

Weekly Shiur

21 Tevet 5773

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(Notes taken during the shiur. Neither reviewed nor edited)

We said that the nigun menuchah vesimchah has a number of different nigunim. This was the one from Nadborna. Next week, we'll learn the nigun from Chabad, and this is a special thing that liturgy for Shabbat evening has a Chabad nigun for it.

This Shabbat we read parashat Shemot, a new chumash. It is known that apart from this parashah there are 6 parashot that are known by their acronym, Shovavim (שובבים) a special time for teshuvah based on a verse that appears in Yermiyahu, שׁוּבוּ בְּנֵי שׁוּבְבִים. The acronym is made of the initials of the first 6 parashot in the Chumash of Shemot, including all the exile in Egypt, the exodus and the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. They are especially related to the rectification of the covenant. And as the Alter Rebbe says, the best time to rectify with short fasts is in the winter months, these weeks.

Shemot is the name of both the parashah and the chumash, there is something special about the beginning, everything follows the inception. The beginning of the rectification of the covenant is this week. There is a verse in Malachi, the final prophet, he writes, שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם, return to Me and I shall return to you. The word שׁוּבוּ, return, is equal to 314, the value of God's Name Shakai (ש-ד-י), the Name corresponding to foundation, and which the sages interpret as meaning – that God said to the world enough. As the Rebbe RAschab explains, all teshuvah on the covenant is meant to halt and stop the disappearance of a person's true identity, which is what the blemish of the covenant detracts from. So these two words, שׁוּבוּ and ש-ד-י are equal. In fact, the value of the two verses, שׁוּבוּ בְּנֵי שׁוּבְבִים and שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וְאֶשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם is also the same, it is 776, בִּיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ, וּפְרֻצַת, the coming of Mashiach, etc. Shovavim (שובבים) equals 360, the value of Shechem (שכם), which we read about last week in Yaakov's blessing to Yosef. The average value of each letter in שׁוּבְבִים is 360 divided by 6 or 60, the value of כְּלִי, a vessel. There are 6 vessels that need to be rectified. If we write שׁוּבְבִים in full, we get שׁוּבוּ בְּנֵי שׁוּבְבִים, or 1296 or 36 squared (36 is the tenth part of 360, שׁוּבְבִים), or 6 to the fourth. So the שׁוּבְבִים is able to rectify all the sixths, especially the sixth sefirah, the yesod (foundation). Yosef himself is a multiple of 6, Yosef יוסף equals 6 times Havayah (26).

Returning to the verse in Malachi, return to Me and I will return to you. He promises that if we do teshuvah, He will return to us. There is a Torah in Likutei Moharan (2nd part) where he talks about this verse, where Rebbe Nachman connects it to the beginning of parashat Shemot. He brings a remez from the first 10 words of the parashah: וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַבָּאִים מִצְרֵימָה אֶת יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ וּבֵיתוֹ בָּאוּ. There are 11 words in the first verse, but if we look at just the words until הַבָּאִים, the final letters spell תְּהִלִּים (Tehilim). The next 5 words, their final letters spell תְּשׁוּבָה (teshuvah). He learns from this that the segulah, the greatest segulah to awaken in teshuvah is the saying of Tehilim. One needs to say a lot of Tehilim. He ends the Torah by saying that with the power of Tehilim one can do teshuvah. And we can add, as the Rebbe always brought from the Rambam, that at the end of the exile the Jewish people are destined

to do teshuvah and immediately they are redeemed. So how do we merit doing teshuvah and exiting Egypt—every exile is like Egypt, including our present exile in the land of Israel—by reciting Tehilim. He brings another remez for this from the verse in Chronicles, נאם הגבר הקם על, The speech of the man who elevated... What did he elevate, the state of teshuvah. This is King David, who was not worthy of the act with Batsheva, but he endured it in order to teach us how to do teshuvah, in order to write Tehilim. He came to show us that anyone, in any state, can do teshuvah. In the Tanya it says that there is nothing at all that can stand in the way of teshuvah, regardless of what it says in the holy books, there is always hope, you should always press forward. This is Yehudah's nature, that no matter what, he continues forth. This idea is one of the most seminal in the Pri Tzadik, Rebbe Tzadok Hacohen, who writes that there is nothing that can stop teshuvah.

It's interesting... who brings these type of remazim, that there are 10 final letters that spell תהלים תשובה. I might have expected that this be in the Ba'al Haturim. And if we open his commentary, we see all kinds of words that he finds in the first verse of our parashah. But, he doesn't mention Tehilim and teshuvah. This is an example of how every person that opens the Torah and reads it, finds exactly that which is connected to him and he needs. Even Ba'al Haturim who looked at the final letters in this verse, he didn't see these two words, it waited for Rebbe Nachman. Through Tehilim one merits doing teshuvah.

