

Weekly shiur

21 Elul 5773

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

We are now nearing the end of Elul, the month of God's compassion, and entering the coming year, which God will bless upon us. One of the remazim that appears regarding Elul that appears in the holy books is not one of the famous ones regarding verses whose acronym spells Elul, like Ani ledodi vedodi li. One of them is taken from the Book of Esther, meaning that there is a connection between Elul and Adar. When Adar enters we have a lot of joy, while Elul seems to be more serious. In any case, the BST who was born on the 18th of Elul taught that he came to the world to teach the Jewish people to do teshuvah out of joy, with life. So in Elul there should also be a great deal of joy. Again, it says that the verse in Esther is **איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים**. Every remez is connected to a different pillar in the service of God and this one is related to tzedakah, one of the ways in which we do teshuvah. It is known that the Alter Rebbe writes in the Tanya, that the main segulah today for doing teshuvah over our sins is through tzedakah, as in the verse, **חטאך בעדקה פרוק** from Daniel. If a person has a sin he annuls it with tzedakah. So he writes that in our generations when it is difficult to fast all the fasts that the Kabbalists wrote are needed to annul our sins, and there is a particular number for each sin, instead we can give tzedakah. And the meaning here is to give even more than the chomesh, the 20% that is traditional. Usually it says that the one giving tzedakah should not give more than 20% of his wealth. But, there is a verse, in the beginning of Job, spoken by the Satan in this case, **עור בעד עור וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו**. Therefore, one should give a great deal of tzedakah in order to make up for all our iniquities during the year. And since we are all one people, one body, all friends and responsible for one another, therefore we should give more and more tzedakah to make up for all of us. And thus, to bring the redemption to the Jewish people by doing tzedakah, since first there must be immediate teshuvah and then there is immediate redemption, as the Rambam writes: At the end of their exile, the Jewish people will do teshuvah and immediately be redeemed.

Our generation is a generation of teshuvah. The final of the 13 Measures of Divine Compassion is **ונקה**, which means that God forgives and erases the sins of those who return to Him. To be cleansed one need only do teshuvah and then the board is clear, like a clear sky, all the clouds disappear and the redemption comes. The advice is then to give a great deal of tzedakah. And again, the remez is **איש לרעהו ומתנות לאביונים**.

Before these words, we find the mitzvah of sending food to one another (in celebration of the victory of Purim), **משלוח מנות**. There are then two mitzvot which sound similar and both involve giving: **מנות** (portions – of food to our friends) and **מתנות** (gifts – to the poor). The Rambam writes that the greatest joy of Purim, even more than the food and drinking is the tzedakah, the gifts to the poor. There is no greater joy for a Jew than when he opens his heart and hand and gives to his brother, and we are all brothers. There is a beautiful remez: **איש** is equal to **לרעהו**. Meaning that first, one should feel equal,

that all Jews are equal. That is the purpose of sending portions of food, משלוח מנות. We give one another, like in physics where forces act by the exchange of force particles. One particle gives the other and thus they connect, as equals.

We know the vort from the Heilige Yid, that when you inscribe two points (two letters yud) side by side, that is a shorthand symbol for God's essential Name, Havayah. But, when you write them one on top of the other, that is a sof pasuk. A yud in Yiddish is a yid, a Jew. So if two Jews are equal, that is God's Name. But, if one is above the other, that is the end (sof pasuk).

So the איש לרעהו is to build the foundation of equality between Jews and from this equality, that we are equal and we connect by exchanging force particles, the portions that we send one another, that allows us to the true purpose which is to give to someone even infinitely, and as God promises that He will give us without end, עד בלי די.

In this month we give remazim for the coming year. The coming year is 774 (without the thousands) and there are a number of different verses and phrases that equal this number. One of them about which we will talk about tonight which is connected with tzedakah is a verse from Amos. This phrase became a whole chapter in the Tanya, in the Kuntres Acharon. The name of the chapter is וְצִדְקָה בְּנַחַל אֵיתָן. The entire verse in Amos reads, וַיְגַל בַּמַּיִם מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בְּנַחַל אֵיתָן. In the Tanya, the Alter Rebbe usually doesn't give sources for the verses, but here he notes that it is from the end of the fifth chapter of Amos, which implies that the Alter Rebbe wants us to look inside, to see the context. There it says that all the sacrifices brought during the time of the Temple (even the singing of the Levites), is all worthless to God if there is no justice and especially if there is no tzedakah in the Jewish people. So the chapter's beginning constitutes a rebuke. But, towards the end it says, וַיְגַל which has two interpretations. It means either "will be revealed," meaning that justice will be revealed like waters. Or, it means, like the phrase גַּל נְעוּל מַעַיִן חַתוּם or like גַּלְתָּ עֵילִית גַּלְתָּ תַּחְתִּית, or like גַּל נְעוּל מַעַיִן חַתוּם from the Song of Songs—a wellspring. But in the Tanya, he only brings the end of the verse. The eitan in every soul is the part that is a part of God above. We receive this part of our soul from Abraham, the first Jew, who is called אֵיתָן הָאֲבִירָחִי. The first thing we think of when we hear this in the Tanya is that אֵיתָן is the same letters as תְּנִיא. It's a very important word, and that is why the Alter Rebbe began the Tanya with it. And indeed there is a chapter that is the chapter of Eitan, upon which all of Chassidut is based. And tzedakah is the river that pulls the waters out of the wellsprings, out of the eitan. We have to give tzedakah in order to reveal the eitan in the innermost point of our hearts, and this is in order to bring the Mashiach. That is why in this chapter in the Tanya he brings the verse, הִנֵּה יֹשְׁבֵי עֲבָדֵי יְרוּם וְנִשְׂא וְגִבָּה מְאֹד, which is predicated by the revelation of the eitan in the soul, through this river. In Kabbalah, eitan is the inner point of wisdom, which is where the actual spark of Divinity is. And it is revealed only in the heart, in the inner heart, not in the mind, and the segulah for revealing it in the heart is tzedakah. If you open your hand to give to your brother, that is a segulah for your eitan to be revealed in your heart.

