

Reish Lakish (2)

Tzeischem leshalom for Stern Family and Se'udas Hodayah for Shasel Family

(Unedited notes taken by Moshe Genuth during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

We are now in the *hilula* of the Rebbe Rashab, may his merit protect us and all the Jewish people. We'll begin with his *niggun*, *niggun hachanah*.

This was the *niggun* of the Rabbi of Poltova, the *chavruta* of the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab once said about him that he saved my *nefesh*, *ru'ach* and *neshamah*.

1. *Reish Lakish's sayings (from binah to tiferet)*

The month of Nissan and parashot Tazria and Metzora

Today was the *Rosh Chodesh* of Nissan, this month is for you the first of months. Last Thursday we explained that the novelty of the Jewish people is that we are able to awaken God from below. Because of our awakening, God awakens. This is the secret of the first verse in *parashat Tazria*, "Should a woman conceive and give birth to a male" (אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר). Usually *Tazria* and *Metzora* go together – so now we are in the second half of the two *parashahs*. From this statement about our awakening from below, we came to talk about Reish Lakish,¹ who was more than all the other sages, a symbol of awakening from below that awakens God above.

This is of course relevant to the coming of Mashiach, the month of Nissan. If we do *teshuvah*, as the Alter Rebbe rules, we will immediately be redeemed. Even if we hold by Rabbi Yehoshua's opinion that there is no reason for the exile (חנים נמכרתם ולא בכסף)

¹. This class is a continuation of the one given the previous Thursday, the 25th of 2nd Adar, 5774. That class presented a novel thesis that Reish Lakish was not literally a bandit before doing *teshuvah*, but rather had left his studies under Rabbi (Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi), alongside his future brother-in-law and teacher-friend, Rabbi Yochanan, to lead a group of Jewish militants aimed at restoring Jewish statehood in 3rd century Israel with Roman agreement. Harav Ginsburgh presented a thesis (developed in a book by one Rabbi Brill, a 20th century *talmid chacham*) that at the time there were 3 groups among the sages, the one led by Rabbi Yochanan encouraged settling the land of Israel, but not seeking autonomy, the one led by Rav Yehudah in Babylon demanded that the Jews of Babylon not make *aliyah* to the land of Israel at all, and Reish Lakish's group, as described. All of the present *shiur* builds on that thesis [MG].

(תגאלו), nonetheless, it is written in Chassidut, that there is the special teshuvah of the month of Nissan, which precedes the redemption (just as in Egypt, right after the awakening on the part of the Almighty to redeem the people, there came an awakening from below, when the people expressed their love for the Almighty). For this reason, the Alter Rebbe rules, that according to all opinions, when we do *teshuvah* at the end of the exile, we will be immediately redeemed. In Nissan the *teshuvah* is from renewal, connecting with the nothingness, the *ayin*, as Rabbi Hillel says, *ayin* is the Mashiach of Israel (אין משיח לישראל), where the word אין, meaning “there is no” can also be read as, אין, “nothingness”).

This was the point made by Reish Lakish, all out the awakening below, not to count on God’s awakening without us awakening first. Of course, in the end, there is awakening from above, but you can’t wait for it to happen by itself.

More sayings from Reish Lakish not previously taught

We began to bring different sayings of Reish Lakish in the order of the *sefirot*. A few years ago, there was another *shiur* on Reish Lakish where we explained many of his sayings. This *shiur* was already published in the Farbrengens of 5771, part 2². So today, we’ll only bring new sayings that were not reviewed there.

Tiferet: “Shema Yisrael” and “Baruch Shem” between Yaakov and his sons

Earlier, we read the *Kriyat Shema* of the evening of the 2nd of Nissan, the Rebbe Rashab’s *hilula*, thereby performing a *mitzvah* from the Torah. When we say this verse, we have to meditate upon it and the exemplar of Chassidic meditation following the Chabad method is the Rebbe Rashab. First off, we have to think about the context in which this verse appears in the Torah.

In *Kriyat Shema* there is something special. We begin with a verse from the Torah (שמע ישראל הוי אלקינו הוי אחד) and then we add another phrase that is not from the Torah (ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד). The Alter Rebbe explains that these two phrases, the verse and the phrase, are the higher and lower unifications, and we unify in this way, twice a day.

². In the past few years, edited Hebrew transcripts of Harav Ginsburgh’s shiurim have been published as books under the title שיעורים והתעודיות [MG].