What is the connection with the verse from Malachi. Hashem is asking us to first return to Him and as we said according to the Rambam, He will return to us, by bringing us the true and complete redemption, the Mashiach. Says Rebbe Nachman, that just as there are 50 gates of understanding, there are 50 gates of teshuvah. This is a simple thing in the Zohar that understanding is always equated with teshuvah. Sometimes teshuvah refers to the lower hei returning (תשובה תתאה), but in any case, the source of both higher and lower teshuvah is in understanding. The lower teshuvah in our parashah is Pu'ah and the higher teshuvah in our parashah is Shifra, the two midwives. All the miracles and wonders and all the revelation of Hashem in Shemot is in their merit. It is pretty explicit here as it says, שם האחת שפרה ושם השנית פועה. Indeed, they were a mother and daughter (just like binah and malchut—the higher and lower hei). There is another saying from the sages that they were Yocheved and not her daughter (Miriam) but rather her daughter in law, Elisheva (Aharon's wife). Just as Leah and Rachel are the bigger and smaller hei, so Shifrah and Puah are the higher and lower hei in Havayah. The difference is that Leah and Rachel are the service of the tzadikim, while Shifrah and Puah are the service of ba'alei teshuvah.

At the end of their story it says that God made them "houses." But it says להם, in a masculine form. Until now, the Torah makes a point to relate to them with feminine pronouns, how did they now become masculine. One commentary says, that because they sacrificed themselves to save the males, as Pharaoh told them to kill the males and spare the females, but because of their Fear of Heaven, they did not follow his instructions and they let the males live. So in this merit, they themselves received a masculine aspect. Another explanation in Kabbalah is that the relationship between a mother (Ima), who is even more an influence than Zeer Anpin (the masculine partzuf), and her daughter is like that of a male to female. So, when the lower hei

returns to the higher hei, they both are designated as masculine. This fits with what we find in the sages that Shifrah and Puah are the same woman. This is a wondrous midrash. Rav and Shmuel disagree on whether they were a woman and her daughter or a woman and her daughter-in-law. But, here, they are one person altogether, following the idea of the return of the lower hei to the higher hei to become one. The words, ויעש להם בתים is equal to 913, the value of בראשית. There are two important idioms in parashat Shemot that equal 913. According to the Tikunei Zohar, anything that is related to Bereisheet is related to the purpose of the world's creation, the תכלית. The first as we said is He made them houses (ויעש להם בתים). Rashi says that these houses were the houses of priesthood and kingdom. Another commentary says that these allude to the building of the third Temple. Here "houses" indicates that the third Temple contains the first two, the first two Temples, like the Rebbe always said that the 3rd Temple is triple, as it contains the first two.

So Shifrah and Puah are the higher and lower hei, but that they refer to the service of ba'alei teshuvah. We are in exile in this parashah, and we are told that to come out of exile, we have to do teshuvah. Return to me, and I shall return to you. We need these two special souls, Shifrah and Puah. When we do teshuvah Hashem does teshuvah. Hashem is like our shadow on our right hand (ה' צלך על יד ימינך). The Rebbe said the same thing about the campaigns: that if we perform our campaigns properly, then Hashem will perform His, which is the campaign of Mashiach.

Let's return to Rebbe Nachman. He says that just as there are 50 gates of understanding, there are 50 gates of teshuvah. The first 49 gates of teshuvah correspond to the 49 letters of the tribes. He doesn't write, but he means how the tribes are mentioned at the beginning of parashat Shemot. We know that on the stones of Shoham on the High Priest's garments, 6 tribes were written on one stone and 6 on the others, with 25 letters on each stone, hinted at in the verse, ויפן כה וכה. Altogether 50 letters. The remez is the Tribes of י-ה, and when we multiply these two letters, yud by hei, we get 50. How then can Rebbe Nachman write that there are 49 letters in the tribe's names. The peshat though is that he is referring to how the tribes names are written at the beginning of our parashah. They didn't change their names when in Egypt and when we look at their names here we see that they have 49 letters, because Binyamin is written without a yud בנימן. Rebbe Nachman writes that every Jew has one of these 49 letters, that is his personal gate for doing teshuvah (just as each has a gate for his prayers). He connects them with the 49 days of sefirat Ha'omer. He writes in another place that every Jew has a special day in sefirah Ha'omer (like Rashbi). But, not every one knows his gate. Like the Alter Rebbe writes in the beginning of Tanya, that not every person knows what his portion in the Torah is. What prevents teshuvah? He says two things prevent it. The first is simple: a person is so immersed in the evil of the false world that he inhabits, and so he has no will to do teshuvah. But, there is one who does want to do teshuvah, but he can't find the way. What is the path, how should I go about doing teshuvah, I feel like a blind person. I have an awakening to do teshuvah, but if I can't find the path, that at some point, I will despair. There is a solution, a segulah to both these problems: Say Tehilim. If you are so coarse that you can't awaken to do teshuvah, if you say Tehilim you will be awakened. And, also if you are awakened but can't find your path to teshuvah, say Tehilim. This is connected with the Chassidic vort that during the first