He explains three things about this: First, it is an experience of infinite love to God, the Jewish people and all that is holy to the Jewish people. This is called great love (אַהֲבָה רַבָּה). Second he says that in the midst of great love, a person whose eitan is revealed in

his heart, his ego is completely nullified, he has no self. Thirdly, he writes that when the eitan is revealed in the heart thanks to this river, the person reaches a state of non-corporeality, where he is no longer limited by his body (בְּלוֹת הַנֶּפֶשׁ), and this is true teshuvah described as וְהָרִיחַ תְּשׁוּבָה אֶל הָאֱלֹקִים אֲשֶׁר נִתְּנָה. These three things correspond to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Abraham is love. And the revelation of the eitan, the root of Abraham in our heart, becomes an experience of great love as we said. The nullification of one's being means nullifying my being making so that only God exists, that occurs because of the gevurot, the might, in the soul, corresponding to Isaac. Finally, the non-corporeality, freedom from bodily limitations, to depart the body's Egypt (מִצְרַיִם), that is tiferet, the middle axis that combines and balances the right and the left. The right is the great love, and it still contains a sense of being—there is someone that loves. The left is the opposite, it is the nullification of being. Thus, tiferet, the middle is a combination of the two, it means leaving myself, like צְאִינָה וְרְאִינָה, which the Alter Rebbe explains as צֵא אֲנִי וְרֵאָה אֲנִי. And all this happens thanks to tzedakah, which pulls the river of eitan, the act of tzedakah is like the act of a river of eitan. The eitan descends down the mountain, like the river that flowed down Mt. Sinai during the giving of the Torah. A mountain is clarity in Hebrew (בְּהִירוּת), which is in the mind, that is where the eitan starts, but it has to descend down to the heart where it is revealed as we said with great love, nullification of being, and non-corporeality—because the final purpose in a Jew is the heart. Again, the segulah to make this happen is tzedakah, and particularly the tzedakah of Elul.

The verse we mentioned earlier from Job, עוֹר בְּעַד עוֹר is mentioned three times in the Tanya, but the main place is here in this part of the Kuntres Acharon. Therefore there is a segulah among the Chassidim to give עוֹר, 276 more on Elul. It can be shekalim, it can be dollars, it can be Pounds Sterling, it can be whatever you want, the best is to add zeros to this number. In any case, this is an important thing for the coming year, which we said is equal to the opening verse of this chapter in the Tanya. Just as there are kaparot and pidyon kaparot, and we all need atonement. And thus, עוֹר בְּעַד עוֹר וְכָל אֲשֶׁר עוֹר בְּעַד עוֹר יִתֵּן לְאִישׁ יִתֵּן בְּעַד נֶפֶשׁוֹ וְצַדִּיקָה בְּנַחַל אֵיתָן, which we said is the literal coming of the Mashiach.

Now in all the veins of Chassidut, this verse, וְצַדִּיקָה בְּנַחַל אֵיתָן, appears in only 2 books. In the Tanya and in Likutei Moharan from Rebbe Nachman of Breslov. This is interesting, that among all the important verses in Chassidut, this verse is not quoted. How does Rebbe Nachman use this verse? He doesn't bring it at the beginning of a torah. He brings it to prove that tzedakah is an aspect of water, בְּחִינַת מַיִם. It says, וְצַדִּיקָה בְּנַחַל אֵיתָן, a flowing river that flows strongly is נַחַל אֵיתָן. The sages say אֵיתָן means one of three things: strong, hard, or old. In any case it's water. He says that the Jew fixes his heart, and Elul is the time to rectify one's heart, and he brings another verse regarding the heart, הַהֶפְכִי הַעֲזוֹר אֲגַם מַיִם. Sometimes a person can have a heart like stone (stone can be good too), and if it is like stone, it is not sensitive and it can be the opposite, vicious and angry. And so, the stone quality of the heart, has to be transformed. And how is this done, Rebbe Nachman asks? With tzedakah! This is similar to the idea brought in the Tanya, because he says that the act of tzedakah turns the stone heart in a person to a

heart of flesh. It is a great principle in Breslov, to reach a heart of flesh, and the Breslov Chassidim say that the name Breslov (בְּרֶסְלֵב) itself is “heart of flesh” (לֵב בָּשָׂר). Indeed, the final goal is that we all reach a state of a “heart of flesh,” that we transform our heart of stone into a heart of flesh. This is done with tzedakah, by opening the hand and the heart, by softening the heart.

