

Derech Chaim Conference Shiur

Rosh Chodesh Nisan 5773

(Notes taken during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

We invite Dadi Ben Ami to sing.

Today was Rebbe Nachman's birthday, but now is already the second day of Nisan, which is the day of passing of the Rebbe Rashab, so this is a good opportunity to connect both tzadikim.

Lechaim lechaim.

A good month, a good month of redemption, the month of miracles. The movement is known as Derech Chaim based on the verse, "For a mitzvah is a candle and Torah a light, and the path of life is the rebuke of morality" (כי נר מצוה ותורה אור ודרך חיים תוכחת) (מוסר), Proverbs 6:23. This is the only time this phrase appears in the Tanach. If a person has transgressed the Torah, which is light, then all is not lost. Though God created the world with the measure of judgment, which is Torah, He saw that the world could not be sustained this way, so He added the measure of mercy, which is *teshuvah*. Teshuvah can rectify everything. There is *musar*, morals, but the morals are first of all intellectual morals, understandings. So from the verse, we learn that *derech chaim*, the path of life, is a movement of *teshuvah* based on God's compassion, which is above even the Torah and the *mitzvot*, meaning that it can rectify whatever was transgressed in the Torah, it can renew the Torah. As much as we are awaiting Mashiach this month of Nisan, we are waiting for the Mashiach to renew the Torah, to reveal its most inner light, with the power of *teshuvah*. This is why the Rambam rules that in the end, the Jewish people will do *teshuvah*, and immediately they will be redeemed.

Just as Derech Chaim appears only once in the Tanach, so there is another phrase that appears only once, in the first chapter of Psalms, "the path of sinners" (דרך חטאים), and their connection is that they have the same gematria. In fact, the letters themselves are almost the same except that one of the yud's in "life" (חיים) has become a tet and alef (טא) in "sinners" (חטאים). The equivalence of the numerical values in this case implies that the path of life comes to rectify the path of the sinners. So, as much as we identify with the path of life, we should know that it comes to rectify the path of the unjust, the transgressors. This should serve to strengthen our identification of Derech Chaim as a movement of *teshuvah* for the Jewish people and for the entire world.

In our simple year, where there is just one day of Rosh Chodesh Nisan, we begin the new chumash of Vayikra, Leviticus. There the first mitzvah is to bring a sacrifice, and the Torah begins, אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן להו' אם עולה קרבנו. The word "his sacrifice" (קרבנו) equals Mashiach (משיח). All the sacrifices in general are related to teshuvah and the burnt offering (עולה) is no exception. The burnt offering makes amends for both the positive commandments, but as Rashi says, the chidush, as explained by Rashbi in the Talmud, is that it can make amends for an improper thought, הרהור הלב. In the Talmud,

Rabbi Levi says that Rashbi's teaching is based on an explicit verse in the Tanach (Ezekiel 20:32-3),

וְהָעֵלָה עַל רוּחְכֶם הִיוּ לֹא תִהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם אֹמְרִים נְהִיָּה כְּגוֹיִם בְּמִשְׁפָּחוֹת הָאֲרָצוֹת לְשֶׁרֶת עִץ וְאֶבֶן. חִי אֲנִי נְאֻם
אֲדַנְי יְהוִה אִם לֹא בְיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזִרְעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְחִמָּה שְׂפוּכָה אֶמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיכֶם.

This verse is actually meant to reveal how dear we are to God. Even if we think otherwise in our hearts, God promises to be our King regardless. In any case. There are many different remazim in this verse. I am your King, says God, and you are my people. (And in the end, we will come to experience that, "God will be King over the entire earth, on that day God and His Name will be one.")

In the midrash halachah on Vayikra called the Sifra, it says that אדם מכם, an individual among you, includes a convert, a *ger*. "From among you" (מכם), says the Alter Rebbe, means that a person must bring his inner animal as a sacrifice. That is the main teshuvah of the path of life. So a man amongst you, includes the convert. There is even a reading that says that it comes to include the non-Jews who wish to bring a sacrifice. What we learn from this is that "a man" addresses all mankind. As Rashi says, the "a man" here alludes to the first man, Adam. Just as he did not take from what was not his, so you should bring a sacrifice from what is yours and not from something that is stolen. So "a man" includes all people.