12 days of Nisan we read the bringing of the sacrifices by each prince of each of the 12 tribes, and after each reading, we say, that if our soul root is from this tribe (even if we are a Levite, and know that we are not). During Sefirat Ha'omer from the 12 tribes, we resolve further and reach 49 letters of these 12 tribes. If we count (and Hashem counts with us) the 49 days of Sefirat Ha'omer, then the 50th day becomes Hashem returning to us. In the future this becomes the new Torah that comes out of Me, out of Mashiach. So to find your special day in Sefirat Ha'omer, to find your letter in the tribes, say Tehilim. This is all from the remez that the final letters of the first 10 words of Shemot spell Tehilim Teshuvah (תהלים תשובה).

A few days ago in Hayom Yom we read that someone who reads the Zohar elevates his nefesh (psyche), and one who reads Midrash elevates his heart, while one who says Tehilim with tears, that washes the vessel. That he mentioned all three implies that we should say all three. The Rebbe Moharash used to say that learning Zohar for him was learning Chassidut. And the Zohar elevates the nefesh. ארוממך א-להי המלך, there is revelation through elevation (התגלות דרך התרוממות), one has to reveal and draw down the revelation of elevation. This means returning one personal wholeness (שלמות עצמית) that has disappeared because of one's blemish of the covenant. The Rebbe Rashab explains that we do this by learning Chassidut, of course, in a way that we can understand and make sense of it. But, the first thing is Zohar, meaning Chassidut, that it elevates the nefesh. The second thing is Midrash, in another place it says that the words of the Midrash draw the heart to them and bring a person to know He who created the world. In the continuation we'll bring an example of this. So we need to elevate the nefesh, awaken the heart, but a third thing is also needed. That the vessel be clean and pure. The names Shifrah Puah are a notarikon of the word Shefa (שפע), effluence or abundance. When do we ask for effluence, for great abundance, which is like the revelation of Shifrah and Puah. There is only one such instance. Right after Sefirat Ha'omer in the Yehi Ratzon every night. The counting of the Omer is the secret of Amram, Moshe Rabbeinu's father. He is the connection between Moshe Rabbeinu and Pharaoh. Moshe is Amram minus 5, and Pharaoh (פרעה) is Amram plus 5. So Amram is their average. This we won't explain any further. So Shifrah and Puah through their teshuvah a great deal of abundance is drawn down.

We just mentioned Pharaoh. The stories of Shemot begin with his figure. There is also Pharaoh in holiness, referring to the unbridled revelation of all lights, something the Rebbe like to mention. In the Zohar it says that this is explicitly the malchut of Atzilut, from which all lights emanate. The Pharaoh below is the greatest ego, the greatest hubris. He is the great crocodile that lives in the Nile. Moshe Rabbeinu is afraid of the Pharaoh below. He can connect only with his father, Amram. From the beginning of Shemot until Moshe's birth, no personal names are mentioned. Even Shifrah and Puah, in the literal reading, might now be their names, they might be even righteous gentiles, thank to who great abundance comes down. What is certain is that they are related to teshuvah. The only other name that is mentioned is Pharaoh. The entire Egyptian culture revolves around Pharaoh. Now in Shifrah and Puah שפרה פועה, we very clearly see the name Pharaoh, פרעה. There are place names, Pitom and Raamses, פתם רעמסס. They too contain the word פרעה, Pharaoh. Everything is about Pharaoh, very fitting for Egypt. But, interestingly, in both cases, Pharaoh's

name is divided in two. These are the very special four names in the beginning of Shemot. When we add them together we get 4 times משיח בן דוד, Mashiach son of David.

Why did Pharaoh build these cities? These cities were treasure houses, and Pharaoh had the idea from Yosef, he had a residual idea, that Jews are good with money, with treasures. They are the best at handling these things. The verse says, אדם לעמל ילד, that a person is born to toil. The initials of "toil עמל" spell "treasure-cities for Pharaoh" (ערי מסכנות לפרעה). We do this in holiness by gathering and giving all the treasures to the Pharaoh of holiness. We need both spirituality and material wealth. We need to build two strong cities to hold these treasures. With Pitom and Raamses in the background, Shifrah and Puah appear, as if to say that they come out of these two cities.