In keeping with his style, Rebbe Nachman connects this with wondrous ideas. In Chabad, when we say lechaim, the accepted nusach is to say, לְחַיִּים וְלִבְרָכָה, lechaim and for blessing. This is from the Rav Hamagid of Mezritch (as the Alter Rebbe heard from him). The Chassidim explained that לִבְרָכָה is לֵב רַחֵם, a soft heart, to soften the heart. Rebbe Nachman also explains the same thing here, saying that tzedakah softens the heart because it is like water. And water softens stone. How did Rebbe Akiva come back to yiddishkeit? When he saw drops of water falling on a stone until they softened it and made a hole in it. Likewise, tzedakah has to be like small drops. It has in the end to become a great amount, but like it says, that it is better to give it drop by drop. Every drop softens the heart and makes a positive hole in it.

Now, what is Rebbe Nachman’s direction in this teaching? The main thing that is relevant to us is what we just said, but we have to understand the complete teaching in Rebbe Nachman’s Torah. He says there are tzadikim that are צְנוּעִים, they are modest, they don’t stop learning, they do mitzvot all day long, but they are modest, they don’t speak highly. This type of modest tzadik who walks earnestly with God does not awaken any of the kelipot (at least not very much). He does everything quietly. In Chabad this is an important principle called אִוְהֵן בְּלִיטוּת. But, he says that this is a small tzadik.

There is a great tzadik who speaks openly and boldly, like Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai who with his speech makes entire empires angry. He speaks his mind, which is God’s word. Every person has his own prophecy which is his fountainhead, his wellspring. Rebbe Nachman is alluding to himself, speaking boldly, and because of this he entices the kelipot.

Next, to illustrate these two types of tzadikim he brings a story from the Talmud. In the Tanya there is a similar idea in regard to two types of Jews, one who walks with a great deal of authority, like Abraham, who publicizes God, without any fear. This is a soul from the right side. But, there is a soul from the left side, that lives according to Torah, but everything is contracted by him. Thus, it is fitting to call the one on the right a “great tzadik” (צַדִּיק גָּדוֹל), since the word “great” (גָּדוֹל) alludes to the right side, like in the Patach Eliyahu where the right side extends far and wide. It is also called רִישׁ גּוֹלִי, a revealed head, someone who acts publicly, like the Rebbe told certain people, you have to act בְּרִישׁ גּוֹלִי.

Now Rebbe Nachman’s main teaching is that in order to give this tzadik power and strength to talk boldly and openly, he needs to receive tzedakah from good people. And the more tzedakah is given to him, the more power he has to talk boldly and brazenly and even more to anger the kelipot. It is worthwhile learning this (LM II, 19). Still, if the tzadik whose task is to speak boldly, if the tzedakah he receives is from people who are not worthy, people who are not good, then it hurts his ability to speak openly. When it comes from a good source, the tzedakah strengthens his boldness and his speech. But,

when the money is not kosher, it does not come from good sources, then it hurts his speech. There is a saying from the sages that בפיו “in your mouth” refers to tzedakah. This word appears in the verse מוֹצֵא שְׂפָתַיךָ תִּשְׁמֵר וְעִשִׂיתָ בְּאֲשֶׁר נִדְרַתָּ לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נִדְבָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ בְּפִיךָ, which is speaking about vows (nedarim) that one takes upon oneself. Each of the words in the verse is explained by the sages to refer to another type of vow that a person takes upon himself with his speech and the final word is בפיו, which the sages say refers to tzedakah. Meaning that tzedakah is related to the mouth. This is what Rebbe Nachman says that tzedakah gives power to that type of tzadik to speak boldly, but it has to be good tzedakah.

He adds that the fact that this tzedakah angers, and creates a conduit for the kelipot to drink from, he is actually creating people who mimic him, negative people, men of deceit. And they too speak boldly. And they too ask for tzedakah. He says that all these bad people, they are the ones who now receive the negative tzedakah, these charlatans that he himself created, they take the negative tzedakah, and he, the true tzadik remains only with the righteous people who continue to support him. This is all very interesting.

He ends with the story from the Talmud that we mentioned, taken from tractate Shabbat, blot 77 amud beit (77b). There is a minhag among some of the Chassidim to start learning tractate Shabbat from this blot, this page in particular... There the story appears about Rav Yehudah who answered any question in nature that someone would ask him. His student Rav Zeira took the opportunity and asked him, why do the black goats go first in the flock, and they are then followed by the white sheep? Rav Yehudah answered that this is the order of nature, like when the world was created, first there was darkness then God created light—this is a general principle: first darkness then light (ברישא חשוכא והדר נהורא). The goats represent boldness, עזיזת דקדושה, not to be ashamed of those people who mock him, the first halachah in the Shulchan Aruch. Now if a person is quiet and modest, no one will mock him, so certainly the first halachah in the Shulchan Aruch is talking about someone who is not afraid to express his opinions and to act accordingly. It is this type of bold speech and behavior that leads to opposition against him. The goat is a symbol for such a person. And then the sheep, who are modest and quiet follow.

The next question Rav Zeira asks is: Why does the camel have a short tail, while the ox has a long tail? These are questions about nature. If a person is very happy like Rav Yehudah was at that time, he has the capacity to understand nature, to understand why God created nature the way he did. Rav Yehudah replied that the camel eats thorns and if his tail was long the thorns would get stuck on his tail and would hurt him. So God created him with a short tail. In passing let us mention that this method of thinking is exactly the same as that used in modern biology. Again, he says that he eats thorns and therefore would be hurt by a long tail. Why does the ox have a long tail? He answers because he lives in areas that have a lot of mosquitoes (בקי) and he needs a long tail to swat them away, therefore God gave him the weapon he needs. Rebbe Nachman explains, based on this story from the Talmud, that the camel represents the modest tzadikim. It says that camels are modest. They do not entice the wicked, or anyone else, except that in their day-to-day service of God, they continually eat thorns, meaning they

consume the kelipot, without even meaning to—that is their daily bread through their modest mitzvot and prayer, and study of Torah. And so that these kelipot, these thorns, don't stick to them and cause them anguish, God created them—the camel—with a short tail. Every tzadik, every person has a tail: these are those who mimic him, those born out of his service of God. And so this modest tzadik doesn't need a long tail.