On the verse we just mentioned, אדם ובהמה תושיע ה', the sages say that this refers to people who are conscious but make themselves like animals. Says Rashi, here too, that this too refers to Adam. That Adam was conscious, but he made himself like an animal, meaning that he acted with humility like an animal. Like King David who says, "I am with you like a beast" (בהמות הייתי עמך). David, whom we are awaiting. So man and beast refers to Adam and to David, since David was the main example of a person who made himself like a beast. If we have Adam and David, then Mashiach completes the acronym to be Adam (אדם). So then when we add them, Adam and David, we get Mashiach.

So the general path of life, which is the rectification of the path of the unjust, is to reach all people on earth. First of all this means Jews, but it also includes all the non-Jews, all the converts. But, the word "man" here comes to include everyone in it. If Derech Chaim does not include everyone then the teshuvah is not yet complete.

There is a mesorah that compares 4 verses in which the word "man" (אדם) appears. The first verse is, אדם כי ימות באהל, "A man, should he die in a tent." From this verse the sages learn that the Torah can only be learnt by someone who is willing to die, figuratively, when learning it. The second verse is, אדם כי יהיה בעור בשרו שאת או ספחת, this is from parashat Tazria, describing the plague of leprosy. Since it starts with the word "man" it means that leprosy is something that only a special person, worthy of being called a "man" can have. The third verse is in our parashah, אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה'. And the fourth verse (there is a "man" in each of the Four Worlds) is, אדם ובהמה תושיע ה'. So before we connected between the 3rd man and the 4th, but now we'll see that the 4th is higher than the 3rd. These 4 verses with "man" they correspond to the 4 letters of Havayah, from below to above.

Rabbi Shlomo Kluger (someone the Rebbe Tzemach Tzedek respected very much) has a beautiful explanation for this mesorah of these four verses that contain the word

“man.” He says that this mesorah is alluding almost explicitly to a well known teaching from the sages, brought in the Yerushalmi and in the Yalkut Shimoni. In this teaching, the question is posed: “The sinning soul, what will be with it?” (הנפש החוטאת מה תהא עליה). The Yerushalmi uses a variant, “What is its punishment?” The question is posed to four different things. The first is wisdom. Wisdom answers, “The sinning soul should die.” Only death can atone for sin. Then prophecy was asked. Prophecy replied, “The sinner should be pursued by trials and tribulations, and the suffering will cleanse it.” As it says in Tanya too in the beginning of Igeret Hateshuvah. Then the Torah was asked, it replied, that such a soul should bring a sacrifice to atone. The Torah brings in its support the opening verse of our parashah. Here it is the person who is sinning in his heart, in a hidden thought. But, this answer is not enough. Finally, God himself is asked the question, and He answers differently, not that the sinner should die, nor that he should suffer, not even that he should bring a sacrifice, just that he should do teshuvah and he will be forgiven. This is learnt from another verse in Tehilim, על כן יורה חטאים בדרך, Where again חטאים here equals חיים, as explained earlier.

The commentaries state that this first of all refers to the rectification of Cain, the first person whom God told that if he did teshuvah he would be rectified. From this we also learn that the main teshuvah, the main path of life, is to rectify Cain, who killed his brother, thus symbolizing baseless hatred. This was what destroyed the Temple. And the Temple will be rebuilt thanks to baseless love. One who is separate from his brother, didn't encourage his brother. Cain lost the opportunity even after God told him that he should overcome his evil inclination, and killed his brother. Anyway, the Almighty says the only thing needed is teshuvah.

So R. Shlomo Kluger (the Maharshak) says that these 4 answers correspond exactly to the 4 verses brought in the mesorah about “a man” (אדם). It is important to note that there are some readings where wisdom and prophecy's verses are switched. In any case, the first verse, אדם כי ימות באהל, is wisdom's answer. Again, the idea here is not to actually die, but to figuratively die in learning and serving God. The second man is the suffering of leprosy which is what prophecy said. The third is even more explicit. The Torah answered that a person should bring a sacrifice, which is the third verse, אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לה'. Finally, the fourth answer, given by Hashem, that a person should just do teshuvah, that is the verse, אדם ובהמה תושיע ה'. The Maharshak explains this beautifully, and says that the Almighty has mercy even on the animal. When you bring a sacrifice, it is instead of my being sacrificed, I bring an animal, that is why a person has to place his hands on the animal's hands with all his strength, connecting with it. But, if a person does teshuvah then both he and the animal are saved (the animal is not sacrificed). So this is an immeasurably higher level than the previous 3 verses. We have here then a beautiful correspondence between these 2 sets of 4.