There is a verse in Job that says, ויסתר עמל מעיני, that He hid my toil from my eyes. He means to say that his suffering is his toil. But we just said that a person is born in order to toil. But, Job prefers not to have been born, not to see his labor. He prefers that Pharaoh's decree that every male born be killed, that this happen to him, that he die before he is born. After the story of the two midwives, the paragraph (פרשה) ends and we hear of how a Levite man married a Levite woman, also without personal names, and the story goes on until Moshe Rabbeinu is born.

Another nice remez. There are other final letters in the second paragraph, which begins לוי ויקח את בת לוי. A man from the house of Levites when and took a daughter of Levites. The final letters are שתי, the final letters of the next 3 words are תי. The Rogachover writes that here Amram enacted the mitzvah of marriage. Together they spell the word שתיתי, a word we talked about last week in the verse, שתיתי. This word appears only once in a positive form, "I drank." It appears a few other times in the negative: לא שתיתי, I did not drink, like by Moshe Rabbeinu and by Channah, Samuel's mother. The positive instance is in the verse in Song of Songs: שתיתי ייני עם חלבי אכלו רעים שתו ושכרו דודים. What does "I drank my wine refer to?" In the beginning of the sidur there are a number of ma'amarim on this verse, where it is explained that I drank my wine refers to the supernal mother, אימא עילאה, the pure meditation in the mind, and I drank my milk corresponds to the supernal father, אבא עילאה. Here they are Yocheved and Amram. This is a difficult to realize remez, that we would not have come to without this ma'amar in Chassidut.

Let's return to the Hayom Yom and connect it with the Rebbe Rashab's ma'amar this week in Ayin Beis. We said that first we need Zohar to elevate the nefesh, then Midrash to awaken the heart and then Tehilim needs to be said with tears in order to wash the vessel. Of course these tears, especially in Chabad, should not be fake and forced. These must be the tears of teshuvah. When I learn Zohar and it elevates my nefesh that is not yet teshuvah. Awakening the heart is nearing teshuvah but not teshuvah itself. But, Tehilim with tears that is teshuvah—as it says that the gates of tears were never sealed. And it washes the vessel. Usually the vessel is the heart, but to awaken the heart is not yet a broken heart. But, when Tehilim washes the heart, it is specifically a broken heart—like the vort that there is nothing more whole than a broken heart. From this we learn that the fact that a heart is not broken is not yet teshuvah, rather it is washing this broken heart with Tehilim with tears. In the Rebbe Rashab's ma'amar he explains that the light and the vessel have to be unified. The

nature of light is nothingness, to nullify itself before God's will, while the nature of the vessel is to descend and become coarse physicality. They both have to change direction in order to connect. The light has to descend down into the physical realm and want to connect with the vessel and the vessel has to ascend and nullify its being. So we have light and vessel and nothingness and being. In addition there is Torah and davening, prayer. The nature of Torah is like light, to nullify and return above into God. A person who doesn't understand that the nature of Torah is light, it is not intellect, then he doesn't yet have the light of Torah. Real Torah comes down from Heaven, we received it from Heaven. By doing so, by being given to us at Mt. Sinai, Torah already changed its direction. Prayer is taking my being, my self and elevating it, also changing its direction. When prayer is connected properly with Torah that is the essence of rectification. The world of rectification is the place where directions are reversed in order to change Chaos into rectification.

The Magid explained that the best allegory for understanding all of Torah and Chassidut is that of the Rebbe and the student. The Rebbe Rashab doesn't mention this here. The main novelty in this ma'amar is that if there is no proper balance between Torah and prayer, between the Rebbe and his student, then the student might nullify too much and the Rebbe might descend to low and become to coarse. Again, he doesn't talk about teacher and student, in which case the light becomes a vessel and the vessel becomes light. This is like role-reversal, like the terrible situation today when men want to become women and the opposite by an operation and the like. This is like what we mentioned last week that the nullification shouldn't be up to the student, as he might go too far. If we use the allegory of Rebbe and student, then it seems that the roles are reversed. The Rebbe is someone who is selflessness. There is a student who has learnt so much about selflessness, that he thinks that he has the greatest selflessness. This is all ego. But, there is also the opposite situation. The Rebbe when he begins to talk, in order to make things clear in a classroom, one has to make things concrete. So the Rebbe has to talk in a language that the children understand. For him, the language he has to use, is coarse and crude. But, these are the only words the student understands, meaning that he can understand them. Otherwise, his words won't mean anything for the student. But, there is a situation in which the Rebbe talks with more crudeness than the student and this role reversal is a terrible situation. This is a very good example for understanding how when there is proper balance between the light's direction and the vessel's direction, then everything is good and well. All this is related to what we said about Tehilim and a broken heart and tears because if the heart is broken, then a person can really think that he already has lowliness. But, if he has not washed this lowliness with tears and Tehilim, the lowliness can end up in a very negative place. Only if you have all three things together, can you be rectified according to this saying from the Tzemach Tzedek.

