

24 Tevet 5768

Wednesday, January 2, 2008

Kaf Dalet Tevet Farbrengen

Part 1

from Harav Yitzchak Ginsburgh

The nigun Keili Ata was sung

Lechayim, lechayim

Shne’ur: two lights

Today is the *yahrzeit* of the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chassidut Chabad. The literal meaning of his first name, Shneur, is “two lights.” The Ba’al Shem Tov himself said that the soul of the Alter Rebbe came down into the world in order to unify the two aspects/lights of Torah, the concealed and the revealed. The simple understanding of this statement is that the concealed light of the Torah refers to Chassidut, the study of which, in the way of Chabad, makes it possible to comprehend the mysteries of the *Zohar* and the teachings of Kabbalah in a way that can nourish the soul with inner understanding. The Alter Rebbe brought the Kabbalah of the Ba’al Shem Tov to the entire world, especially in his classic text, the Tanya. As for the revealed light of the Torah, the Halachah, the Alter Rebbe was its greatest codifier, from his time to the present, the results of which we have as the Alter Rebbe’s Shulchan Aruch. In this way, both lights of the Torah were unified in the person of the Alter Rebbe.

Two lights in the Tanya

An additional, more profound understanding of the Alter Rebbe's two lights is found in a discourse from the Rebbe. He notes that in the first printing of the Tanya there were only two parts, the Book of the Intermediaries and the Gate of Faith and Unification. The subject of the first part is how every individual can come to understand and feel that the entire Torah is close his mouth and his heart; the first part thus brings the Almighty close to every individual. The second part deals with the higher and lower unifications. The higher unification is how the world—brought by God into existence every (moment of every) day from nothingness—is null within the essence of His consciousness, above time and space. The lower unification is how the process of continuous recreation reflects, in our consciousness, the presence of the Creator within the context of time and space. The Rebbe explains that the first part of the Tanya is meant to bring Divinity, the light of God, into the heart of man, while the second part is meant to draw Divinity



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down to earth and reveal the presence of the Creator in all of His creations. He says that we can then view the first two parts of the Tanya as “two lights,” one concealed (in the heart of man) and one revealed (in the world at large). The Rebbe goes on to explain that even in the first part of the Tanya itself there are two lights, the light of the mind that illuminates the emotions of the heart, thereby revealing the innate light of the heart. (The Alter Rebbe’s second name, Zalman [Yiddish for Solomon], in Hebrew permutes to spell *lizman*, “to time,” and thus can be seen to correspond to the second part of the Tanya that draws the two lights into the reality of time and space.)

In Sefer Yetzirah (the Book of Formation), reality is described as comprising 3 dimensions: world, time, and soul. Using this as a reference, we can say that the first part of the Tanya focuses on drawing Divinity into the soul dimension (the individual). The second part focuses on drawing the Divine into the world and time dimensions.

Two lights in man

The third verse of the Torah reads: “And God said: ‘Let there be light!’ And there was light.” So the very first time that light is mentioned in the Torah, two lights appear. There are many explanations in Kabbalah as to what the nature of each of these two lights is. The numerical value of the verse **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר**, “And God said: ‘Let there be light!’ And there was light,” the first saying of creation, is exactly the same as the value of **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֵׂה אָדָם**, “And God said: ‘Let us make man,’” the saying which brings creation to its culmination on the sixth day. In the words of Sefer Yitzirah, “the end is wedged into the beginning.” The verb “make” (“And God said: ‘Let us *make* man’”) implies rectification and perfection, as we shall see later. Thus there is no greater rectification of man than to connect the two primordial lights of the first day of creation together.¹

Between Chanukah and Purim

The month of Tevet is in the middle of the time period between Chanukah and Purim. [Within this time period are the weeks of *Shovavim*, so named for the initials of the Torah portions read (*Shemot, Va'eira, Bo, Beshalach, Yitro, Mishpatim*), which according to the Kabbalists is the time for rectifying our sexual conduct.] Once we understand the significance of this entire time period, we will better understand the significance of the 24th of Tevet.

If we look in the *Kedushat Levi*, the collection of Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev’s teachings, we see that he dwells on the point of Chanukah and he explains in length what the difference between Chanukah and Purim is. By looking at his teachings, we can come to more fully understand the essence of the time period between Chanukah and Purim.

