

B"H

Transcripts of Harav Ginsburgh's Lectures
In memory of Gavriel Noach and Rivkah Holtzberg

10 and 11th of Shevat Farbrengen – Part 1

from Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

1. Introduction

Today it is 58 years since the Rebbe began his official leadership. 58 is the *gematria* of the word meaning "grace" (חן) in Hebrew.

The previous Rebbe, the *Rayatz* passed away in 5710. Just a few days before his passing he gave us a new *ma'amar* (Chassidic treatise) to be studied on his grandmother's day of passing, the 10th of *Shevat*. On that very day, he passed away and the treatise in a sense became his will and testament to our generation. The complete treatise contains 20 chapters, divided into four sections. The first section (chapters 1-5) is titled *Bati Legani*, and was meant to be studied on the 10th of *Shevat*. The second section titled *Hayoshevet Baganim* (chs. 6-10) was for the 13th of *Shevat* (his mother's day of passing). The next two sections do not have a title, but, the third section was meant to be studied on *Purim* of that year (chs. 11-15) and the fourth and final section (chs. 16-20) was meant for the 2nd of Nisan that year (his father, the Rebbe *Rashab's* day of passing).

For the first twenty years from 5711 to 5730, on the anniversary of his father-in-law's passing, the Lubavitcher Rebbe would teach one chapter of the treatise in great depth and with a great deal of elaboration. Thus in twenty years, he completed a full cycle. In 5731 (1971), the Rebbe started a second cycle, but for some unknown reason did not complete it. He taught chapter 18 (a second time) in 1988 and stopped. There must be a deep reason for this. We cannot know the Rebbe's reason fully, but there are some hints to it in what he did say about chapter 19 and 20 in 5729 and 5730. We want to say that perhaps the Rebbe was hesitant to explain what the last two chapters are saying in full.

2. 58 and the Encampment Before Mt. Sinai

But before we start with the 19th chapter of *Bati Legani*, let us take closer note of the fact that this is the 58th year since the Rebbe began his official leadership. We noted that 58 is the *gematria* of the Hebrew word for "grace" (חן). In Hebrew, this word also means "symmetry." In a symmetrical figure, the two sides face one another. Let us give a short introduction that will set the stage for the various topics we would like to discuss tonight.



GALEINAI PUBLICATION SOCIETY

2 Hausner St. • Jerusalem 96431 • tel.: 972.547.533770 • www.inner.org

This word, “grace” (חַן) is also the two-letter root (the gate) of the word “He camped” (וַיִּחַן), which the Torah brings in reference to the Jewish people’s encampment before Mt. Sinai prior to receiving the Torah. Yet, the Torah chooses to say this in the singular, “he camped” instead of “they camped.” The sages explain that unlike all their other encampments, this time the Jewish people were united like a single individual with one heart (meaning, a singular purpose).

The unity that the people had while facing the mountain on which the Torah would be given came to rectify a similar situation in which they were facing the Egyptians on the sea. There, the Torah also uses the singular, “And behold, Egypt was chasing them....” Not “the Egyptians,” but “Egypt,” indicating that the Egyptians too, in their attempt to capture the Jewish people were united like a single individual with a single heart. In the Talmud, the sages teach us that “the gathering (unity) of the wicked is bad for them and awful for the rest of the world, while the gathering of the righteous (*tzadikim*) is beneficial to them and a benefit for the entire world.”

How can we tell the difference between the unity of the wicked and the unity of the righteous? Regarding the wicked, it says that their unity is, “with one heart, like one man.” The heart precedes the man, i.e., the mind, the intellect. The wicked unite in order to follow their heart, to attain what their hearts desire. The heart is the natural dwelling place of the animal soul and all its cravings (as explained in the *Tanya*). But, about the unity of the righteous, it says that they gather, “Like one man, with one heart.” Their mind, their intellect and Divine soul, precedes and guides their heart, their natural proclivities.

Moreover, the Egyptians—representing the wicked—attained unity during their impulsive pursuit of the Jewish people. The Jewish people—representing the righteous—reached a state of unity when in a state of peaceful rest in their camp (after having returned to God in their hearts, as *Rashi* explains in his commentary on the previous verse). The encampment, which we saw before stems from the two-letter root meaning “grace” or “favor” (חַן) implies that the unity of the righteous is based on their finding favor in one another’s eyes. In other words, they simply enjoy one another and each other’s company. But, the wicked cannot come together without an impulsive drive to achieve some goal. Even when they are running together, they do not feel love for one another.

Still, once the righteous have achieved unity in their restful state of “encampment” (וַיִּחַן), they have to begin moving and pursuing a goal together. The two letters of “grace” (חַן)—the 58th year of the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s leadership—are the initials of these two words, “encampment” (חֲנִיָּה) and “movement” (נִסְיָעָה). They are also the initials of the two roots of the words *chassid* (חַסִּיד) and *mitnaged* (מִתְנַגֵּד), the disciple of the Ba’al Shem Tov and the Jew who still opposes (to whatever extent) the Ba’al Shem Tov’s way.¹ Thus, these two are destined to find favor, to find grace in each other’s eyes.

