

Torat Hanefesh – School of Jewish Psychology

Annual Convention

Harav Ginsburgh's Keynote

11 Av 5773

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

1. The 11th and 12th days of Av

Good afternoon.

We are in the days following Tisha B'av the destruction, and moving towards the 15th of Av, the day about which it says, that there were no better days for the Jewish people (as the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur). We are moving from the depth of despair to the height of the soul. It is one of the principles of the soul, that a person can be in the deepest and lowest place and within a few days reach the highest heights. It doesn't mean that he is sick and bipolar, but rather that he is healthy and he can see the lowest and the highest places almost together.

It is also important that a great deal of the content studied in Torat Hanefesh is inspired by Rebbe Hilel of Paritch, whose yahrzeit is today, the 11th of Av. Tonight will already be the 12th of Av, also an important day in the annals of Chabad. It is the date on which the first Rebbe, the Alter Rebbe was married. In the year he got married, the 12th was like this year, on Friday, and so as the custom was then, the marriage seudah was held on Friday together with the Shabbat meal.

2. Ahavat Chinam – Love without reason

How do we move from the lowest to the highest. It is apparently connected to the destruction of the Temple the sages tell us was caused by empty hatred (שנאת חנם). And therefore the building of the final and third Temple will be thanks to love without reason, Ahavat chinam, as it is called. The three weeks that end with Tisha B'av are called the 3 weeks of calamity (שלישה דפורענותא). And immediately, with the end of Tisha B'av we move from calamity to consolation, seven weeks of consolation (שבעה דנחמתא). The root of consolation is נחם, and it has the same letter as the root of baseless (חנם), as in baseless love, the love without reason that will build the Temple, both in our personal lives and in our collective lives as a people.

Before we came here, there was a gathering of our activists whose topic was "Jews love Jews." Right now, the activists are marching through the streets of Jerusalem with flags and banner carrying this motto. Identifying with them, we'll begin with the topic of Ahavat Yisrael, love of the Jewish people, loving one's fellow Jew. What does Ahavat Chinam mean?

One of the sayings of the sages in Pirkei Avot is that there is a love that is dependent on something, like the love of Amnon and Tamar, and there is love that is independent (it is unconditional love) like the love of David and Yehonatan. The motto Ahavat Chinam was used by both the Friedeger Rebbe and by Rav Kook (with some connection between the usages). The source for Ahavat Chinam is in this saying from the sages about love that is independent of any conditions.

Let us meditate on this notion of a condition. When it comes to love, conditional means that the person has some self-interest in the love. Ahavat Chinam is thus love that which is not the result of self-interest. But, we might say that it is independent of even things that are holy, even independent of the word of God. What is the holiest thing? The word of God. So Ahavat Chinam is such because there is no self-interest, no dependence, not even on the holiest thing: the word of God.

There are three explanations in the sages about what the word of God (דבר ה') is. The sages state, "the word of God is halachah, the word of God is prophecy, the word of God is the redemption" (דבר ה' זו הלכה, זו נבואה, זה הקץ). So whenever it says in the Tanach, the word of God, it refers to either a halachah, a law, or it refers to a prophecy, it might be some message that is not necessarily instructive or prescriptive, it might be a moral saying, or it refers to some prophecy about the redemption, like a "vision" (חזון). If we take these three explanations and apply them to the saying about love that is independent of anything, we get something very surprising. What we are saying is that there is love that is independent of halachah, of prophecy, and of the redemption. Prophecy refers to the inspiration of the Divine spirit within every Jew. When the Mashiach comes, the Divine spirit within each of us will be revealed. Each of us has such a point in him, which is also called our *da'at* (דעת), and for each person it is different. And now this love is not dependent on what God wants (halachah)—not because God tells me that I should love you, like the Torah says, "You shall love your fellow as you love yourself" (Rabbi Akiva made this into the general principle of the entire Torah, the pillar upon which the entire Torah stands, like Hillel the elder before him). Now if there was no precedent for what we are now saying (that Ahavat Chinam means love for our fellow Jew that is independent of even God's word), we might not say it, but it says that the type of love taught by the Ba'al Shem Tov and especially by the Alter Rebbe, that the love of a Jew is not to be seen as a mitzvah. It is a mitzvah, of course. But what the Ba'al Shem Tov revealed was something beyond a mitzvah, the clinging of souls to one another. This is something essential to the Jew. If you are a Jew, there is also a teaching that (might be in the name of Rebbe Hilel of Paritch) if you take a Jew and crush him, trying to get to his essence, you will get a drop of Ahavat Yisrael. So we have a precedent for our understanding that love that is independent is not dependent even on halachah. It is even higher than prophecy, it is even more than the point of the Divine Spirit in each of us, it is even more than the prophecies of the redemption. How did we come to this topic? Because we said that this was the way to rebuild the Temple. One might think that this was some kind of trick, some kind of equation with which you can bring the Mashiach. But, if you think that loving your fellow Jew is for this purpose, then

it's probable that it won't bring the Mashiach, because true love between Jews is essential to us.