It is explained in Chassidut that the common theme of these two holidays, established by the sages, is that the miracles that they commemorate happened within a

natural guise—the miracle is concealed within nature. This is in contradistinction to the holidays from the Torah which commemorate the supernatural events and revealed miracles that occurred in the exodus from Egypt. The *Kedushat Levi* though explains that within the category of concealed miracles, like Chanukah and Purim, there are two types. He says that in Chanukah the miracle occurred because we here below acted with tremendous self sacrifice and that our actions joined with God's help from above. Still, it was our awakening from below that drew down the light of the miracle. But, in Purim, though there was some awakening from below, it was not at all at the same level as the amount of self sacrifice found in the acts of the Hasmoneans. The greatness of Chanukah is therefore the self-sacrifice of human beings. In Purim there was also self sacrifice which came into play when Jews did not convert for an entire year even though it seemed certain that all the Jews would be killed. Nonetheless it was not the same thing at all.

What follows from this? On the one hand we might think that the miracle of Chanukah was greater because we took part and contributed to the miracle happening. But the *Kedushat Levi* says that the miracle of Purim is greater in the sense that it was much clearer that the miracle came from God, from above and that it was a miracle. In other words, the *Kedushat Levi's* conclusion is that the miracle of Chanukah is more concealed within nature, more en clothed than the miracle of Purim.

Even though the sages say that the nature of a male is to go out and conquer, but that it is not the nature of a woman to do so, there is an amazing story that is related to Chanukah, that of Judith who killed Holofernes. In Hebrew, "Judith" is pronounced *Yehudeet*, and is also the feminine form of *Yehudee*, meaning "Jew." So, Judith is also the feminine form of "Jewish." The Arizal writes that Judith was a reincarnation of Ya'el who killed Sisra, the commander of the Canaanite forces in the time of Devorah and Barak.² Like Ya'el before her, Judith entrapped Holofernes. Yet, there is a crucial difference between the two. In order to entrap Sisra, Ya'el had to commit a sin, about which the sages say that a sin for the sake of Heaven is greater than a good deed that is not for the sake of Heaven.³ But, Judith did not need this; she was able to entrap Holofernes without committing a sin.

Apart from the fact that Judith is the female hero of Chanukah and we are now in the time period between Chanukah and Purim, we are mentioning Judith for another reason. In Hebrew, the *gematria* of Judith, יהודית is 435, which is also the exact numerical value of today's date, the Alter Rebbe's birthday: 24th of Tevet, or כד טבת. In addition, 435 is equal to $\Delta 29$, meaning the sum of all integers from 1 to 29. The initials of כד טבת equal 29! So there is special cause to study about Judith and her Hebrew form, Yehudeet today.

We have already mentioned that Judith is associated with Chanukah, but she is also connected to Purim. The hero of Purim is Moderchai the Jew. Mordechai is the first person who was not from the tribe of Judah called a Jew, Mordechai the *Yehudee*. The

sages explain that from that time and on, a person who completely denies idolatry is called a Jew (not just someone from the tribe of Judah). So this whole period of time between Chanukah and Purim can be described as the time between Judith and Jew, or in Hebrew, between *Yehudeet* and *Yehudee*, the feminine and masculine forms of "Jew." In gematria, the sum of Jew and Judith is 470, which is also the numerical value of "'Let there be light' and there was light!" **יהי אור ויהי אור**, the two types of light, the masculine and feminine types of light that we mentioned earlier and also the numerical value of **נעשה אדם**, something that we will turn to in the second half of today's talk.⁴

To tie things together, we have now seen that the miracle of Chanukah is more feminine, because it came as a result of our awakening below, which is called feminine waters in Kabbalah, and was therefore more fully enclothed in nature, which is also feminine. The miracle of Purim was more masculine because it was mostly an awakening from above, called masculine waters in Kabbalah and was also therefore more revealed and contrary to nature.

Judith as the model Jewish female warrior

Let us return to Judith. On Shabbat was the *yahrzeit* (the day of passing) of Maimonides (20th of Tevet). Once it was thought by mistake that Maimonides' *yahrzeit* was on the 24th of Tevet. Even though this was a mistake, it tells us that there is a strong connection between Maimonides and the Alter Rebbe and therefore as we shall see between Maimonides and Judith. In the generation of the Magid, people described the Alter Rebbe as having the mind of Maimonides.