Let us see a few *gematriot* that will direct us further in our discussion.

The full phrase describing the encampment before Mt. Sinai reads, “Israel encamped there, facing the mountain” (וַיַּחֲזֵן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגְדַת הַהָר). The *gematria* of these words is 1222, or twice 611, the *gematria* of “Torah” (תּוֹרָה), implying the unification of the Written Torah with the Oral Torah. 1222 is also the product of 26 and 47, or *Havayah* (יִיְהוּה) and *Havayah Ekyeh* (יִיְהוּה אֶיְהוּה), a beautiful unification of these two Names of God.

The first two words, “encamped there” (וַיַּחֲזֵן שָׁם) equal 414 or twice the value of “light” (אֹר), 207. 414 is also therefore the value of “the infinite light” (אֹר אֵין סוּף), since “light” (אֹר) equals “the infinite” (אֵין סוּף). It is also the value of the phrase, “source of life” (מְקוֹר חַיִּים) and the word “And you shall love” (וְאַהֲבַתְּ), which begins the first paragraph of the *Shema*.

Just the words, “facing the mountain” (נֶגְדַת הַהָר) equal 267, or “chariot” (מְרֻכְבָּה), alluding to the secret of the Divine Chariot, which we will contemplate in length later.²

Together 414 and 267 (וַיַּחֲזֵן שָׁם נֶגְדַת הַהָר) equals 681, or 3 times “blessing” (בְּרֻכָּה), alluding to the threefold blessing of the Torah, the Priestly Blessing. Additionally, 681 is the value of “trumpet [or *shofar*] blast” (תְּרוּעָה), inherent in which is the power of unification—the sound of the *shofar* and the trumpet causes our attachment to the material and mundane to shatter, as in the verse, “Sound the trumpet for *Havayah*, all the land.”

Finally, the *gematria* of the first, middle, and last letter of the phrase “Israel encamped there, facing the mountain” (וַיַּחֲזֵן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגְדַת הַהָר) is 406, or $\triangle 28$ (read: the triangle of 28, the sum of integers from 1 to 28). 406 is also 7 times “grace” (חֵן), alluding to the 7 types of *tzadikim* that will greet the Divine Presence, as will be explained.³

3. The Topic: Victory

Victory, נִצְחָה (or eternity as it can also be translated), is the topic of chapter 19 of the treatise, which continues the topic discussed in the entire final two sections of the treatise (chs. 11-20). Victory/eternity is of course the name of a *sefirah*. A key verse regarding victory/eternity is, “And the Eternal One of Israel will not lie nor change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change His mind”⁴ (וְגַם נִצְחָה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁקַר וְלֹא יִנָּחֵם). (יִנָּחֵם כִּי לֹא אָדָם הוּא לְהִנָּחֵם).

We want to understand how victory manifests in the psyche. The day on which the *tzadik* passes away is the day in which the essence of his soul is revealed and the day on which all of his work ascends upward with him, reaching its climax. We have explained in the past that the previous Rebbe’s essence was victory. According to this, the essence of the Lubavitcher Rebbe was acknowledgment or thanksgiving. These two *sefirot* are considered two halves of one body, explaining the intrinsic connection between the Rebbe and his father-in-law, a connection that was officially revealed on the 10th of *Shevat*. For this reason, every time the Lubavitcher Rebbe mentions his father-in-law he continues to give him the title, “the leader of our generation.”⁵

The context of victory in this treatise is in relation to a king, who in order to be victorious over his opposition brings out his most valued treasure; a treasure which he has never before taken out of his treasure chamber. This treasure is the secret weapon that will win the war for the king. At the critical juncture, when the opportunity presents itself to win the war once and for all and crush his opposition, the king opens his treasure chamber and brings the treasure out—the secret weapon—and distributes it freely to his soldiers, giving them all that they need in order to be victorious and win the war.

4. The Mittler Rebbe's Parable

When the Lubavitcher Rebbe taught this chapter (chapter 19) of the treatise in 5729, he noted that this parable about a special treasure that the king is saving was used by the Mittler Rebbe, the second Rebbe of Chabad. But, the Mittler Rebbe's gives a more elaborate description of the secretive nature of the treasure/weapon. The Mittler Rebbe writes that there are times when the King is in such joy that he opens his treasure to show the guests at, for example, his wedding day (which is a metaphor for the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, which is called the wedding day of God, the groom, and Israel, the bride) or at his only son's wedding day. Or, he shows it to his beloved friends. But in any case, he only shows them the treasure, he does not give it to them, and even what he shows is only part of the treasure. Needless to say, he does not bring it out or pass it out freely.

