"Open my eyes so that I may see the **wonders** of Your Torah"

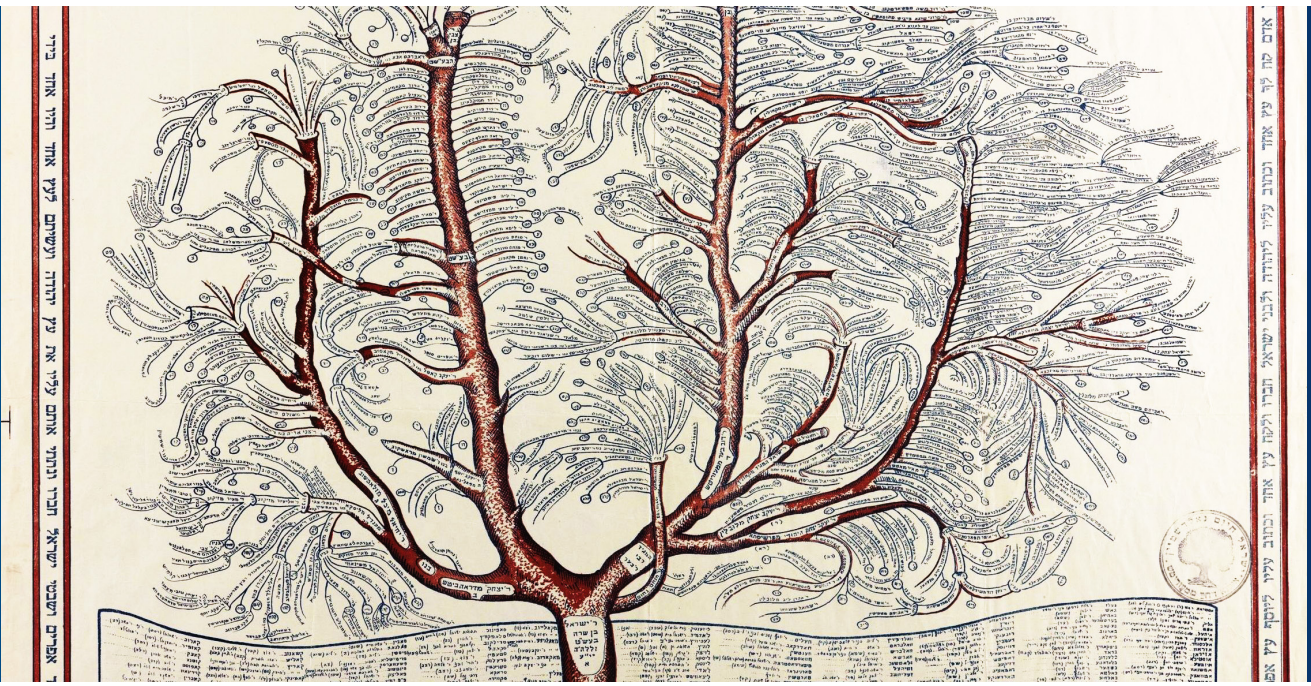
בס"ד

Wonders

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of HaRav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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שַׁבָּת וַיֵּרָא ❁ טז-יז חֶשְׁוָן תשפ"ו



5786 is the Year of the Family. The family is a manifestation of Godliness and the Divine Presence in the mundane. By starting a family and having children, we are not only creating a lasting bond with our spouse, but we are also bringing peace and love into the world, both to our own personal and individual lives and homes and to others that we meet. Having a family is foundational to the brotherly love between humans that is the great principle of Torah... it is also the vehicle through which we can come to rectify our egos, learning how to curb our sense of self and tempering it into a source of creativity and nurturing.

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The Lubavitcher Rebbe to Rav Ginsburgh, Elul 5741

"…It would be proper to publish your classes in book form. With blessings for success…"



Wonders

An anthology from the shiurim and farbrengens
of Harav **Yitzchak Ginsburgh**

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THE YEAR OF THE FAMILY

As first discussed in our Rosh HaShanah 5786 issue, the main phrase describing the current year, **תשפ"ו**, *is "May this be a year to be fruitful and multiply" (*תְּהִא שְׁנַת פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ*). Just before Rosh HaShanah, Rav Ginsburgh posted an in-depth tweet analyzing this quote from the Torah and taking a deep dive into its significance.*

The family is a manifestation of Godliness and the Divine Presence in the mundane. By starting a family and having children, we are not only creating a lasting bond with our spouse, but we are also bringing peace and love into the world, both to our own personal and individual lives and homes and to others that we meet. Having a family is foundational to the brotherly love between humans that is the great principle of Torah, according to Rabbi Akiva. It is also the vehicle through which we can come to rectify our egos, learning how to curb our sense of self and tempering it into a source of creativity and nurturing.