We are of course in parashat Vayikra, so we should most identify with the third answer, bringing a sacrifice, but still we should know that the universal response to sin for all mankind, is God's answer, that through teshuvah God has mercy even on animals. This raises a lot of thoughts. What does it mean, if the Almighty has mercy on the animals, what is the Third Temple needed for, the Temple that the Mashiach will

build. On the one hand this is based on a mesorah, on the other it is based on an explanation by one of the greatest sages of previous generations.

There are a number of other proofs for this correspondence. There is a verse, על פי שנים עדים יומת המת לא ימות על פי עד אחד. Two witnesses refer to prophecy and wisdom. And the third witness is the Torah. According to all these, someone has to die. Suffering is also considered a form of death, as it says, that a leper is like a dead man. Or the animal dies when being brought as a sacrifice. But, the person will not be killed based on one witness. The one witness refers to God who does not want anyone to die, not even the animal as a sacrifice. This is what we are awaiting.

Rabbi Shimshon of Astropolya, one of the greatest tzadikim explains about the verse, עדותיך נאמנו מאד לביתך נאווה קדש הוי לאורך ימים. You testimonies refers to the Torah, which says that a sacrifice can be brought to do teshuvah, but this can only be done when there is a Temple, לביתך נאווה קדש. What happens when there is no Temple? Then the end of the verse is relevant: ה' לאורך ימים. Do what God said, which is just teshuvah. God is eternal, לאורך ימים. This is all related to the same issue. There is the teshuvah of Hashem and that always stands.

We will have a short intermission, but before, we want to create a movement that will truly affect the entire Jewish people and the entire world. How can we take this message and translate it into a universal message?

Rebbe Nachman brings the verse we mentioned earlier about our thoughts to disconnect from God. Says Rabbi Nachman that it is connected with the verse, זבחי אלקים רוח נשברה. There is a well known question, since all the sacrifices are given to Havayah, why does Psalms here use the Name Elokim. The answer is that this is not an actual sacrifice, but rather a broken spirit, which sweetens the harsh judgments and brings forgiveness to man so that he can come to be like God again, אני אמרתי אלקים אתם I have said that you shall be as God. But, if you do not strengthen the Divinity within you, then you will die like Adam, the first man. God's purpose was that the Divinity in us be pronounced, but because we transgress, it doesn't happen. To return to that state we need to bring ourselves like a sacrifice, through a broken spirit. Rebbe Nachman writes that there is only one particular type of negative thought that the Almighty treats as if it was an act, that is the thought of idolatry, worshipping a false idol. It is only on this type of thought that a person needs to bring a sacrifice to repent. And this returns to what we quoted from the Talmud that Rabbi Levi says to Rashbi, that the thought you have to serve wood and stone, to be like the nations of the world. This is an interesting phrase, to serve, not to worship (לשרת). And on this the Almighty swears that He will indeed come by force to be our God. He uses the descriptions, יד חזקה וזרוע נטויה, that we know from the Exodus, they can be something positive, but the final description ובחמה שפוכה, sounds really terrible. Still all three descriptions come to express God's love for us.

So Rebbe Nachman says that the burnt offering, the עולה comes in order to rectify our thoughts of idolatry, of worshipping false Gods. As long as we are still in exile, and we are indeed still in exile, then we are still idol worshipers in purity, which means that we worship different reasons, all kinds of causes, other than God as what gives us what we have. For instance, we think that it is the doctor or medicine that heals, not God, that it is

not God that gives us our livelihood. This is called thoughts of idolatry. And most people don't understand how grave these thoughts are.

It's not that God's answer rejects the other answers, rather it includes them. The אדם includes the answers given by the Torah, by prophecy, and by wisdom. Says Rebbe Nachman that if a person is in real excitement, true *hitbodedut*, and then he suddenly loses his excitement, he falls spiritually, says Rebbe Nachman that this fall came from a thought of idolatry (מחשבת עבודה זרה). If he would not have had this thought, he would not have fallen. How would we say this in Kabbalah? That the person has shifted from a state of face to face (פנים בפנים). Whether it be that he is learning or praying, as we learnt in the Tanya in the past few days, when a person is excited in his service, it is a state of being face to face. But, to fall is to turn around. Once you turn around, whatever thought accompanied this turning around, not to face God directly but to look at a physical cause for where I am, this is what causes me to retire backwards. And since I am no longer facing God, then God no longer faces me, and we come to a state of back to back. Like the state of Adam and Eve before they were separated. What is the broken spirit? It is to divide, נסירה, the division between the two back to back individuals, so that they can turn to come back face to face. The secret of the נסירה, the divide, is the secret of breaking something in half, breaking the spirit. But, to break my spirit, that is like the plague of the frogs in Egypt, when the frog was hit, it multiplied. Likewise, in the human spirit. Once the spirit is broken it becomes two separate spirits. The example is a sigh. When the sigh is very deep, there is a spirit that enters and a spirit that departs. The one spirit became two. Two times spirit, רוח, is equal to חתך, the name of the division, of the נסירה. This is referred to פי שנים ברוחך. The face to face that comes as a result of this is much higher than the state of excitement you started with. This in short is Rebbe Nachman's teaching.

