the stone on top of them, the birds returned to life — So the holy sage brought them to a more direct revelation of Divine Will, which silenced all their doubts and restored their faith.

took the stone and *parchu* with it — Then these people, too, experienced Divine Will and as a result acquired the fear of Heaven they needed in order to receive God’s lovingkindness. This freed them from having to labor and work for their livelihood. Like the priests of God in the Holy Temple, they were free to spend their days and years engaged in pursuing spiritual devotions and bringing greater awareness of God to the world.

No “In review” appears here as all the major themes of the lesson are reviewed over the course of the section.

172. **This also relates to healing...signify healing.** “This” refers to our lesson. Rebbe Nachman will show that the four major concepts discussed in the lesson correspond to the four steps in healing a wound. As mentioned in note 1 above, the Rebbe added this section to the lesson for the benefit of his follower Reb Getzel of Ladizin, who was very ill and could not travel to Breslov for that Shavuot (see also n.189 below).

173. **charity, with healing in its wings.** In the verse immediately preceding the one quoted in the text, the prophet Malakhi speaks of Judgment Day. On that day, God will remove the sun from its sheath to destroy the wicked. They will be consumed by its burning heat like stalks of dried out straw. However, for those who remained faithful to God, it will be a benevolent sun—“a sun of charity”—which will provide healing.

174. **An elder...acquired wisdom...tongue of the wise heals.** Rebbe Nachman quoted this Talmudic teaching above, in section 8 (and see n.100). There he contrasts the worthy elder, one

יב. וְזֶה בְּחִינַת רְפוּאוֹת, כִּי הוּא רְפוּאָה לְכָל הַמַּכּוֹת, כִּי כָל בְּחִינּוֹת אֱלוֹ הֵם בְּחִינַת רְפוּאוֹת.

צְדָקָה הִיא רְפוּאָה, בְּבְחִינַת (מלאכי ג): “צְדָקָה מְרַפֵּא בְּכַנְפֶיהָ.” זֶקֶן - זֶה קִנְיָה חֻכְמָה (קדושין לב): הוּא בְּחִינַת רְפוּאָה, בְּבְחִינַת (משלי יב): “לְשׁוֹן חֻכְמִים מְרַפֵּא.” רְצוֹן הוּא בְּחִינַת רְפוּאָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתוּב (ישעיה סא): “ה’ שָׁלַחְנִי לְחַבֵּשׁ לְנִשְׁבְּרֵי לֵב, לְקַרְא שְׁנַת רְצוֹן.” מְלָאכֶת מַעֲשֵׂה בְרָאשִׁית הוּא רְפוּאָה, כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתוּב (דברי-הימים ב' כד): “וַתַּעַל אֲרוּכָה לְמַלְאכָה בְיָדָם.”

כִּי רְפוּאוֹת הַמַּכָּה הִיא עַל-יְדֵי כְּמָה בְּחִינּוֹת. שְׁבַתְחָלָה צְרִיכִין שְׂיִפְתַּח פִּי הַמַּכָּה, אַחַר כֵּן צְרִיךְ כַּח הַמוֹשֶׁה, שְׂיִמְשֶׁךְ וְיִוצִיא הַלְחָה וְהַדְמִים הַמְקַלְקְלִים מִתּוֹךְ הַמַּכָּה, אַחֲרֵי-כֵן צְרִיכִין לְהַדִּיחַ כָּל הַדְמִים, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה בָהֶם שׁוֹם קְלָקוּל וְעַכְרִיוֹת, כְּדִי

who acquires wisdom and so is deserving of the appellation, with the unworthy elders who fail to advance each day in holiness and *daat*. Here, the Rebbe cites Proverbs (*loc. cit.*), that wisdom is synonymous with healing. The *Metzudat David* explains that the inherent pleasantness in the words of the wise moves people to repent, and by returning to God [the decrees and judgment against them are mitigated and] they are healed.

175. **Ratzon signifies healing...a year of ratzon.** The verses cited here open the same chapter of Isaiah cited in section 3, in which Yeshayahu foresees the Divine Favor which awaits the Jewish people in messianic times: “Foreigners will stand and pasture your flocks.... And you will be called ‘priests of God.’” Here the prophet reports: “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because God has anointed me. He has sent me to bind up (heal) the wounded of heart.... To proclaim a year of favor unto God, and a day of vengeance by our Lord.” With this proof-text Rebbe Nachman shows the connection between *ratzon* (favor) and healing (“bind up”).

176. **the repair work went well in their hands.** In recounting how King Yoash of Judah brought about the renovation of God’s Temple in Jerusalem, Scripture states: “The foremen did their jobs; the repair work went well in their hands, and they restored God’s Temple to its proper state and reinforced it.” The Hebrew term *arukhah*, translated in the verse’s context as “repair,” literally means “recovery” and “healing.” Having earlier established the link between the Tabernacle (Temple) and the Act of Creation (see §3 and nn.29-30), Rebbe Nachman brings this proof-text discussing the Temple’s “recovery” to show that the Act of Creation corresponds to healing.

Thus, each of the four concepts—charity, wisdom/worthy elder, *Ratzon*, and the Act of Creation (God’s *chesed*)—signifies a step in the healing process, as Rebbe Nachman explains next.

or impurities are left, so that the blood can flow and circulate, coursing regularly without any obstruction. For when the blood that flows and circulates through the <body's arteries> reaches an area that is dysfunctional, i.e., the location of the wound, its flow is retarded there, and all the impurities and infections in the blood collect at that spot. That is what generally happens: all the different kinds of impurities and infections in the blood collect at the point of dysfunction, so that the blood is retarded there and cannot circulate in the manner which it ordinarily flows. For the blood courses in a regular manner, circulating through the body so many times an hour, and the like. But when there are impurities in the blood, it is blocked at the point of dysfunction, and is unable to circulate normally. It is therefore necessary to cleanse and purify [the blood]. Finally, we have to close the mouth of the wound.¹⁷⁷

Each of these steps of healing—<i.e., firstly, opening the mouth of the wound, then purging it of the pus, then purifying and cleansing the infected blood, and finally sealing the mouth of the wound>—is accomplished by means of the concepts discussed above [in the lesson].