But even when it comes to a state of war the king does not necessarily bring his most treasured weapon out to win the campaign. The Mittler Rebbe differentiates between two types of war. There is a war the king fights to increase the size of his kingdom and to glorify his name. For this type of war, he will use some of the treasures, but he does this conservatively and in a measured manner. Because he himself is not in danger—it is a war of expansion—he carefully weighs which part of his treasures to use in the war and which part to keep under lock and key.

But, then there is another type of war, when the king himself is being opposed. Someone or something is waging war not only to conquer his kingdom, but to destroy the king himself. The opposition wants to destroy everything that the king represents in the world and everything that is his purpose in life. It is in this type of war that the king will open his treasure chamber, bring out his most valuable and secret weapon, and distribute it freely and without any reservations to all of his soldiers, regardless of their training, ability, etc. Every single soldier will receive the weapon and every single soldier will have free use of this treasure in order to bring victory.

This is the parable that the Mittler Rebbe writes. If we are careful in our reading, we will notice that the Mittler Rebbe included four levels of revealing the treasure. From the lowest level, which is when he shows the treasure to a beloved friend, to when he shows

it during his wedding or his son's wedding, to the war of expansion, to the war of survival.⁶

Also, the two types of war correspond to what in Jewish legal parlance are called an obligatory war and a permissible war. In the first situation, the Jewish king is obligated to take the people out to fight the war, for instance, to save Jewish lives from oppressors, or to conquer the Land of Israel. In the second situation, he is not obligated but is permitted to engage in it for a number of various reasons. In the case of a non-obligatory war, the king has many limitations about the extent of his engagement in the campaign.

5. The Secret Weapon – The Secrets of the Secrets

What is the secret weapon that the king is handing out in our generation in order to win the final battle? In the most general terms possible, the treasure is the secrets and the secrets of the secrets of the Torah. In the *Zohar*, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai says that with this book (with the secrets of the Torah revealed in the *Zohar*) we will come out of exile with mercy and compassion. It seems that in our generation there are no more secrets. It seems that from the time of the Ba'al Shem Tov, and even more so from the *Alter Rebbe* and on, everything has been openly revealed.

Still, even among the secrets of the Torah, there are some secrets still unknown. In Kabbalah, these secrets fall under the category of the 32nd of the 32 pathways of wisdom, which unites with the 50th of the 50 gateways of understanding. This unification is the secret of the word "Lebanon" (לְבָנוֹן) appearing in the verse, "A wellspring of water, a well of living waters, pouring from the Lebanon"⁷ (מַעְיָן גַּנִּים בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים וְנַזְלִים מִן לְבָנוֹן). The letters of this word can be broken up to read 32 (לְבָ) and the name of the letter *nun*—נ (נוּן), whose value is 50. **This is our hidden treasure that no one has ever laid eyes upon.** The 32nd pathway is hidden, not even the bird of prey—a symbol for King David⁸—nor the falcon⁹ has ever laid his eyes upon, as in the verse, "There is a path, which no bird of prey knows and which the falcon's eye has not seen."¹⁰ And the 50th gate of understanding was not attained by even Moshe during his life.¹¹

This unification has to be understood by even the simplest soldier in a way that he can use it during the "battle" in order to win the war. This is referred to in Chassidut as a manner in which the individual can gain sustenance from it (יְתִפְרֵן סוּן מִיְגִידָה). The distribution of these secrets of the secrets of the Torah, this is what the king is taking out now and distributing freely to anyone who wants to become his soldier. We have talked about this many times. In our generation, the generation that has to be victorious, there are no longer any secrets. The secrets have to be explained to even the simplest of soldiers in a way that he (or she) can integrate it fully into their understanding. Then they will be able to embark on their mission with joy, win the battle, and bring the Mashiach.

6. The Secret Weapon – The Same, Above as Below

There is one particular phrase the *Rayatz* uses in the treatise to describe the treasure and the secret weapon in it. The phrase is a quote from the *Tikunei Zohar* and it reads,

*The infinite light reaches [both] above without end, and below without extreme.*¹²

Thus, the king's treasure is God's infinite light, which makes the higher realms and the lower realms equivalent because it permeates all of reality equally. If we want to understand the nature of the secret weapon the king is handing out to us, his soldiers, we have to deepen our understanding of this statement. Because it is the need to win the war, to achieve victory, that motivates the king to reveal this treasure, it follows that there is an intrinsic connection between the *sefirah* of victory and the infinite light, as described. We need to better understand how this equivalency illuminated by God's infinite and essential light is our secret weapon.