This piece originally appeared as a post on HaRav Ginsburgh's Hebrew Twitter account (@RavGinsburgh) and was subsequently edited and published in the Rosh HaShanah 5786 issue of Nifla'ot.

Marrying and having children is the first *mitzvah* in the Torah. As the Torah relates, "God blessed them [Adam and Eve] and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and rule it; rule over the fish of the seas and the birds of the heavens and over every animal that crawls on the earth.'"[1] As we will see, the blessing and commandment to marry and have offspring is at the very core of the purpose of all of Creation. When we perform this commandment or help others by either facilitating their finding their match, or by supporting them as they have more children, we are increasing the Presence of God in the world. Since this is the special phrase alluded to clearly in the number of this year, we find it appropriate to designate this year, 5786, as the year of the family.

THE FAMILY MANIFESTS GOD'S ESSENTIAL NAME

Though we might think that Adam and Eve were the first and only ones to be blessed and commanded with this phrase, the words "be fruitful and multiply" appear four times in the Torah. The first time, God says it to the fish on the fifth day of creation.[2] The second time, He addresses Adam and Eve on the sixth day. The third and fourth times are directed to Noah and his descendants as they emerge from the ark: "God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill

1. Genesis 1:28.

2. "God blessed them saying, 'be fruitful and multiply, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth'" (Ibid. v. 22).

the earth'"[3] and "Be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply on it."

The value of the words, "be fruitful and multiply" (פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ) is 500. Four times these words equal therefore 2000, alluding to the secret of the major letter *beit* with which the Torah begins. The four times as well as the major *beit*[4] are indicative of the basic structure of the human family: a father, a mother, a son, and a daughter, which correspond to the four letters in the Tetragrammaton, God's essential Name, *Havayah*.[5] As the Torah testifies, without this *mitzvah*—to be fruitful and multiply by striving to have a normative family consisting of a father, mother, and two children—God's Name is fragmented, "Hand upon the throne of *Kah* [י-ה], *Havayah* is at war with Amalek from generation to generation."[6] One of the central meanings of this verse is that Amalek sow's doubt in the hearts of the Jewish people, preventing them from passing the word of God from generation to generation, thereby fragmenting the first two letters of God's essential Name—the *yud* and the *hei* [*Kah*], representing the father and mother—from the final two letters—*vav* and *hei*—representing the children.[7]

3. Ibid. 9:1 and v. 7.

4. The major *beit* is seen as if indicating 2 to the 2nd power, or 4, meaning that from the first two humans, Adam and Eve, there emerged a family of four.

5. *Zohar* 1:27b and elsewhere.

6. Exodus 17:16. The sages state that Amalek is instrumental in severing the covenant of procreation, thereby causing a blemish in one's sexual conduct and preventing the individual from engaging in the commandment to be fruitful and multiply in a pure and holy manner.

7. See *Derech Mitzvotecha*, *Issur Achilat Geed HaNasheh*.

THE FAMILY TREE

There is an opinion among the commentaries that the power of the father is to be fruitful, and the power of the mother is to multiply. This explains why the main responsibility of the commandment, which is to be fruitful, is placed upon the man.[8] Thus, "be fruitful" corresponds to the *sefirah* of wisdom, the father principle, while "and multiply" corresponds to the *sefirah* of understanding, the mother principle.

However, there is another option. Before reviewing and explaining this second option, we need to recall that one of the most common ways to depict a family is the tree metaphor. It is so common that we are all familiar with the concept of a family "tree." The branches of the tree usually indicate a connection between individuals, whether through marriage or through birth and the fruit are the individuals themselves. The English translation "be fruitful and multiply," already captures the fruit part of the family tree metaphor. However, it is less commonly known that the word for "multiply" (וּרְבוּ) is the Aramaic word for "beauty" (*tiferet*).[9] However, interestingly, the first word usually translated as "be fruitful" (פְּרוּ) actually is related to both the fruits and to the branches, as in the phrase, "and sent out branches"[10] (וַתְּשַׁלַּח פֹּרֹאוֹת).

Following these observations, the second option is to correspond "be fruitful" with the *sefirah* of knowledge (*da'at*), since the *Zohar* states that "one who lacks knowledge

8. *Even HaEzer* 1:14.