Giving charity causes the wound to open, as in “open, you shall open.”¹⁷⁸

<“An elder is one who has acquired> wisdom” is the purgative, as in “the drawing of wisdom [is more precious] *mePeNiNiM* (than pearls)” (Job 28:18)¹⁷⁹—*meliPhNai u'meliPhNiM* (from the innermost recesses).¹⁸⁰ {As our Sages, of blessed memory, taught on the verse “She is more precious than *peninim*”—*meliphnai v'liphnim* (see *Yerushalmi, Shabbat* 69b on Proverbs 3:15).}¹⁸¹ Wisdom purges the dysfunction from the innermost

177. **Healing a wound entails a number of steps...collect at that spot...close the mouth of the wound.** The reason Rebbe Nachman specifically discusses the healing of a wound is explained in note 189 below. His barometer for determining health is the bloodstream. This is as the Talmud teaches: “At the head of all illnesses am I, blood” (*Bava Batra* 58b, and see *Rashbam, s.v. b'reish kol*). When impurities in the blood collect at the site of the wound, breeding infection in that part of the body, blood circulation is retarded.

178. **Charity causes the wound to open...open, you shall open....** As explained above, in section 2 and note 16, charity is always a beginning and an opening. In the healing process, charity (giving, and giving again) signifies the first step: opening the wound, and, when needed, opening it even wider.

179. **the drawing of wisdom is more precious than pearls.** Chapter 28 of the Book of Job is Iyov's paean to wisdom. In the verse cited here, he praises its pursuit: “the *MeSheKh* of

שְׁיוּכְלוּ הַדָּמִים לְיֵלֶךְ וּלְסַבֵּב כָּל סֹדֵר סְבוּבָם כְּסֹדֵר בְּלִי שׁוּם עָכוּב. כִּי כִשְׁהַדָּמִים הוֹלְכִים וּמְסַבְּבִים בְּגוּף כְּדֶרֶךְם, כְּשֶׁבְּאִים לְמָקוֹם שֵׁישׁ בּוֹ קִלְקוּל, דִּהְיִנוּ בְּמָקוֹם הַמַּכָּה, נִתְעַכְּבִים שָׁם, וְשָׁם נִתְעַכְּבַת וְנִמְשָׁךְ כָּל עֲכִירוֹת וְקִלְקוּל שֵׁישׁ בְּהַדָּמִים, כִּי כֵן הַדֶּרֶךְ – שֶׁבְּמָקוֹם הַמְקַלְקֵל, שָׁם נִתְעַכְּבַת כָּל מִינֵי עֲכִירוֹת וְקִלְקוּל שֵׁישׁ בְּהַדָּמִים, וְאִזִּי נִתְעַכְּבִים שָׁם הַדָּמִים, וְאִין יְכוּלִים לְסַבֵּב סְבוּבָם כְּסֹדֵר הַלוּכָם וּמְרוּצָתָם, כִּי יֵשׁ לְהַדָּמִים סֹדֵר הַהֲלוּךְ, שֶׁהוֹלְכִים וּמְסַבְּבִים הַגּוּף כֶּךָ וְכֶךָ פְּעָמִים בְּשַׁעָה, וְכִיּוֹצֵא, וְכִשְׁיֵשׁ בְּהֵם עֲכִירוֹת, נִתְעַכְּבִים בְּמָקוֹם הַמְקַלְקֵל כִּנְל, וְאִינָם יְכוּלִים לְסַבֵּב כְּסֹדֵר, עַל-כֵּן צָרִיכִין לְהַדְרִיחָם וּלְכַבֵּסָם. אַחַר כֶּךָ צָרִיכִים לְסַגֵּר פִּי הַמַּכָּה.

וְכָל אֵלוֹ בְּחִינּוֹת רְפוּאוֹת נַעֲשִׂים עַל-יְדֵי בְּחִינּוֹת הַנֶּל.

כִּי צְדָקָה הִיא בְּחִינַת פְּתִיחַת פִּי הַמַּכָּה, בְּבְחִינַת: “פְּתוּחַ תִּפְתַּח.” חֲכָמָה הִיא בְּחִינַת כַּח הַמוֹשֵׁךְ, בְּבְחִינַת (אִיּוֹב כח): “וּמִשָּׁךְ חֲכָמָה מִפְּנִינִים” – מִלְּפָנֵי וּמִלְּפָנִים (וְכִמּוֹ שֶׁדָּרְשׁוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרָנוֹם לְבָרְכָה (ירושלמי שבת פרק יב הלכה ג) עַל פְּסוּק: “יִקְרָה הִיא מִפְּנִינִים” מִלְּפָנֵי וּלְפָנִים, עֵין שָׁם), שֶׁבְּחִינַת חֲכָמָה מוֹשְׁכַת וּמוֹצִיאָה הַקִּלְקוּל

wisdom [is more precious] than pearls.” The Hebrew term *liMShoKh* means “to draw forth” or “to elicit.” Rebbe Nachman thus reads the verse as connecting wisdom with the drawing power associated with a purgative. In the context of our lesson, this relates to drawing out the pus and infected blood from deep within the wound. See the following note.

180. **mePeNiNiM...meliPhNai u'meliPhNiM.** The Talmud (*Sotah* 4b; *Horayot* 13a) reads the Hebrew term *peninim* as a cognate with the expression *liPhNai v'liPhNiM* (innermost recesses, לפני ולפנים), teaching that one who knows Torah is more precious (i.e., deserving of honor) than even the High Priest, the only one permitted to enter the Temple's innermost sanctum (the Holy of Holies). Rebbe Nachman's teaching here, apparently a paraphrasing of this teaching, does not cite the same verse the Talmud brings (see the following note), but Iyov's words, which explicitly link wisdom with the power to draw forth and elicit.

181. **She is more precious than peninim....** Reb Noson inserts here the same teaching as brought in the previous note, but cites as its source the Jerusalem Talmud (*loc. cit.*). The

recesses, from all the deepest places.¹⁸²

The festival is the revelation of *Ratzon*,¹⁸³ through which the blood is cleansed and purified so that it can circulate regularly. This is the significance of *ReGeL* (festival), as in “the Spring of RoGeL” (1 Kings 1:9), which *Rashi* there interprets as “the Spring of Cleansing.” In other words, through the *regel* and holiday, which reveals Divine Will, the blood is cleansed and purified and can then circulate regularly.¹⁸⁴ This is why the festival is called *ChaG*, which connotes circulation, as it is written “It is He Who sits above the *ChuG* (circumference) of the earth” (Isaiah 40:22)—above the circling of the earth, because cleansing and purifying the blood causes it to circulate regularly.¹⁸⁵

The Act of Creation—as in “The world is built on lovingkindness.”¹⁸⁶

Through the aforementioned concepts we merit the bestowal of lovingkindness; His lovingkindness sustains the world, as in “And you will be called ‘priests of God,’” as discussed above.¹⁸⁷ Through the

Talmud’s proof-text is the verse cited from Proverbs: “She is more precious than *peninim*.” The import is that with wisdom one can penetrate deeply into anything and gain insight into its innermost recesses, *liphnai v’liphnim*.