The verses in the Shema were said by Moshe Rabbeinu to the generation entering the land of Israel. At the end of chapter 25 of the Tanya—a chapter that a groom customarily learns before his wedding—a wedding too is a unification—it is explained that Moshe Rabbeinu strengthens the generation and imbues them with a sense of self-sacrifice needed to conquer and inherit the land of Israel and physical reality, allowing them to remain connected to spirituality at the same time. That is the literal context and meaning of the verse, שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד. So this is indeed connected with the generation entering the land of Israel—moving from a state of pure spirituality in the desert to physical life in the holy land.

Yaakov and the Tribes: Switching between the higher and lower unifications

But, there is a well-known midrash that places the Shema and Baruch Shem earlier. On his deathbed, Jacob sent to call for his 12 sons, hoping to reveal to them all that would happen in the end of days. But, when the tribes that came to see their father, suddenly, Jacob could no longer reveal what he had wanted to. He feared that it was because perhaps one of his children was not faithful—that he too had a wayward son (as did Yitzchak, who had Esau, and Abraham who had Ishma'el). Feeling his fear, the tribes said to their father, “Listen [our father] Israel, Havayah is our God, Havayah is one.” It was then that Jacob replied, “Blessed be the Name of His Kingdom forever and ever” (ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד).

In general, the Kriyat Shema contains a switching of place and vessel. The first paragraph has 42 words or vessels, where 42 indicates might, while its content is about loving God, i.e., loving-kindness. So the first paragraph is about the light of loving-kindness in a vessel of might. The second paragraph has 72 words, or vessels, where 72 is the Name related to loving-kindness (72 equals loving-kindness, חסד), but its content is about fearing God, by relating punishment. So the second paragraph is the light of might in vessels of loving-kindness. This type of switch is called אחליפו דוכתיידו.

Likewise, between the two (Yaakov and his sons) Yaakov was the one worthy of stating the higher unification—but in fact it was his sons who said it. They were the ones who spoke, “Listen Israel, Havayah is our God, Havayah is one.” And, then it was Yaakov who spoke the lower unification, Baruch Shem, etc.

Higher unification is unification above time and space (uniting the two Names Adni and Havayah, in that order), while lower unification is the drawing down of that which is above time and space into our reality (unifying the two Names, Havayah and Adni, in

that order). I live in time and space, but at the same time I feel God's Presence, a Presence that is above time. In higher unification, my entire experience is annulled.

The Shema: Spoken by Moshe Rabbeinu from above to below, spoken by Yaakov from below to above

So this midrash explains that the order is not from above to below (higher to lower) as when Moshe gave us the power to conquer the land of Israel, but rather from below to above. So according to the sages, this is an awakening from below. What was the context of the tribes and Jacob saying these verses? Yaakov wanted to reveal the end of days, but suddenly felt the Divine Presence leaving him. He feared that it was because one of his sons was not whole in his faith. The tribes felt this and reassured him, Know our father Yisrael that just as you have only one God, we have only one God. Still, God prevented Yaakov from being able to reveal all that was in his heart (ליבא לפומא לא גליא). The tribes were thus saying to their father, know that even if you are unable to reveal your heart, even though there is no awakening from above, know that everything is ok.

The point of this midrash is that even if the Divine Presence has left you, Yaakov our father, and you are unable to bring us the Mashiach from above, as it were above, know that there is Mashiach in our hearts, here below. The departing of the Divine Presence feels like a moment of emptiness, of nothingness, as if "there is no Mashiach" (איין משיח), but the tribes tell their father, No, there is Mashiach, the Mashiach in us. [Meaning, that the moment that one feels that "there is no Mashiach" (איין משיח), it must be transformed into a sense of "I am Mashiach" (אני משיח), because as the sages say, "In a place where there are no one to act, strive to be the one who acts." As we have explained in the past, "I am Mashiach" (אני משיח) equals "a crazy person" (משוגע), but "you can [also] become crazy from the sight that your eyes see"³ (והיית משוגע ממראה עיניך אשר תראה).] So Yaakov replies, Baruch Shem, etc. implying that may it indeed be so that God's eternal sovereignty be revealed through your own Messianism.

The author of this midrash is, you can already guess, Reish Lakish. He took the verses out of their literal context in Deuteronomy and taught this midrash that this all happened in the time of the tribes in Egypt. This again is one of the midrashim that the Rebbe Rashab loves the most to explain.