9. Onkelos translates the word "beauty" (תִּפְאֶרֶת) in Deuteronomy 26:19 as רבו.

10. Ezekiel 17:6.

[i.e., *da'at* or consciousness] cannot bear fruit [i.e., have viable offspring]"[11] and "multiply" with the *sefirah* of beauty (*tiferet*). Then the relationship between them is like that between Moses and Jacob: "Moses on the interior [the *sefirah* of knowledge acting as the soul to] Jacob on the exterior [the *sefirah* of beauty acting as the body]."[12] Indeed the Hebrew word for "beauty," *tiferet* (תִּפְאֶרֶת) is cognate with the word for "branch" (פְּאֹר). The relationship between being fruitful and multiplying is like that of multiple branches of a tree carrying its many fruits.

Following this second correspondence, we can understand why the Torah's first commandment is to be fruitful and multiply. The Torah's goal is to increase our "consciousness," specifically of course consciousness of God.[13] Knowledge becomes the soul of beauty just as, "And Adam knew Eve, his wife, she conceived and gave birth" and then "she gave birth again."

FAMILY, LOVE, AND PEACE

Perhaps more than anything, the year of the family suggests the love between husband and wife when joined with the Divine Presence in their intimate privacy. It is then that their souls burn with love for one another, which when spontaneously aroused, brings the Divine Presence and its effect of peace to the entire household.

We find this beautifully suggested in that, "Be fruitful and multiply" (**פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ**) also equals twice the value of "candle" (**נֵר**). A candle symbolizes the soul, and the two candles are the souls of the husband and the wife. When uniting, both husband and wife should strive to rekindle and increase the flame of their respective love for one another. The flame of the soul's love should be kindled in the manner described by the sages as, "until the flame rises of its own accord."[14] The letters of the word for "of its own accord" (**מֵאֲלֵיהָ**) permute to spell *Elokim* (**אֱ-לֹהִים**), indicating that this love, when it rises spontaneously and naturally, is Godly and is the sign that the Divine Presence dwells between them. This type of love includes and envelops the first three levels of the soul known as *nefesh*, *ru'ach*, and *neshamah*. Indeed, the word for flame (**שַׁלְהֶבֶת**) has the same value as the phrase that describes our love for God, "with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your might"[15] (**בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ**); each of these aspects of love corresponds to one of the three lower levels of the soul. Flame is also the value of the three "lights" found within a candle[16] and known as "*chashmal*,"[17] "fire," and "glow" (חַשְׁמַל אֵשׁ נֹגַהּ). The light that radiates from the candles and fills the home is the light of "peace in the home" (שְׁלוֹם בַּיִת) created by the candle. This radiance (known in Hebrew as זֹהַר) corresponds to the two highest levels of the soul.[18]

11. See *Zohar* 2:103a.
12. Quoted often. See *Tikkunei Zohar* 13 (29a).
13. See *Likkutei Levi Yitzchak* on Tanya 25b.
14. *Rashi* on Exodus 27:20.
15. Deuteronomy 6:5.
16. *Zohar* 1:51a.
17. This is perhaps the most mysterious word in the entire Bible appearing exclusively in the first and eighth chapters of Ezekiel. It is usually translated as "electrum" and is the basis for the modern concept and force of electricity.
18. The connection between the *chashmal* (electrum), fire, and glow and the radiance that

In practice, this higher radiance[19] shines through the house when the wife lights (at least) two Shabbat candles.

FAMILY AND BROTHERLY LOVE

In the previous section, we saw that there are four levels of light in the flame of love between husband and wife that radiate outwards to fill the home with peace and serenity. As we shall now see, strong family values also affect the way we interact with others outside our home. In other words, the strength of the family has a direct impact on how we are able to act with love for our fellows—the *mitzvah* of "love your fellow as yourself."[20] This is hinted to in the sum of the values of the four levels of light— "*chashmal*, fire, glow, radiance" (חַשְׁמַל אֵשׁ נֹגַהּ זֹהַר)—949, which is also the value of "love your fellow as yourself" (וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ).

Amazingly, this is also the value of "the love of a man for a woman" (אַהֲבַת גֶּבֶר לְאִשָּׁה) as well as, of course, "the love of a woman for a man" (אַהֲבַת אִשָּׁה לְגֶבֶר)!