Both the *Rayatz* and the Rebbe refer us to the verse we quoted above to prove this point. "And the Eternal One of Israel will not lie nor change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change His mind"¹³ (וְגַם נִצַּח יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִשְׁקַר וְלֹא יִנָּחַם כִּי לֹא אָדָם הוּא לְהִנָּחֵם). The eternal or victorious One of Israel refers to God. And God is "not a man" in the sense that men are dynamic and changing. But, God is the same always and everywhere, regardless of how high you go or how low you seek. God is unchanging, as the verse states, "I God have not changed...."¹⁴ He is the same whether you go above, i.e., search for the highest reason for creation, and whether you go below, i.e., seek the ultimate purpose of creation.

What does this mean? We have to give a simpler explanation. Let's look at the context of this verse about the eternal of Israel. The prophet Samuel says these words to king Saul after his failure to confess his sin of not annihilating *Amalek*. In other words, Samuel is telling Saul that he cannot confess his sin because he is not connected with the Eternal of Israel. He is not connected with the aspect of God that is the same above and below, as explained. King Saul was following the example of Adam, who when challenged by the Almighty regarding his sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge also was unable to confess. Instead, Adam immediately laid the blame on his wife, Eve. But, God, says Samuel, is "not a man," or translated even more literally, God "is not [like] Adam."

For this reason, God renounced Saul's sovereignty and anointed David in his place. David was the first to start rectifying Adam's sin. David too sinned. But, when confronted by the prophet Nathan, he immediately and naturally cried out, "I have sinned to God." David confesses simply and naturally, without thinking twice. About this the Torah says, fortunate is the generation whose leader sins and immediately confesses and brings a sacrifice, for thereby he paves the way for the coming of the *Mashiach*.

We might have thought that because the Hebrew letters of "Adam" (אָדָם) are the initials of "Adam" (אָדָם), "David" (דָּוִד), and "*Mashiach*" (מָשִׁיחַ), David would act exactly

like Adam and shun responsibility for his sin. But this was not the case and David climbed above Adam, doing what the latter was incapable of doing. After he realized that he had sinned, through natural consciousness,¹⁵ David understood that he was chosen to act as the intermediate that connects Adam (the initial state of mankind) with the *Mashiach* (the rectified state of mankind). The *Mashiach* is the one who understands this secret of “not a man” (לֹא אָדָם). So, David was the first step in a progression from “Adam” to “not Adam,” from being limited to being unlimited. The purpose of this progression is not to replace man per se with “not a man.” Rather, it is meant to elevate man so that he can hold both extremes—man and “not man”—simultaneously. So that he can unify the infinite (aspect of the Almighty, that which is the same above and below and unchanging) with the finite (aspect of the Almighty, as revealed in the mundane). And, again, the first step in this progression is the ability to earnestly confess one’s transgression naturally and without machinations.

7. God’s Infinite Light

Next, the Rebbe dwells on a particular point regarding God’s infinite and essential light. Since it is the valued treasure, the secret weapon, that the king is going to distribute to his soldiers, how can it be revealed in the first place? How can the essential light of the Almighty, the manifestation of God’s essence be revealed? This light is also called God’s face (either the 50th gate or the 32nd pathway, as we have explained) not revealed even to Moshe Rabbeinu, as the verse says, “But, my face will not be seen.” In Hebrew, the word for “face” (פָּנִים) also means “inner.” So how can such an inner light be revealed in the first place?

The Rebbe answers by noting that even from this inner aspect of God’s essence, there is a possibility that some light will shine down. Some of God’s essential light can be revealed, albeit tenuously, in our reality (the Rebbe provides a reference to a source in Chassidic philosophy that discusses this point).

But, he gives this answer in order to refute it. He says, this is not what the previous Rebbe meant when he referred to the treasure being distributed freely, because then it would only be a slight revelation like the dripping of drops of water from above. But, the king passes out his treasure freely, to everyone, and he offers it in such a way that everyone can understand it (not just a glimmer of it). So this cannot be the meaning.

Next, the Rebbe negates a second possibility. In many of his discourses, the Alter Rebbe discusses how an awakening (like a trigger) from above, awakens man below and then the awakening from below awakens God above to shine His light into the heart of man. Finally, after man has reached his most perfected state, the very highest level of awakening from above falls upon his “perfect place” (אֶתֶר שְׁלִים). We might think, says the Rebbe, that this is what is meant by the king passing out the treasure, this final stage of an awakening above that motivates a perfected human being below. But, this too cannot be it, because clearly we are not perfect, we are still in the midst of our war, our

rectification. In fact, it is quite clear that we are in the middle of a spiritual battle because of our imperfect natures. Moreover, in the parable, the king passes out his treasure freely to all his soldiers, again without regard for their training or level.

Furthermore, the Rebbe writes that if there is any amount of awakening from below, it comes in the form of a person willing to newly enlist in the king's spiritual army (like a *ba'al teshuvah*). Obviously, if someone has just walked into the recruitment office—someone has just decided to join *Tzivot Hashem* (the Almighty's spiritual army) in order to wage a battle against the spiritual ills of the world that oppose the king—that someone cannot be considered to be perfect. Instead, when you come to be recruited, they start giving you their treasures, like a weapon and training, etc.

