

Weekly shiur

14 Elul 5773

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

Nigunim: Ani ledodi, Ketivah vachatimah tovah, Trein tapuchin

1. The complete Torah gives grace

A good evening. Today we are in the full moon of the month of Elul, the month of *Ani ledodi vedodi lo*. In Chabad it is the day of the founding of the *Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim*, where the complete Torah (תּוֹרָה תְּמִימָה) is learnt, including both the revealed dimension of the Torah and chassidut, the concealed dimension. The acronym for revealed (נגלה) and chassidut (חסידות) is Noach (נח).

When we transpose the letters of Noach we get “grace” (חן). The second blessing of the Priestly Blessing is that God give us grace (וַיַּחַן). Indeed, as we will see the middle blessing of the Priestly Blessing corresponds to Torah and Torah that is complete, that contains both *nigleh* and chassidut, gives grace, חן, in the eyes of both God and man. It should contain both the body of the Torah, the *nigleh*, and the soul of the Torah, Chassidut.

2. 5774 and the Priestly Blessing

In the month of Elul we give *remazim* for the coming year, and one of the *remazim* for 5774 is related to the Priestly Blessing. The priests bless with love and there are 3 blessings, which is why it is called the triple blessing. The first words of each blessing are “Bless you... Shine... Elevate” (יְבָרְכֶךָ יָאֵר יִשָּׂא). Their sum is equal to 774! This is a beautiful sign for the coming year, and worthy that all priests have this in mind when saying the blessing this year, and also the congregation being blessed.

We like to explain *remazim* that are connected to the *parshah*, based on the Alter Rebbe’s dictum that we live with the time (and his birthday is this Shabbat). Ki Tavo contains rebuke, but the inner light of the rebuke is love, that is their purpose. The Alter Rebbe says, that according to the truth (אֱלֵיבָא דְאַמְתָּא), all these curses are nothing but blessings. There is no room for anything but blessing here. Therefore, the main meditation this week is to think about how all the things that seem to be curses, are actually blessings, and even if we don’t see it this way right now—in this world of deceit, which is why the Alter Rebbe says that “according to truth”—they are all nothing but blessing.

There is no greater blessing than the Priestly Blessing. All the other blessings that one blesses another is only to draw and reveal a potential state that already exists. But, the Priestly Blessing reaches to high that it can draw down a new potential that did not exist until now. It is like blessing Abraham and Sarah who according to their nature could not give birth, and make them fertile. It is called: המשכה מהעלם שאינו במציאות, drawing down

from that which is concealed and not actual [like revealing the spark concealed in flint stone). And this is done in three stages, the three blessings of the Priestly Blessing.

One of the interpretations of this being a triple blessing is that the 3 blessing correspond to *mitzvot* (מִצְוֹת), Torah (תּוֹרָה), and *teshuvah* (תְּשׁוּבָה). The first is the blessing for keeping the *mitzvot*. The first blessing comes down to us, thanks to our keeping the *mitzvot* and fulfilling God's will. So someone who wants to receive יְבָרְכֶךָ should perform *mitzvot*. The second blessing is about Torah, which is light, יָאֵר is "God should illuminate." The Torah is considered a graceful woman, נְעֻלַת חַן, she makes those who learn her seem graceful, and as we said, חן is the ability to unify the *nigleh* with Chassidut. Therefore it is clear that the second blessing relates to Torah. The third blessing is יִשָּׂא, which is very connected with "carrying" or "elevating" like נוֹשֵׂא עוֹן, that God carries your sins, He forgives, and thus this is *teshuvah*. One who does *teshuvah* is worthy of God carrying His sins and transforming them into merits. The month of Elul is specifically about *teshuvah* from love, *Ani ledodi*. And when one does *teshuvah* out of love the transgression are transformed into merits, וַיְהִי כִּי הָיָה לְךָ אֵת הַקְּלָלָה לְבָרְכָהּ. And then it is revealed that truthfully, it is all blessing. Thus יְבָרְכֶךָ corresponds to *mitzvot*, and to merit the second blessing we must engage in Torah, and the most powerful faculty in the Jewish soul, which prepares it for peace. There are enemies. How do you make peace? You need of course also *mitzvot* and Torah, but the main thing is *teshuvah* as the blessing says, וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם, "And he shall grant you peace."