³. Deuteronomy 28:34.

Reish Lakish loves the simple Jews, he loves all the Jews together, all the tribes together. Every saying a sage says is an experience he is seeing in his mind's eye. And so he sees how all the tribes come together before Yaakov and unify God together. Just as the Mittler Rebbe writes about his father, that he dedicated his life so that every Jew could have a taste of the higher unification.

Connection of the midrash with tiferet

Moshe Rabbeinu is the da'at of the souls of Israel. Yaakov is the *tiferet*. לעולם ה' דברך נצב בשמים, says the Arizal that the root of the *malchut*, the single point from which it starts, stands in the Heavens, meaning that it is connected to the hindside of the *tiferet* of *Zeer Anpin*. Therefore, this *midrash* from Reish Lakish is fitting for the *sefirah* of *tiferet*, which is Yaakov and his tribes.

It says that “bed” בטטה is a “branch,” and it means that each of the tribes branches off in a different direction, just as *tiferet* branches off in all six directions. This is also related to the proclivity (נטיה), which in Hebrew stems from the same word as “branch,” that every Jew has for self-sacrifice. If you have only one in your heart, and we—the tribes—also have only one in our hearts, we are able to sacrifice ourselves. Like in an army that needs to conquer the land of Israel. We are all enlisting in the army of Hashem.

We began with this because it continues the content from our previous class. It is also in honor of the Rebbe Rashab, who corresponds to the *sefirah* of *tiferet*. In the previous class, we came to the *sefirah* of wisdom, and so we should now continue with a saying from Reish Lakish that corresponds to understanding (בינה).

Binah: “One burns [terumah] based on chazakot”

Let's continue in the order of the *sefirot* with understanding. An important principle in Reish Lakish's halachic thinking (contrary to that of his brother in law's Rabbi Yochanan). A brother in law is called a גיס, from the word “familiar” (like family), which allows them to speak freely and openly with the other. Rabbi Yochanan says something and Reish Lakish says 24 different contradictions to that. When Reish Lakish passed away, Rabbi Yochanan was close to losing his mind, because he had no one to spar with. At the end of Kidushin there is an issue of whether we burn based on chazakah or not. Reish Lakish says we do, and Rabbi Yochanan says that we don't. Out of this dispute, we learn a great principle that spans the entire Talmud.

The literal dispute is about little children who are playing in the sand and obviously from time to time they touch something that is defiled. If we then see the child near a *terumah* (something ritually eaten by a priest), we can assume that the *terumah* has been defiled. The dirt is called **אשפות**, and this word appears in the 113th chapter of Tehilim, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's upcoming new chapter (on the 11th of Nissan, in a few days).

Now the *terumah* is assumed to be pure before the child came near it. But, now that the child came near it, Reish Lakish says it is 100% certain that the child was defiled and that he touched the *terumah*, so the *terumah* should be burnt. But, if there were any doubt, it is forbidden to burn the *terumah*, and Rabbi Yochanan says, that it is not 100% that the *terumah* was defiled, so it should be left hanging. The question then is whether we burn *terumah* based on a *chazakah* (disposition). According to Rabbi Yochanan, you only burn the *terumah* in a case of "majority." For instance, there is *terumah* on the table and in the room there are many **שרצים** and frogs. Now, if we find a piece of some animal in the *terumah*, we look at the majority. If the majority of the little animals are **שרצים** then the *terumah* is defiled and should be burnt. But, if the majority are frogs, then the *terumah* is not considered defiled. But, in the case of the child coming near the *terumah*, Rabbi Yochanan says that we do not burn the *terumah*. This is the *pshat* of the dispute.

Now what type of *chazakah* (legal disposition) does this child have? First of all let's mention that the *Tosafot* state another way in which children are defiled—not because they play in the dirt and touch **שרצים**, but rather that take a random child, since women pick him up, and many women are in a state of *niddah* (ritual impurity due to menstruation), then the child too has the impurity of *niddah*.