FAMILY AND THE RECTIFICATION OF THE SELF

The connection between the strength of the family and the love of others outside the home leads us to one other effect that the family has, this time upon each of us as individuals, and specifically, on the well-being of our sense of self—our ego. The famous words, "Love your fellow as yourself" are followed by the signature phrase, "I am *Havayah* [God]"[21] (אֲנִי הוי'). The plain meaning of this signature is that God Himself is guaranteeing the reward for whomever keeps this commandment. The deeper meaning is that by keeping this commandment, one merits to resemble God's very essence.[22]

The first thing to notice is that the letters of "I" (אֲנִי), the Hebrew pronoun designating the "self," when multiplied by one another in order—i.e., *alef* (א) times *nun* (נ) times *yud* (י)—equal 500, the value of "be fruitful and multiply" (פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ). This reveals a reciprocal connection between love and care for others and the strength of one's family. Now, if we do the same for God's essential Name, *Havayah* (the second word in the phrase)—*yud* (י) times *hei* (ה) times *vav* (ו) times *hei* (ה)—the product is 1500, which is another 3 times "be fruitful and multiply" (פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ). Thus, the two words together equal 2000, once again, the value of the major *beit*, the Torah's first letter, as explained earlier.

The rectification of the self, the ego, requires self-nullification (coupled with lowliness, a topic we discuss in length elsewhere). The famous allusion to this

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surrounds them is also mathematical. If we form a quadratic series out of the values of the first three words—glow (58 ,(נֹגַהּ, and fire (301 ,(אֵשׁ, and *chashmal* (378 ,(חַשְׁמַל—and extend the series, we find that the only other two positive numbers are 289 and 34. The average value of these five positive numbers in the series is 212, the value of "radiance" (זֹהַר). Thus, mathematically, radiance in a sense corresponds to the two other positive numbers in the series.

19. In Kabbalah (*Zohar* 3:124b; see also *Tanya Iggeret* 26), this higher radiance is known as זִיהֲרָא דְּאִימָּא עִלָּאָה, the radiance of the supernal mother.

20. Leviticus 19:18.

21. Ibid.

22. See *Hayom Yom* for the 28th of Nissan.

is that when the letters of "I" (**אֲנִי**) are permuted, they spell the word for "non-being" or "nothingness" (**אַיִן**). The way in which we learn to temper and control our ego is through self-nullification before God, dedicating ourselves to His will as revealed in the Torah's commandments. This principle has a very powerful textual allusion: the very first time this word—"non-being" (אַיִן)—appears in the Torah, it is the 500th word in the Torah. Even the context points to the necessary task of nullifying oneself since the phrase is, "And there was no man…"[23] (וְאָדָם אַיִן).

The direct connection between building a family through being fruitful and multiplying and the self brings us full circle to our first observation—that the phrase, "be fruitful and multiply" was said twice to Noah and his offspring, twice. The first time the word "I" (אֲנִי) appears in the Torah[24] is when God addresses Noah and his offspring to make the covenant of the rainbow with them, ensuring that there will never be another flood, "God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I am giving between Myself and you'"[25] (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים זֹאת אוֹת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר **אֲנִי** נֹתֵן בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם). The rainbow covenant is specifically related to the rectification of the *sefirah* of foundation (*yesod*) and the procreative organs. Of course, once again, multiplying the letters of "I" produces 500, the value of "be fruitful and multiply." Amazingly, the word after "I" is "am giving" (**נֹתֵן**), whose value is also 500!

The context of this first "I" in the Torah suggests that in order to truly unite and conceive a family, the husband and wife must both give their "I," their self, to one another, just as God gave the sign of His covenant to Noah and his offspring, thereby revealing that He would never again bring a flood to destroy the world. As explained earlier, to give one's "I," each needs to be willing to nullify it for the greater good of the other and of their coming together to create a family.

23. Genesis 2:5.

24. Without any prefix letters.

25. Genesis 9:12.

THE MONTH OF CHESHVAN: TURNING THE BITTER TO SWEET

In order to understand our present month of Cheshvan it is important to view it in relation to the three months that precede it—Av, Elul, and Tishrei—as these months lay the foundation for understanding its energy and possibilities for spiritual advancement. A deep connection between the months of Av, Elul, and Tishrei is found in a cardinal teaching of the Ba'al Shem Tov, who taught that every process, whether material or spiritual, progresses through three stages: submission (*hachna'ah*), separation (*havdalah*), and sweetening (*hamtakah*).[26] The first stage, submission, entails diminishing one's ego in order to obtain a more balanced view of reality. In this initial stage one submits their will, energy and time to achieving a specific goal or purpose. Often, we are inspired to make a commitment but lack the ability to submit to a detailed plan of action, especially when the goal demands a considerable amount of dedication or time.

When relating this idea to Av whose ninth day, *Tisha B'Av*, the day on which we fast and mourn for the destruction of the Temple and many other tragedies throughout the millennium, it is clear that the energy of Av calls for a great deal of emotional submission in light of Jewish history and the existential reality of an unrectified world. However, submission does not mean depression, but it does require a great deal of humility to assume the burden of the collective history of the Jewish people.