3. Mitzvot, Torah, and Teshuvah as three crowns

The gematria of these three words, "*mitzvot, Torah, teshuvah*" (מִצְוֹת תּוֹרָה תְּשׁוּבָה) is equal to 1860, therefore the average value is 620, the value of "crown" (כְּתֹרֶת). So these three are like three crowns, שְׁלֹשָׁה כְּתֹרֶת. There is the crown of *mitzvot*, etc. If they correspond to the three crowns noted in *Pirkei Avot*, according to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, then the *mitzvot* are the crown of kingdom. A king issues commands, he gives commandments, מִצְוֹת מֶלֶךְ. Torah is of course the crown of Torah. And *teshuvah* is thus the crown of priesthood, related to the Temple, the place of the priests, and where they make the Priestly Blessing pronouncing God's ineffable Name. This is the place of *teshuvah*, that is what the Temple is meant for. God told us to make a Temple so that He dwell there, and the place of the Divine Presence in each of us is where we do *teshuvah*. Just as there is a return to the land of Israel, שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן, and that is one form of *teshuvah*, there is another level of *teshuvah* which is building the Temple, and it is the main expression of *teshuvah* out of love. There is a verse, and you shall enjoy all the goodness (וַיִּשְׂמְחֶתָּהּ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב), and that is done in the Temple.

4. Mitzvot, Torah, and Teshuvah and their correspondence with the first three communal commandments

We mentioned a few days ago that 774 is also equal to another triplet of words, the three *mitzvot* that we were commanded as a community, once we enter the land of Israel.

These are communal *mitzvot*, not for individuals. The community has to first of all make sure it has a king, שׁוֹם תְּשִׁים עָלֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ. That the leadership be according to Torah, that the leader be someone who is completely nullified before God. This is the first *mitzvah*. The second *mitzvah* is that this king has an army, and with this army he has to fight the wars of God, and most importantly the war against Amalek, annihilating them, the end of *parashat Ki Teitzei*, last week's *parashah*. This war is against those who want to destroy us, the holiness of the world, and we have to annihilate them completely. But, the war against Amalek cannot be conducted without a king. The third *mitzvah* is that after we are at peace from all our enemies, we build the Temple. When we mention these three *mitzvot* using one word for each they are: מֶלֶךְ עִמְלֵק מִקְדָּשׁ. And indeed, the value of all three is 774. A sign that this is a good year to perform all three. May this be a year of a King, Amalek, and Temple. And it is also the year of יִבְרַכְךָ יְיָ. How do they correspond. We already explained the first and the last. The first corresponds to the king, and thus the commandments, *mitzvot* are related to the king as we explained. The king both blesses us and guards us (וישמרך), as he creates security in the land, with the power of Torah performance. Of course the king has to be accepted willfully by the people. It is the happiest *mitzvah* that we have. The king then is the source of blessing and the source of safekeeping.

We also explained the last one. The Temple that we want so much is because the Temple is a symbol of the wholeness of the *teshuvah* of the Jewish people. We are all a priestly nation. So there is something about the priesthood that is greater than everything else. What we are left with is why Amalek corresponds to Torah. The Priestly blessing appears in Parashat Naso, which also indicates that the whole purpose is "elevating," or "carrying" נשא. And as we said it is the transformation of transgressions into merits, by God carrying it.

The Ba'al Shem Tov explained that Amalek (עמלק) is equal to "doubt" (ספק) in gematria. Just as there is a physical Amalek, its source is the spiritual Amalek within us. Who is this spiritual Amalek? It is our own doubts in the truth of the Torah, the Written Torah, the Oral Torah, the doubts in the truth of the *tzadikim*, and God forbid other forms of doubt in faith. So we have to make war with these forms of doubt, God save us from them. To do so we can only be victorious with Torah. The Torah which we said is a graceful woman. When you combine the revealed Torah with Chassidut together, that is what annihilates Amalek. Thus, every *yeshivah bochur* should sit and learn the complete Torah. It is the power that protects the Jewish people including the soldiers that go out to war.

So this is our opening for this evening. 5774 is the year of יִבְרַכְךָ יְיָ and it is also מֶלֶךְ עִמְלֵק מִקְדָּשׁ and they are connected with Ki Tavo where the rebuke is meant to transform what at first seems as a curse in this world of deceit into a blessing in the world of truth. And again as the Alter Rebbe said, they are all blessings.

5. Only blessings from the 15th of Av and on...

It is known that one year, the Mittler Rebbe, before he was *barmitzvah* had to hear this *parashah* from someone else, not his father who would normally lein it. And he became very ill from it (he was two months before *barmitzvah* and according to *halachah* he was supposed to fast on Yom Kippur) but he was so ill that the Alter Rebbe wasn't sure he was allowed to fast. The Chassidim asked him, why he was so ill, because every year he had heard this *parashah* and the rebuke. But, he answered that when his father would lein the *parashah* it would all sound like blessings and he had never heard the curses before. His father was in the world of truth then when he was reading it. What we also learn from this is that the residue, the impression from the rebuke lasts until Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, when everything is transformed and darkness is made into light. It all begins on the 15th of Av and ends on Yom Kippur as the sages say that these were the best days on the Jewish calendar. The phrase, "only blessings" (רק ברכות), only blessings equals 15th of Av (תמשה עשר באב), so the fact that these are all blessings begins to illuminate on the 15th of Av. The crux of the exile is with the destruction of the Temple which occurred on the 9th of Av. We all receive a shock then, and it takes 6 days to recover. Just as one of our students experienced recently. And then one can realize that even the 9th of Av (it takes 6 days) but then we can understand that even what happened on the 9th of Av, according to the truth, is nothing but blessing, which is why "only blessings" is equal to the 15th of Av. And then transforming it into actual blessings, that takes from the 15th of Av to Yom Kippur. And in the middle we have the rebuke in Ki Tavo, also in order to perform the saying, תבלה שנה וקללותיה, and not only that all the curses be no more, but that they also be revealed as blessings.