But, the great tzadik, who is like an ox, בְּכוֹר שׁוֹרוֹ הָדָר לוֹ, he is the firstborn who receives twofold, meaning that whatever he speaks has two meanings, therefore he can always be understood improperly. This is a trait of the great tzadik, even earnest people might understand completely the opposite from what he meant, and therefore it creates even more mitnagdim. But, in the end it is a blessing for him. So God gave him a long tail, he is a source for many of the kelipot, many of the chitzonim (external forces), he creates many of them, but it is all for his own good, because with his long tail he continually swats the mosquitoes—alluding to the improper and unkosher money that people want to give him. He swats this money away and is able to steer clear of it so that it doesn't hurt him.

Earlier we asked why the Alter Rebbe opened the Tanya with the word Tanya? The explanation is that “Tanya” is the kelipah of Torah scholars. Tanya means “we learned....” This kelipah is that a Torah scholar flouts his learning, how much I know he says, how much I've learned. There is a verse in Psalms, סֵעִפִּים שְׁנֵאתִי תוֹרַתְךָ אֶהְבֵּתִי: there are people whose only enjoyment in Torah is to quote from se'ifim (paragraphs) in the Shulchan Aruch. So these type of people I hate, says King David. Instead, I love your Torah. So again, there are people whose entire learning is filled with being, with pridefulness. What is a mosquito in Hebrew? יתוש, the same letters as ישות, being. And thusly, the tzadik swats them away. They want to give money to the tail itself, to those that merely mimic the great tzadik, they don't want to give money to the tzadik himself. This in short is Rebbe Nachman's Torah. And again, we came to this, because this is the only other time that a Chassidic work brings the verse from Amos that we mentioned, among thousands of Chassidic works.

Again, the simplest explanation is that tzedakah is like water and it softens the heart. That is why we should give more and more tzedakah.

We are now in parashat Nitzavim-Vayeilech. If we search the Tanach for a verse, or part of a verse, whose initials spell נצבים (Nitzavim), we find only 2. The more important one is in Isaiah, in the chapters that we read as part of the שבוע דנחמתא: בִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי יֵצֵא מִפִּי: שְׁבַע דנחמתא. The initials spell נצבים. We see from this verse that the tzadik, צ, of Nitzavim is what stands. Meaning, that the fact that all 10 types of Jews are reported to be standing before Hashem at the beginning of parashat Nitzavim is because we are all tzadikim, as it said in the haftarah of Ki tavo: וְעַמְּךָ כֻּלָּם צְדִיקִים, Your people are all tzadikim. What else do we see? Another allusion to the fact we mentioned earlier that tzedakah is related to the mouth.

We said there is another verse. This second one is negative, about the exile of Tzidkiyahu: צְדִיקְיָהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה בֵּיד נְבוּכַדְרֶאצַּר. Again the initials spell נצבים. Again, the tzadik is related to tzedakah. Apparently, Tzidkiyahu did not give tzedakah as his name

implies. In a person name, we find their mission. Tzidkiyahu means both to judge justly and to give tzedakah. And because he didn't perform this mission, he was sent to exile. In any case, the verse from Isaiah is the rectification for this.

How does Rashi explain the verse **בי נשבעתי יצא מפי צדקה**? What tzedakah came out of God's mouth? Rashi explains that God vows with his mouth to accept our return when we do teshuvah. That is his tzedakah. To accept the teshuvah of every single Jew. There is an essential connection here between teshuvah and tzedakah. He doesn't say that when we give a lot of tzedakah God will accept that as our teshuvah, but still, it shows the segulah and connection between tzedakah and teshuvah, by giving a great deal, like the verse we learnt, **וצדקה כנחל איתן**.

There are many remazim in this verse, but the main thing is to explain that wherever that letter tzadik appears (and tzadik means a righteous person), it implies tzedakah. And since all Jews are tzadikim, they all give tzedakah, and the fact that we stand, **נצבים**, as we said, and specifically stand on Rosh Hashanah (implied in the word **היום**, at the beginning of the parashah) that is thanks to the great tzedakah that we all give on these, the final days of the month of Elul. When we add the skin, we take the skin of our backs, to give tzedakah, **עור בעד עור**, skin for skin, a person saves himself and the entire Jewish people, bringing the redemption to the entire world.

Earlier, we said there are a number of different remazim for the month of Elul. Another one is in this week's parashah: **ומל ה' אלקיך את לבבך ואת לבב זרעך**. After the rebuke in the previous parashah, we come to the parashah of teshuvah in this week's parashah, which shows as the Rebbe explained that the purpose of rebuke is only to awaken us to do teshuvah. The main mention of teshuvah is in this week's parashah. Thanks to our teshuvah below, this verse says, we merit God circumcising our own heart. circumcising (**למול**) also means to fill, as we explained before, with the **נחל איתן**.