182. **Wisdom purges the dysfunction...from all the deepest places.** Having shown that wisdom is synonymous with both the power to draw forth and to reach the innermost recesses, Rebbe Nachman relates this to healing. Wisdom/the worthy elder signifies the second step of the healing process: drawing out the impurities found in the innermost recesses of the wound and the deepest places inside the body.

183. **The festival is the revelation of Ratzon.** As explained above (see §6 and n.70), the Hebrew term *regel* (foot) by extension refers to the three pilgrim festivals, when the Jews would travel on foot to the Temple in Jerusalem, where Divine Will was manifest.

184. **Regel...Rogel...the Spring of Cleansing....** Rebbe Nachman connects this here with the phonetically similar word *rogel*, the name given to the spring in whose waters the launderers would clean garments by treading them with their *raglayim* (feet). Thus, the Spring of RoGeL (רגל), which *Rashi* interprets as Spring of Cleansing, alludes to the link between *ReGeL* (רגל), the festival, and the third step of the healing process: purifying and cleansing the infected blood. As the Rebbe explains here, celebrating the *regalim* (pilgrimage festivals) reveals Divine Will, and by cleansing the blood restores it to its normal circulation.

185. **ChaG...ChuG...circulate regularly.** Rebbe Nachman further connects the festivals to the blood’s unimpeded circulation through the etymological similarity between the word *ChaG* (חג), “a holiday,” and *ChuG* (חוג), “a circle.” The verse cited here from Isaiah (*loc. cit.*) speaks of God sitting above the earth, from where He rules everything by Divine Will and providence.

מִלְפָנַי וּלְפָנַי, מִכָּל מְקוֹמוֹת הַפְּנִימִיִּים.
 רָגַל שֶׁהוּא הַתְּגִלוֹת הָרָצוֹן, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחִינַת הַדָּחַת וְכַבּוּס
 הַדָּמִים, כְּדֵי שְׂיֻכְלוּ הַדָּמִים לְסַבֵּב סְבוּבָם פְּסָדָר. וְזֶה בְּחִינַת רָגַל,
 בְּחִינַת (יהושע טו): “עֵין רוּגֵל” – עֵין כּוּבֵס, כְּמוֹ שֶׁפָּרַשׁ רַשִׁי
 שָׁם. הֵינּוּ שֶׁעַל יְדֵי רָגַל וְיוֹם-טוֹב שֶׁהוּא הַתְּגִלוֹת הָרָצוֹן, עַל-
 יְדֵי-זֶה נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחִינַת הַדָּחַת וְכַבּוּס הַדָּמִים כַּנִּל, וְאַזֵּי יְכוּלִים
 הַדָּמִים לְסַבֵּב פְּסָדָר. וּבְשִׁבִיל זֶה נִקְרָא הָרָגַל חַג – לְשׁוֹן סְבוּבָה,
 כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב (ישעיה מ): “הֵי־שֵׁב עַל חוּג הָאָרֶץ” – עַל סְבוּבָה הָאָרֶץ,
 כִּי עַל-יְדֵי הַדָּחַת וְכַבּוּס הַדָּמִים, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה הֵם מְסַבְּבִים פְּסָדָר
 כַּנִּל.

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית – דִּהְיֵנוּ בְּחִינַת: “עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה.”
 כִּי עַל-יְדֵי בְּחִינַת אֱלוֹ הַנִּל זֹכִיךְ לְהַשְׁפֵּעַת הַחֶסֶד, שְׂיִתְקַיֵּם
 הָעוֹלָם בְּחֶסֶד, בְּחִינַת: “וְאַתֶּם כֹּהֲנֵי ה’ תִּקְרְאוּ” כַּנִּל, וְעַל-יְדֵי

186. **Act of Creation...built on lovingkindness.** This refers to God’s *chesed*. As Rebbe Nachman explained above (§3, and see nn.23, 35), God created the universe entirely by means of lovingkindness. The Act of Creation began with “an arousal from on high,” as the unmediated Will of God. For at the time of creation, nothing existed to initiate an arousal from below; there was nothing to awaken God’s Will to create the world. The fact that worlds do exist—this world, the celestial world, the transcendental world and beyond—is therefore proof that the Act of Creation was fueled solely by God’s lovingkindness. In the healing process, the Act of Creation/God’s *chesed* signifies the fourth step: sealing the mouth of the wound. This is explained in the text and notes which follow.

187. **priests of God, as discussed above.** This relates to what Rebbe Nachman taught above (§3): Considering that God could have created worlds such as these solely by means of His lovingkindness, without any arousal from below, He can certainly sustain and perpetuate the worlds solely by means of His lovingkindness. Then we would not have had to engage in any labor or work whatsoever, as even the [work for one’s] necessities would be done by others... “And you will be called ‘priests of God.’” As mentioned in note 38, in this verse from Isaiah (61:6) the prophet Yeshayahu foretells the time when the Jews will not have to work for their livelihood and other nations will do their work for them. Instead, they will be God’s priests, free to pursue their spiritual devotions and bring greater awareness of God to the world. Over the course of the lesson, the Rebbe has explained that giving charity sets in motion a series of rectifications that ultimately enables people to be the beneficiaries of God’s bounteous lovingkindness and so, even in the present, “be called ‘priests of God.’”

concept of priest, [the embodiment of] lovingkindness, the mouth of the wound is closed, as in “and the priest shall close up the wound” (Leviticus 13:4).¹⁸⁸ Through lovingkindness/the priest, the wound is entirely closed and completely healed.¹⁸⁹

188. **the priest shall close up the wound.** This verse is from the chapter in Leviticus dealing with the procedure for verifying *tzaraat*, “leprous affliction” (a physical symptom that is punishment for a spiritual malaise). Scripture states that the *kohen* is assigned to determine whether the particular affliction appearing on a person’s body is *tzaraat* and so renders him spiritually unclean, or not. When the spot or blotch afflicting the skin does not appear to have penetrated the skin and the hairs on it have not turned white, the *kohen* quarantines the affliction—“the priest shall close up the wound”—for seven days and then re-inspects it. Rebbe Nachman relates this to healing a wound, specifically to the step of closing it up, which completes the process. In the context of our lesson, this proof-text teaches that it is *chesed*, the attribute personified by the *kohen* (see nn.39, 86), which closes the wound.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* cites the *Zohar* that when Goliath approached David on the battlefield, he was smitten with *tzaraat* on his forehead (*Zohar* III, 206a). The same thing happened when King Uziyahu of Judah attempted to bring the incense-offering, although he was not a priest (2 Chronicles 26:19). In our context, in both cases the *tzaraat* appeared specifically on the brow to indicate that they were guilty of blemishing the Brow of Divine Will.