6. 5774: a year of Ish Tevunah – a man of inner comprehension

The final blessing of the Priestly blessing begins, ישא. These letter can also spell איש, which is one of four synonyms in Hebrew for "man." Moshe Rabbeinu is called איש, and God Himself is called a "man of war" (איש מלחמה). Usually, the highest connotation for man is אדם, but God is not only not called אדם, he is called "not Adam" as in the verse, "He is not a man to change His mind" (לא אדם הוא להנחם). But, He is called *ish*, איש. This is very simple word and a permutation of ישא. To be an *ish*, and this is the future description in the time of Mashiach, איש ואיש ילד בה, about women too, since an איש is someone who is a mashpia.

Now, the value of the two remaining words in our remez from the Priestly Blessing are יברכך יאר – adding the Torah together with the *mitzvot* – whose sum is 463, which is equal to תבונה (comprehension). Today there is also a modern word which uses the same letters, תובנה.

Tevunah is the ability to integrate what one has understood. One can understand without integrating, but *tevunah* means to make it part of oneself. The entire month of Elul is related to a מקלט, a place of refuge, based on the Arizal's acronym of Elul in the

verse, **וְאִשֶּׁר לֹא צָדָה וְהָאֱלֹהִים אָנָּה לְיָדוֹ וְשָׁמְתִי לָךְ מְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יָנוּס שָׁמָּה**. The city of refuge is a place that captures me, encompasses me, and *Tevunah* is when I encompass it. We are now saying that when we add **יָאֵר** and **יִבְרַךְ** we get **תְּבוּנָה**, which goes together with **אִישׁ**, in an idiom that repeats four times in Proverbs, perhaps the highest connotation that the Book of Proverbs uses to describe a person, **אִישׁ תְּבוּנָה**. One should strive to reach a state of being a man of *tevunah*, of comprehension. And so we have that 774 is also equal to **אִישׁ תְּבוּנָה**, a man of comprehension. So this is a great year for grasping a lot of *tevunah*.

8. Four instances of *Ish Tevunah* in the Tanach

If we want to understand what this man of *tevunah* is, we open the Book of Proverbs and look at its various instances. The first is in the verse, **כִּי שְׁחֹק לִבְסִיל עֲשָׂה זִימָה וְחִכְמָה לְאִישׁ תְּבוּנָה**. First, let's explain that we are going to meditate just on this phrase **אִישׁ תְּבוּנָה** (which we found from the Priestly Blessing, meaning that they too should have in mind that we should all become **אִישׁ תְּבוּנָה**). This first verse says that when the fool creates **זִימָה** it is nonsense, but in contrast wisdom is to the wise man as *tevunah*.

The second verse is **אִוֹלֵת שְׂמֵחָה חָסֵר לֵב וְאִישׁ תְּבוּנָה יִישֵׁר לֵבָת**. When someone who is without a heart does something foolish, it is great joy for him. The commentaries say that this is when he invents a crooked understanding (**סְבֵרָא**). He thinks he's come up with something really important. In contrast, the man of *tevunah* is happy when we finds something straight. It is also straight thinking. And this is what gives him joy. The man without a heart has a crooked head and he enjoys his crooked theories.

The first two verses include the fool and the wise man in contrast to one another. In the final two verses, the two halves of the verse are positive. No contrast here.

The third verse is **חֹשֶׁךְ אִמְרָיו יוֹדֵעַ דַּעַת יִקָּר רֹחַ אִישׁ תְּבוּנָה**. A person who speaks much, who saves his words, as the sages tell us to do, he doesn't say things that are not needed, such a person has *da'at*. The word **יִקָּר** has a reading and a written version: **יִקָּר** is how it's read, and **וּקָר** is how it's written. The *pshat* is how it's read and the concealed level is based on **וּקָר**. The reading is the external and the written form is the inner. So the inner meaning is that the man who is "cool," of "reserved spirit" he is the one who is a man of *tevunah*. This in Chassidut is called *ohne hispa'ailus* (not getting excited). This is the rectification of the *kelipah* of *Amalek* who is cold (**אִשֶּׁר קָרָךְ בְּדָרָךְ**).