3. Worrying without reason – Existential angst

Let's explain how there is a love that is not for any reason in another way. We know that Jews have worries. Let's look at the worries, the angst in the Jewish soul, to illustrate how there are worries that have some reason behind them and there is a level of worry that lacks a reason, worry or angst that we can simply call existential. The three types of worries that have a reason can be connected to worrying about the three meanings of the "word of God" – halachah, prophecy, and the redemption.

Let's start with the last meaning, the word of God as the redemption. Redemption refers to the coming of Mashiach and the rebuilding of the Temple soon in our days. So we might say that if a Jew worries about the redemption, he or she is worrying about the benefit of the entire Jewish people. Love for the Jewish people includes being preoccupied with the good of each individual Jew as well as the entire people. In general, Jews are a worrisome people, not just worry in the sense of "what will be?" but worry in the sense of caring about things, conscientiousness. We are a people that has experienced a great deal of difficulty and so we worry in both ways, about the future and about each other. So, if the word of God means the redemption, which the Rebbe taught us we should do everything we can to hasten, then that is worrying for the Jewish collective, for the klal. The coming of the Mashiach is the panacea for all the collective psychological problems of the entire people. To bring the redemption for the Jewish people and for the entire world, that is what will heal our problems as a people.

Next, let us look at the word of God as referring to prophecy. Prophecy is like the holy spirit that comes out of my own heart. God wants that holy spirit to manifest, he wants all the talents that we have to be actualized. Worrying about prophecy is then the same as worrying about self-actualization, self-fulfillment. That is the revelation of the Divine spirit in each of us, of course it is for the benefit of others too—it means that each of us becomes a prophet. Every Jew is a walking image of God. To make this happen, each of us has to be sincere and earnest, as in the verse, "His will shall be earnest and sincere" (Leviticus 22:21) and this is attained by sincere and earnest love for every single Jew. Just to say that I'm worried about my own self-fulfillment, that is usually a negative self-interest, but in this sense it is something very positive. God wants each of us, through love of our fellow Jews to come to our own self-actualization and self-fulfillment.

Finally, the word of God is halachah. What that has to do with worrying is simplest. To worry about what God wants, that is worry for halachah. As the Alter Rebbe says, "The greatest compassion is upon You, God." How do we have compassion and mercy for Hashem? By following His will, and doing his mitzvot, his halachot.

So there is a recurring motif of worry and angst in the Jewish soul. It can be worry about the collective (you don't even have to be frum to have this worry), it can be about self-fulfillment, about finding the Divine spark within myself, revealing the part of God above that is in me. And there is the worry for God and His will.

Those who attend our classes at Torat Hanefesh are familiar with the verse, “a worry in a man’s heart—he should lower it” (דָּאָגָה בְּלֵב אִישׁ יִשְׁחַנָּה) and the three interpretations the sages give to it (ישחנה, יסיחנה, ישמחנה), which correspond to the Ba’al Shem Tov’s three stages of submission, separation, and sweetening. This is the three stage process by which the Ba’al Shem Tov taught us to deal with worries that are not positive, how to get rid of them. So if someone is worried about other things that really have no place, we have to help them go through this process to rectify their worries.

But, above and beyond positive worry (about the Jewish people as a collective, about revealing every individual’s essence, and about God and His will) there is another level of worry. This worrying and angst is described in the sages statement that, “the secrets of the Torah are revealed only to one who has worry in his heart” (אין מוסרין סתרי תורה אלא) (למי שלבו דואג בלבו). We are as we said a surviving people, that have a lot of worries in our hearts, just as a mother worries for her children. This level of worry is not for any particular reason. It is existential. And it is particularly this type of existential angst that causes the secrets of the Torah to be revealed to someone. It is the type of worry that one cannot really point at the reason for. When someone comes for advice, you always look for the reason for why they are worried. Like with phobias. But, even with phobias, there are certain phobias that are existential.

So now that we have seen that there is existential worry that is not because of the Jewish people, it is not because of self-fulfillment and revealing the spark of Divinity in each of us, and it is not for God’s will, and yet the sages acknowledge it and even say that the revelation of the Torah’s secrets depends on it, we can draw an analogy to Ahavat Chinam. Love without reason. Love that is above all types of love that have some reason to them. We can call this existential love for the Jewish people, and it is specifically this type of love that is needed for the Temple to be rebuilt (again, it can’t be that the reason for the love is to have the Temple rebuilt, the love is existential—without any reason behind it)!

