

## INTRODUCTION

Reb Noson bases this first discourse on Rebbe Nachman's foundational teaching about judging oneself and others favorably. Popularly known as *Azamra* (I will sing), the Rebbe's lesson teaches that looking for the good in people—finding the *nekudah tovah*, the good point, that everyone has inside—is the key to coming closer to HaShem. Reb Noson shows that arousing these good points is the principal means for waking up from the spiritual slumber that people fall into on account of their sins—that is, the key to “rising in the morning.”

Over the course of his wide-ranging discourse Reb Noson will link discovering one's good point—and uncovering the concealed good points in others, even in Jewish sinners—to an array of additional topics. These include: constructing a *mishkan*, a sacred space for HaShem's Presence to manifest in this world; transforming fallen sparks of holiness into melody and song; refining and elevating speech through the different stages of the Shacharit prayer; dressing, and reciting the morning blessings; the four special Torah readings during the month of Adar known as the *Arba Parashiyot*; and rising at *chatzot*, midnight, and its connection to redemption.

פִּי-כֹן עַל כָּל פְּנִים יֵשׁ בּוֹ אִיזָה נִקְדָּה טוֹבָה. וְכֵן יַחֲפֹשׂ וְיִמְצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ עוֹד אִיזָה נִקְדוֹת טוֹבוֹת. וְעַל-יְדֵי-זֶה שָׂדוֹן אֶת עַצְמוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת וּמוֹצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ נִקְדוֹת טוֹבוֹת עֲדוּן, אַף-עַל-פִּי שְׁעֵשָׂה מִה שְׁעֵשָׂה וּפְגָם מִה שְׁפָגָם, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה הוּא יוֹצֵא בְּאֵמֶת מִכָּף חוֹבָה וְנִכְנָס בְּכָף זְכוּת בְּאֵמֶת, וְעַל-יְדֵי-זֶה יְכוּל לְזַכּוֹת לְתִשְׁבּוּהָ.

זֶה בְּחִינַת (תהלים לו, י): "וְעוֹד מַעֲט וְאֵין רָשָׁע וְכוּ", עַל-יְדֵי אוֹתוֹ ה"עוֹד מַעֲט" שְׁשָׂם אֵינּוּ רָשָׁע, עַל-יְדֵי-זֶה: "וְהִתְבּוֹנְנֵת וְכוּ", עַיֵן שָׂם.

וְעַל-יְדֵי-זֶה יְכוּל לְשַׁמַּח אֶת עַצְמוֹ. וְאֵזִי יְכוּל לְהִתְפַּלֵּל, וְזֶה בְּחִינַת (שם קמו, ב): "אֲזַמְרָה לְאַלְקֵי בְּעוֹדֵי", עַל-יְדֵי ה"עוֹד מַעֲט" שְׁמוֹצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ, עַל-יְדֵי זֶה יְכוּל לְזַמֵּר וְלְהוֹדוֹת לֵה'.

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good point. And in a similar manner he should keep on searching and finding still more good points inside himself.

By judging himself favorably<sup>2</sup> and finding still more good points inside himself—even though he has done what he has done and blemished what he has blemished—a person genuinely crosses over from the side of guilt to the side of merit. And through this he can merit doing *teshuvah*. As long as he believes that he is bereft of good and so feels distant from HaShem, it is indeed very hard for him to sincerely return to Him in repentance. But after he finds his good points and feels genuinely close to HaShem, it is easy to do true *teshuvah*.

David HaMelekh hints to the power of judging favorably in *Tehillim*. This is the significance of the verse "There is still a little bit in which the sinner is not..." By virtue of that "still a little bit"—namely the good that is still in him—there he is not a sinner, and through this, "when you reflect..." When a person finds his good points, he tips the scales of justice in his favor and is no longer at his original place, so to speak. Consequently, "when you reflect upon his place," he is already not there! Study the Rebbe's words there.

And by this finding of his good points, a person can bring himself to joy. He will then be able to pray with enthusiasm and inspiration. This is the significance of the verse "I will sing to my God with what I still have left." Through the "still a little bit"—namely the good he finds inside himself—he is able to sing to HaShem and praise Him.<sup>3</sup>

"There is still a little bit in which the sinner is not; when you reflect upon his place, he will not be there."

(*Tehillim* 37:10)

"I will sing to my God with what I still have left."

(*ibid.* 146:2)

Notes &amp; Sources

2 See Avot 1:6.

3 Rebbe Nachman links this verse from *Tehillim* (146:2)—"I will sing to my God with what I still have left (בעודי, *be-ODEe*)"—with the verse from *Tehillim* (37:10) cited in the previous paragraph—"There is still a little bit (מעט, *ve-OD me'at*) in which the sinner is not." What is it that enables a person to sing

to HaShem? It is the little bit of good that he still finds inside himself, the point in which he is not wicked. Reb Nosen will bring this again in the next section (see also note 16 below), linking these two verses to a third verse from *Tehillim* that likewise alludes to the good point through the Hebrew word *od* (עוד, still).