The final and fourth verse that mentions a man of *tevunah* is the one that is most well-known: **מִיָּם עֲמוּקִים עֵצָה בְּלִבְ אִישׁ וְאִישׁ תְּבוּנָה יִדְלֶנָּה**. This last verse, again both halves are positive. Deep waters are positive and they are in the person's heart, except that he cannot bring them up, and reveal them from his heart. To this purpose he needs a man of *tevunah* to bring them up and reveal them. There are 3 verses that mention this idiom, **בְּלִבְ אִישׁ**, in the heart of a man. First of all **בְּלִבְ אִישׁ** is equal to 345, the value of **מִשָּׁה**. The first verse is **דִּבְרֵי אִישׁ יִשְׁחַנּוּ וְדִבְרֵי טוֹב יִשְׁמַחְנָה**. The secrets of the Torah are revealed only to a person whose heart is worried in him. Indeed the worry has to be sweetened. And as we explain in our book on this verse, there are three stages of submission, separation, and sweetening in regard to these worries in the heart. That is the first time this idiom appears.

The second instance is in the verse, which is even more well-known, רבות מחשבות בלב, מים עמוקים עצה בלב איש. And the third time is in this verse, איש ועצת ה' היא תקום. The second verse is about thoughts in the heart, and in the third verse it is the advice that is deep in the heart. In any case these are the three instances of this idiom in the Tanach, and they deal with דאגה-מחשבות-עצה, whose initials spell מדע, knowledge. It could also be דמע or tear.

If we've come this far let's note that בלב איש which equals Moshe, and Moshe contains the three patriarchs. How so? The first verse, רבות מחשבות בלב איש, corresponds to our patriarch Abraham. At first Abraham's name was אברם, and the initials of these four words is אברם Avram. And then it was עצת ה' היא תקום, the advice or plan of God is what elevates him. In his first nature, Avram could not give birth to a son, but God's wondrous advice which was to reveal his spiritual root, allowed him to have a son. Abraham then had many thoughts, what will be with me and Sarah? We don't have children. But, God's plan came through and by changing his name to אברהם he had a son, Isaac. This is how it always is. Abraham is not worried (דאגה), but he is full of thoughts. He believes that God is running the world and doing all for the best, but he is full of thoughts of how things will work out. In general it says that Abraham was full of rumination.

Now, what about the other two verses. Who does "Worry in the heart of man..." Who among the patriarchs was a worrisome type, not just full of thoughts. That is Jacob, who was always worried שמא יגרום החטא, lest the sins cause... This type of worry, when it is holy, reveals the secrets of the Torah. Jacob's difficulty in life was raising his children. If Abraham was constantly thinking about what would be with him, but Jacob who is with a house full of children, he is constantly worried. And so his root in Moshe Rabbeinu is this verse, דאגה בלב איש. In Kabbalah there are two sets of partzufim for wisdom and understanding: ישראל סבא ותבונה and אבא ואימא עילאין. *Tevunah* is Rebbechah and the father and mother are Abraham and Sarah. Yisrael sava is of course then Jacob.

9. The four instances of Ish Tevunah correspond to the first four sefirot

How does Rashi explain the final verse of a man of *tevunah*? Rashi says that this is talking about a teacher and student. The teacher has a sealed *halachah* in his heart. These are the deep waters that he cannot bring out, he cannot reveal it. How can it be brought out. The man of *tevunah* then is his student, he needs a comprehending student to bring it out. Only this type of student can bring it out. This is all from the *remez* that 774 is equal to איש תבונה. How can we take Rashi's explanation based on the verse's literal meaning, that the teacher needs a student who makes his Rebbe wiser, and say it in the terminology of Kabbalah and Chassidut. The sealed *halachah* in the Rebbe, and this will give more weight to our explanation that the deep waters are מוחא סתימאה, it is the wisdom of the crown, the superconsciousness. Within the *keter* there is the inner and external *partzufim* and the מוחא סתימאה is concealed, but in reality, and it is in the Arich, the external partzuf of the *keter*. It is also called כח המשכיל, the power of intellect. When

the Rebbe has this knowledge in his concealed wisdom, מוחא סתימאה, he cannot express it and it is described as שתיק רב. How can the student have the ability to reveal it? It is because *tevunah* comes from *binah*, which is actually the *binah* of Atik, and in the sages this is called אובנתא דליבא, the comprehension in the heart. This is the source of Isaac. So there is this *woanta deliba*. And this is what gives the student the power to reveal concealed secrets in his Rebbe's concealed mind. It comes from the fact that the student has tremendous love and trust in his Rebbe. A true student loves his Rebbe even more than the type of love between a man and a woman. It is love that cannot be described, and he has more faith in his Rebbe than even his Rebbe has in himself. That is why he can uncover the concealed mind of his Rebbe, thanks to his own אובנתא דליבא. This is all an explanation for what Rashi is saying about this verse. So this final verse is the one that describes that the root of *tevunah* is in the *keter*.