The midwives feared God they had fear of Heaven. And they did not do what Pharaoh commanded them to do, their teshuvah was not to do what they were told to do, to kill the males, but in fact they did the opposite, they took care of the children. The addition is that they did the complete opposite, and kept the children alive and took care of them. What is this called today, this type of teshuvah, this type of teshuvah that brought about the birth of Moshe Rabbeinu, the exodus, and the

giving of the Torah and the building of the Temples? This today is called סירוב פקודה, refusing to perform a direct order. The teshuvah is refusing to perform a direct order by the women in particular, and it is in their merit that we were redeemed. The merit of righteous women brings the redemption and particularly this refers to their strengthening the faith of the children. But, here we see another merit of the righteous woman. The entire redemption was in their merit, that the Jewish people did not change their names, their appearance, that they did not assimilate. But, actually it is two different things: giving the children faith and trust in Hashem, but first of all they have to give birth to these children. In the parashah, even before they were given "houses," it says that God benefited the midwives, by making the people multiply and be fruitful. This was because their whole intent was that the people be fruitful and multiply and increase in numbers. So the first thing is to have many children and then the next thing is to educate them only upon holiness, with pure holiness, and the first thing in that respect is that they believe in the coming of Mashiach. But the merit of having many children begins with being willing to refuse a direct command. How do we know that this is true, because our entire people begins with a refusal to follow orders. That is the story of Abraham. There are many forms of refusing to follow orders. A person who is unwilling to follow what the culture dictates, that person is refusing to follow orders. A person's environment becomes like a commander telling you what you do and if you do not follow it and society finds out, you will be punished severely and ostracized. Even Moshe Rabbeinu, who was more humble than all people, his humility was because he looked at the last generation of history and saw that there were Jews whose only toil in this world is not to follow the orders of a society that forces them to do the opposite of what Hashem tell them to do. In the case of the midwives, all of Egypt was Pharaoh. To not do what he said was also dangerous physically, he could kill them. The principle of refusing to follow orders is alluded to in Yosef's name. He has yud and vav, which are the letters of Havayah, and he has samech and pei, the initial letters of "refusing an order" (סירוב פקודה). Where do we see that he refused orders? With Potiphara's wife. Potiphar is also a name connected with Pharaoh. His refusal to follow her order was not something small. She told him that if he did not do what she said, she would have him killed. The threat in the end was not carried out and he was "only" placed in jail. The fact that a Jew is always refusing orders, that is the essence of what it means to be in Tzivot Hashem, which is to refuse the orders of the yeitzer, the evil inclination. The evil inclination is "older," it is 13 years older than the Divine soul and therefore feels like the "responsible adult." The serpent in the Garden of Eden also felt that it was older than Adam and Eve.

In the sages, the laws of refusing an order are learnt from Amasa ben Yitra the Israelite, he was the minister of the army of Yehudah. But, in the Midrash it says that we learn to refuse an order from Yosef. In the sacrifices of the princes of the tribes, the eighth day is the day on which Menashe brought his sacrifice, and there the sages dwell on how Yosef refused an order and they connect this all to a verse in Ecclesiastes, אני פי מלך שמור ועל דברת שבועת אלקים, I, says the Midrash, am like the king who commands you. This is the "I." This I of the king, in general because it commands you, you have to follow his command. But, there is an exception, when it says, ועל דברת שבועת אלקים, if what he tells you is not to follow what you have sworn

to Hashem. There is a lengthy discussion of this verse. Yosef's refusal to follow a command is connected to the evil inclination, represented by Potiphara's wife. But, the Rambam writes that the refusal to follow a command is particularly related to the commands of a king. For instance, if the king commands you to do something, but you are in the middle of performing some mitzvah, then you are not required to follow the command (in any other case you might be found guilty). All the more so if he commands you to do something that the Torah forbids. Then you must refuse to follow his command. So in the Talmud, we learn about refusal to follow the king's command from Amasa ben Yitra, because that was a case of refusing to follow the king's command (and not like YOsef who refused Potiphara's wife). In that particular case, Amasa said that he did not have to conscript soldiers because they were now busy in learning Torah. This of course was not a conscription that was necessary to save lives (פקוח נפש), but a war that was not necessarily needed, otherwise, it of course takes precedence over learning Torah. Yoav eventually killed Amasa, even though they were cousins. Yoav killed two tzadikim, Avner ben Ner and Amasa ben Yeter. How was Amasa a tzadik and better than Yoav who killed him? Because Amasa knew how to learn from the words "only" and "but" (אכין ורקין), but Yoav even though he knew very well how to learn, did not know how learn these words properly. What "רק", what "only" did Amasa learn so well? It says in Joshua that the people came to Joshua and said to him, "All that shall refuse your command shall be killed, only be strong (רק חזק ואמץ)." The word "only" here comes to exclude someone who refuses the king's command (like Joshua) because he listens to God and not to you. In such a case he is not guilty and not to be killed.