The second stage, separation, involves separating the essential from the extraneous and truth from falsehood, while at the same time defining an orderly path towards the fulfillment of our goals. We must "separate" or distinguish between those activities, situations and attitudes that will further the attainment of the goal from those that will distract us from achieving it. This stage is an accurate description of the spiritual, emotional, and psychological work of the month of Elul when we prepare for a New Year and the holidays of the month of Tishrei through deep introspection.

The last stage in the Ba'al Shem Tov's three-stage process is called sweetening. In this stage, we reach our goals and realize that it was all worth the time and effort. So often we dedicate substantial effort to reaching a goal that turns out not to be exactly what we had hoped and longed for. The stage of sweetening offers us the sweet reward for a job well done and enables us to express our feelings of gratitude for God's constant assistance and guiding hand. The month of Tishrei, with all of its holidays, represents this last stage of sweetening when the spiritual work of the months of Av and Elul and the preceding stages of submission and separation are fully integrated in the proper

26. *Keter Shem Tov* (ed. Kehot) 28, 160, 302.

manner. The awe and joy of the prayers that elicit repentance, forgiveness, and atonement are truly a sweetening for the soul.

The Ba'al Shem Tov also taught a similar three-stage process based on the mysterious word, *chashmal*, that appears in the vision of Ezekiel, referred to as *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, the Workings of the Chariot.[27] The first syllable of this word—*chash*—literally means silence, while the second syllable—*mal*—means speaking. Thus, the paradox of the "sounds of silence." The Ba'al Shem Tov taught that any pair of opposites will always have an intermediary stage that unites them. Thus, he reads the word as *chash-mal-mal*, as the word *mal* actually has two meanings: circumcision and speaking. These three stages correspond perfectly with submission, separation, and sweetening. Submission entails an inner silence born of true humility and existential lowliness. Separation mirrors circumcision as that act involves separating the foreskin from the male organ. Sweetening is expressed through speech, especially thanking God for what ever success we achieve. In this paradigm the submission of Av is expressed in silence, the process of separation in Elul entails circumcising the heart, while the sweetening of Tishrei is articulated in the exalted prayers of the holidays of Tishrei.

Hachna'ah Submission **הכנעה**	Silence Chash **חש**	Av
Havdalah Separation **הבדלה**	Circumcision Mal **מל**	Elul
Hamtakah Sweetening **המתקה**	Speaking Mal **מל**	Tishrei

27. Ezekiel ch. 1.

Chasidut explains that the type of sweetening referred to in the month of Tishrei is that of turning darkness into light. The month of Tishrei begins with Rosh HaShanah and recalls the Creation of the world. Although the first explicit creation through God's speech on the first day is that of light, described in the third verse of the Torah, "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light," in the second verse, we already learn that there is darkness as well. Light and darkness were initially mixed, until God separated them and gave each its own domain—day for light and night for darkness. The paradigm of darkness preceding light is archetypal, setting the stage for the spiritual need to "turn darkness into light" or as stated by King Solomon "superior is the light that comes from darkness."[28] The month of Tishrei with all its holidays invites us to turn personal, national, and universal "darkness into light."

A support for the idea of turning darkness into light in Tishrei is found in the verse: "Blow the shofar on the New Moon, when it is concealed, for the day of our festival."[29] Rosh HaShanah in the Torah is called, *Yom Teru'ah*, a Day of [shofar] Blasts.[30] It is the only holiday that begins on a New Moon when the moon is hidden and darkness reigns at night. The holidays of Tishrei that follow are thus a time of spiritually turning darkness into light.

With this introduction we can now try to understand the special service of the month of Cheshvan. According to tradition the only month of the year that

28. Ecclesiastes 2:13; Zohar 3:47b.
29. Psalms 81:4.
30. Numbers 29:1.

has no holiday, commemorative event, or fast day is the month of *Cheshvan*. For this reason, some call it *Mar* ("bitter") *Cheshvan*. Another important reason for identifying this month with bitterness is that it was on the 17th day of Cheshvan that Noach's Flood began.[31] In fact, the month of Cheshvan in the Bible is referred to as *Chodesh Bul*.[32] The word *bul* comes from the word for flood, *mabul*. The story of the Flood as told in *parashat Noach* is always read at the beginning of Cheshvan.

The *Zohar* states that a true tzaddik is one who turns darkness into light and bitter to sweet.[33] Chasidut explains that it is actually much harder to turn bitter into sweet than it is to turn darkness into light. Thus, first comes the spiritual service of Tishrei and only then can we turn the bitter into sweet in the month of Cheshvan.