Now we can return to the first three verses that mention a man of *tevunah* and say that they correspond to the wisdom, understanding, and knowledge (the Chabad). By Divine Providence, we are here at the end of the Gaon of Vilna street in Rechovot, so we shall say an explanation from the Gra about this. He explains that the first verse begins with laughter. בי שחוק לבסיל, true laughter is spontaneous. You can't really prepare true laughter. It happens suddenly, like the Mashiach. If it's not spontaneous it's not real. So the fool (בסיל), when he gets a chance to fornicate in some way, it is spontaneous, like laughter. The continuation is that the same is true of wisdom (a lightning strike upon the mind) for a man of *tevunah*. It is like a sudden light in a dark night. This is the feeling, the eureka experience that wisdom has for a man of *tevunah*. זימה requires some deep thought too. What we see from this is that this verse is about the wisdom of the man of *tevunah*: it is a sudden experience.

The second verse is אולת (a crooked mind) לב. שמחה לחסר לב. In Proverbs the לב חסר is the opposite from the נבון, the comprehending person. שמחה is joy, the inner experience of *binah*, understanding. Wisdom is חייך מה (which is a smile, a tiny smile, that is how laughter begins). A person who is always smiling can either be someone very wise, or a fool. In any case, there is the laughter of the fool and there is the joy of the man who lacks a heart. In contrast, there is the איש תבונה יישר לבת, what makes the man of *tevunah* happy and full of joy is a straight argument and understanding—a straight path. So this verse, describes the *binah* of the man of *tevunah*. There is a statement in Kabbalah that yesod *binah* reaches all the way to *tiferet* (and this is the straight path, דרך ישרה שיבור לו (האדם, דרך שהיא תפארת לו מן האדם).

The third verse is explicitly about knowledge, da'at. What does it say: חושך אמריו יודע. דעת יקר רוח איש תבונה. Here we see *da'at* explicitly. The reading and written forms יקר and וקר. There is a person with a rich spirit (יקר רוח) and a person with a cool spirit (וקר רוח). The first, the rich spirit, is one who feels that his thought is valuable and he wants his thought to be transformed into action, he doesn't want to speak much. (It is worthwhile for everyone to learn the Gra's commentary on these verses in Proverbs). A man of cool spirit is one who doesn't get excited easily and has an adamant spirit, he is not moved easily. So again this verse is about *da'at*, knowledge.

This is exactly their order in Proverbs. The first is about wisdom, the second about understanding, and the third about knowledge. And the fourth verse is the source of all the *tevunah*, in the *אובנתא דליבא*, which again, allows the devoted student to bring out his Rebbe's concealed mind.

Let's have a musical intermission, and then we'll *be'ezrat Hashem* continue.

10. Two rebukes in the Torah

Let's continue with transforming the rebukes into blessings, "only blessings." In fact, the words, *כי תבוא* "When you come [to the land...]" is equal to "rebuke" (תוכחה). This itself is amazing, since the greatest blessing is coming to the land of Israel. It is explained that all the rebuke is in order to bring us to *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* has the power to transform.

There are two rebukes in the Pentateuch: *Bechukotai* (the 33rd *parashah* in the Torah, and therefore it is always read in proximity to Lag Ba'omer) and *Ki Tavo*, the 50th *parashah*, connected with the 50 gates of understanding. What is the connection between these two numbers? There is also a connection between the number of curses in each. In *Bechukotai* there are 49 curses, and in *Ki Tavo* there are 98, twice as many, a ratio of a whole to a half. The relationship between 33 and 50 is that of two thirds. If 33 is related to Lag Ba'omer, then 50 is *Shavu'ot*. 33 is the closest whole number to two-thirds of 50 days of *Sefirat Ha'omer*. The first rebuke is read specifically before *Shavu'ot* and the second before Rosh Hashanah, and each time there is a week gap. But, the goal is to transform the rebukes, the curses into blessings.

It is known that rebuke, *תוכחה* is *תוך אהבה*, that the inner aspect of love transforms it into blessing. Like every positive phenomenon, as it progresses it increases, like the light of the *tzadikim*, that continually increases. At the literal level, it seems that the negative also increases, but now we've discovered it's inner meaning as positive.

11. The final 3 verses of the rebuke in Ki tavo

Now let's look at the final 3 verses of the rebuke, and so if it is all blessing it should be revealed that these verses contain the most blessings. Indeed, these final 3 verses are explained in Chassidut in a way that shows that they are all blessings. The first verse reads, "Your life will hang in suspense before you. You will be afraid night and day, and you will not believe in your own life" (וְהָיָה חַיִּיךָ תְּלָאִים לְךָ מִנְּגִד וּפְחָדָת לַיְלָה וַיּוֹמֵם וְלֹא תֵאֱמִין בְּחַיִּיךָ). Then it continues, "You will say in the morning, 'If only it were evening!' and you will say in the evening, 'If only it were morning!' because of the fear in your heart that you will experience, and because of the sights that you will behold" (בְּבֹקֶר תֹּאמַר מִי יִתֵּן עֶרֶב) (וּבְעֶרֶב תֹּאמַר מִי יִתֵּן בֹּקֶר מִפְּחָד לְבָבְךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּפְחָד וּמִמְרָאָה עֵינֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּרְאֶה). The third verse, the one that concludes this section, which is seemingly about something new, and somewhat surprising, yet it is a continuation, reads, "God will bring you back to Egypt in ships via the path about which I said to you, 'You will never see it again.' There, you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as slaves and bondwomen; but there will be no buyer" (וְהָשִׁיבְךָ יְיָ הוּא מִצְרַיִם בְּאֲנִיּוֹת בְּדֶרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי לְךָ לֹא תִסִּיף עוֹד לְרֹאֲתָהּ וְהִתְמַכְרֶתֶם שָׁם לְאִיכָבֶד)