4. Crying without reason – God’s inner chambers

To illustrate this point further, let’s look at another saying from the sages. The sages discuss two seemingly contradictory verses describing God. One verse says, “boldness and happiness are in His Place” (עז וחדוה במקומו), while another verse says, “In hiding, My soul cries” (במסתרים תבכה נפשי). So which is it? Does God laugh or cry? The truth is that God is like a Jew. The Tanya’s essence is the Zohar’s saying that the existential state of a Jew is that one part of his heart is crying, and the other part of the heart is laughing. This is an existential state of both crying and laughing at the same time. Likewise, as it were, it is with God. Simultaneously, He is both crying and laughing.

To understand this a little better, the sages say that the Almighty has an external aspect and an inner aspect. In the inner aspect, no one sees him. In the language of the sages this is called “His inner chambers” (בתי גואי) and “His outer chambers” (בתי בראי). In his inner chambers He cries. What does He cry about? Crying is about worrying. It says that He is crying, “because of the greatness” (מפני גוה) the greatness of the Jewish

people that was taken from them and given to the nations of the world, the state of exile of course—the exile of the Jewish people among the nations of the world. He is crying because He has pushed us away from His “table,” from the Temple. But, externally, He does not show that He is crying.

The Ba'al Shem Tov taught us that externally a person should always have a happy face on, even during the Nine Days, even during Tisha B'av. The crying should be internal, while our exterior should always exhibit joy and happiness. In the same discussion in the Talmud that describes God's joy and crying, the sages note another verse that on the day the Temple was destroyed, all the worlds, all the angels (even the external aspects of God) all showed sorrow. But, that was only at that very moment. Immediately it was changed and externally the sorrow did not show. What we learn from this is that all the crying, all the sorrow comes because of the destruction of the Temple. And apart from the very moment of destruction, externally God always seems joyful, and that is what a Jew should learn to do too.

But, then a question arises. What will happen once the Mashiach comes and there will be any reason for God's sorrow. Will God's inner chamber's, where He cried during the exile, will it be useless? Will it be null and void? Let's ask this another way: which should be more eternal, God's inner chamber or His external chamber? We might think that what is internal should be more eternal. What is internal should be more essential and therefore more eternal. According to the description the sages give, at least on the day of the destruction everything was sorrow on the outside too. But, what will happen with the coming of Mashiach? Will there no longer be inner chambers?

If we understand this way, that the sorrow will cease, there will no longer be a reason to be sad (and this of course is relevant to us too), then what will happen with the secrets of the Torah? We said that they are revealed only to one who worries, is sad inside. So we have to say that there is only so much that we know about why God has sorrow inside. He has only revealed to us so much about His reasons (and the same is true about us...).

In gematria, weeping (בכיה) is equal to “the singular one” (יחידה), the soul's highest part, while “joy” (חדוה) is equal to “the living one” (חיה), the soul's second highest level. Now if there is sorrow and crying without a reason—because the Mashiach has already come—the Mashiach's name (משיח) permutes to spell “he will bring joy” (ישמח)—what might be the reason for the sorrow to continue? There is crying that results from joy, and that might be on the day of the redemption. But, is there something more essential to the crying. What we have been talking about through these three topics—love, worry, and crying—is a very existential point in the Jewish soul. There is a worry that is essential to what it means to be a Jew. It is beyond the worry for the collective, for the redemption, for the Almighty. Even after they are redeemed, there remains an essential point. To understand what this point is about, let us turn to Rebbe Hillel of Paritch.