8. The Mechanism of Victory

In all, the Rebbe spends an entire chapter highlighting the fact that the manner in which the treasure is distributed (as described in *Bati Legani's* last 10 chapters), is like no revelation we have ever seen in Chassidic thinking. The only thing you are required to do in order to receive this treasure, this secret weapon, is to enter the recruitment office and enlist in God's spiritual army. Automatically, you become victorious, for with this secret weapon you are promised victory. This is a good parable, because when a person goes to enlist in the army, just for doing so, the army gives him a weapon and training.¹⁶

To understand the mechanism of receiving God's essential and infinite light in order to be victorious, let us call upon a teaching we have reviewed many times in the *yeshivah* in *Shechem*. This is a teaching from Rebbe Isaac of Homil on the *sefirah* of crown. Rebbe Isaac explains that the light of the *sefirah* of crown [your super-consciousness] does not descend from above. Rather, it comes at you from the front, face to face, moving towards you, as it were. The word "crown" (כִּתְרוֹ) alludes to this. The first letter, *kaf* (כ) opens to the side, not downwards, implying that the crown does not come at you from above (sliding down above you, like a hat), but rather comes at you, enveloping you like a glove¹⁸ (of course it wraps you also from above, as its form suggests). This image is meant to give us a sense that the crown is not something that descends, rather something that is here, enveloping us all the time. It is present around us constantly.

And, the *sefirah* of victory, as described in *Bati Legani*, is like the *sefirah* of crown. The *sefirah* of victory is a unique mechanism. It does not act like the rest of the *sefirot*, but more like the crown. Like crown, victory (the king's need to be victorious, that each of his soldiers be victorious) reveals God's essential light, reaching all the way to the unknowable head of crown, the *Radla*. Victory can reveal this light, regardless of where you are and what your state is.

Since we have used one of Rebbe Isaac's teachings, let us bring another one. In a letter to a friend, Rebbe Isaac explains that the soul has a pulse of to-and-fro; a run-and-return that is in the soul of every Jew. Everything that is alive has a pulse—a dynamic called run and return. In the human body, there are actually two pulses. The external

pulse is felt in the wrist (the hand) and the inner pulse is felt in the heart.¹⁹ Being human, being “man,” means having a pulse—a dynamic of run and return. An example of run and return is the manner in which the Torah was revealed. God descended on Mt. Sinai and Moshe ascended to God. Then, the Torah was given from heaven (having descended to earth).

But when it comes to victory, this is not the process we need to think about (awakening above, then below, then above again, etc.) We have just seen that victory is defined in the verse as “not a man.” Thus, it does not function by the regular run and return dynamic, the regular pulse of the soul, the usual definition of “man.” The revelation of the highest treasure (revealed in order to ensure victory) does not happen through a process of run and return. It is a separate process altogether.

When the new recruit is given a weapon, it is not in the manner of run and return. Though the Hebrew word for “victory” also means eternity, as noted earlier, the new recruit is not thinking about eternal life. On the contrary, he is earnestly willing to give his life for victory. [In fact, in order to be victorious you have to be willing to fight for all eternity²⁰ and be willing to give up eternity, i.e., life.] . So when you are willing to be recruited to this cause of winning the king's spiritual war, you are immediately given his most trusted treasure and weapon—the secrets of the secrets of the Torah—without any effort on your part. And you do not need to draw these secrets down from above. You discover that they are within you; where you are, in your present state. Simply put, you realize that you yourself are the treasure. The treasure is in you yourself.

Another important point that the Rebbe makes about victory is that you might be inclined to think that the verse in Samuel implies that God is the “eternal of Israel.” In other words, that God created victory for His own sake. But, the true meaning is that victory was always meant *for* Israel, for the Jewish people. Victory and its special mechanism of revealing God's essence was, from the moment of creation, meant for the Jewish people and placed in the Jewish people. It is the “victory/eternity of Israel.” The moment a Jew awakens to the need to be victorious, awakens to his purpose of winning the battle against all opposition against the King, the treasure—the secrets of the Torah, God's infinite light—appears in him.

9. The Ba'al Shem Tov's Teaching

Everything we have said so far leads us to another point that the Rebbe makes, this time in his *ma'amar* titled *Hayoshevet Baganim* of 5729. As explained earlier, *Hayoshevet Baganim* is actually the second section of the full *Bati Legani* treatise and includes 5 chapters (chs. 6-10). When the previous Rebbe wrote the treatise, he noted that the second section should be learnt on the 13th of Shevat. On some years, on the 13th of Shevat, the Lubavitcher Rebbe would also teach this second section and the topic was almost consistently the state of exile of the Jewish people and the great elevation that transcends from serving God even in this state.