In parashat Eikev that we read a few weeks ago there is the parshah of yirah, of awe of God. There are Jews that read this parashah every day. There it says, **ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם**, you shall circumcise your hearts. The difference is that in Eikev it is referring to removing the crude skin over the heart, but here it is God circumcising. The difference is explained in Chassidut such that what we remove is the revealed evil, but the concealed evil can only be removed by God. During the mitzvah of circumcision, we also do two things: the circumcision is of the crude foreskin and then there is **פריעה**, a removal of a very fine and delicate foreskin that is almost transparent. Indeed, the **נחל איתן**, the strong river we are discussing that is revealed through tzedakah, it is an aspect of the foundation of the father figure (**יסוד אבא**) which is long and ends in the procreative organ, bringing the light of the **נחל איתן** to be revealed there, in the crown. Now the **פריעה**, because it is thin skin (which is **עור בעד עור**, skin within skin—two skins of the circumcision), it can only be fully removed by God. The segulah for the Almighty to do his part is through tzedakah. And then our crown is revealed, alluding also to the crown of the Mashiach. In this case, a person is willing to give his skin so that the essence of his soul be revealed.

Again, the month of Elul is in the words **את לבבך ואת לבב**. Since it means “your heart and the heart of your children,” we see that Elul is related to the connection between the generations, another very Messianic notion that reminds us of the coming of Eliyahu Hanavi (who is present at every circumcision, he is the angel of the covenant), and his task is to connect the generations. We can say that the crude foreskin is mine, but my thin transparent skin is what affects my offspring. The concealed evil affects one’s children. And this occurs on the month of Elul. And the segulah again is the tzedakah, the skin, the 276 that we give.

In any case this verse has 18 words and 67, or Elul letters. It is a very rare structure for a verse in the Pentateuch [there are only 22 such verses in the entire Pentateuch]. 18 and Elul of course alludes to the 18th of Elul, the day of birth of the two great luminaries, the BST and the Alter Rebbe. From this we can learn that the circumcision mentioned in the verse refers to the circumcision done by the Mashiach in the future, as explained in Chassidut. It is connected with drawing down joy and liveliness in the service of God. The first mention of circumcision from Eikev that we saw is in the context of fear and awe of God, which is what we need to seek: awe is God’s treasure that we seek. But, here we all do our best to return to God using our free will and then the Almighty accepts our return, **בי נשבעתי**, it is God’s vow.

Now there is something else that connects the word **חי** (alive) and Elul. The end of the verse is **למען חייך**, all this circumcision is for your life. And as we said it contains 67 letters, the value of Elul (**אלול**). In the alef beit, the letter tzadik is the 18th letter. The tzadik is the life of the worlds, he introduces life into everyone, into the entire Jewish people. Liveliness comes from the tzadik and the tzadik is the foundation; the BST teaches that we should always serve God with a live organ, **אבר חי**. So let’s ask, how many letter tzadik are there in the two parashot we will read this Shabbat? We find that there are exactly 67 letters tzadik. And as we said, 67 is Elul. So just as the verse that contains the remez of Elul has Elul letters and 18 words, the 18th letter, tzadik appears Elul times in these two parashot. In Nitzavim there are 38 tzadikim, and in Vayeilech there are 29—together 67, the value of Elul. The two parashot together have 40 and 30 verses, all together 70 and the remez for this is **מל**, circumcise or “separate.”

In number theory, 38 and 29 are a very special pair. Triangular numbers are the sum of the integers from 1 to a certain number. The triangle of 5 is the sum of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. So it equals 15. Thus, every integer has a triangular value. The triangle of 38 (the tzadikim of Nitzavim) is 741 and the triangle of 29 (the tzadikim in Vayeilech) is 435. Together they equal 1176, which is itself a triangle. It is very rare that the sum of two triangles equals a triangle. In this case it is the triangle of 48, and probably the triangle the Rambam loved the most. For this reason, he began his main work, the Yad with a phrase that equals 1176: **יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות**. The initials of this phrase famously spell Havayah, God’s essential Name, and its gematria is 1176, the sum of the triangles of 29 and 38. This is all in parentheses. Meaning that there is some inyan in meditating this week on the letter tzadik, because the tzadik is what allows us to stand in judgment and be victorious in our judgment on *the* day, the day of Rosh Hashanah.

So now let's look at the verses that opens Nitzavim. The entire Jewish people stand together, from the greatest to the lowest, we are all equal. As we said earlier, that God atones for our sins, וְנִקָּה לְשִׁבְיִם, when we are שְׁווִים, which means equal. So even though there are many levels of Jews, in truth we are all equal. When we stand together, לְעִבְרֶיךָ בְּבְרִית, we can pass through a covenant with the Almighty. The first tzadik is in the word נִצְבִּים (it is the main letter of the two-letter root of נִצְבִּים, which is נִצַּב). It is the 5th letter from the beginning of the verse. In Atbash transformation, צ is ה, something that is related to the yahrzeit of the holy Arizal, on the 5th of Av—the 18th day of the Three Weeks. Here too, the first tzadik is related to its value in Atbash, 5. Is there another tzadik in the description of the entire Jewish people in these opening verses? Up to כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל there are 5 types (according to the Zohar). In the second verse there are 5 more types. One of the interpretations of the verse, וְעַמְּךָ כָּל־צְדִיקִים, is that every Jew has two tzadikim in him. The first is the higher tzadik, corresponding to Yosef and the lower tzadik corresponds to Benjamin. The only word that has another tzadik is in the ninth level, “your woodcutter” (חֹטֵב עֵצִים). Since he is the ninth, he corresponds to the foundation, the tzadik! Indeed, this is very fitting that the ninth contain the second tzadik. Apart from these two letters tzadik, there are none other. So this is starting to sound good. But, we have to strengthen the remez.