5. Three concepts related to heat: consolation, war, and compassion

We said that there are Three Weeks of calamity and then 7 Weeks of Consoling. Since they are 3 and 7, they represent the first three sefirot in the soul and the 7 lower emotive sefirot of the soul. The first three includes the keter and the intellectual faculties. The seven lower are the emotive sefirot. So from the aspect of the intellect there is calamity and the heart is connected with consoling, nechamah. We mentioned the root נחם (consol). There are 3 roots that are connected in Hebrew: נחם רחם לחם. The three letters נרל interchange (אותיות למני"ר). The two-letter basic root is חם. לחם means both bread (it is baked in heat) and it also means warfare. Only in the past generation have we seen a cold-war (something completely against nature). But, to make bread you have to have heat, חם. There are a number of different explanations about the connection between bread and war, why they come from the same root. The Radak for instance says that the connection is that the sword "eats." Therefore warfare is like eating one's enemies. The later grammarians say that there is an idiom קשרי מלחמה, which is more like the contact and connection made between two people warring with one another, like Yaakov with Esau's angel. These are two explanations that are based on the literal meaning of these words. On the level of drush, that all the wars made in the world are over bread, over material needs (like the wars of King David). What we wanted to say is that all three of these words, their connection is through "heat" (חם), bread (לחם), consolation (נחם, which requires heat) and compassion (רחם). The Ba'al Shem Tov when he was still a hidden tzadik would bless the children that he took to cheider, placing his hand on their chest, "You should be a warm Jew." The Shpoleh Zeideh said that after the Ba'al Shem Tov did this for him, he was burning inside with holiness. The sages indeed say that the time of year with most heat is the end of the summer. I might have thought that the three weeks are the hottest time of the year. We might think that calamity is hotter than consolation, but the three weeks of calamity are relatively cold. How so? The sages say that a donkey even in the time of Tamuz is cold, why is he cold? Because he feels that all that happens to him is coincidence (called קרי in Hebrew, which comes from the word for cold, קר). All this is a prelude to Rebbe Hillel's teaching on the three weeks and the seven weeks.

6. Rebbe Hillel of Paritch's parable for understanding the Temple's destruction

Rebbe Hillel brings a mashal, a parable to explain the three weeks. His parable is about a teacher and his student. The teacher loves his student and everyday reveals new things. Suddenly one day, the student senses that his teacher is no longer really with him. He's not trying to teach him. At first, he notices that his teacher is only missing sporadically. There are sporadic halts in the teacher's connection with him, but this intensifies to the point where the teacher just leaves the room. The student's feeling is awful. His beloved teacher, from whom he receives all his life, is gone. It is like the feeling that God has left the earth. Like a child that feels that his mother has left him. The

worst possible feeling. Time passes. And everyday that the teacher doesn't appear, the feeling gets worse until after 3 weeks suddenly the teacher appears again and with a illuminant face and smile, and reveals more and more than he ever did. As the teacher is with him for a few days, the student gains confidence again that he is really with him. The consoling takes a few days, it is not just immediate, it takes 7 weeks. With each week that passes, more heat is added to the heart. The calamity is cold, it is adding more and more coldness to the connection, until the teacher disappears, and the consolation adds more and more heat to the connection after the teacher reappears. We won't explain the full parable, but the point is that the reason that the teacher left wasn't because he was angry at the student (even though that's what the student might think). Rather, Rebbe Hillel explains that as the teacher was teaching, he suddenly experienced a great inspiration, like a lightning strike on his mind, which like lightning tends to disperse and disappear immediately. So the teacher has to catch this inspiration. If we go back to our worries: there is worry that I might miss this inspiration and it is exactly what my beloved student needs to hear, even more than all that we are learning at the moment. So to capture this inspiration, we can't continue learning as we were, because the teacher needs time to integrate what he has just felt and seen. He needs to recede to his inner chamber and in there to integrate and build (with binah) the new conceptual understanding he has. True inspiration, true consolation changes my entire conceptual scheme of reality. If to capture it takes 3 weeks, then it takes 7 weeks to transfer it to the student. This is one of the most beautiful ma'amarim in Chassidut in general and in the original ma'amar, Rebbe Hillel explains what happens in each of the weeks that precede the disappearance and then of the 7 weeks that follow the teacher's reappearance. And again this corresponds to the 3 weeks before Tisha B'av and the 7 weeks that follow Tisha B'av (which is apparently why his yahrzeit is on the day after Tisha B'av).

From this parable we can understand what happens in God's inner chamber when Mashiach comes. We asked: from the literal understanding when there is no more reason to cry no more reason for sorrow, the inner chamber might be annulled. If the secrets of the Torah are given only to one who feels sorrow, then what Rebbe Hillel's parable teaches is that both the teacher and the student have to worry in order to reveal the secrets of the Torah: the teacher so he can transfer them correctly to his student and the student so that he can receive them. But, how can there still be sorrow in the inner chamber after the coming of the Mashiach and the full and true redemption, when the greatness will be returned to the Jewish people.

7. The constructive role of harsh judgments

What is clear to us even without this parable is that the 3 weeks, are judgment. They are intellect. The intellect in and of itself is cold (the heart is warm). Even the first Jew, Abraham, so long as he was called אַבְרָם Avram (before he received the hei) he was called the concealed mind (שְׂכַל הַנֶּעֱלָם מִכַּל רַעֲיוֹן). Even then he was able to sacrifice himself in the Name of God's oneness. But, relatively, Avram without a hei, is all intellect, which as much as he worries, he is cold (even though he is already a man of loving-kindness). Like we said about the month of Tamuz, the first three weeks, which even though they

are hot, they are still cold relative to the 7 weeks. Indeed, when the hei was added to his name he becomes אברהם like אבר מה, and the hei and chet interchange many times, making him אבר חם, a warm organ. Only once this heat was added to him could he give birth to a warm Jew, to Isaac (like the Ba'al Shem Tov's warm Jew). The hei provides him with heat, even though he had a lot of feeling and emotions before receiving the hei, in order to give birth to another Jew he needed the warmth of the hei.