Chasidut further explains that turning darkness into light and bitter into sweet relates to what is referred to in Kabbalistic terminology as *kelipot,* meaning literally "husks" or "shells." These represent spiritual barriers that encase sparks of holiness embedded in the material world. According to Kabbalah, the world is constructed in such a way that Divine light is hidden within layers of concealment and the role of the individual is to penetrate those husks, extract the sparks of light, and elevate them through mindful action.

Kabbalah identifies four primary levels of *kelipot*. The first three are considered inaccessible—they shroud the Divine spark so thoroughly that in our current state of spiritual development we cannot redeem the light within. These three are described as inherently impure, and they form the mystical basis for various prohibitions in Jewish law.

The fourth *kelipah* is of a different nature altogether. Known as *kelipat nogah*, it occupies a marginal space—between the holy and the profane. It contains both potential darkness and potential light, and as such, it is the primary arena in which human beings operate. It is this realm that we engage with daily, as we strive to elevate the physical world through conscious, righteous behavior.

Chasidut explains that turning darkness into light is accomplished through dealing with *klipat nogah* and this is the spiritual service of the month of Tishrei, whereas elevating the sparks of light and holiness encased deep within the three lower *klipot* can only be accomplished through the much harder work of turning bitter into sweet. Since nothing can exist without a spark of Godliness animating it, even in the most fallen aspects of reality there are sparks that can be redeemed.[34]

Because the month of Cheshvan follows the uplifting and inspiring holidays of the month of Tishrei, there is a sense of intrinsic bitterness that accompanies this month. This is similar to how gravity ensures that what goes up must eventually come down, there is a certain feeling in Cheshvan of falling from the spiritual heights of the holidays of Tishrei. Yet, the real practical

31. Genesis 7:11.
32. 1 Kings 6:38.
33. *Zohar* 1:4a.
34. *Mivchar Shi'urei Hitbonenut* vol. 10, "*Chodesh Cheshvan*."

and spiritual work of the New Year only begins in this month and therefore though it lacks the dazzle of the preceding month it is actually where the real nitty-gritty work of the new year unfolds. Thus, it holds tremendous potential for rectification, accomplishment and manifesting in real terms all of the prayers and resolutions of the month of Tishrei.

Some people refer to this month as *Ram* ("exalted") *Cheshvan*. The word *Ram* is actually the same letters as *Mar* (bitter), only they are inverted. This idea reflects beautifully the challenge and opportunity of turning bitter (*mar*) into sweet (*ram*) in the month of Cheshvan.

REBBE SHALOM OF KAMINKA: TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

Rabbi Shalom Rosenfeld, the rabbi of Kaminka and the father of the Kaminka Chasidic dynasty, was born in Rava to the wealthy Yaakov Yosef and Yenta, daughter of Rabbi Yehoshua Tzvi Heshel of Bor. He completed the entire Talmud at the age of 9 and was known as the "prodigy of Rava." In his youth, he studied under Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh Charif and Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, and later drew close to Chasidut. Rabbi Shalom, who did not officially serve as a chasidic rebbe, was recognized as a great tzaddik and was known for his sharp wit. Many of his Torah teachings and parables are seasoned with witticisms that conceal lofty secrets. He passed away on the 20th of Cheshvan 5612 (1851), and his only son, Rabbi Yehoshua, filled his place in Kaminka. His Torah teachings and stories about him were printed in the book "Ohev Shalom."

Once, a miserly rich man came to the holy Rabbi Shalom of Kaminka and told him that he was quarreling with his wife, so he asked the Rebbe to curse her so she would die. The holy Rabbi responded that it is forbidden to curse someone, but he had advice for him. The Talmud states, "Because of the sin of unfulfilled vows, a man's wife dies." Now, in a certain town, they need a *mikveh* (ritual bath) that costs a great fortune. "My advice is that you should vow to pay for the *mikveh's* expenses, but don't intend to fulfill it, and through this, you will achieve your desire!" The man vowed to give the expenses for the *mikveh* and returned home.

After a long time, the wealthy man returned to the holy Rabbi of Kaminka and complained that he still didn't see any "salvation." Nothing had happened to his wife. The holy Rabbi responded: "It is written that his wife dies, but you are not treating her as a wife, for you quarrel with her all day. Therefore, start treating her properly and don't argue with her, and when you make peace with her, she will be regarded as your wife and she will die."