The sages say that if there is a teacher and student, who do you listen to? To the teacher. Alluding to the story of the serpent and Eve. Who should she have listened to? To the teacher, meaning God. But, the Rambam uses a different terminology. He says, between a master and servant who do you listen to? To the master, because he wants to stress that the earthly king is only the servant of the real Master, his Master, meaning the Almighty. When the king is not following the Master's teachings, than he is not even worthy of being called a student, he is simply a servant and should not be listened to. This is an important point. The student too has to feel that he is a servant, he has to know his place. Sometimes to even feel that you are a student demonstrates coarseness. This is related to what the sages say that serving the teacher is greater than learning from him.

Returning to our midrash on Naso, on the tribe of Menashe, it says that whomever is careful with not following illegal commands, by him the Almighty enacts that whatever a tzadik decrees that Almighty follows. His whole purpose was to do God's will, so then if there is a situation in which the real King, the Almighty decrees something that is not good in our physical eyes (בטוב הנראה והנגלה), he will be given the power to annul God's decree. These two principles (that the tzadik decrees and God follows the decree and that God decrees and the tzadik annuls) correspond to netzach and hod. Another important point is that it doesn't matter who the king is, it can be a kosher Jewish king, not just if it is Pharaoh or someone else.

The Gra connects the Rambam with the mitzvah of honoring one's parents. You have a responsibility to honor them and do what they say, unless they tell you do something against the Torah. There are two such instances: with a king and with

one's parents. The Gra writes that it is simple that one is more responsible to the king than to his parents. It doesn't matter whether it is a Jewish or non-Jewish king. We'll build a model around this. One's parents are wisdom and understanding. The I is Zeer Anpin. The king who is more than the parents is then the keter, crown. But, we said that sometimes the king is Jewish and sometimes he's not. It can be a Jewish king, or state, Jewish culture as it were, Jewish shades (שדין יהודאין). How can we reflect the difference between them. The non-Jewish king is the external aspect of keter, Arich. This is will vs. will, my will has to overcome his will. But, if the king, or the culture, or the state, is Jewish then that emanates from the inner aspect of the keter, the crown, it comes from pleasure. So we have pleasure vs. pleasure. There is some pleasure in following the decrees of the Jewish state, especially for someone who believes that the state represents the beginning of our redemption. There is a great pleasure then in following the commands of the state. And to not follow their orders, one has to have tremendous pleasure in holiness to stand up to them. What we get from this is that to disobey our parents, when they tell us for instance to desecrate the Shabbat, then we need to awaken our own power of nullification to nullify what they say. All the power of the Jewish kingdom comes from the inner aspect of the keter, but in the case where they command something that is forbidden, the inner aspect of the keter is off and mistaken. The archetype of disobeying orders are Shifrah and Puah. What is God in this model? He is the Radla, the unknowable head. The Jewish king is Atik, the non-Jewish king is Arich, and the parents are Abba and Ima. And the "I" is Zeer Anpin, and if I'm a woman then the "I" is malchut (not Zeer Anpin).

Another remez. How do I know that the letters samech and pei in Yosef are related to disobeying orders and that in its merit, children are born? Because these two letters in his name allude to having another child, "May God add me another child," the words that Rachel spoke when giving Yosef his name. But, the first word in the Torah that has the two letters samech and pei together is when Eve gave birth to Abel: ותוסף ללדת את אחי את הבל. Proving that these two letters are related to having more children.

How much does סירוב פקודה equal? It equals תבונה, tevunah, the lower partzuf of binah. Tevunah relative to binah represents ba'alei teshuvah relative to tzadikim. Improper service of God, is described as לא יחפץ כסיל בתבונה כי אם בהתגלות לבו, the fool does not seek tevunah, but rather the revelation of his heart. All that he does is to seek favor in the eyes of others. Tevunah is unified with ישראל סבא, with what can be translated as the authentic Jewish spirit. A woman who wants to be married to Yisrael Saba, to the authentic Jewish spirit, has to disobey illegal commands.

Among the Tannaic sages, סירוב פקודה equals "Rabbi Meir" (רבי מאיר). We have to look for stories about him and disobeying orders. His contemporaries did not understand his opinions.