189. **Through lovingkindness...closed and completely healed.** The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* cites *Chayey Moharan* (*Tzaddik* #390) that Rebbe Nachman’s follower, Reb Getzel of Ladizin (see n.1 above), was suffering from a very severe intestinal infection. The doctors had given up hope of saving his life. They said that the only conceivable treatment would be to break open the infected area, drain out the pathogenic fluids, purify the blood and seal the infection. However, this would be a very dangerous procedure to undertake so deep inside the body, one that would almost certainly prove fatal. Reb Getzel’s fellow chassidim from Ladizin traveled to the Rebbe for the festival and told him of Reb Getzel’s condition. On Shavuot, the Rebbe taught this lesson, in which he spoke in considerable detail about healing. When the chassidim from Ladizin returned home, they found Reb Getzel cured. He told them that the infected area had unexpectedly opened, and after a great deal of pus oozed out his pain was gone. A few days later the area was completely healed. From what Reb Getzel related it was clear that the sudden opening of the infection had begun late on the first day of Shavuot, at the very time Rebbe Nachman was giving this lesson.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* comments that, in fact, the correlation between Rebbe Nachman’s discussion about healing a wound and the lesson’s other topics runs deeper than indicated in the text. Central to his commentary is the understanding that the steps for treating a physical wound and those for treating a spiritual wound are conceptually much the same. He writes: Any serious infection in the body most likely began as some minor dysfunction in a particular area which caused the impurities in the blood to gather there. Left untreated, the infection grows and the pain it causes increases until the infection opens and the fluids are drained from the wound. When a person wants to begin, or begin anew, serving God, he undergoes a very similar treatment to heal his soul. All beginnings are difficult (see n.11 above).

בְּחִינָה זוֹ, בְּחִינַת כֹּהֵן, חֶסֶד – עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה נִסְגָּר פִּי הַמַּכָּה, בְּבְחִינַת
(ויקרא יג): “וְהִסְגִּיר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת הַנִּגְעַ” שְׁעַל יְדֵי בְחִינַת חֶסֶד, בְּחִינַת
כֹּהֵן, נִסְגָּר הַמַּכָּה לְגַמְרֵי וְנִתְרַפָּא בְּשִׁלְמוֹת:

He has to overcome all the “impurities” that confuse his thoughts and undermine his *ratzon* and commitment to his goal. These impurities build up when the Serpent’s Brow and deterministic ideology prevail over *Ratzon*. People’s thoughts and *r’zonot* (wills/desires) become “infected.” For just as the blood circulates through the body, a person’s thoughts and *r’zonot* regularly course through his soul. When they are pure and free of pathogens, they circulate in a healthy fashion and are directed solely to God. His heart and soul yearn for one thing, the very essence of all worship: getting closer to Him. But when the Serpent’s Brow gains vitality from the days and years a person spends eking out a living, its influence over his thoughts and *r’zonot* increases. That person then finds it very difficult to begin any devotional practice in the service of God. Especially difficult and burdensome for him is to begin giving his money to charity. For it is precisely in the sphere of earning a living that the infectious agents gather, since that is the source of the Serpent’s Brow’s vitality. A person sees that he is not receiving God’s *chesed* and thinks that he has no choice but to spend his days hard at work, this being the *natural way* to earn one’s livelihood. The Serpent’s Brow takes advantage of his thoughts and fills his fallen days with vexation and resentment. These feelings are the root of the cruelty and the annoyance that wells up when he is petitioned by the poor to give away his hard-earned money. Unless treated, all the impurities coursing through his soul gather around this very issue and the infection builds. The solution, the Rebbe teaches, is to break his heartlessness and transform it into compassion so that he can give liberally to charity. This corresponds to the first step of the healing process: opening the wound. His cruelty is the infection. Breaking it and giving charity opens the way to his serving God through this mitzvah and through all the other devotional practices that were blocked for him. This is the meaning of Scripture’s bidding cited earlier in this section: “open, you shall open your hand to him” (see n.178, and §2 and n.16 above). For charity opens the wound so that one can begin serving God, and, when needed, opens it even wider for even greater spiritual advancement.

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* continues: Rebbe Nachman has explained that charity counters the Serpent’s Brow by rectifying the blemished days and *daat* of unworthy elders. This empowers the worthy elder, who is deserving of the appellation and has genuine length-of-days because he has acquired wisdom (see §8 and n.100). Earlier in this section the Rebbe taught: Wisdom purges the dysfunction from the innermost recesses, from all the deepest places. This is the second step of the healing process, and relates also to one’s spiritual healing. After charity opens the blockages for the person wishing to serve God, wisdom drains out all the pathogenic fluids—i.e., purges even one’s vaguest inclination to agree with the principles and attitudes of the determinists, the fallen *daat* of unworthy elders. Without its source of vitality, the Serpent’s Brow loses influence and the Brow of *Ratzon* is revealed. The festival’s proclamation revealing Divine Will is then heard. This corresponds to the third step of the healing process: purifying and cleansing the infected blood. With regard to the soul, this ensures that no doubts remain in that person’s thoughts and *ratzon*. Sometimes, even though deterministic ideology has been refuted, if a person’s *ratzon* is infirm and his commitment to serving God is not total, the Serpent’s Brow can rise from defeat, God forbid. This is the reason the blood has to be purified

13. This is the explanation [of the opening verse]:¹⁹⁰

{“On the day of the *Bikkurim* (first fruits), when you bring an offering of new-meal to God on your Shavuot Festival, you shall observe an occasion proclaimed sacred; you shall not do any mundane work.”}