Reish Lakish: An assessed disposition cancels the status quo

Now, this type of *chazakah* (disposition) is called **חזקה דאומדנא**, meaning it is an assessed *chazakah*—the state of the child is assessed to be impure. The fact that the *terumah* is originally pure, that too is a *chazakah*. So what Reish Lakish is saying is that a **חזקה דאומדנא**, a disposition based on assessment is stronger and cancels a *chazakah deme'ikara* (**חזקה דמעיקרא**), an original-state disposition, what today we would call the *status quo*. A *chazakah deme'ikara* is saying that whatever state something was in, it remains in that state. Most of the *chazakah de'umdana*, **חזקה דאומדנא**, the assessed dispositions, are psychological in nature. They stem from a certain psychological assessment of human nature and behavior. For this reason, the description of these

assessed dispositions usually begins with the words, “A person does not...” For instance, “A person does not pay back his debt before its time,” etc.

Let’s look at this word **אומדנא**. This word equals “faith” (**אמונה**). We can also permute the letters to spell almost (we only need exchange the *vav* in *umdana* to a *yud*) “A person does not...” (**אין אדם**). There are many types of these psychological *chazakot*.

Human nature or nature: Which is stronger?

So what is the core of the dispute between Reish Lakish and his familiar brother-in-law? Again, this dispute has many ramifications throughout the Talmud. The question at its core is which is stronger. Is it the status quo or human nature? Reish Lakish so trusts his psychological appraisals and assessments of human nature, that he says that it is stronger than the constancy of physical nature, a **חוקה דמעיקרא**, and cancels it. And that is what he means by “one burns [terumah] based on *chazakot* [**דאומדנא**].”

But, Rabbi Yochanan places more weight on nature, on physical continuity in nature. And because the assessed disposition is not so strong in his eyes, it can only lead us to doubt the state of the *terumah*. Similarly, Rabbi Yochanan holds that politically the status quo is very strong, and so if you are planning on changing things all at once, you won’t succeed. Instead, at most you can cast a doubt on the status quo, and then slowly things will begin to change.

So if we translate this into something educational, we can ask: what is stronger, the nature of our psychological nature or the nature of physical reality? All this is related to understanding (**בינה**), which is both related to psychology and to the assessments made in an **אומדנא**.

Reish Lakish’s assessments – *binah* – the ability to change the status quo

Now, if Reish Lakish trusts his assessments so much, then he is probably the best assessor around. We see this for instance in his story with the cannibals, how he prepared everything he needed, he assessed the situation beforehand, knowing that he could get out of them by hitting each one time and a half. To rule, you have to have the power of assessment. Today, people want everything to remain in status quo. But, Reish Lakish wants to change things. He trusts his assessment of human nature, and therefore feels that he can change things.

Halachically, we rule according to Rabbi Yochanan. Beit Hillel, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Yochanan are considered one *halachic* tradition (an awakening from above, like

loving-kindness), while Beit Shamai, Rabbi Eliezer ben Horkanos and Reish Lakish are considered the opposite *halachic* tradition (that the awakening is from below). The Lubavitcher Rebbe ruled that Mashiach has to come from below, heralding the change from ruling like Beit Hillel to Beit Shamai and Reish Lakish. What this means is that as the redemption comes nearer, we have to have more and more assessment as opposed to status quo. This is similar to our concept of Conscious Determination discussed in the article Faith and Confidence.

Ruling according to the last generation: The depth of the end in binah

Another thing related to *binah*, understanding. Reish Lakish says that the last sages are greater than the first. This is how *binah* is the “depth of end” (עמק אחרית). He stresses that Yiftach in his generation is like Shmuel in his. You only have the leader of your own generation.

There is a dispute between Reish Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan about who is considered greater, the first sages or the last sages. Rabbi Yochanan says that the earlier the sages, the greater they are. This certainly sounds plausible, this is how we have all been brought up to think. But, Reish Lakish holds the opposite, that the later the sage, the greater he is. This is exactly the mindset of the depth of the end, to rule like the final, the most recent sages, the mindset of *binah*. If you have a mindset of *chochmah* (wisdom) then you rule that the first sages (the depth of the beginning, as wisdom is called in the Book of Formation) are greater.

The Mashiach that everyone is expecting will never come

Like the Lubavitcher Rebbe says that the Rebbe of the generation is the Mashiach of the generation. But Reish Lakish says even more than that: even if Moshe and Aharon themselves would come in Yiftach’s generation, Yiftach would still be the leader and Moshe and Aharon would be subservient to him. Because Yiftach is the general all-inclusive soul of his generation. Thus the statement that there is no Mashiach, refers to the feeling that Mashiach is not someone that comes from above, but rather someone that grows from below, someone that is here. This is a little similar to the Alter Rebbe’s saying that the Mashiach that everyone expects will never come, and the Mashiach that will come, no one is expecting.