But, in 5729, the Rebbe taught *Hayoshevet Baganim*, and this time notably focused on a teaching of the Ba'al Shem Tov. The Rebbe describes in length how this teaching was passed down through the generations and how further elaboration was added to the teaching from generation to generation.²¹ The Ba'al Shem Tov's original teaching is based on the verse in *parshat Beshalach*, "And the sea, before daybreak, returned to its strength" (וַיֵּשֶׁב הַיָּם לְפָנוֹת בֹּקֶר לְאַיְתָּנוּ).

Let us see the full teaching:²²

"And the sea, before daybreak, returned to its strength." The sages taught²³ that the word "to its strength" (לְאַיְתָּנוּ) should be read as "to its conditional state" (לְתַנְאֵי), the condition that the Creator had made that the sea split for the Jewish people. It is unclear who the Creator made this condition with.

But, the thing is, that when He spoke the utterance (מֵאֲמָרָה) [that created the sea] He did so on the condition that the sea be split. And if this condition would not be met, there would have been no sea in this spot in the first place, and its waters would not have been created with the rest of creation. For everything in the Torah is both prescriptive and prohibitive.²⁴

We can now understand why the sages say that the tzadikim perform God's will instead of saying that they follow His word (דְּבָרָה) or His utterance (מֵאֲמָרָה), for God's will cannot be grasped.

The parable for understanding this is of a father who tells his son some halachah (law from the Torah) or some innovative interpretation in the Torah and the son, thanks to the sharpness of his intellect and his complex thinking, is able to disprove his father's words [and offers a different interpretation]. Though the child opposes his father and disproves him, still the father receives nachat,²⁵ great pleasure, and great joy from his son's argument, like in the verse, "Be wise my son...."²⁶ And this is what the father wants, far more than if the son would have quietly accepted his words. Likewise, the tzadik rules, as it were, through his fear of God.²⁷ And this is the meaning of they do His will, even though they do not do what He said or what He uttered.

This now explains the story about Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir²⁸ who told the river, Split for me, as I am going to perform a mitzvah (commandment). The River replied, I too am rushing to perform my Master's will. Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir said, If you do not split your waters, I will decree that waters will not flow in you, forever. Seemingly, Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir's reply is difficult, because the river indeed responded properly. But, with what was explained above it can be understood. God made a provision with all the acts of creation that they do the will of the tzadikim, even if it means going against their nature; and the opposite is also true....

So, this is what Rabbi Pinchas ben Ya'ir said: If you do not split your waters then it is apparent that you are not keeping the provision that God made with you when He spoke the utterance that created you. Therefore, it is as if you were never created and as if there had never been water here. Of course, it also means that water will never flow in you. This is also what Joshua did when he told the sun to halt.

And all of this is relevant to one who is called the Almighty's son who can perform his Master's will. And who is this? The person who guards his covenant and is therefore called a "tzadik the foundation of the world." And understand this well.

The main point is that the Ba'al Shem Tov is saying that the *tzadikim* are described as those who do God's will, not His word. Just this statement alone should shock us. At Mt. Sinai the Jewish people said, "We will do and we will hear." And this was learned from the angels of God who also perform His word and then hear His word.

But, here, the Ba'al Shem Tov is saying that *tzadikim* are at an even higher level. Just as we said earlier that winning the king's war is higher than the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai (the wedding day of the Almighty and Israel). Indeed, this is hinted to in the first commandment, the beginning of the giving of the Torah. There God says, "I am *Havayah* your God that has taken you out of Egypt, from a house of slavery." Even the giving of the Torah is thus predicated on the exodus from Egypt, where God fought to subdue His opposition.

Thus, the giving of the Torah is compared to the joy of a wedding, the consummate joy of man becoming a complete man (through marriage). But, the war against that which opposes God's very essence, this war requires the squandering and free distribution of God's ultimate treasure in the manner that is called "not a man."²⁹ The angels taught us the secret of doing [God's word] before even hearing it. But, the Ba'al Shem Tov reveals that the *tzadik*, the person who goes to war, is at an even higher level and performs God's will, not His word. So once more we are left with the question of what is this treasure, what secret weapon does God give the *tzadikim* in order to win the war?

Before answering this question, let us note that though the Ba'al Shem Tov's teaching clearly refers to those who perform God's will [rather than His word] as *tzadikim*, the Rebbe says that it actually refers to *ba'alei teshuvah*.³⁰ How so? We know that the *Mashiach* comes to make *ba'alei teshuvah* out of the *tzadikim*, i.e., to give the *tzadikim*, the righteous who have never sinned, a taste of the power of *teshuvah*. Thus, comparatively, the *ba'al teshuvah* (including the *tzadik* who becomes a *ba'al teshuvah*) is the one who does God's will, while the *tzadik* (who has not yet become a *ba'al teshuvah*) follows God's word, i.e., the revealed Torah. Now, what does it mean that the *ba'al teshuvah* does God's will? A *ba'al teshuvah* is someone who in the past did not do what God said to do, especially when it comes to guarding the sanctity of his covenant; this includes most of the people in our generations. Therefore, his rectification is to do God's will. This is pertinent to a *tzadik* who has become a *ba'al teshuvah* too.