On the day of the *BiKkuRim* — This is the concept of beginning, as in “in anguish, like *maVKiRah* (she that gives birth for the first time).”¹⁹¹ Which beginning is this?...

when you bring an offering of new-meal to God — This alludes to charity’s beginning, when one begins to give charity anew.¹⁹² This is the meaning of “an offering of new-meal”—it alludes to new charity, beginning charity, because “an offering” signifies charity, as it is written “presenters of an offering of charity.”¹⁹³ And charity rectifies the concept of elder, as discussed above.¹⁹⁴ This is:

and cleansed completely, so that it can circulate regularly. And this purification and cleansing are likewise necessary if a person’s thoughts are to be directed solely to God and he is to firmly yearn to come closer to Him. Only then can he be certain that impurities will not again gather at the wound, and he will not have to again be treated to remove the doubts afflicting his *ratzon*. Finally, with Divine Will revealed, so that he recognizes the Hand of Divine providence and that God rules the world by the principle of reward and punishment, that person acquires fear of Heaven. He then receives God’s *chesed* in abundance, and, as one of God’s priests, does not spend his days and years working to eke out a living. The Serpent’s Brow, now deprived of all sustenance, is defeated for good. As the Rebbe teaches here, this is the meaning of “and the priest shall close up the wound.” This corresponds to the fourth step of healing: sealing the mouth of the wound. Through the priest, who personifies *chesed*—“And you will be called ‘priests of God’”—the infection’s opening closes and he is healed completely.

In review: The essence of giving charity is to break one’s cruelty and turn it into compassion (§1). The devotion of charity is extremely difficult. Giving charity when beginning something new widens the doors of opportunity and allows the person to enter more easily (§2). Were God’s *chesed* to descend, we would not have to work. We have to see to constantly draw God’s *chesed* (§3). However, abundant lovingkindness can be overwhelming. We create the container and conduit to receive it through our fear of Heaven (§4). Fear of Heaven comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Revealing that everything is governed by God’s Will contravenes determinism and generates belief in reward and punishment, thus producing fear (§5). Divine Will is revealed through the Three Festivals, whose miracles proclaim the rule of God’s providence. But these proclamations are drowned out whenever deterministic ideology prevails (§6). The determinists are defeated by the great and holy sage who binds all wills to *Metzach haRatzon*. The contrast to this is *Metzach haNachash*, from which the heretical scientists and philosophers derive their influence (§7). *Metzach haNachash* acquires its strength from elders who fail to gain additional holiness and *daat* with each new day. The determinists are then able to prevent the holy sage, the worthy elder, from revealing Divine Will (§8). The benefit of giving charity is very great. It counters the influence of *Metzach haNachash*, as it rectifies the harm

וְזֶה פְּרוּשׁ:

וּבַיּוֹם הַבְּפוּרִים - זֶה בְּחֵינַת הַתְּחִלָּה, בְּחֵינַת צָרָה כְּמַבְכִּירָה. וְאִיזְהוּ הַתְּחִלָּה.

בְּהַקְרִיבְכֶם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַה' - הֵינּוּ הַתְּחִלַּת הַצְּדָקָה, כְּשֶׁמִּתְחִילִין מִחֲדָשׁ לַתֵּן צְדָקָה. וְזֶה בְּחֵינַת מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה, בְּחֵינַת צְדָקָה חֲדָשָׁה, בְּחֵינַת הַתְּחִלַּת הַצְּדָקָה. כִּי מִנְחָה בְּחֵינַת צְדָקָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁפְּתוּב (מֵלֹאכֵי ג): “מִגִּישֵׁי מִנְחָה בְּצְדָקָה.” וְעַל-יְדֵי הַצְּדָקָה נִתְתַקֵּן בְּחֵינַת זָקֵן כַּנֶּ"ל, וְזֶהוּ:

caused by unworthy elders. This reveals Divine Will, which leads to fear of Heaven and makes receiving God’s *chesed* possible (§9). Even money taken by non-Jews is considered charity and effects a revelation of Divine Will (§10). However, if this revelation is less than complete, so that doubt remains about Divine providence’s rule over all that occurs, then even though *Metzach haNachash* has been defeated, it can reawaken and regain its strength. Charity helps for this as well, because giving is always beneficial for countering the repeated attacks of *Metzach haNachash* and the determinists who would undermine faith in God (§11A). The concepts of charity, wisdom, Divine Will and *chesed* parallel the four steps in treating a wound (§12).

190. **This is the explanation....** Rebbe Nachman now shows how the concepts discussed in the lesson are alluded to in the opening verse. As mentioned (n.1), the Rebbe gave this teaching on Shavuot, the topic of this verse.

191. **On the day of the *BiKkuRim*...*maVKiRah*....** The Hebrew term *bikkurim* refers to the offering brought from the first-ripening fruits of any of the seven species mentioned in Scripture’s praise of the Holy Land: “It is a Land of wheat, barley, grape, fig and pomegranate; a Land of oil-olives and date-honey” (Deuteronomy 8:8). The *bikkurim* are brought to the Temple and, following the performance of certain rites, are given to the priests. The verse cited here refers specifically to the *bikkurim* of the year’s wheat crop. Before any of the new crop can be offered in the Temple, a meal offering of two baked loaves has to be brought on Shavuot (see Leviticus 23:16-17). The root letters of *BiKkuRim* (בִּכּוּרִים) are the same as those of *maVKiRah* (מַבְכִּירָה), “a first-time birth” (see §2 and n.15 above). In the context of our lesson, this relates to a new beginning—i.e., opening a new opening—as the Rebbe explains next.

192. **charity’s beginning...give charity anew.** As explained above, in sections 1-2, this is when a person breaks his cruelty and transforms it into compassion. Every time a person begins to give charity—which Rebbe Nachman calls “the beginning of all beginnings”—he must break his heartless tendencies. This opens a new opening, enabling the giver to embark upon a new path or devotion in worshipping God.

193. **an offering of new-meal...an offering signifies charity....** As explained above, in section 10; and see note 129 there.