We can also add that the assessments, which we said are of the formula “A person does not...” (אין אדם), also refer to the famous acronym from the Arizal that “person”

(אדם) stands for Adam David Mashiach (אדם דוד משיח), again related to the point that Mashiach is not someone that comes from above but that is already here.

Another small point to add is that מעיקרא is more like classical physics, while אומדנא is more like quantum mechanics. In classical physics objects have objective existence. In QM, there existence seems to be predicated upon psychological states (questions that we ask about the universe).

Da'at: Property is not the same as the fruit grown on the property and whether one can learn from someone who is not righteous

We continue with da'at (knowledge). There is another important dispute between Reish Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan. This dispute is whether the purchase of profits (פירות) is the same as the purchase of property (הגוף). The question is, if someone has bought the rights to the benefits gained from a parcel of land, has he also claimed with his purchase general rights to the land. Or, whether these are two separate categories: the rights to the proceeds, the produce from the land and the rights to the land itself. Reish Lakish says they are distinct, so in practice, that one can purchase profits separately from the property, but Rabbi Yochanan says they are not distinct.

Where do we see an example of how the distinction or lack thereof is important (למאי נפקא מינה)? For example: a person bought all the proceeds from a certain field, all the fruit that will grow from that field will be his. He has to bring the first fruit (*Bikurim*), but the question is whether he can read the *parshah* read when bringing the first fruit, which states “the land that You [God] have given me.” According to Rabbi Yochnan he can, because by buying the profits, he bought the land. But, according to Reish Lakish he can't, because he purchased the profits, the fruit, separately from the land.

Possession in da'at – the source of the vessels is Radla, higher than the source of the lights

The whole concept of purchasing and possessing is related to da'at. So what you mean to purchase is dependent on your da'at. How shall we explain the difference. Reish Lakish says that the having rights to profits, even full rights, is still not the same thing as possessing the thing in and of itself—the *etzem* (גוף הדבר, עצם הדבר). But, Rabbi Yochanan says that if you have purchased all the pleasure from something, all the profits, all the fruits, then you possess the thing in and of itself. Pleasure is as we know

in Atik. So what Reish Lakish seems to be saying is that there is something beyond pleasure, something beyond Atik—the highest head of the crown, known as faith in Chassidut. Since Reish Lakish is *gevurah*, he is likened to the thing in and of itself, to *atzmut* (מפי העצמות מפי הגבורה). Since Rabbi Yochanan doesn't differentiate between the two sides of *da'at* (the right side is the pleasure—that which is revealed, and the left side of *da'at* is that which remains concealed—the faith), he is saying that if you have the right side, you already have the left side. But, Reish Lakish is saying that the left and right are different, and the left represents an awakening from below. The left side of the *da'at* represents the body of the thing in itself. This needs to be developed some more, but for now, this is what I feel their dispute is based on.

Current events and this dispute

What is this like in current events. If the Rebbe says that we cannot give up a single inch of land but someone else says that we are open for negotiations, then the latter feels that the pleasure (הנאה) from the land is the only thing—it and the land are one and the same. But, the Rebbe's insistence on not touching the land at all, is like Reish Lakish. He feels that the body of the land, the land itself, is not dependent on the pleasure gained from the profits.

This incidentally, is one of the only places where we rule according to Reish Lakish (because, we should say, that it is closer to the Torah's spirit).

Rabbi Meir learning from Elisha ben Avuyah

Another important issue related to *da'at*: In tractate *Chagigah*, the Talmud asks, based on a saying from Rabbi Yochanan, that if the teacher, the Rav, resembles an angel of God, one should seek to learn from him, but if not, one should not. Asks the Talmud, according to this, how did Rabbi Meir learn Torah from Elisha Acher, who was not just unlike an angel, he was a heretic. Rabbi Meir, the one who was the Mashiach among the sages of the Mishnah, he learnt from a heretic? How is this possible. Comes Reish Lakish (the one opposite Rabbi Yochanan, like his study mate), and says that Rabbi Meir fulfilled the words of the verse in Proverbs, *הט אוזןך ושמע דברי חכמים ולבך תשיט לדעתי*, it doesn't say *לדעתם*, but *לדעתי*, meaning, listen to what the sages say (and even if they are not righteous), hear their wisdom, and do not listen to their opinions (but rather, lean your heart to My opinion, meaning to God). There is a wondrous explanation of the

verse in Proverbs. And again, the one who says this is Reish Lakish (indeed, this same explanation is brought in other sources, anonymously).