We do so by counting how many letters between the two tzadikim. The Rebbe when he was a child could look at a tree and say how many apples on it. Can someone just stare at these two verses and see how many letters are in between? I counted, I even counted a few times just to make sure and what I found is that there are exactly 90 letters, the value of the letter tzadik צ! So this really strengthens the remez. In both verses altogether there are exactly 90 plus 18 more letters, and we said that the letter tzadik is the 18th letter! So these two verses allude to the two values of the letter tzadik. Tzadik in normative gematria is equal to 90 and in ordinal numbering it equals 18! So really these two verses are mentioning the two tzadikim in every Jew.

Let's meditate some more. In the next four verses there is only one additional tzadik, in the word “for Yitzchak” לִי־צַחֲקֶיךָ. Apart from this tzadik these 6 first verses of the parashah don't contain any other צ. So let's do the same thing. How many letters from the צ of עֵצִים to the צ of לִי־צַחֲקֶיךָ. The letter tzadik is particularly related to the name Yitzchak, since on the High Priest's breastplate that is the only צ that appears (the breastplate had inscribed on it the names of the 12 tribes and the 3 Patriarchs). Indeed, Yosef the tzadik received his spiritual inheritance from Yitzchak (many times, the inheritance skips a generation, going from grandfather to grandson—the grandson receives his essence from his grandfather. That is also why there is a minhag to combine these two names together, Yosef Yitzchak). Yitzchak is one who stands and is connected to the first tzadik in the entire Torah, in the word “the earth,” הָאָרֶץ since he dwells in the land and doesn't leave it. Earth, אָרֶץ is a notarikon of the phrase, אֹרֶן זָרוּעַ לְצַדִּיק, light is sewn for the tzadik. Indeed, the first tzadik in the entire Torah is a straight tzadik (צַדִּיק (יִשְׂרָאֵל), the final form of the letter tzadik. The sages say that the bent form (the form that appears in the middle of a word alludes to the tzadik—the righteous individual—of this

world, while the straight form (which only appears at the end of a word) alludes to the tzadik of the World to Come. Thus, the fact that the first tzadik in the Torah appears in the word “earth” and it is a straight tzadik tells us that this refers to the land of Israel that wanted to do the Creator’s will. In “earth” (אֶרֶץ) too, the main letter is tzadik, not the reish. And likewise, Yitzchak, is essentially connected to the land of Israel.

Now between the tzadik of עֶצֶר and the tzadik of לִיעֻזָּק there are exactly 127 letters. This number appears explicitly in the Torah as the lifespan of Sarah. What is the connection to the first distance of 90 letters? That Sarah was 90 when she gave birth to Isaac and she was 127 when she passed away upon hearing the news of Yitzchak’s binding on the altar by his father Abraham, Akeidat Yitzchak. So the two spans between the tzadikim in the parashah are connected both to Abraham and in relation to Yitzchak. Yitzchak also passed away when his mother did, since his soul left his body for 3 years before he returned to life.

Now we come to the more scholarly (עֵינִי) part of this evening’s shiur. Among all the different types of 10 Jews there is only one tzadik, in the wood-cutters. But, who are these wood cutters? Rashi writes the background. The Rebbe writes that not always what Rashi writes as the literal meaning of the verse is also the way the sages rule on it halachically in the Talmud. So there are two levels of understanding here: the literal and the halachic (legal).

Let’s start with the legal. Halachically the final two types listed, the woodcutters and the pale-bearers are Canaanite slaves, who are not even Jewish. Meaning that included are the sages of the Jewish people, the men, the women, the children, the converts, and then something that is less, Canaanite slaves. Rashi though writes that just as in the time of Joshua, who ruled after Moshe Rabbeinu, the Givonites came in deceit and the leaders of the Jewish people vowed and made a covenant with them that they would not kill them (thinking that they were not from the land of Israel). What did Joshua do with them? He appointed them as pale bearers and woodcutters. The Rambam rules that not only that, but also that he forbade them from ever being married with Jews, but only during the time of the Temple, because the verse says, לְמַקְדָּשׁ ה', for the purpose of the Temple they were pale-bearers and woodcutters. So as long as the Temple exists, they are slaves and cannot be converted. For them the exile is a rectification, because it is then that they are no longer woodcutters for the Temple, and they can convert. But, then as time passed on, in the time of King David there was an event when these Givonites wanted to kill Saul’s children for what they did to them, they had no mercy at all. Seeing that they have no mercy, and someone who has no compassion it is not right for them to become part of the Jewish people at all, ever. And so King David forbade them from ever converting. We saw in parashat Ki Teitzei different people who cannot convert for some number of generations, but there is something about the Givonites—that the sages call נְתִינִים, which literally means “given,” because Joshua gave them as slaves to the Temple—that makes them unworthy of ever, even after many generations becoming Jews. In the Torah the prohibition is only against the males of the Ammonites and the Moabites (the women are not forbidden which allowed Ruth and Na’amah to convert

and from them comes the Mashiach), but by the Givonites the prohibition is against both the males and the females. So even though this is only a Rabbinical decree, it is more harsh than any prohibition appearing originally in the Torah.