194. **charity rectifies the concept of elder, as discussed above.** See section 9, where Rebbe

on your Shavuot Festival — This is the concept of Elder, for at Sinai God appeared to them as an elder (*Rashi*, Exodus 20:2). Through the new-meal offering, the beginning of charity, the concept of an elder/Shavuot is rectified.¹⁹⁵ This ends the Serpent's Brow feeding off the unworthy elders of the generation. Then the festival's proclamation revealing Divine Will is heard, as discussed above.¹⁹⁶ And this is:

you shall observe an occasion proclaimed sacred — This alludes to the festival's proclamation, the revelation of Divine Will, which is "an occasion proclaimed sacred." It is heard now <because the roar of the enemies, the wild animals sustained by the Serpent's Brow, has been defeated> through charity, which defeats the Serpent's Brow/determinism. This brings to <the revelation of Divine Will>.

<And> revealing Divine Will produces fear of Heaven, through which <it is possible to receive lovingkindness, so that> the world <is sustained> through His lovingkindness, as in "The world is built on lovingkindness." As a result, <we have no need to engage in any labor or work.> "Foreigners will stand and pasture your flocks.... And you will be called 'priests of God'" <will be fulfilled>.¹⁹⁷ And this is:

Nachman taught that charity is found "after many days," i.e., with those who have length-of-days. Giving charity, the Rebbe explained, rectifies the fallen length-of-days and *daat* of unworthy elders. This, in turn, gives strength to the worthy elder—i.e., the holy sage, who binds all the wills to the root of Divine Will.

195. **at Sinai God appeared to them as an Elder...Shavuot...** Shavuot commemorates the Giving of the Torah. In *Likutey Moharan* I, 56:7, Rebbe Nachman teaches: "At the Giving of the Torah, God appeared to the Jews as an Elder with great compassion" (see *Rashi*, Exodus 20:2). "Elder" refers to one with composed *daat*, which determines the extent of compassion.... Shavuot therefore signifies supernal lovingkindness and great compassion (see also *Zohar* III, 128b). In the context of our lesson, the Rebbe explains that giving charity, the new-meal offering, strengthens the influence of the holy sage/Shavuot and rectifies the blemish of *daat* engendered by unworthy elders.

196. **This ends the Serpent's Brow...Divine Will is heard, as discussed above.** In section 6, Rebbe Nachman taught that "each festival announces, proclaims and reveals Divine Will.... However, not everyone hears the proclamation of the festival, on account of [the roaring of] the wild animals.... These are the deterministic scientists who demonstrate through their erroneous ideologies that everything is caused by the laws of nature." In section 7, the Rebbe explained that the determinists are defeated by the holy sage, who binds all wills to the Brow of *Ratzon*, the root of Divine Will. "However, opposing [the Brow of *Ratzon*] is the Serpent's Brow, which is the root of determinism." Then, in section 8, the Rebbe taught that "the Serpent's Brow is

בְּשִׁבְעַתֵּיכֶם – זֶה בְּחֵינַת זָקֵן, כִּי בְּסִינֵי נִדְמָה לָהֶם כְּזָקֵן (מכילתא בשלח, הובא ברש"י שמות כ), כִּי עַל-יְדֵי בְּחֵינַת מְנַחֵה חֲדָשָׁה שֶׁהוּא בְּחֵינַת הַתְּחִלַּת הַצְּדָקָה נִתְתַּקֵּן בְּחֵינַת זָקֵן, שֶׁהוּא בְּחֵינַת שְׂבוּעוֹת כַּנ"ל, וְאֲזִי נִתְבַּטַּל יְנִיקָתוֹ שֶׁל מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, שִׁיּוֹנֵק מִזְקְנֵי הַדּוֹר, שְׂאִינָם כְּתִקּוּנוֹ כַּנ"ל, וְנִשְׁמַע קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב, שֶׁמְגַלֶּה אֶת הַרְצוֹן כַּנ"ל. וְזֶהוּ:

מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם – הֵינּוּ קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב שֶׁהוּא הַתְּגִלוֹת הַרְצוֹן, שְׁזֶה בְּחֵינַת: "מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ" כַּנ"ל, שֶׁהוּא נִשְׁמַע עִתָּה עַל-יְדֵי הַצְּדָקָה, שֶׁמְכַנִּיעַ אֶת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, חֲכַמַת הַטְּבַע, כַּנ"ל. וְאֲזִי עַל-יְדֵי הַתְּגִלוֹת הַרְצוֹן, "כָּל מְלֹאכֶת עֲבָדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ".

כִּי עַל-יְדֵי הַתְּגִלוֹת הַרְצוֹן נַעֲשֶׂה יְרָאָה, וְעַל-יְדֵי יְרָאָה נִשְׁפָּע חֶסֶד, וְאֲזִי אֵין צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּם מְלֹאכָה, כִּי נִתְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָם בְּחֶסֶדוֹ, בְּבְחֵינַת: "עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה", וְאֲזִי: "וְעַמְדוֹ זָרִים וְרָעוּ צֹאנֵיכֶם" וְכו', "וְאֵתֶם כִּהְיִי ה' תִּקְרְאוּ", כַּנ"ל. וְזֶהוּ:

nourished by the generation's elders, when those of the generation with length-of-days lack wholeness." And in section 9, he added that "giving charity reverses the blemish engendered by the fallen *daat* of those with length-of-days, from which the Serpent's Brow feeds. We remove all sustenance and vitality from the Serpent's Brow/determinism, and so the Brow of Divine Will grows stronger." Here, he links giving charity with bringing the new-meal offering on Shavuot. With the roaring of the determinists silenced, the festival's proclamation revealing Divine Will can be heard.

197. **revealing Divine Will produces fear of Heaven...receive lovingkindness...will be fulfilled.** In section 3, Rebbe Nachman taught that "if God were to pour His lovingkindness upon us...we would not have (had) to engage in any labor or work whatsoever, as even the [work for one's] necessities would be done by others.... 'Foreigners will stand and pasture your flocks.... And you will be called "priests of God.'" In section 4, he explained that "because it is impossible to receive lovingkindness in abundance.... One has to create a container and a conduit through which to receive the lovingkindness. This is accomplished through fear of Heaven." And in section 5, the Rebbe added that "fear of Heaven comes about mainly through the revelation of Divine Will...that God created everything through His Will, without any obligation to do so, and He gives life and sustains everything through His Will, without any determinism at all. For then there is reward and punishment."

you shall not do any mundane work — We do not have to engage in any work and labor whatsoever, because the world is sustained through His lovingkindness, as in “And you will be called ‘priests of God.’”¹⁹⁸

14. There is a difference between the wild animals and the Serpent’s Brow.¹⁹⁹ The deterministic scientists likened to wild animals are those scholars who adhere to determinism for personal benefit. It is the pleasure they get from this [ideology] that causes them to hold fast to their point of view and falsehood and the like.²⁰⁰ But the scholar who is likened to the Serpent’s Brow is wicked and heretical without any personal benefit. He gets no pleasure from his wisdom. On the contrary, he is {a “devout” villain, because he is} wicked and heretical without any ulterior motive.²⁰¹

198. **We do not have to engage in any work...called priests of God.** With fear of Heaven to make the container in which to hold God’s lovingkindness, we are able to receive the flow of His blessing and bounty without having to engage in any work and labor whatsoever. Instead, as the recipients of God’s *chesed*, we are His priests and can devote our days and years to pursuing spiritual devotions and bringing greater *daat* to the world.