In the *Yad*, Maimonides' codification of Jewish law, *Hilchot Melachim* are laws that are most relevant for us today because they deal with the subject of Jewish monarchy and our task in this generation is to renew the monarchy with the coming of the Mashiach. In these laws, Maimonides writes that there are conflicts, wars between Israel and its enemies, that the Torah commands us to engage in. According to Maimonides the wars of the Hasmoneans were such wars commanded from the Torah, because we have to defend ourselves against our enemies and not allow them to conquer our land and prohibit our Torah observance. Maimonides writes that in such a war even a groom and a bride have to leave their wedding canopy in order to join in battle. The different commentaries throughout the generations tried to understand this bewildering statement, because it is common knowledge that only men participate in war, as the sages say: "It is the manner of a man to conquer, but not the manner of a woman to conquer." There are some commentaries who propose that Maimonides means to say that the woman's role is to provide support for the war effort, for instance by bringing food, supplies, etc. to the soldiers. But, today's Rabbis say that even this the woman should not do. They suggest a reading of the *halachah* brought by Maimonides: If the groom leaves the wedding to go to war, the bride simply is told to leave her wedding canopy because without the presence of the groom there is no reason for her to be there.

But, there is one Medieval commentary, the Meiri, who says that this statement should indeed be understood literally. Except, that to include a woman in combat is not a good idea, not because it is not modest, but because she is likely to have more fear than a man and that in the face of physical combat and bloodshed she might run away. And so, even a woman who wants to enlist in the army of the Mashiach, should be persuaded not to. So what then is the meaning of this *halachah*? The Meiri answers that Maimonides is referring to acts like that of Judith. Every woman should think and plan a way to physically help save the Jewish people, as, for instance, by using her power of seduction to kill the head of the enemy's army. This is what the bride should be thinking of when she is under her wedding canopy, if there is a call to war. It is worthwhile to look in the Meiri himself to see how he explains this.

Judith in the Bible

When we look in the Bible, we find that the name Judith appears only once. It was a made up name that Esau gave to his wife in order to convince his parents that she was a follower of what is called *dat Yehudeet*, Jewish religion. Other than that, Judith appears 6 more times, and in all of these cases it means "the spoken Hebrew language"⁵ (this accounting was brought down originally by Rebbe Tzadok of Lublin). In the Bible the modern word that we use to describe the Hebrew language, *Ivreet*, is not used, rather this word *Yehudeet* is used.

Esau is likened to a pig that stretches out its hooves to convince people that it is kosher, while hiding the fact that it does not chew its cud, making it not kosher. Similarly, Esau's wife Judith symbolizes an impure shell or attire that is donned by a person who for various reasons wants to dishonestly pass as a Jew.

Since, Judith is also the name of the spoken Hebrew language in the Bible, there is a question of whether spoken Hebrew, e.g. Modern Hebrew, needs clarification (ברור). So, historically, we have that first this was the name of a woman, then the name of spoken Hebrew, and then finally, in the Oral Tradition, Judith is the name of another rectified and holy woman.

Jewish custom

We mentioned the notion of *dat Yehudeet*, which can loosely be translated as "Jewish religion" or "Jewish custom." The *Mishnah* in tractate *Ketubot*⁶ explains that *dat yehudeet* consists of those things that if a woman does not keep them she can be divorced without the husband owing her her *Ketubah*. The *Mishnah* actually mentions two such bodies of customs or laws, *dat Moshe* (Mosaic custom or religion) and *dat Yehudeet*. The word *dat*, which we have been translating as religion, law, or custom, is found in the verse "...On His right, the fire of *dat* [law or custom], for them."⁷

In passing, we recall that the Ba'al Shem Tov said that he drew down his daughter's soul and name, Odel (אדל), from the initials of this phrase: אש דת למו. As is known from

the many stories about her, Odel was a prophetess. The Ba'al Shem Tov's great grandson, Rebbe Nachman of Breslov, writes⁸ that there are three different types of woman: an evil woman, a wise woman, and a prophetess, which correspond to the 70 languages of the nations, Aramaic, the language of translation, and the Holy Tongue, the language of the Bible, respectively. All this of course deepens the connections we have seen.