וְתִגְבֹּר כְּאֵרִי לְעִמּוֹד בְּבִקְרָא לְעִבּוֹדֵת בּוֹרְאוֹ שְׂיֵהָא הוּא מְעוֹרֵר הַשַּׁחַר. הַג"ה: "שְׂוִיֵתִי ה' לְנִגְדֵי תְּמִיד" זֶה כָּלֵל גְּדוֹל בְּתוֹרָה וְכוּ' (ארח חיים סימן א' סעיף א').

א ■ כִּי אֵינִי בְּדַבְרֵי רַבְּנֵי ז"ל (בסימן רפב):

שְׁכַשְׁאֲדָם מִתְחִיל לְחַפֵּשׂ עַצְמוֹ, וְרוֹאֶה שְׁהוּא רְחוֹק מֵאֵד מֵהַשֵּׁם יִתְבַּרְךָ, וְהוּא מְלֵא חַטָּאִים וּפְגָמִים הַרְבֵּה, וְנִדְמָה לוֹ שְׁהוּא רְחוֹק מְטוֹב, אֵזִי הוּא צְרִיף לְחַפֵּשׂ וּלְבַקֵּשׁ וְלִמְצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ אִיזָה טוֹב, כִּי אִיךְ אֶפְשָׁר שְׂוֵא עֵשָׂה אִיזָה טוֹב מִיִּמּוֹ?

וְאֵף שְׁהוּא רוֹאֶה שְׁגַם מַעֲט הַטוֹב שְׁעֵשָׂה הוּא מְלֵא פְּצָעִים, כִּי מְעַרְב בְּפִסְלַת הַרְבֵּה, אַף-עַל-פִּי-כֹן, אֵי אֶפְשָׁר שְׂוֵאֵין בּוֹ אִיזָה נִקְדָּה טוֹבָה עַל כָּל פְּנִים.

וְכֵן יַחֲפֹשׂ וְיִמְצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ עוֹד אִיזָה טוֹב, וְאֵף שְׂזָה הַטוֹב גַּם כֵּן מְעַרְב בְּפִסְלַת הַרְבֵּה, אַף-עַל-

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A person should strengthen himself like a lion to rise up in the morning for the service of his Creator, so that it is he who awakens the dawn. Gloss: "I set HaShem before me always" (*Tehillim* 16:8)—this is a major principle in fulfillment of the Torah (*Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim* 1:1).

### 1 ■ KEY CONCEPTS FROM LIKUTEY MOHARAN<sup>1</sup>

In LM I, 282, Rebbe Nachman states as follows:

When a person begins to examine himself and sees that he is very far from HaShem, full of many sins and blemishes, and it seems to him that he is far removed from all good, he must not despair. Rather, he should search and seek until he finds in himself some good. For how is it possible that he never did anything good in his life? Finding that good point will wake him from spiritual sleep and create in him a genuine feeling of closeness to HaShem.

And even if a person sees that also the little bit of good he has done is riddled with imperfections, mixed with many impurities, he should not get discouraged. He may have performed a mitzvah improperly or for the wrong reasons, yet it is impossible that his deed is totally flawed; that it does not contain at least some bit of good, some flawless point capable of enhancing HaShem's glory.

And so, just as he persevered and succeeded in finding that first good point, he should continue to search inside himself until he finds some other good. Even if that good too is mixed with many impurities, it has to have in it at least some

Notes &amp; Sources

1 This opening discourse of *Likutey Halakhot* is atypical of Reb Nosen's "Halakhah 1" (*aleph-series*) discourses, which as a rule are shorter and less intricate than those he authored in later years (see Appendix B, p. 244). From Reb Nosen's manuscript we learn that this in fact was his teaching on *Hashkamat HaBoker*—Rising

in the Morning from the "Halakhah 3" series, but was switched to here when *Likutey Halakhot* was brought to press. Apparently, Reb Nosen wanted to give this discourse greater prominence since it is based on Rebbe Nachman's seminal teaching of *Azarna* (LM I, 282).

ודע, שכל אחד מצדיקי הדור בונה משכן. שמשם מקבלין תינוקות של בית רבן הקבל פיהם שאין בו חטא, בשביל זה הם מתחילין מן "ויקרא וכו'", עין שם.

וזה הצדיק שיכול ללקט כל הטוב שנמצא בכל אחד, הוא יודע כל הבחינות שיש בענין זה של המשפנות הנ"ל שבנין הצדיקים, שמשם מקבלין התינוקות הקבל פיהם שאין בו חטא וכו' וכו', עין שם כל זה היטב.