Now, in Joshua it says that the Givonites also acted deceitfully (גם המה עשו בערמה). The commentaries ask, what does it mean that they “also” came? Who else came. The answer is that in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, just before entering the land of Israel, there came a group of Canaanites to convert. They did not come deceitfully, they came openly. Could they convert, or not? From Rashi it sounds that Moshe Rabbeinu accepted them as converts, but according to the sages he did not, but made them into a lower status called a Canaanite slave (which is one step before conversion). Now what is amazing is that in Rashi on Joshua, where it says that the Givonites also came deceitfully, Rashi doesn’t mention that there was a similar story in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, but rather he explains that “they also came deceitfully” refers to there having come deceitfully, like the sons of Jacob. This is truly wondrous. When did Jacob’s sons come with deceit? In Shechem, after Shechem raped Dinah, they demanded that they circumcise, and then Shimon and Levi came and killed them all. Yaakov was not happy because he was afraid of the consequences, but in fact, halachically they acted properly. Even Moshe Rabbeinu in the end koshered their act by blessing these two tribes. So, among the seven Canaanite nations, who were the Givonites from? In Joshua it says explicitly that they were from the Chivites, the very nation that was in Shechem. Shechem the son of Chamor was a Chivite. So this is not written, but apparently there is some story of reincarnation here. In the previous generation, the Jews came with deceit to the Chivites and then in the next generation, it is the Chivites that came with deceit to the Jews.

Who are these Chivites? Among the 7 nations, they correspond to the sefirah of hod, acknowledgment. It is known that the Rebbe, Rebbe Elimelech said that if a Jew feels a negative character trait coming upon him, he should shout out the names of the 7 Canaanite nations and this will quiet that trait. Apparently saying their names is like the ox’s long tail that swats all the kelipot. So what is their order: the Canaanite are the chesed, the Hittites correspond to might, the Emorites to tiferet, the Prizites to victory, netzach, the Hivites are the hod, like the serpent which strikes the left heel. The Yevosite correspond to foundation, yesod, and the Girgashi to malchut. This is an important principle regarding the 7 Canaanite nations.

Now, where did the Chivite turn around, like hod about which it says, transformation, הודי נהפך עלי למשחית. Shimon is the active member between he and Levi and later he promised Dinah that he would take her as his wife. So the first mover in this case was Shimon, then the Givonites came and turned the tables. And from that moment we are square. If this would not have happened maybe there still would have been some inkling of impropriety in what Shimon and Levi did. Now the elders of the people vowed that they would not hurt them. Of course today there is a question today whether such a vow must be withheld today, when the “leaders” of the Jewish people make some agreement, which is not necessarily according to Torah. Do we too have to honor these agreements, like Joshua honored this one.

In the Jerusalem Talmud there is an important distinction made between Joshua and Moshe Rabbeinu. It says that Moshe Rabbeinu placed the heads of the people before the elders, while Joshua reversed the order. Just this requires meditation. The heads refers to the crown and the elders to wisdom. Usually keter is higher than wisdom, but there is an aspect of wisdom that is higher than keter. The sages explain this difference in a number of different ways. The simplest explanation is that since everyone was Moshe Rabbeinu's student and disciple then all the heads were also elders. But, by Joshua, when there were already heads of the people that were not his disciples, so there the elders (that are his disciples) come before the heads of the people. In his time, not every head was also a sage, and elder, and the Torah must come first.

Now, after all this, we find that the tzadik in the Jewish people is in this Canaanite servant. If we're discussing the Givonites, what happened later? When the rest of the Canaanite kings heard that one city had committed treason and joined the Jews who were coming to conquer the land, they decided to destroy Givon. They were traitors in their eyes. The month of Elul's tribe is Gad. When Gad was born, Leah said, **בא גר**, in one word, which refers to treason. Gad was Zilpah, Leah's maidservant's son and Leah felt that by consenting to wed her maidservant, Yaakov had forsaken her, he had committed treason towards her. So what does this mean that Elul is a month of Gad, a month that is related to treason? That the main rectification during Elul is to rectify the covenant. The sense of Elul is action. Gad was a man of action. Action is rectification, as it says in the beginning of the Torah, that God created the world so that we would do. Do what? Act to rectify that which is broken. The main form of action is tzedakah, **והיה מעשה הצדקה שלום**, the act of tzedakah will be peace. Another allusion to the service of Elul being tzedakah. And in the Jerusalem Talmud it is simply preferred to as "the mitzvah." And the rectification is mainly that of being a traitor.

Let's tell a story to liven things up, a story from my father-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Segal who for a short time was the leader of the Lechi (**לוחמי חרות ישראל**) and he also created another underground movement during the time of the British mandate called Brit Hachashmona'eem. Now, there was a certain point when many of the young men of the Lechi started leaning to the far left. There were those who became Communists, all before the founding of the state of Israel. His reaction was to leave the Lechi, he took with him all the frum young men and created the Brit. There was an unwritten law that anyone who leaves the Lechi be executed. You could not commit treason in this way. It was this way in many of the underground movements of the time. All this just to give a bit of a juicier angle on this story with the Givonites and their act of treason. So Moshe Segal called the heads of the Lechi and said, I didn't leave Lechi, Lechi left me, the Lechi surrendered its faith and its principles of faith that it received from Jabotinsky. It is you who are traitors, not me. Amazingly, they accepted this and this saved him from them. This is an example of positive treason, certainly related to the tribe of Gad, who knows how to be a traitor through self-sacrifice.