So the 3 Weeks are harsh judgments, they are cold. And the 7 Weeks are days of loving-kindness of consolation. Judgment is the destruction of the Temple, while loving-kindness is the time of rebuilding. All of Rebbe Hillel's parable comes to give us a new understanding of what judgment, din, is. Whenever we think of having dinim, experiencing din in our lives, we associate it with harshness, with judgment. And the time we feel this the most is during the 3 Weeks—that God is acting harshly towards us. And therefore this is the best time to contemplate what dinim, judgments really are. Rebbe Hillel gives us a whole new understanding. He says that when you experience din, judgment it is really that there is a plan to give you a thousand times more and what currently exists is simply not enough to contain it. The sages say this explicitly about the Temple, that it was destroyed because God was clearing the place for the eternal reality that would come with the Third Temple. When we contemplate this more deeply, we see that judgment is a type of intellectual exercise where one looks at reality and understands that it could be better than what it is now. As much as what you want or even have is good, things could be a million times better. This is seemingly very strange. A Jew might think that he already has the best possible world, but of course it could be better. The Rebbe used to say that "if good is good, then better is better." Even if a person has a 100 he wants 200. If one is discontent with what one has, that itself is din, judgment. Like here at Torat Hanefesh, it's good, but it's not the best, it can be a lot better. So if I have an inspiration, something on the tip of my tongue about how to make things better, it is legitimate to have this type of judgment. If I don't have any inspiration at all about how to make things a lot better, then just to say that things are not the best, that is illegitimate. For instance if a child is not acting the best, but I don't know how to improve his behavior, that is not enough a reason to criticize it. But, the moment that I spend half an hour a day and think about improving my child's behavior, that makes it legitimate to criticize. How is this said in the sages: That the Tzadikim have no rest neither in this world or in the World to Come, as it says, they will go from strength to strength. The Tzemach Tzedek explains that what pushes them from place to place is strength, the power of din, of judgment. Meaning that they see a new light at the end of the tunnel all the time. But, if you are unable to see how to improve things, it is not warranted for you to criticize it and pass judgment about it. In the future, the understanding about how to improve things more and more, infinitely better and better, will flow freely without the need for 3 weeks and 7 weeks.

In any case, it says that at first the Almighty wanted to create the world with the measure of judgment but he saw that it could not be sustained so he added the measure of mercy (the Name Havayah). Applied to what we just said this means that God created the world in such a way that we would all be like the Lubavitcher Rebbe—never content.

As good as things are, they can be infinitely better. Indeed, the tzadikim it says, in the future, God will measure them with judgment. But, most of the people find judgment difficulty. Most people try to live based on the sages injunction “being joyful with one’s portion.” That comes from the mind of Ima. While the striving for better and better, of not being content with what one has come from the inner aspect of Abba. It is what causes the teacher to constantly, through his self-nullification, receive new inspiration about how to do things and how they can be better.

There is a story about a crooked and deformed head from Rebbe Hillel. Everyone’s head is deformed and it has to be straightened with heat.

So what Rebbe Hillel is saying in our parable is that the whole reason for the destruction is that there is a way to do things better. Indeed, we might say that when Mashiach comes, we want an even better Mashiach. Indeed, the Alter Rebbe used to say that the Mashiach everyone is waiting for will not come, and the one that comes, nobody is waiting for. What we learn from all this is that God is never content. God will always find a reason to cry. Crying and sorrow is actually the power to move forward. Except again, that it is only warranted if he already has an idea about how to change things for the better.

8. Four levels of relating to calamity and destruction

Let’s take a step back. How do most people relate to judgment. We can think about the destruction of the Temple or something that is closer to us, the Holocaust. What is the usual reaction? We will now discuss four possible reactions to judgment that we have. The highest, revealed in Rebbe Hillel’s parable corresponds to the yud of Havayah. The lowest, which is not a good reaction, related to malchut, which is also called צדק, is that there is no Master to the Universe, לית דין ולית דיין. We know that the tzadikim, especially the Rebbe never condoned a Jew who lost his faith because of the Holocaust. Still, we can understand this lowest of reactions. This reaction says that the world is hefker, no one is running it. You see destruction in the world and your conclusion is that there is no one responsible for the world. What is the spark within this reaction (if there was no spark at all, we couldn’t include it in our correspondence to Havayah)? It might be that because of this spark, because of the anger that Jews had at the Almighty, this shows that they are warm Jews, that they care about what God did, and they attribute it to him. A harsh reaction is better than no reaction at all (as is known about stories related to the first reactions to Chassidut...).