Now we have to explain this in the context of what we said before, and that now we are in the second day of Nisan, so we have to connect it with a teaching from the Rebbe Rashab. Let's start with the practical aspect. What is the most important ministry in the government, the ministry that would be most instrumental in rectifying our lives in Israel? On different opportunities, we discussed the centrality of the different departments. It might possibly be the ministry of defense. Or, perhaps it education, everything is dependent on education. Once we said it might be the department of justice. They are all important, and all of them are needed to rectify the situation. But, just as a thought, a happy thought, which in Hebrew is הרהור שמחה, a phrase that equals (and thus rectifies) "a melancholy spirit" (מרה שחורה), each one should think about what the most important ministry is.

In any case, our chidush tonight is that the most important ministry is the Department of State. When we talked about cracking the thick shell of a nut, a number of years ago, we said that the most difficult nut to crack is the media in Israel. But, if we think about it, we can come to the conclusion that the media must follow the lead of the State Dept. There is another point. The best merchandise is never marketed in Israel, it is always sent to other countries as exports. There is something about trying to seem a certain way in the eyes of the nations. What happens in Israel is not so important in

people's eyes. Now we see that the biggest failure of the State of Israel is in how it represents itself outwardly. Abba Eben, as much as we was one of the greatest speaker in Jewish history,

The State Dept. receives only 1/33 of the budget given the Defense Dept. in Israel. In terms of money, we see that the Defense Dept. is considered the most important. So why do we say that this is the most important office? Another sign for this is that this is the only other dept. that the Prime Minister wants to hold. Sometimes it's the Defense Dept. but usually it's the State Dept., This was also true for Begin. This goes together, because how we seem to the nations of the world, that is what affects everything that happens in the country itself. It affects the media and everything else, industry, etc.

Now, what do we want? If the PM would be Moshe Rabbeinu. Earlier we talked about King David, but now we'll make him into Moshe Rabbeinu. So who would he, Moshe Rabbeinu take as his secretary of state. The best candidate would be Moshe Rabbeinu father-in-law. Yitro. You might think that Yitro should be responsible for the Justice Dept. because he gave the good advice about how to make a justice system. Still, the Torah says that after he gave his advice he went back home to convert his family.

The Rebbe Rashab explains כיתרון האור מן החשך, החכמה מן הסבלות. It says in Chassidut that סבלות refers to secular studies, external, mundane wisdom. And just as light must come out of darkness, so the Torah's wisdom must come out of clarifying the external wisdoms, חכמות בחוץ תרונה, which means that out of them will come a light that returns all the way to the keter.

Yitro in the beginning of his parashah, this is also connected with the renewed Torah of Mashiach, he is described as בהן מדין חתן משה, he knew all the cultures in the world, all the peoples. And it is he, the priest of Midian, which comes to praise him, that he is the one who brings a sacrifice to God. It is praiseworthy that he was a priest of Midian and then became Moshe Rabbeinu father-in-law. The Rebbe Rashab explains this word, חתן, that it means that thanks to him, Moshe was taken down into reality, who brings Moshe down? His father-in-law. It is Yitro who connects Moshe with the mundane thanks to his having been a priest for idolatry. And thanks to him the Torah can be given. What minister is he? He is the Minister of State. Who brings the PM down to reality, it is the secretary of State.