The opening verse thus translates in the context of our lesson as follows:

On the day of the *Bikkurim* — Making a new beginning...

when you bring an offering of new-meal to God on your Shavuot Festival — by giving charity, rectifies the concept of elder/holy sage/Shavuot, and defeats *Metzach haNachash* and the determinists.

you shall observe an occasion proclaimed sacred — Then the festival’s proclamation revealing Divine Will can be heard. With the fear of Heaven that comes with revealing Divine Will, the container for receiving God’s lovingkindness is created.

and you shall not do any mundane work — Consequently, there is no need to engage in any labor or work, for the world will be sustained by God’s lovingkindness.

199. **There is a difference between the wild animals and the Serpent’s Brow.** This refers to Rebbe Nachman’s teaching in section 7 (and see n.88), that “opposing [the Brow of *Ratzon*] is the Serpent’s Brow, which is the root of determinism. For everything has its root, and the root of determinism is *Metzach haNachash* (the Serpent’s Brow).” Here, the Rebbe will explain that there is an essential difference between those who espouse heretical ideas solely for the sake of persuading others, like the Serpent’s Brow, and those who, like the determinists/wild animals, follow and advocate these ideas for some ulterior motive. A parallel discussion appears at the end of section 7, where the Rebbe distinguishes between an individual who draws wisdom from the Serpent’s Brow to demonstrate that everything is due to natural causality and the Serpent’s Brow itself, which threatens to introduce heresy into the very root of Divine Will.

200. **scholars who adhere to determinism for personal benefit...point of view and falsehood**

כָּל מְלָאכָת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ – כִּי אֵין צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּם
מְלָאכָה וְשׁוּם עֵסֶק, כִּי נִתְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָם בְּחֶסֶדוֹ, בְּחִינַת: “וְאַתֶּם
כֹּהֲנֵי ה’ תִּקְרְאוּ”, כַּנֶּל:

יֵשׁ חֲלוּק בֵּין הַחַיּוֹת רְעוּת וּבֵין הַמִּצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, כִּי חֲכָמֵי הַטֶּבַע
שֶׁהֵם בְּחִינַת חַיּוֹת רְעוּת הֵם הַחֲכָמִים שְׂאוּחֲזִים בְּחֻמַּת הַטֶּבַע
לְהִנָּאֵתָם, כִּי יֵשׁ לָהֶם הִנָּאָה מְזוּהָ, כְּדִי לְהַחֲזִיק דַּעַת וְשִׁקָּר שְׁלָהֶם
וּכְיוּצָא. אֲבָל הַחֲכָם שֶׁהוּא בְּחִינַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, הוּא רָשָׁע וְכוֹפֵר
בְּלִי שׁוּם הִנָּאָה, שְׂאִין לוֹ שׁוּם הִנָּאָה מִחֻמַּתוֹ, רַק הוּא (כְּמוֹ רָשָׁע
יָרָא, שֶׁהוּא) רָשָׁע וְכוֹפֵר בְּלִי שׁוּם הִנָּאָה כַּנֶּל:

and the like. This refers to scholars who adhere to deterministic ideology for the personal benefit it affords them, such as fame, livelihood or power. It might mean avowing belief in the natural order and discounting the supernatural so as to be seen as “educated,” even “civilized,” as opposed to, say, those who are guided by their faith in God. Such scholars can often be found vociferously defending their positions—i.e., “roaring like wild animals”—to convince others, and themselves, of the veracity of their position.

Reb Noson adds: For some, it is succumbing to base desires that leads one to deterministic heresy. If, instead of striving to overcome the wants of the body, a person allows them to fester and grow, he is in danger of being convinced of one deterministic idea after another, until, eventually, he becomes trapped in the depths of heretical thinking. His desires bring him to disbelief and heresy so that he can then rationalize his satisfying those very desires. These determinists are the “wild animals” who deny Divine Will. Their defeat is brought about by the great and holy sage binding all wills to the Brow of *Ratzon* (*Torat Natan* #22; and see §7 and nn.81-83). The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains that the holy sage can defeat these scholars because their adherence to determinism is motivated by *ratzon* (will and desire) for the pleasure and personal benefit it affords them. When the holy sage binds all wills to the root of Divine Will, i.e., the Brow of *Ratzon*, he includes the *ratzon* of these determinists, and this enables him to counter their influence.

201. **scholar who is likened to the serpent’s Brow...a devout villain...wicked and heretical without any ulterior motive.** Reb Noson explains that the scholar who is wicked and heretical with no ulterior motive is likened to the Serpent’s Brow. Like the root of determinism, he is associated with vexation and wrath, and so is motivated by spite and the need to express his anger against God. Thus, his aim is neither pleasure nor benefit, but to instill blemish into the root of Divine Will and spread heresy there, God forbid. Reb Noson adds that the brazenness which characterizes such scholars—as in “You have the *brow* of a harlot, you refuse to be ashamed” (Jeremiah 3: 3)—is evidenced in the overt and uninhibited way in which they shamelessly declare their heretical ideas and lash out at all that is holy. Protection against these

15. All the concepts of this lesson are one and entirely interconnected. Any act of charity is very difficult at the beginning; nevertheless, the benefit of charity is extremely great. Giving charity means not having to engage in any work or labor, because the world is then sustained through His lovingkindness. For charity keeps the Serpent's Brow from drawing sustenance from the elders of the generation, and, as a result, the festival's proclamation that reveals Divine Will is heard. This, in turn, reveals fear of Heaven, which essentially comes about through the revelation of Divine Will. Fear of Heaven then creates a container and conduit for receiving the bestowal of lovingkindness. Without this container and conduit it is impossible to receive the lovingkindness. Only through fear of Heaven, the conduit and container, can the lovingkindness be received, so that the world is then sustained through His lovingkindness. And then, we have no need to engage in any work, because "Foreigners will stand and pasture your flocks..." will be fulfilled, as discussed above.²⁰²

heretics comes only from giving charity, which rectifies the blemish engendered by unworthy elders and so cuts off sustenance and vitality from the Serpent's Brow (*Torat Natan*, *ibid.*). The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* explains that unlike the determinists, whose *ratzon* the holy sage binds to the Brow of *Ratzon*, the scholar who is likened to the Serpent's Brow is "devoutly" villainous. With no *ratzon* for pleasure or personal benefit from his heresies, the only way to counter him is by cutting off his sustenance. This, as Rebbe Nachman has shown, begins by transforming one's cruelty into compassion and giving charity.