(לְעִבְדֵימָם וְלִשְׂפָחוֹת וְאִין קִנְיָה). What does וְהִתְמַכְרְתֶם mean? We ourselves want to be sold to our enemies, this is the only instance of this verb form, which means “becoming addicted” (לְהִתְמַכֵּר), you become addicted to your enemies. The *pshat* says Rashi is that you want to be sold to them, but there are no buyers. Rabbeinu Bechayei says this is something good. Meaning that the conclusion is some surprising transformation into good, because no one wants to buy us. But, Rashi says that the reason there are no buyers is because they will demand that you be killed, no sold into slavery. Thus, according to Rashi, this is indeed the worst. In a *sichah*, the Rebbe says that even all that is in Rashi is a blessing internally. So even the הרג וכליון, says the Rebbe, is like how the sages say that the Torah can only be kept by one who is willing to kill his *yetzer*, one who has כלות הנפש. With all this rebuke, the simple Jew enters a state that is above and beyond reason, a positive state, and he is divorced from his bodily (needs) in a positive way, he then becomes like someone who is 100 years old (בן מאה which equals 98, the number of curses), and has no body, and lives a fully spiritual life.

After these three verses, there is a concluding verse that reads, “These are the words that constitute the covenant that God commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab, in addition to the covenant that He made with them at Horeb” (אֱלֹהֵי דְבָרֵי הַבְּרִית (אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְיָ הוּא אֶת מֹשֶׁה לְכַרֵּת אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מִלְּבַד הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אִתָּם בְּחֹרֵב). The entire rebuke is called a covenant. There is no more sacred word for connection between two parties and it is likened to the covenant that God made with us at Mt. Sinai, Horeb.

Now, let's explain how these verses can be explained as blessings.

12. Making a blessing out of fear

The Degel Machaneh Efraim writes והיו חייד תלויים לך מנגד, your life, he says, is God's Name. One should perform the verse, שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד. The *Rama* in the *Shulchan Aruch* writes that this is the first thing every Jew must fulfill, שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד, for He is your life. Meaning, that your Life, God, is hanging before you and in front of you. But, the continuation ופחדת לילה ויומם and then it says, ולא תאמין בחייד, If “your life” is God, how can you understand this? He doesn't explain, so we have to add to his explanation. The second half is easier: What does it mean that you will be afraid night and day? That by seeing God's Name before him day and night, he merits fulfilling the verse, אשרי אדם (whose initials spell “truth” אמת). God is called Fear, like the Fear of Isaac. So to fear night and day is like what the BST said, to fear only God. But, what about “You shall not believe in your life?” For this we need a deep topic in Chassidut. There are two forms of life, חי בעצם and חיים להחיות. The first is God's essential life, which the Rambam explains in not in addition to His essence. He and His life are one thing. And what God gives life to all creation, that is only a revelation of His essence. First He brings everything into existence, He makes it into being, and then He adds life to it. So how shall we explain, “You will not believe in your life.” First, “He is our life” (כי הוא חייד), and Your Life is hanging before you. But, now we explain that at some point a Jew reaches a state where he doesn't need believe in חיים להחיות, that God gives me life, but rather it becomes something that is perceived, not through faith, but reality. Therefore

this is a great blessing: You will not believe in the life God gives you, but You will experience that God is giving you life. Where will the faith then be directed? To God's essential life!

Apparently the middle stage, when a person fears only God, that is what brings him to a state of experiencing the life that God gives him at every moment, it is dependent upon it. So first *Shiviti*, then constant fear of God alone, and finally knowledge and perception of the life God is giving you.