The wealthy man did so, and peace began to reign in his home. They lived well and happily until the wife fell ill and was nearing death. The wealthy man rushed to the holy Rabbi and said: "Rebbe, now I am happy with her and no longer desire her death. Please pray for her recovery!" The holy Rabbi said to him: The only advice I have for you is to pay your vow and build the *mikveh* you promised." Of course, the wealthy man had no choice, and he paid his vow and built a *mikveh*.

The holy Rabbi of Sanz greatly praised this deed, saying: "Look, Rabbi Shalom accomplished two things at once: he took a miserly rich man and extracted a *mikveh* from him, and he restored peace to his home."

FOUND? OR FIND?

Many single men and women ask themselves how to know who will truly be a suitable partner. This amusing yet unsettling story provides a very significant answer: miserliness, or a person who sees giving as something that doesn't flow naturally, is a major red flag for a character that is difficult to live with. At the beginning of the story, the wealthy man is presented only as miserly - but it quickly becomes clear that he is much more than that...

Chasidut explains the famous question that was customarily asked of grooms in the Land of Israel: "*Matza* or *Motzeh*?" The intention of the question is to contrast two opposite verses from the sayings of King Solomon: "He who finds (*matza*) a wife finds good" and "I find (*motzeh*) more bitter than death the woman." When a person "finds a wife," it is "good" - but if the situation is "I find," meaning he seeks his own benefit - then the woman becomes "more bitter than death" to him. A person who enjoys giving can "find a wife," whereas miserliness is the main point by which one can identify a type of "I find."

Rabbi Shalom of Kaminka himself was very sensitive to this: although he had boxes full of Torah novellae, he did not print his books because he did not want his learning to become a source of financial gain. Similarly, although many benefited from his Torah and advice, he refused to become a "professional Rebbe" and take money from the chasidim who sought his counsel. This distancing from personal interest and the desire to benefit others are the central qualities one should seek and maintain throughout married life. In our story too, the desire to avoid giving was the cause of the wealthy man's domestic problems. Therefore, when Rabbi Shalom wanted to instill the quality of "finds good" in the wealthy man, he chose to tempt him into charity - even if only superficially. Interestingly, Rabbi Shalom suggested that he should specifically build a mikveh - a form of charity that concerns Jewish domestic harmony.

SHARED GENEROSITY

From the fact that the wealthy man in our story is male, and also as a result of the interpretation of "I find more bitter than death the woman," a mistaken impression might be formed: as if the woman is only the "receiver" in the relationship, and she must check if the man is a good and generous "giver" for her. But in fact, as the Lubavitcher Rebbe said, every Jew is essentially a "giver." Therefore, both partners should approach married life with the attitude of being essentially givers: how can I act for the good of the relationship, my partner, and the world in general?

When Eliezer, Abraham's servant, wants

to test the young women coming to the well, he chooses the test of generosity: will the girl before him "think big" and give him more than he asked for? When he meets Rebecca, who gave above and beyond what she was asked to do, he knows she is fit to be a member of the house of Abraham, the man of kindness.

Evidence of the importance Eliezer places on this can be seen in the order of his actions: after Rebecca draws water for the camels, he hurries to put the bracelets on her hands, and only then inquires about her family and lineage. From this we can learn that the qualities of the intended spouse are several times more important than family pedigree, which is often seen as a crucial detail among those of distinguished lineage. When there is a potential spouse with good qualities, the pedigree is an additional gift from Heaven (as Rashi interpreted the verse "'By this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master' - if she is from a family suitable for him, I will know that You have shown kindness").

Although it is written that "a woman is stingy with guests," Sarah our matriarch is not like this - and so her daughters are required to be. In a sense, one could even say that a woman's generosity is even more significant than that of a man. The Gemara explains that while a man gives from his money, a woman's giving is in food - which is literally the work of her hands, and also more readily available for the hungry poor. This generosity can be distinguished during courtship, if the young man or woman is endowed with a discerning eye. But even afterwards, it must be well preserved - as the most important quality in married life.

HOW TO BRING ABOUT CHANGE?

The Sanzer Rebbe, who told this story with amazement, was a close friend of Rabbi Shalom of Kaminka. Both studied together under Rabbi Naftali of Ropshitz. While the Sanzer Rebbe inherited his teacher's leadership quality, Rabbi Shalom took on Rabbi Naftali's witty sense of humor. For this reason, even when they "acted out" the roles of Rebbe and *chasid* (as some *tzaddikim* did during their travels), Rabbi Shalom would remain the *chasid* while the Sanzer Rebbe played the role of the Rebbe.