202. **All the concepts of this lesson...as discussed above.** In brief, giving charity (§1-§2) elicits God's *chesed*, so that the world is sustained by lovingkindness and people do not have to labor to eke out a living (§3). Charity rectifies the blemish engendered by the fallen days of unworthy elders (§9), which sustains the Serpent's Brow and empowers the determinists (§7-§8). With their sustenance cut off, the roaring of the wild animals/determinists is quieted and the festival's proclamation revealing Divine Will is heard (§6). When Divine Will is revealed, fear of Heaven is attained (§5), which creates the container for receiving God's lovingkindness (§4). It is therefore extremely difficult to begin giving charity. For by eliciting Divine Will and enabling God's lovingkindness to be received, charity countermands the natural manner and order by which the world is sustained. Nonetheless, when a person does overturn his natural cruelty and gives charity, the rectifications his giving effects counter all the obstacles to the world being sustained solely through God's bounteous lovingkindness.

Rebbe Nachman gave this lesson at the end of the first day of Shavuot, 1809. The previous evening the Rebbe held a lengthy conversation with his followers, recorded in *Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #51: He said that man's purpose in this fleeting world is only to strive for that which is eternal. "A person should not be concerned with wealth, since whether he has it or not, his days will pass.... As for serving God, I don't know of anyone who can claim that

כָּלֵל הַמְאֲמָר כְּלוּ אֶחָד, וְכִלּוּ קָשׁוּר זֶה בְּזֶה, שֶׁהֲצַדִּיקָהּ הִיא קָשָׁה מְאֹד בְּהִתְחַלָּה, אֲבָל הַתּוֹעֵלֶת שֶׁל הֲצַדִּיקָה גְדוֹל מְאֹד, כִּי עַל-יְדֵי הֲצַדִּיקָה אֵין צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּם מְלָאכָה וְעֶסֶק, כִּי נִתְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָם בְּחֶסֶדּוֹ, כִּי עַל-יְדֵי הֲצַדִּיקָה מוֹצִיאִין יְנִיקַת מִצַּח הַנְּחָשׁ, שִׁיּוֹנֵק מִזְקַנֵי הַדּוֹר, וְאֵזִי נִשְׁמָע קוֹל הַקְּרִיאָה שֶׁל יוֹם-טוֹב, שֶׁמְגַלֶּה אֶת הַרְצוֹן, וְאֵזִי נִתְגַּלֶּה יְרָאָה, כִּי עַקֵּר הִירָאָה - עַל-יְדֵי הַתְּגַלּוֹת הַרְצוֹן, וְעַל יְדֵי הִירָאָה נַעֲשֶׂה כְּלִי וְצַנּוֹר לְקַבֵּל עַל יְדוֹ הַשְּׁפָעַת הַחֶסֶד, כִּי בְּלֹא הַכְּלִי וְהַצַּנּוֹר אֵי אֲפֻשֶׁר לְקַבֵּל אֶת הַחֶסֶד, רַק עַל-יְדֵי הִירָאָה, שֶׁהוּא צַנּוֹר וְכְלִי, עַל יְדֵי מְקַבְּלִין אֶת הַחֶסֶד, וְאֵזִי מִתְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָם בְּחֶסֶדּוֹ, וְאֵזִי אֵין צְרִיכִין לַעֲשׂוֹת שׁוּם מְלָאכָה, כִּי נִתְקַיֵּם: "וְעַמְדוֹ זָרִים וְרָעוּ צֹאנֵיכֶם" וְכו' כַּנ"ל:

he serves God commensurate with His greatness.... The main thing is *ratzon* and longing to constantly yearn for God. And from this [place of *ratzon*], one prays, studies Torah and keeps His mitzvot...It is not good to be old...." The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* connects these points from Rebbe Nachman's conversation with their corresponding concepts in the lesson. 1) "A person should not be concerned with wealth, since whether he has it or not, his days will pass." This relates to the Rebbe's discussion of how it is possible to work all one's days and years just for life's necessities (see §3). 2) "The main thing is *ratzon* and longing to constantly yearn for God. And from this [place of *ratzon*], one prays, studies Torah and keeps His mitzvot." The Rebbe explained to his followers that, considering God's awesome greatness, no one, not even angels, can presume to truly serve Him. The only thing a person can do is always desire to come close to God, and with that strong *ratzon* pray, study and keep mitzvot as best as he can. This relates to the lesson's discussion of revealing Divine Will. As explained in note 120 above, each is dependent on the other. A person who genuinely recognizes Divine Will merits the essence of *avodat HaShem*: serving God with strong *ratzon* and great longing. And conversely, when a person serves God with strong *ratzon*, he merits a greater revelation of Divine Will. Also, in the lesson the Rebbe taught that a person does not have to do anything when God bestows His lovingkindness, "for You pay each man *as if* his deeds'...—it would be *as if* he acts" (see §3 and n.43). This relates to the Rebbe's point that "the main thing is *ratzon*, a person's longing and yearning. It is the concept of receiving *chesed* from God; of not having earned His blessing and bounty by truly serving Him, but receiving them anyway, *as if* he had." 3) And the Rebbe said: "It is not good to be old." A person has to begin anew each day. This relates to his teaching that a worthy elder is one who each new day increases the measure of his holiness and *daat* (see §8). Sanctity is thus restored to the fallen days, Divine Will and Favor are revealed, and through fear of Heaven an influx of God's bounteous lovingkindness and blessing fills the world. Amen. Amen.