What is the difference between *dat Moshe* and *dat Yehudeet*? When a woman does not keep the first it means that she is directly causing her husband, on purpose, to commit transgressions against the commands of the Torah. For instance if she cooks him non-kosher food and tells him it is kosher, or if she is ritually impure and tells him that she is pure, etc.

The latter, *dat Yehudeet*, pertains to issues that are connected to modesty, different things that Jewish woman over the generations, took upon themselves to keep. These are the customs of modesty that make up the special mark of a Jewish woman. For instance, even if a woman covers her hair somewhat, but the covering is not connected strongly, and she goes out this way into the street, or if she demands intercourse so loudly that the neighbors can hear, or that she bad-mouths her husband's father in front of him, all of these are examples of not keeping Jewish custom, the good customs of Jewish woman as pertains to modesty. This is how these two terms are used in a legal context.

¹. Just as the two instances of light in the third verse of the Torah correspond to direct and reflected light, or the masculine and feminine aspects of light, so "man" that was created contains a male and female.

For *gematria* lovers: This means of course that $\text{יהי אור ויהי אור} = \text{נעשה אדם}$.

The *gematria* of the three verbs in these two phrases, $\text{יהי ויהי נעשה} = 481$, or $13 \cdot 37$, which is $\square 16$ (the 16th inspirational number = $15^2 + 16^2$).

So now we have two lights and one man. Let us look at the various *gematrias* of these: $\text{אור אור} = \text{אדם}$, $\text{אדם} = \text{טוב שם טוב}$, which is also the product of 27 and 17, or $\text{טוב} \cdot \text{זך} = \text{אור כי טוב}$. "A good man," $\text{טוב מאד} = \text{אדם טוב}$.

Now, if we write these three words, אור אור אדם , as a square figure, we get:

א	ו	ר
א	ו	ר
א	ד	ם

Note that the right-to-left diagonal spells אום , one of the 72 Names of God, while the left-to-right diagonal spells אור .

The *gematria* of אור אור אדם is $1 + 21 + 795 + 1 + 21 + 795 + 1 + 10 + 145 = 1790 = 5 \cdot \text{משיח}$, or the front and back of $\text{משיח משיח משיח משיח שיח יח ח}$.

The letter filling of אדם אור אור is $\text{אדם אור אור} = 1891$, or $\triangle 61$, or $\triangle \text{אין}$, which as we will see later is also the value of $\text{האדם נוצר מעפר, האדם נוצר מקוף}$.

The second filling of אדם אור אור equals 3700, or $100 \cdot 37$, where 37 = the הבל of creation.

So taking the normative value, the first filling, and the second filling together (these three correspond to the crown, wisdom, and understanding of the words), we get 6050 or $2 \cdot 55^2$, where 55 is the *gematria* of הכל "everything." 6050 is thus the double square of 55, alluding to the higher

and lower unifications (יהודא עילאה יהודה תתאה) as it pertains to the creation of the world. If we add to this the value of the מספר קדמי, we get 7840, or $10 \cdot 282$, where $28 = \text{יחי}$.

Using the *Albam* letter mapping, אור becomes לפט = 119 = $7 \cdot \text{טוב}$ (the word טוב is mentioned 7 times in the account of creation, האור כי טוב, being the first). So אור אור is לפט לפט = 238 = רחל. In *Albam*, אדם becomes לסב = 92 = הכל הבל. So together, in *Albam* אור אור אדם becomes לפט לפט לסב = 330 = $6 \cdot \text{הכל}$, the six permutations of הכל.

The three mappings *Atbash*, *Albam*, and *Achbee*, together form a mathematical transformation ring, and in Kabbalah are referred to as the *malbush*, the garment of a word. אור אור אדם in *Atbash* becomes תפי תפי תקי = 1476. In *Achbee* it becomes כונ כונ כחש = 480. So the *malbush* is אור אור אדם = 2286 = 2745, or the product of אדם and אין!

². See Judges ch. 4.

³. See our Hebrew volume *Teshuvat Hashanah*, pp. 253ff.

⁴. See also the lectures from 6th and 7th of Av, 5766.

⁵. See 2 Kings 18:26 and 18:28; Isaiah 36:11 and 36:13; 2 Chronicles 32:18; and, Nechemiah 13:24.

⁶. *Ketubot* 7:6.

⁷. Deuteronomy 33:2.

⁸. *Likutei Moharan* 1:19.