The level above this is that a person says that this was all without Divine Providence, it is a coincidence, מקרה. But, at least I feel at this level that the reason for this is because I treated and saw God in the same way. I left God by not feeling His Divine Providence in everything in my life, and so He left me and left me to coincidence, to chance events. This is called “a measure to measure” (מדה כנגד מדה). We deserve this type of treatment, because this is how we acted towards God. About the Holocaust, the Rebbe didn’t like looking for reasons why we were deserving—he said it is forbidden to think this way about the Holocaust. Why would chance and coincidence be warranted? Because that’s how we treated God. But, we said that internally there is truly Providence, because God

is reacting to our own actions. Why is this related to the vav of Havayah, to Zeer Anpin, the emotive faculties? It is like God saying, You did this to me, I'll do the same to you. This is like God thinking in "small mindedness" (ze'er anpin, the small face), God is like mimicking our own small thoughts and way of thinking. It is the mind of immaturity—a measure for measure.

The higher reaction is to feel as the judgment is happening that it also contains infinite mercy at every moment. There is a teaching that there was happiness even during the very day that the Temple was destroyed. Where? Those who were sensitive felt that God took his anger out on the stones and the wood, and left many of us alive—not everyone, many were killed, but the Jewish people survived. For all the harsh judgment there is still joy at having survived. There is compassion in the middle of the judgment and you feel happy for this compassion. If you were worried that something worse would happen, at least to a certain extent you are consoled, that the worst didn't happen and it's over now. Someone who can reach this level, he has reached the level of the hei of Havayah, the foundation of Ima (the mother's womb, called the רחם, mercy).

After these 3 reactions, we come to Rebbe Hillel's understanding of judgment. Not only does the judgment also contain mercy, that we the Jewish people survived, but that the entire purpose of the judgment was not to punish us (even though we might indeed be guilty of something—the student may indeed think that he has done certain things wrong), but rather that the teacher has new inspiration and for my own sake is disappearing from me. This is the revelation of the yud of Havayah, wisdom, the new inspiration that the teacher has received.

This in itself is a very important lesson about how to react to harsh judgments, to calamities and catastrophes in life, personal and communal. Altogether we have seen a complete model here of how one can relate to these judgments. But, the question remains, how can we include the first level (he who says, there is no judge and no judgment, God has left the void of His Providence) in this model? It seems to be an improper response, as we said, that the Lubavitcher Rebbe (and none of this generation's tzadikim) condoned this type of response to the Holocaust.

The answer comes from the Ba'al Shem Tov. The mishnah in Avot states that there are four types among those who go to the Beit Midrash (the learning hall) to learn Torah. There is the type that goes and learns, but doesn't practice what he learnt. There is another that practices, but doesn't go to the Beit Midrash to learn. There is the type that learns in the Beit Midrash and practices what he learns. And finally, there is a type of person who neither goes to learn nor practices. The Ba'al Shem Tov asks (*Keter Shem Tov* 188), how can this last type be categorized among the people who have some relationship with a Beit Midrash—he doesn't go to learn and he doesn't practice. He has no connection with Torah study at all—neither theoretical nor practical. But, the Ba'al Shem Tov answers that actually this fourth type acts as the foundation for the other three types. Without him there would be possibility for there being a Beit Midrash in the first place. Such people need to be rectified, and their rectification is the teshuvah that they do (which separates the bad from them and leaves only the good). The principle is that "light is greatest when it comes from darkness" (יתרון האור - מן החשך), and so it might

be that the Jew that says that God has left our reality to its own devices, once he does teshuvah and is rectified, he may be the one to reveal the highest level of relating to calamity, Rebbe Hillel's approach that all is for the benefit of building something new.

Let's go back. The teacher didn't disappear because the student did something wrong. On the contrary. He knows that whatever is wrong with the student is his own fault. Likewise, the Almighty regrets every day having created the evil inclination. He knows it's His fault. At the highest levels and deepest places of His inner chambers, God takes the blame for everything. For me to be able to understand this that God has taken something away, Has concealed Himself for my own benefit, that is the highest way to understand the seeming judgment directed at me.