Learning the wisdom of the nations out of the might of da'at

This is one of the sources from which we see that Reish Lakish was not afraid to learn from anyone. He learnt this principle from Rabbi Meir, who went to learn Torah from Elisha Acher, the heretic. Elisha Acher had learnt all the sciences of the time, all the philosophy of his time, and yet Rabbi Meir was not afraid to learn from him. And then Reish Lakish a few generations later, adopted his method and was willing to learn wisdom from anyone. As we know, there is a blessing that we say when we see a wise man among the nations.

Again, the idea here is that Reish Lakish has a strong da'at, his emphasis is on the left side of da'at, the gevurot of da'at. This same idea is brought in the 8th chapter of the Tanya, where even though the Alter Rebbe dissuades us from learning sciences, etc. Still, he writes, if you know how to use it to grow close to God, לדעת, then you can like the Rambam and the Ramban. So you can learn them as long as you constantly strive to know God.

So these are two very foundational statement of Reish Lakish related to da'at.

Loving-kindness: Spreading Torah in Abraham's way

Since we began with tiferet, we have to reach it. So let's say one thing about loving-kindness. This is brought many times in Chassidut, a saying from Reish Lakish, regarding Abraham. He says that the verse should be read, ויקריא שם בשם ה' א-ל עולם, Abraham was full of self-sacrifice and went to publicize the Name of God in the world. What we hear from Reish Lakish is that not only should you say and proclaim the Name of God in the world, but you should state it in such a way that it awakens the one listening, to the point where the person you are trying to affect says it himself. This is called true loving-kindness. Light should be given in a way that it affects the person to the point where he continues to light others. Abraham is likened to water, and he is so "wet" that whomever he touches becomes wet himself, able to wet others. It is like how the Rebbe wanted every shaliach to make other shluchim. Abraham starts as one and in the end he becomes, "the father of many nations."

Might: Opening Gehenom on Christianity

There is a dispute between Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish regarding the verse in Proverbs, *פֶּעֶרָה פִּיהָ מִבְּלֵי חֶק*, the Gehenom opens its mouth without rules. What does this mean? Reish Lakish says that if a person has not fulfilled even one rule of the Torah, then Gehenom has to swallow him. Says Rabbi Yochanan, this is too much. But, the opposite: Gehenom opens its mouth only if a person has not kept even a single rule, a single commandment. But, if he has performed even a single mitzvah, Gehenom can't swallow him. But, the question is: it was Reish Lakish who said that even the most empty Jew is full of good deeds and commandments.

“Opens its mouth” – to say that the commandments are annulled

Now in the book by Brill, he writes that in Reish Lakish's generation (about 100 years after Bar Kochva, about 150-200 years after the destruction of the Temple), the other new religion caught hold in Rome. What followed were many edicts against the Jewish religion. Thus, what Reish Lakish means, says Brill, is that Gehenom is open to a Jew who says that even one mitzvah is annulled from the Torah. And who says this? This is Christianity. This seems to be a very good explanation of what Reish Lakish means. This is all related to might, *gevurah*, because this *sefirah* corresponds to law.

Hod: The spread of the conflict with Christianity

Now, in the shiur we gave a few days ago, we mentioned the saying from Reish Lakish that the evil inclination has a many different names. It is called Satan, it is called the evil inclination, etc. We explained that on the one hand at that time Christianity was taking hold of Rome and at the same time, Rome was at war with the Persians. Now, spiritually, Xtianity was trinity and the Persians who were Zoroastrians were duality (*שניוּת*). So there was a war between the 2 and the 3. This is similar to how the war in the time of Abraham was between 4 and 5. Here there was a state of war between 3 and 2. On the one hand, Reish Lakish was with Rome against Persia. But, now that Xtianity was taking hold of Rome, Reish Lakish became against Rome.

Now, Reish Lakish spoke satirically. You have to interpret some of his sayings in this way. So his saying that “He is the satan, he is the evil inclination, he is the angel of death” is a satire on the trinity. Now why does he use this order? It should have been the evil inclination (that entraps man), then goes up before the heavenly tribunal to find the person guilty, then he is called satan, and finally he comes back down to kill the person

for his sins. But, he uses this order, because of the order that the Xtians chose (the father, son, and the one that I can't even say it's name).