13. Making a blessing out of anticipation for morning and evening

Now for the second verse. בבוקר תאמר מי יתן ערב ובערב תאמר מי יתן ערב. One of the greatest Chassidim in Chabad is Rebbe Isaac of Homil. He writes that the most essential pulse of the Jewish heart is the run and return between "God is all" and "All is God." In every split second there is a comprehension that nothing but God exists. And the next split second, there is the comprehension that is the opposite, that all of reality that is before me is real, and not just real, but the final purpose of what God wants, and that this itself is Divine. From one extreme to the other, this inner run and return is pulsating in us. Sometimes this is called the higher unification and the lower unification, or the higher *da'at* and the lower *da'at* which are also these two unifications. The higher *da'at* is in the morning and the lower unification is in the evening. Higher *d'aat* is God is all. The lower *da'at* is usually explained as much less, because you feel that the lower reality is real, and the Divine is only behind it. But at its root, the lower *da'at* which allows being to be experienced is actually higher. All the higher unifications, all that is written in Kabbalah is like *garnisht* next to it. Again, the lower is "All is God." Since it is not clear and not easy to say which is better, there is a run and return between them. Each of these forms of consciousness admit that the other has more wonder to it. In this sense, God is called אל ההודאות, a God of acknowledgments. The lower knowledge acknowledges that there is more wonder in the fact that God is truly above and beyond all that exists, and the higher knowledge acknowledges that there is more wonder in God reaching His purpose in the lower reality. This is akin to the description of Moshe Rabbeinu's grave, the higher one's think it is below, and the lower beings think it is above. Moshe Rabbeinu's grave is a connotation for the 50th gate, and so the 50th gate is run and return. In the morning you think that the 50th gate is below, and in the evening you think that the 50th gate is above. This is an amazing explanation. There can be no greater blessing for our consciousness of God then this run and return between the morning and the night. And again, this is the pulse of the Jewish soul.

How can we now explain the continuation. מפחד לבבך אשר תפחד ומראה עיניך אשר תראה. A person who is praying is told to face down with his eyes and to place his heart above. The heart, its fear, is felt from the wonder of that which is above. And this is the fear of the heart that is meant here. And from the sight of what your eyes see, is for the one who is above and is looking down. So we now have two beautiful examples of transforming a curse into a blessing.

14. Making a blessing out of returning to Egypt

What about the third verse, And God will return you to Egypt on ships, on the path that I said you would never see again, and there you will want to be sold (addicted) to your enemies, to slaves and maidservants, and there are no buyers.”

God will return you to Egypt, the literal meaning is that God will take you out in exile, from the land of Israel to Egypt, and Egypt is a symbol for all the exiles, because it means “straits,” God forces us into straits, taking away our true Jewish free will. In the Arizal the example of this is a person who is raised as a slave, which makes the soul which should be free to break forth. All Jews are kings and a king forges a path. But, to be in Egypt is to be like a slave.

But **והשיבך** also means to do *teshuvah*. The purpose, the final goal of returning to Egypt is to do *teshuvah*, and God works in the most secretive ways to return us to Him, even as He brings us back to Egypt. Indeed, in the entire rebuke, God’s essential Name, *Havayah* appears exactly 26 times, and the value of *Havayah* is of course 26. 26 times God’s mercy (*Havayah* is the Name of mercy). What are these ships? There are a number of different explanations. Rashi says that these are slave ships. But, if we *darshen* this a little, it says that “ship” (**אניה**) is “I,” and thus “אניה” is self-consciousness (**מודעות עצמית**), which is what happens to someone who is captive in Egypt—he is in the prison of his own self-consciousness. He is a prisoner within his own egocentricity. This is felt also in the special word in this verse, **והתמכרתם**, and you will grow addicted. You become addicted to thinking about yourself, to being self-conscious. Actually, this verb form appears 2 more times in the Tanach. Ahab was the most wicked of all Jewish kings, and twice it says that he “grew addicted” (**התמכר**) to do evil in God’s eyes (**לעשות הרע בעיני ה'**). And the second time is at the end of 2nd Kings. It says that all 10 Tribes had become addicted to doing evil in God’s eyes. Actually they inherited this **התמכרות** from Ahab. The Rebbe, since he wants to transform everything into a blessing, says that to become addicted to your enemies is to become addicted to collecting the sparks of holiness. Why is there exile in the first place? To add converts to the Jewish people. And to be addicted to our enemies (the evil that holds the sparks of holiness captive), is to be addicted to **עבודת הבירורים**.

What do the slaves and maidservants represent? Becoming *Ba'alei teshuvah* whose main task is to be God’s servants.

We come now to the final words, and the Rebbe writes that here the world **אין** should be read *ayin*. The Alter Rebbe explains that the **אין** is the source of the Jewish people’s soul, and it is higher than the World of Rectification, but above this there is the *ayin* that is our source, the source of the Jewish people. There is a principle in Chassidut that between every two beings there is a state of nothingness. The nothingness prepares the path to being that is much higher than the initial state of being. So the first being has to be nullified so that the new being can appear. Now, all the difficulties are meant to bring us to blessings. Because our *mazal* can only awaken when we reach a state of nothingness. This is like the seed that rots in the ground and then emerges as something infinitely more than where he came from.