10. A New Definition for Teshuvah

To understand how, we have to see the Rebbe's new explanation for what it means that the *tzadik* becomes *ba'al teshuvah*. In one sentence, the Rebbe's innovation is that *teshuvah* can be compared to the sages' saying that, "God makes a decree, which the *tzadik* then annuls." Says the Rebbe, the *tzadik* that can annul God's decrees is the *ba'al teshuvah*.

Let us explain this. There are actually two statements along this format made by the sages. The first is that the *tzadik* makes a decree and God makes it happen. The second is the one we have just quoted, God makes a decree, and then the *tzadik* annuls it.

The first saying is about the *tzadik* who has not become a *ba'al teshuvah*, and refers to every soul before it enters the world. Every soul is asked, both as an individual soul and as part of the collective of Jewish souls, whether the world should be created. Individually, every soul has to agree to come down into the world. When it states, I am ready (it issues a decree that it should be born), God makes it happen. As a collective, before God created the world, he sought the counsel of all the souls of the *tzadikim*, i.e., the Jewish people, Should I create the world? Since the answer was affirmative, God created the world.

But, then the soul comes down into the reality that it itself decreed should be created. And, inevitably, it experiences sin. It cannot be otherwise. God created an evil inclination in the world, and even though the sages say that He regrets this every day, He knew the consequences. So, at this point, the soul that has now become a living, breathing person has to be able to say, "I didn't create myself. You, God, You created me, and you created my evil inclination, so You are the one responsible, in the final analysis, for my transgressions."³¹

In the Torah it says, "God wants those who fear Him." A person whose fear of Heaven is perfect and prevents him from sinning, this is whom God wants. But, I am not such a person. So I have to do *teshuvah*. Normally, *teshuvah* means rectifying all your sins until you are cleansed and God wants you once more. But, here the Rebbe says that the meaning is different. *Teshuvah* means saying to God, I ask that you want me anyway, even though, for the moment, I am not doing what You want. I am asking that you want me the way I am. Every Jew is like the Almighty's only son, therefore every Jew can come before Him and ask that He change His will so that He want him the way he is even though this is not what it says in the Torah. The Torah says, I [God] will want you only if you act accordingly. This is a very harsh statement, like a threat. One might even think that it means that God says to the sinner, get out of here. Leave! I do not want you. But, the Almighty is hard to anger and quick to forgive. In this case, "quick to forgive" means that the Jew can create a new will in God.

II. A New Will

What does it mean to make a new will? We usually think of it in the following way. Say someone is sick. When we pray for his or her health we say to God, "May it be Your will, before You [that you bless so and so with a complete recovery, etc.]" We are asking God to annul His previous will—that this person be ill—and want something new, that this person be well. But, in truth, even though there is a change of will here, this cannot be called a new will, because God really wants everyone to be healthy. The only reason

for sickness is sin, as the sages say, “There is no suffering without sin, there is no death without sin.” So when we ask God to heal someone, we are really asking for forgiveness.

But here, I am not asking God to forgive in the classic sense, rather to change His original will when He created me. God wants me one way, now I am asking Him to want me as I am. This is asking God to create a new will, a will that never before existed. From God’s very essence a new will should emerge. This is like the famous Chassidic explanation of the liturgical words, “a new light shall shine on Zion”; not “new” in the sense that before there was darkness and now there is light, but that a part, as it were, of God’s very essence, which by definition is not “light,” and therefore is experienced as “darkness,” should become (visible) light!

Simultaneously with not doing what God said (His word), we ask Him to create a new will. By doing so, we are in essence making God’s will for Him and this is what it means “those that do [i.e., make] His will.”

12. All Attempts to Change Have Failed

Still, we should know that a person can “make God’s will” in this manner only if he has done everything in his power to change, but failed. If all attempts at change have met with failure, then this is a sign that what I am doing is God’s hidden will. This is a very delicate point and an individual can easily abuse it. So, let us immediately say that no form of addiction falls under this category. Every addiction can be broken. We are talking about something that truly cannot be changed. If the person is not making an effort to change, then there is no real reason for God to want him the way he is, because he could change. But, if he has tried everything and nothing changes, then it is proper to ask for this change of will.

Beseching God to make a new will, to want me as I am, is especially pertinent to the blemish of the covenant. Though our focus is on unmarried young men, we are also including married men in this regard. A man has to do everything he can to guard his covenant and to avoid everything that may blemish it. But, if he has failed, his spirits should not fall. And then he has to ask God to want him as he is. If the attempt to change and the attempts to guard the covenant are sincere, then God will accept his request and a will create a new will, wanting him as he is.