Returning to the Givonites. The other Canaanites wanted to destroy them. What did they do? They called their new allies, even though the covenant was made deceitfully. Since we vowed to this covenant, the Almighty told Joshua to go and protect Givon. This

was the most important war in which Joshua was victorious over all the nations of Canaan. So in essence, the entire conquering of the land of Israel was made possible by the deceitful nature of the Givonites. This is how God makes things happen. The very positive end of the story was that Joshua said, שמש בגבעון דום, the sun should stand still in Givon. This is Joshua's special song, the song of conquering the land of Israel and it is in essence thanks to Givon and its people. This song, שמש בגבעון is equal to 773, the number of the present year, so it is proper to take advantage of these final days of 5773 to go there, to Givon and remember the events there. Even if you don't make it there by the end of 5773 it says, דום, that this lasts forever. The sages say that if we would not have sinned, we would have only received the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. But, in the Book of Joshua there is one verse that is central. It is the climax of the conquering of the land of Israel: שמש בגבעון דום וירח בעמק אילון. So all was in virtue of the deceitful Givonites who are not allowed to convert.

In general the concept of a Canaanite slave comes from here. Any non-Jew who decides to become a servant to the Jewish people is then called a Canaanite slave, based on this week's parashah.

Now in this phrase, שמש בגבעון דום וירח בעמק אילון has 6 words (the shortest of all the songs in the Tanach) and 25 words, just like Shema Yisrael (שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד). Now we can draw these words as a square:

ש	מ	ש	ב	ג
ב	ע	ו	ן	ד
ו	ם	ו	י	ר
ח	ב	ע	מ	ק
א	י	ל	ו	ן

Each one should take this square home and meditate on it. Now let's ask, what word appears on the diagonal (from right to left)? We can see that it is שמעון, Shimon. The power at work here is Shimon. Usually, we don't "prove" things using these analyses. But, if we would like to accept the testimony of this finding that it is Shimon who was at work in everything that had to do with the war of Givon, then we need to find another testimony to this effect in the words. So let's just write שמש בגבעון. What does this sound like (shemesh begivon)? It sounds just like שמעון, Shimon. So the whole concept of the sun standing still is related to Shimon. How many letters are not accounted for except for the letters of Shimon (in general, it says in Kabbalah that Shimon's name is actually a composite of the two words שם and עון)—שמש בגבעון? 4 letters: שבגב. In reduced numbering their value is 10. How much does Levi equal in reduced numbering? He also equals 10. Levi has to go together with Shimon, and indeed Levi accompanies him even here. So again, all the power here is Shimon's. And what we see is that from the Givonites deceit we receive the greatest victory and a miracle that was even greater than the parting of the Red Sea. All because we didn't go back on our vow to the Givonites. Even though these were people who had no compassion and who were decreed to never

be able to convert. There is a great deal to think about here. And again their original source is in the woodcutters and pale bearers in our parashah.

Now a few interesting points in halachah. What do we learn from the fact that the pale bearers and the woodcutters were Canaanite slaves? It says that a Jew can only appoint another Jew to be his emissary, his representative in performing a mitzvah. Just as you are a member of the covenant (בן ברית) so your emissary must be a member of the Canaanite. But, from here we learn that a Canaanite servant is called a ben brit, a member of the covenant as we learn from this parashah. The most holy word by the Lubavitcher Rebbe is a shaliach. A shaliach, an emissary in Kabbalah is foundation, yesod. And we learn from here that this can be a Canaanite servant, and not only can, but he is probably the best emissary.

Now, it says that normally slaves and servants have a promiscuous nature to them. Why would the second tzadik in Nitzavim appear in them? It sounds the complete opposite from a tzadik who is holy especially in his physical connections. One of the greatest Acharonim, the Rogochover writes a great deal about Canaanite slaves, and in short he explains that a Canaanite servant does not have the status of a private individual. Or, sometimes he says, "he is not a thing." In the language of the sages, "his soul is not his," he is not the master of his own being. What is the difference between a convert and a Canaanite slave? By converting, a convert stops being a non-Jew and becomes a new reality—a Jew. When a Canaanite slave is released, freed, he becomes a Jew! But, first he was a non-Jew, then he became a Canaanite slave, then he becomes a Jew. So what is this state of Canaanite slave, it is being in a non-state. There is no private being there, the CS is part of the Jewish people in the sense of being a part of the covenant, but does not exist as an individual. In the language of Chassidut, we would say that he is in a state of nothingness that comes between every two states of being. You might think that to be in a state of nothingness is negative, but we also know that the nothing is the mazal of the Jewish people (אין מזל לישראל). God's providence is over every individual. But, what about this Canaanite slave? The Rogochover says that he has no personal Providence, as an individual, but rather is included in the Divine Providence over his master, because he is part of his master, not as an individual. If an individual makes a vow that he will receive no enjoyment from Jews, is he also forbidden from receiving pleasure from a Canaanite slave living under a Jewish master? There is a lot of scholarship on this matter, but the bottom line is that he is. But, there is a difference whether he vows not to receive pleasure from the entire Jewish people (in which case the Canaanite slave is included) or whether he vows not to receive pleasure from any individual Jew (in which case the Canaanite slave is not included).