From this, we can learn that to move a person from their initial place and comfort zone, one needs to be clever and humorous... Of course, one can speak and persuade - but for speech to be effective, sometimes a person like Rabbi Shalom is needed: a person who knows how to turn the miser's life into a joke, and also make him laugh along with it...

BELIEF IN CREATION AND LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Nine years ago, when the Chomesh Yeshivah was struggling to survive day by day, HaRav Ginsburgh gave a class on Likkutei Moharan in preparation for Rosh HaShanah. We brought part of that class in our previous issue of Wonders. This week, we focus on another part that ties our faith in Creation with the call to change our situation in the Holyland and bring the Redemption closer.

The following is an excerpt from the class as it appeared in this year's Rosh HaShanah edition of Nifla'ot.

One of the cornerstones of Jewish faith is that God created the world with Ten Sayings as described in Genesis. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov speaks about faith in Creation in one of his three teachings[1] dedicated to *Rosh HaShanah* and based on the verse, "Blow the shofar on the [first of the] month" (תִּקְעוּ בַּחֹדֶשׁ שׁוֹפָר). There he stresses that the apex of faith is to believe in Creation because of prophecy.

We know that the ancient Greeks rejected that God had created the physical universe. They placed God (as the Prime Mover, the "soul" of the world as it were) and the physical universe on the same footing, claiming that the physical universe is just as primordial as God.[2] Famously, Maimonides writes that logically, it is not possible to prove that the world was created or that it is primordial. Therefore, Maimonides concludes that given that there is no proof either way, he accepts our prophetic faith in Creation. Maimonides too believes that God created reality only because of prophecy, not because of some logical proof.

It is surprising that Rebbe Nachman (and apparently Maimonides as well) place faith in Creation as the highest level of faith. Chabad teachings state that one does not need faith to believe in Creation, since it is clearly verifiable. Still, by Rebbe Nachman, faith in Creation is a very big thing. He asks: Where does one obtain this faith? And his answer is: from a *tzaddik*. Indeed, for a *tzaddik*, the world's Creation is palpable.

This exemplifies how what is considered the domain of the tzaddik in other branches of Chasidut, in Chabad is considered the responsibility of every *chasid*. Each of us should strive to reach a state in which the world's Creation is palpable to us. In Chabad this is described as an experience

1. *Likkutei Moharan* 2:5. See also *Wonders* issue 167, "The Need for Spirituality."

2. The Ba'al Shem Tov once related that his soul waited for over a thousand years to descend into this world because the air was thick with the heresy of the ancient Greeks regarding Creation.

that reality is constantly being created anew at every moment.[3] Of course, if this experience is taken seriously, then a person should also feel that they themselves are being recreated at every moment anew.

According to Rebbe Nachman the importance of believing in Creation is that one who has acquired this faith fully will also merit to see the renewal of the world in the future, when God creates a new world, a miraculous world, entirely above the limitations of our present natural reality. It will no longer be a world following natural laws; it will be a world in which all the supernatural prophecies about the future will be realized, all the signs and wonders will become reality, literally; "a wolf will live with a lamb," literally. One merits seeing the renewal of the world in this manner in merit of having faith in its Creation. This is a very straightforward teaching from Rebbe Nachman.

This certainly has relevance for us today. We too are waiting for the renewal of our own reality today, so we too are waiting for the renewal of the world. One must continue to hope for change. Do not be a fool that falls into despair. We continue to hope for pivotal and fundamental changes to happen in our Holyland, especially regarding the leadership and we are called upon to act to achieve this change. We refer to this responsibility that we act to change things with the question, "Who holds the key to Redemption?" Some would say that it is entirely in God's hands, but we argue that the responsibility is entirely ours.

One should meditate on this before praying every morning. You put on your tefillin, what should you think of in the few seconds before praying? According to this teaching from Rebbe Nachman, the most important thing to think about is Creation and the future renewal of reality. One should picture this in the mind's eye: How reality is recreated at every moment and how it will be renewed. The stronger your image and faith in God's recreation of reality at every moment, the more you are empowered to act and to ultimately experience the renewal of reality—particularly, the state of our existence here in the Land of Israel.

3. As described in length in the Tanya's second part (which the Alter Rebbe was contemplating making the first part), *Sha'ar HaYichud VeHaEmunah*. The crux of the argument is that reality does not have an existence independent of the Creator. Therefore, without the Creator constantly bringing it into being, it cannot persist from moment to moment. This is usually backed by the verse, "Forever, God, your words stand in the heavens" (Psalms 119:89) which the Ba'al Shem Tov explained means that God's command, "Let there be a firmament" (Genesis 1:6) must constantly be present in the heavens, otherwise they would not persist as they are.

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