How can we say this using Kabbalistic terminology. The Arizal, as we explained in the previous class is a sum of the two holy Names, קפד קסא, which when you add them give 345, the value of Moshe (משה). What are these two names? The name קפד, is the backside of Abba (עב). While קסא is the inner spelling of Ima (אלף הי יוד הי). The backside of קסא is תקמד another name in Kabbalah. So if I say that Moshe is the backside of Abba that unites with the inner aspect of Ima, which is the unification of קפד with קסא. What is left then is the inner aspect of Abba and the backside of Ima. They do not unite, because they are not near. But, with some quantum leap, the connection becomes (this is what completes Moshe Rabbeinu). עב plus תקמד, is equal to 616, the value of Yitro (יתרו). Moshe is the backside of Abba and the inner aspect of Ima. But, if we unite the inner aspect of Abba and the backside of Ima, we get Yitro. Another proof that Moshe rabbeinu needs Yitro to bring him down is that if we sum all 4 numbers together, משה

$\text{יתרו} = 345 \text{ plus } 616 = 961 = \text{the square of } 31$, a sign of perfection like every square number, which in this case is equal to $\text{יד חזקה זרוע נטויה חמה שפוכה}$, which is equal to Moshe plus Yitro. What is there acronym, חזקה נטויה שפוכה , Chosehn (חשן). Their combined value is Torah (תורה). In number theory, Torah (611) is the combination of 358 and 253, Mashiach and Avner. This is for those well-versed in number theory.

Now, what does it mean that Yitro is the inner aspect of wisdom that is revealed in the backside of binah, understanding—the exact opposite of Moshe Rabbeinu? Yitro is a ba'al teshuvah, one who needs Derech Chaim (as opposed to Moshe who is a tzadik). Yitro taught Moshe the path of life. Moshe Rabbeinu gave the mitzvot and the Torah, but Yitro gave the path of life, saying that if Moshe not connect with the mundane he will perish (in his need to judge the entire people). Who should understand this the best? This is the people's emissary. If there is a good Jewish emissary abroad, then not only must he take care of the Jews around him, but also the non-Jews where he lives. The Mashiach has 5 different tasks that he must complete. The Mashiach's emissaries are like the Rebbe's shlichim, the ones that go out to represent the Rebbe everywhere. The ones who understand in reality, those are the backside of Ima. But, there understanding in Torah comes from Moshe, from the inner aspect of wisdom. In order to bring about Malchut Yisrael in the land of Israel, we have to prepare emissaries to truly represent the Jewish people outside the land of Israel, teaching them how to represent. To teach people the 7 universal laws is something the Rebbe wanted very much, but again, we are always thinking about is how to fix things here. But, it might very well be that the main thing is the dept. of state. The media has to follow the lead of the ambassadors.

There is a state of back to back, when a person falls into an idolatrous thought, which is mainly the feeling that I am the power behind my success, which is of course the biggest problem that the state of Israel has since it was founded. What does it mean to be in a state of face to face? That is excitement in serving God. Is there anything higher? That is described as the righteousness of the righteous, צדקת הצדיק . This is seen in how the letter tzadik is written in the Torah. The question is whether the yud in the letter tzadik צ faces the front or the back. The Arizal says that the yud in the tzadik should face backwards, so that it is back to back with the letter's body. This is then called, says the Arizal, צדקת הצדיק . He explains that this is a higher state than face to face, because face to face implies two that come together. But, there are two here. What would happen if there would not be 2 separate beings, but just 1. To reach the highest functionality, they act as if each is looking in another direction (it looks like its back to back), but this is actually one person looking in two directions, they are absolutely united. The Magid once took his disciples to some village and they went to see a couple. In the house, each was doing something else. When they came out, the Magid asked them, What did you see? The disciples answered that they saw Adam and Eve before the sin. This is actually even higher than face to face. It is even higher than the קפד קסא of Moshe Rabbienu. This is what is manifest in the State Dept. The State Dept. can be described as face to back.

We are always talking about rectifying the Jewish state. But, Israeli's have a sense that they will find the truth somewhere outside the land of Israel. That is why they travel all over the world. We have to prepare ambassadors to travel to different parts of

the world to take care of the Jews there, to represent us in the best possible way, the best PR, and to care for the non-Jews where they are going. When this works, it will affect everything that goes on in the land of Israel. It will even affect the army, how it acts, because it all depends on how the ambassadors represent us. It even affects our education of our young children. It all depends on the name תקמד, which is the rectification of Yitro, ביתרון האור מן החשך ויתרון החכמה מן הסכלות.

Where do we find God, outside, as it says, אמצאך בחוץ, a verse from the Song of Songs which we read on Pesach, so we wish everyone a kosher and happy Pesach.

What should an ambassador take with him? A lot of CD's. With music the entire world can be conquered. The whole thing with the secretary of State was also meant to explain how the non-Jews bring sacrifices, just like Jews, but the fact that they can do teshuvah without bringing a sacrifice is through the ambassador, that they don't need to come to the land of Israel in order to do teshuvah. God has mercy not only on the animals but also on the price of the ticket to Israel, so that they don't need to come here to do teshuvah.