Shifrah and Puah (שפרה פועה) is equal to Shemot (שמות). They are the ones responsible for all the names (the meaning of the word "Shemot") that came down to Egypt.

After all this, we come to their story. In it we find 7 characters. There are Shifrah and Puah. There are the Jewish and Egyptian women, whom they compare. The Jewish women are not like the Egyptian. Then there are the males and females, the son and daughter who are born. And finally, there is Pharaoh. If you want to make this into a

play, you need these 7 characters. It is Pharaoh's command that they disobey, with the merit of the cities of treasure, and the treasure is fear of God.

There is something we didn't finish from before. We said that what Job said about "toil" (עמל). The Ba'al Haturim writes that the word ויסתר appears only twice in the Tanach. Once in this verse in Job, and the other in our parashah, when Moshe concealed his eyes, not to see the burning bush, because he feared looking at God. What is the connection between them. The Ba'al Haturim explains, there is a dispute between the sages whether it was a good thing that Moshe Rabbeinu concealed his eyes and was not willing to look into the burning bush (later, he asked God to see Him, but God told him, you missed our chance at the burning bush). To just look at the Shechinah, the Divine Presence is certainly something negative, but says the Ba'al Haturim, if he would have looked at it and prayed to God that He redeem the Jewish people, that would have been positive. Like the Rebbe said, to bring the redemption, to ask for Mashiach now, one has to look directly at the Divine Presence and ask for Mashiach now. If this is the manner in which we would ask for Mashiach, and if this would have been the way that Moshe would have looked into the burning bush, then we would have been saved all the difficulties of all the exiles after the Egyptian. Job was in despair, which is why he asked that God have concealed his toil, meaning would have not let him be born in the first place. But, in Moshe's case, he was not in despair and if he just would have looked and prayed at the same time, we would have been spared all the exiles. "He concealed" (ויסתר) is 676, the square of 26 (Havayah). In our verse in Shemot, ויסתר משה פניו כי ירא מהביט אל האלהים and Job's verse, ויסתר עמל מעיני, together equal 1296, which we saw earlier is 36 squared or 6 to the fourth power.

Now, we said there are 7 characters in the story of Shifrah and Puah. If there are 7 they should correspond to the seven lower sefirot. We place Pharaoh in correspondence with malchut, kingdom. In this parashah (פרשה), we find that sometimes it says Pharaoh, and sometimes it just calls him the king of Egypt (מלך מצרים). All 7 characters are related to our Divine service, so even the Egyptian women represent something in Divine service. What do they actually represent? In Chassidut it is explained that an Egyptian woman is someone who serves God with the purpose of receiving some personal gratification from their work. Shifrah and Puah would give others water and food. They gratified others. Someone who works in order to gratify himself, that is someone who is serving God with "a feeling of his self," he feels that he loves God, that he fears God, that he is learning Torah. He receives gratification from this all. That is an Egyptian woman. That is the type of service of God that the Egyptian women represent. It causes a curtain to be drawn between Worlds. A curtain is a contraction that does not allow the light to pass between Worlds, because indeed the distance between them is infinite. The curtain is an Egyptian woman. If a person seeks gratification, it presents the Divine light form descending into the lower World. It creates contractions throughout the order of evolution (סדר ההשתלשלות). Just as every mitzvah creates a good angel, every act that is meant to provide one with gratification creates a curtain that hinders light from descending down.

What about the Jewish women? They represent the opposite. They are actually called Hebrew women, and the word Hebrew stems from the verb meaning "to pass"

(ויעבר). It allows the light to descend even without enclotting, without allowing it to be hindered by the Egyptian women, by the curtains. If the Hebrew women give birth before the midwife, what is the midwife needed for? Because they assist the light in passing through the curtain placed there by the Egyptian women. They are able to do this because their source is in God's essence. Shifrah is the pleasure inherent in meditation upon Hashem, and Puah is the "word of God" (דבר ה'), which refers to either halachah, prophecy, or the redemption. When Puah is contained within Shifrah that becomes redemption. But, as long as she is a separate entity from Shifrah, then if she is Elisheva (Yocheved's daughter-in-law) then it becomes the word of halachah, of Torah law. But, if Puah is Miriam, God's word that emanates from her becomes prophecy, since Miriam was a prophetess.

Pharaoh wanted Shifrah and Puah to kill the children in the womb. But, they said that whenever they came, the child had already taken its head out. In Chassidut it is explained that what they said relates to the fact that the power to give birth comes from a source above Shifrah and Puah, that they can only help, meaning that it comes from Radla, from the unknowable head.