9. The theory of fixed and growth mindsets

Now we said that consolation, נחמה also means to change one's mind. In one verse it says that God doesn't change His mind, *כי נצח ישראל לא ישקר ולא ינחם*. But, like we quoted before from the sages that the Almighty intended on creating the world one way, but changed His mind and created it with the measure of compassion. So which is it? Apparently it's both. If there are an infinite number of ascents and each ascent involves a reversal of understanding, my whole conceptual scheme reverses, then for the Almighty this exists even in the present moment, without any dependency on time. Therefore we can say that God is both non-changing and changing all the time. What is non-changing is that in every split second, there is new light, new understanding. At first create the world with the measure of judgment, then add the measure of mercy (and make it precede judgment as it says, *ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים*).

Now after all this let's connect this all with a popular topic in psychology. In English it is called mind-set. Or in Hebrew *דפוס חשיבה* in Hebrew. All the idioms in Hebrew are some translation from English. The most well-known figure in this area today is a professor from Stanford who is apparently Jewish. Because consolation is about changing one's mindset, one's conceptual scheme, we will explain what is said about this in the world and how to understand this based on Torah.

One of the examples brought even before the theory (which is considered new and ground-breaking, while for us in the Torah this is old and well-known), this is also connected to a frum Jew who won the Nobel prize in economics, Auhmann, in game theory, which is also based on mindset. We earlier mentioned the idea of the Cold War (between the US and the USSR). There is the mindset of the individual and a collective mindset, like the mindset that ruled during the Cold War. The collective mindset is usually very difficult to change. Sometimes, a mindset has some benefit. There was a mindset that since each of the superpowers had the power to destroy the world a few times over, they would not attack one another, and this was beneficial because it kept the world peaceful without nuclear war. This is how to introduce the concept of a mindset. The first area in game theory is mindsets in politics, then it developed to psychology. But, first of all it relates to collective mindsets. Normally, every people is beset in a particular mindset, it is a fixation for them and they find it hard to change it. The mind of each individual is meant to agree with this mindset, and it is like putting

the individual in a straightjacket. Our problem is how to change, how to move our mindset, how do we move it so that we can bring the Mashiach? It seems that it is almost impossible to move the current mindset of the Jewish people. So again, the first area where mindsets are useful is in understanding politics. And it is also useful in looking at a ruling party. And here there is something new. If a ruling party is not flexible at all, so that it cannot change its own platform even a little, at least from time to time, it cannot sustain its power. Meaning that every successful party is sustained by its inner criticism, it is always changing its mind. As much as this seems contradictory. Even though the people are usually considered עיילים גיילים (imbeciles), there comes a time when they tire of a certain mindset. So this itself is important. That a party has to have flexibility with its platform. The country that demonstrates this best is the US, where neither of the two parties can hold power for a long time, because the two parties are inflexible in what they believe. And that is why the public changes the ruling party from one to the other every so many terms.

A second area that mindset is applicable and useful is in relation to the fight on terror. This is something very relevant to us here in Eretz Yisrael. Wars in general have to use a flexible mindset. You have to change the way you do the fighting all the time, especially when fighting terror. You have to change your policies and even your morals. Among other things, here in Torat Hanefesh we also want to develop what a state run according to the Torah would be like, and what kind of war morals it would hold by. And it is important that these morals be flexible. This is difficult for someone who is connected to halachah to fathom, because halachah is seemingly unchanging. But, to be successful, you have to understand God's sense of nechamah, of changing His mind, from time to time. You have to see how He Himself changes the rules of the game all the time.

Now all this was just an introduction to how this all plays out in relation to the psyche. In psychology there are two types of individual considered. One type is called "fixed mindset" and the second is called "growth mindset." The fixed mindset type is static and the growth mindset is changing and dynamic. The main point (which is very popular in the world today) is that children should be educated to have a growth mindset, rather than a fixed mindset. We might laugh when we hear this, since all this was said by the sages, including for instance the Rebbe who included in the 12 Psukim some of these sayings to foster growth mindset, especially the saying, יגעת ולא מצאתי אל, תאמין, etc. This is the essence of all growth mindset. Now the idea is that there is a type of person who thinks that all his success in life, all his success has some kind of mystical reason. The mystical reason in the pop culture used to be "the Secret." Growth-mindset is already better, but it's still a low level compared to the Torah. Now the fixed-mindset type thinks that all success depends on whatever talents, whatever genes I was born with. It is all predetermined in this sense. The growth mindset type feels that all success on hard work (עבודה). If you work hard, you'll be successful. If you don't work hard, you won't be successful. If you toil, you will find, if you don't toil you won't find, if you find and you didn't toil, also don't believe it. Only if you've toiled can you believe that you've found (success). Especially in Chabad, this called working with one's own

strength. Not to trust even in what is given to you from the outside (given to you as a present). Of all the sayings the Rebbe could choose from Pirkei Avot, the most important one is **אם אין אני לי מי לי, וכשאני לעצמי מה אני**. If I am not for myself, who will be for me. But, If I trust only in myself (meaning: I trust in what I have been given from birth, my innate qualities), then what am I? You have to work hard, regardless of what you have been given. Again, what is the example with educating a child. A child was successful with something. The mother says, Oh Wonderful. You are so wise and smart. This is a cue (it is a subconscious trigger) that the mother is giving the child. The frum mother would say, You are such a tzadik. In the subconscious, what this creates is a fixed mindset, that success depends on how he is, not on how hard he's worked. The wise parent says, Wonderful, you must have worked very hard to achieve this success. This is a subconscious cue for growth mindset, that everything depends on your toil.