In the Lunar blessing we say: ברוך עושך ברוך יוצרך ברוך בוראך וברוך קונך. The point is that the ayin illuminate the קונה. So at first there is the “grow addicted.” You grow addicted (like a *ba'al teshuvah*) to serving God like a servant, engaging in recovering the sparks of holiness. And then the *ayin* illuminates the קונה – ואין קונה.

Let's say something more. The verse contains another phrase that we didn't explain: God said that we would not see the way to Egypt anymore. Why is this about the path stressed here. This curse follows the verse, נורא עליה על בני אדם, even when a Jew transgresses and does the opposite from what God wants, it is still considered to be נורא עליה, God did it, he planned it. All the difficulties you went through are to reach *teshuvah*, because that it the final intent. All the toil of *berurim*, clarification is just a step in the direction of the toil of unification (יחודים), ואין קונה.

15. Social development: present, post, and neo

Now let's return for a moment to the revelation of the nothingness between every two states of being. There is a modern idiom that connects to this: post. There is zionism and post-zionism. The concept of “post” states that something has reached a state of nothingness. There is a power in the development of society, “these are the chronicles of man,” that make it so that certain things just end. We have to ask whether this is something negative and nonsensical or whether this is positive. But, in any case, the state of nothingness that follows being is “post.” Zionism is about returning to the land of Israel. But, if return to Egypt follows, then all of Zionism is nothing and we've reached a state of post-Zionism. Now if something is negative then the fact that we reach its post, it is positive. What then is negative about “post?” That it is considered the final goal. It is not understood that it is an intermediate stage. What follows the post is neo. If there is Zionism, there is post-Zionism, and then there is neo-Zionism. A new face, new way. It is like that the old Zionism has to rot in the earth in order to give birth to something new, neo-Zionism. This is the meaning of, “and there is no buyer” (אין קונה), where the *ayin*, the nothingness, connects and resides within the קונה.

We are talking about communal issues. Here the issue is regarding our lives as a community. We reach a state of post because we are frustrated with what happened and what came out of all that's been done to date. It's not what we dreamt would happen. So it's over, let's finish it. But, most people don't understand that to finish it is all in order for something new to grow. There are a number of faces of people here who feel post, and we need more people whose faces are neo. This is to explain the final verse in the rebuke, with the final goal being ואין קונה.

16. Curses and blessings, prime and composite numbers

Let's end with some lower energies. We'll do a gematria. From it we can understand what a curse and what a blessing are. Let's count how many letters in the first verse. The first verse contains 46 letters. All three verses together contain 197 letters, which is exactly the number of letters in the account of the first day of creation. Is there a ratio between 46 and 197? The most important concept in number theory is prime numbers.

Every prime number is like a king from which a series of infinite numbers emerge. The prime numbers form a series: 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, and therefore we can say where each prime is in the series, ordinally. The 46th prime is 197 (starting with 1). This is a start. Let's see if there's another example of this in the Torah. We said that the first day's account has 197 letters, so let's look at just the first 3 verses in that account. We find that in these 3 verses there are exactly 28 letters in the first and in all three together there are 103. And indeed, 103 is the 28th prime number (from 1). This is truly wondrous, there is a very low probability that this would happen. To this day there is no way to predict the prime numbers. This is the greatest mystery in mathematics and therefore of the entire natural world. The unknowable head of mathematics is this topic of prime numbers. Now let's see if there's something else that will prove to us that there is some connection between the Torah's first three verses and the three final verses of the rebuke. Together they contain 103 and 197 or 300 letters, which is the triangle of 24 (the sum of integers from 1 to 24) like the 24 books of the Tanach. 24 is important too because it is the factorial of 4 (1 times 2 times 3 times 4) and indicates the number of permutations that can be made between 4 objects. So we can organize these 6 verses in the form of a triangle (homework for the children in *cheider*). Why is the triangle obvious here, because the Torah's first verse is the first 7 lines of this triangle (the triangle of 7, 28 letters). What we need to explain then is what it means to be a prime number. A prime number is a point, it is point like. All other numbers are composite numbers. Every prime number begins an infinite series of composite numbers (multiples of the prime). The prime is the first point. "Point" (נקודה) is equal to "curse" (קללה). To be prime is to be a point, the root of all the blessings that come out of it. A curse is thus something simple, prime. Blessing (ברכה) in Hebrew comes from the same word as "complexity" (הרבה). The root of all reality is general. All the world is prime, which is why the Torah begins with בראשית, In the beginning,... the earth was chaotic. This is a curse. To be "beginning" to be "prime" (ראשוני) that means to be a curse. But, then the light comes out and that is the complexity that then appears. To be prime is to be chaotic and for this reason, that is why a *tzadik* who is prime is at first grasped to be like a curse.

To be post-something is to understand that what came before was a curse and that the current state is even worse, but it is all leading to a state of neo.

May the year and its curses end, and may it all transform into blessings, and only blessings. May we all be inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet year, a year of the complete and true redemption with the Mashiach who will come and redeem us immediately.