In any case, in our reality it is very hard to find someone today who is like the Hebrew women and searches for no gratification in his work. We have the Hebrew women, the Egyptian women and Pharaoh who on the decrees final day commanded all Egyptians to kill whatever Jewish children they find.

The Egyptian women correspond with hod (acknowledgment) because of הודי הפך עלי למשחית. The Jewish women correspond to victory as it says about netzach, וניצח ישראל. לא ישקר ולא ינחם.

The boy and girl here are chesed and gevurah. Pharaoh wanted to kill the boys because they could potentially become the redeemer. He believed that the redeemer could not be a girl. He might have been mistaken in this respect. In Chassidut it is explained that the boy is someone who provides abundance as part of his essential character. Such a person is like an open conduit, who doesn't stop the flow of abundance. The girl is someone who receives and therefore feels that they've received something, so they have to contain what they just received (as a woman has to contain the sperm she received in order to create a child) but in this containment, the girl feels herself.

It seems to Pharaoh that the girls could be made to assimilate. If everyone would serve God with the purpose of self-gratification, then they would assimilate. Pharaoh thought he could get the Jewish girls to be included within the Egyptian women.

Now we are left with the middle axis: tiferet and yesod. Shifrah then of course corresponds to tiferet (beauty—that is what her name means). What about Puah? We said that this is all a story of rectifying the covenant. Before she talks with the children, she has a simple inner voice. She talks with the children, voice here is the sefirah of yesod, foundation. There is a unification in Kabbalah between sound and dibbur, speech. The sages explain that it was not that Puah spoke to the children after they were born, but rather that with her voice she caused the childbirth to move along faster. In an inner sense, her voice had the ability to give birth to the redemption, to bring out Divine revelation. The voice here is more important than the actual words she said. Voice is yesod in Kabbalah, not malchut (which is speech).

So we have constructed a complete partzuf here of the seven lower sefirot and the characters in Shifrah and Puah's story.

Now for the final two verses in the story. They read, "God benefited the two midwives and the people multiplied greatly. And because the midwives feared God, He made them houses." In every true example of selflessness, the nullification of self, there has to be both run and return. The highest level of run is called "with all your muchness" (בכל מאדך). In this case it was the people multiplying, while the fact that they were given houses was their "return." Return is always related to fear, (Because they feared God...) while run is related to love.

The word יראה appears twice in these verses: ותראינה and ויראו. This corresponds to two types of disobeying orders. Passive and active. The passive type is when you are given an order to for instance evict Jews from their homes, you refuse and then you are put in jail (there is one commentary that says that "he made them houses" means that he put them in a jailhouse). But, there is active disobeying, where not only do you not evict the Jewish settlers, but you actually join them. About this type of disobeying it says, that they helped the children once they were born, ותחיינה את הילדים. In Yosef the letter yud and vav refer to the point of not willing to perform the illegal order. The vav is already to do the opposite, because vav causes reversal of tense (וו ההיפוך). Normally we say that netzach and hod are active and passive, but here it's yud and vav.

Now Pharaoh told them to see in the woman's womb, to see with their hands, by groping her, whether it is a boy or girl. Says Chassidut that their first refusal to follow orders was their unwillingness to differentiate between Jews, between boys and girls. I am not willing to tell the difference. This is an important point for all families: not to differentiate between boys and girls, do not want either boys or girls, accept them both equally. Don't want to just have boys or to just have girls. In Divine service this means that there is an individual who can only serve Hashem at the present like a girl, like someone who is a receiver. He should not care, as long as he is serving God. If I meditate upon this in myself to see whether I am a receiver or an influencer, that increases one's feeling of self. It is easy to guess who in Chabad said this, that a person should not look at himself. So the first stage of disobeying an order is not to differentiate between being a boy or girl. Why? Because I know that in the end, the girl will not end up being an Egyptian woman, but rather will come to serve God out of nullification of self (not necessarily nullification of being). The girl can end up feeling her essence but without at the same time feeling her self. This is not the nullification of a tzadik who can annul even his feeling of being an essence, but it is still the nullification of self achievable by the beinoni, the intermediate. To have a sense of one's essence and yet to nullify the self is actually considered to reveal the true oneness of Hashem. This is the purpose for which the world was created. They kept the boys and the girls alive with the understanding that in the end, the girls are actually the final purpose of all creation—the person who nullifies his self, but cannot nullify his essence, as he still experiences it as being part of God. Revealing this is the essence of disobeying orders, this is the final purpose of doing this in the first place. May we merit to experience how God made them houses, to be the boy in holiness and even more so the girl in holiness, all in merit of the Hebrew midwives

Shifrah and Puah. Lechaim lechaim, may we merit the true and complete redemption by Mashiach, immediately.