13. Game Theory Revisited

When we talked on the 19th of Kislev, we mentioned some of the basic principles of Game Theory. Every game has a consistent set of rules and if it is a good game, requires the players to make rational moves in order to win. The manner in which the previous Rebbe and the Rebbe describe the *sefirah* of victory implies that it both changes the rules of the game and encourages the player to make irrational moves. There is something irrational at the core of the *sefirah* of victory.

The moves made by players in a game are rational. Every game has moves and counter-moves that are thought out. The classic game around the world is chess. Its origins are attributed to King Solomon. Chess is a fine example of our point. Chess is a game of war. But, there is no example in chess of making moves that would simply waste all a player's treasures.

[In other words, King Solomon, unlike his father, King David, could not fully grasp the level of victory as explained in *Bati Legani*. Even though Solomon inherited David, he did not inherit his crown; he did not inherit his father's essence, the understanding of "not a man." Victory plays the game but discounts the rational logic of men.]

Moreover, victory changes the rules of the game. We saw that once a young man (whether single or married) decides to join, decides to be motivated by victory over that which opposes God, then even if he has lost everything—i.e., God no longer wants him—he can change the rules. He can ask God to want him the way he is. The idea here is that even though I have lost everything, I beseech God to make me into a winner.

1. We will have a great deal more to say about this in part III of the *farbrengen*.

2. In part III of the *farbrengen*.

3. In part II of the *farbrengen*.

4. I Samuel 15:29.

5. נשיא הדור.

6. See appendix 1 for further elaboration on these four levels of revealing the secret treasure.

7. Song of Songs 4:15.

8. See *Rashi* to Genesis 15:11.

9. In Hebrew, the falcon is an *אייה*, which alternately can be read as the word for "where" (*אייה*). Each of the 5 central *sefirot* (crown, wisdom, understanding, beauty, and kingdom) has a particular question associated with it. The question related to crown is "where?" Like the question asked by the Seraphim, "Where is His place of glory?" (Liturgy, *Kedushat Keter*).

10. Job 28:7.

11. Only upon his passing from the world did Moshe merit to attain the fiftieth gate of understanding. He was buried on Mt. Nevo, whose Hebrew name (*נבו*) is an allusion to the fiftieth gate, as it can be read as "50 in it" (*נ בו*).

12. אור אין סוף למעלה עד אין קץ ולמטה עד אין תכלית.

13. I Samuel 15:29.

14. Malachi 3:6.

15. That is, the coupling of Divine consciousness (selflessness) with human consciousness (lowliness).

16. Everyone knows that this is the reason that most young men want to join a physical army in the first place, to get an automatic rifle, etc.

17. The letter *כ* represents the essence of the *sefirah* of crown. The *gematria* of *כ* is 20. When we write the word "twenty" (*עשרים*) out in Hebrew, its value is 620, the value of "crown" (*כתר*)!

18. In fact, the meaning of *kaf* in Hebrew is "palm" as in the palm of a hand suggesting that the correct image of the crown's descent is like the glove that comes to wrap the hand.

19. Sometimes even if there is no pulse in the wrist, there is still a pulse in the heart.

²⁰. In his 2005 Nobel Prize in Economics [acceptance speech](#), Robert Aumann writes,
For repetition to engender cooperation, the players must not be too eager for immediate results. The present, the now, must not be too important. If you want peace now, you may well never get peace. But if you have time – if you can wait – that changes the whole picture; then you may get peace now. It's one of those paradoxical, upside-down insights of game theory, and indeed of much of science.

²¹. See *Hayom Yom* for the 17th of *Shevat*.

²². Magid of Mezritch's *Or Torah* (New York: Kehot, 2006), pp. 124-5.

²³. *Bereisheet Rabbah* 5:5.

²⁴. Meaning that everything the Torah says, even the account of creation has both a prescriptive and a prohibitive aspect. In this case, when God created the sea He said, If you split when the Jewish people arrive at your shores, then be created. But, if you do not fulfill this condition then you will not be created.

²⁵. Figuratively, the pleasure of peace of mind.

²⁶. Proverbs 27:11.

²⁷. II Samuel 23:3.

²⁸. *Chulin* 7a.

²⁹. Indeed, the first 2 sections of *Bati Legani* end with a discussion of the experience of joy in a wedding. Its climax is the holy folly practiced by some of the sages (this is compared to a state of prophecy). But the discussion of the treasure, the war, and the secret weapon that is given through the faculty of victory is introduced only in the third and fourth sections (chs. 11-20), as noted earlier, implying that the war and victory are incommensurably higher than the wedding.

³⁰. In Hebrew, *ba'al teshuvah* also means "one who has an answer," alluding to the son with the sharpened intellect who can respond to his father's words and disprove them.

³¹. See *Tanya*, end of chapter 31.