There is a book by this woman we mentioned earlier that has become a bestseller. It took her 60 years to come to **יגעתי ולא מצאתי**. She really toiled to come to this conclusion. This itself, polarizing between fixed and growth mindset, and saying that only one is good and the other is bad, this itself is a fixed mindset!

For example, when the Alter Rebbe appointed his son, the Mittler Rebbe to teach the young chassidim, the Mittler Rebbe had very stringent demands. And the moment they didn't achieve, there was disappointment all around. One time, one of the young chassidim yelled at the Mittler Rebbe: Do you think that we are all the children of your father (that we can get to your level)? This really took the Mittler Rebbe and moved him. The Alter Rebbe then told this young chassid, thank you for being mechanech my son, for teaching him how to be a chassid. Growth mindset is free will, while fixed mindset is determinism, but there are indeed things that are determined. There are certain innate traits that we have. So the balance is needed, even though she is right that the main point of education should be to teach about growth, but the other side is needed as well.

Rebbe Nachman too, said to his chassidim: You should all try to be like me. Don't say that I am a tzadik, what kind of a soul I must have. You have to reach the same level. Like we said, this woman is probably Jewish, her name is Dweck (she was raised in Brooklyn, though Wikipedia doesn't say whether she's Jewish or not). The nature of a Jew is to be, "a mover among those who are standing." One who has a fixed mindset, is afraid of failure. But, someone who has a growth mindset is not, he knows that a tzadik falls seven times and gets up, he knows that failure is part of the toil in this world. This is a very important point. As Jews we are meant to move, walk, among those who stand. All the Primordial kings that dies, it was because they had no flexibility and no growth. Growth is a mindset, and one also has to have flexibility, the ability to move between a fixed mindset and a growth mindset.

Now there were 7 kings that perished and one that did not: Hadar. The 7 that died it was because they were with a political mindset that could not change. This is the first example that such a mindset cannot persist. So what was special about Hadar? Hadar means "to return," which means he changed his mind (**הדר ביה**, in Aramaic). But, if he didn't die it also means that he saw judgments differently. His wife's name is mentioned (the other's is not): Meheitavel, **מהיטבאל**, which means that without a wife you are

always in a fixed mindset. For a growth mindset, all the more so to be flexible between the two mindsets, you need a wife who tells you: You can be better. That is the meaning of Meheitavel. You're ok but you can be better. She is called bat Matred. She is always spinning his head around. And her grandfather is **בת מי זהב**, the daughter of running waters, water is always moving. You have to be able to change your mind, you have to be alive, and the sign of being alive is being on the move.

10. The first consolation

Let's end with the first time the Torah mentions the word **נחמה**, consolation. **זה ינחמנו** ממעשינו ומעצבון ידינו מן האדמה אשר ארר הוי'. ויקרא את שמו נח לאמר זה ינחמנו. Noach's name according to this should have been **מנחם**, Menachem, not Noach. Rashi says that he was called Noach because consoling also quiets the mind. This is another carrying of opposites. On the one hand, tzadikim have no rest in this world or the next, but on the other hand, they are resting. What this is saying is that what gives the mind a rest is the ability to change one's mind. Like with Moshe Rabbeinu who prophesied with the word **זה**, this. And the Torah there says, **זה ינחמנו**, this will console us. The word **זה** is here related to the saying, **זה אל זה** וקרא זה אל זה. Of course this requires a lot of meditation to understand, but the idea is that the ability to change form this to this is what gives the mind its rest. Noach's task was to change everyone's mind, to console the world by changing its mindset, moving it from one mindset to another.

We didn't say even a single gematria. The words, **זה ספר**, this is the book, equals 352 and the words **זה ינחמנו**, this will console us is equal to 176. 176 to 352 is 1:2, what we call a "whole and a half." So the average value of the two words "this is the book" is "this will console us." This is the "this" with which Moshe Rabbeinu prophesied. What God created man to be a toiler who works hard (joyfully) that comes from the words, "this is the book of the chronicles of mankind," which tells us to constantly be movers, to constantly be on the move and to give birth to new things, and that this is what consoles us.