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This is the primary spiritual work of the *tzaddikim* of the generation. Thus the Rebbe teaches: **Know that** by gathering up all the good points, **each of the *tzaddikim* of the generation constructs a *mishkan***, a place of holiness for the Shekhinah to manifest.<sup>8</sup> By revealing the good points of the Jewish souls identified with his own soul, each *tzaddik* constructs this *mishkan*, and **from there the little schoolchildren receive the undefiled breath of their mouths.**<sup>9</sup> The Midrash says of these schoolchildren, "Let those who are pure come and occupy themselves with that which is pure." **To this end**, the teachers who introduce little schoolchildren to Torah **start from *Vayikra*. Study there.**<sup>10</sup>

Aside from the aforementioned *tzaddikim*, each of whom reveals the good points of those in his charge, there is also a universal *tzaddik* whose encompassing soul is inclusive of all Jewish souls. **Because he is capable of gathering up the good that is found in everyone, this Moshe-like *tzaddik* is acquainted with and can apply all the aspects of the *mishkanot* that the *tzaddikim* construct, from which the children receive the undefiled breath of their mouths. Study all this well in LM I, 282.**

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of the congregation. A congregation prays with enthusiasm as a result of their *shallach tzibbur* finding and raising up their good points, which are all drawn to him and merged within him. Having explained that judging others favorably creates melodies, Rebbe Nachman refers to the individual who can gather up all the good points that are to be found even in Jewish sinners as the *chazan*, who leads the congregation in songful prayer.

8 As will be explained (see §4 below), after the Jews sinned with the golden calf, HaShem commanded them to build the Mishkan, in which they could find atonement. Moshe Rabbeinu, the leading *tzaddik* of his generation, collected all the contributions made by the Jewish people and erected the Mishkan from their gifts. Rebbe Nachman teaches that the donation each individual brought was a reflection of his personal good point. In this sense, the Mishkan was constructed out of the good points of the entire Jewish people.

9 Chazal teach that the world exists only in the merit of the Torah study of little schoolchildren, whose breath is untainted by sin. The Gemara explains that once a person has sinned, the breath of his Torah study can no longer compare with the pure and unsullied breath of the little schoolchildren (*Shabbat* 119b and

Maharsha, s.v. *eino domeh*). The merit of his Torah study lacks the power to mitigate the judgments that undermine the world's continued existence (see LM I, 37:4 and note 40). Rebbe Nachman adds that pure breath—namely the ability to study Torah in purity and holiness—derives from the spiritual *mishkan* that the *tzaddik* builds out of the good points of the Jewish people (see also note 72 below).

10 The Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 7:3) states that when a child begins reading and is introduced to the study of Torah, he begins not with *Bereishit* but with the opening verse of *Vayikra*. *Vayikra* is the book of the Torah that primarily addresses the issues of purity. It opens with HaShem speaking from the just-completed Mishkan: "He called (*Vayikra*) to Moshe." In a Torah scroll, the word *Vayikra* is traditionally written with an *aleph ze'ira*, a small *aleph*: ויקרא. In Aramaic, *aleph* means "teach" or "study." Therefore the first verse of *Vayikra* is the first verse we teach the small children who, with the pure breath they draw from the Mishkan, sustain the world through the merit of their Torah study. (For a deeper explanation of the small א in ויקרא, see LH, *Eiruvei Techumin* 6:6.)

וְעַל-יְדֵי-זֶה נִעְשִׂין נְגוּנִים, כִּי הַנְּגוּנִים נִעְשִׂין עַל-יְדֵי שְׂמֵבְרֵין רוּחַ טוֹבָה מִן רוּחַ רָבָא וְכוּ'. וְזֶה הַ"אַזְמְרָה" דִּיקָא, בְּחִינַת נְגוּנִים וְכוּ'.

וְכוּ צְרִיכִין לְדוֹן אֶת אַחֲרִים לְכַן זְכוּת, אֲפֹלוּ רָשָׁע גְּמוּר צְרִיכִין לְחַפֵּשׁ וְלִמְצֹא בּוֹ אֵיזָה נְקֻדָּה טוֹבָה וְכוּ' וְכוּ'. עֵין שָׁם.

וְגַם שְׂיָכוֹל זֹאת, לִמְצֹא נְקֻדָּה טוֹבָה אֲפֹלוּ בְּפּוֹשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הוּא יְכוֹל לְהִיּוֹת חָזֵן וְלְהַתְּפַלֵּל לְפָנָי הַעֲמוּד וְכוּ', עֵין שָׁם.

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And this finding of the good points creates melodies. For melodies are made by selecting the good *ruach* from the *ruach* of gloom and despair.<sup>4</sup> The Rebbe explains that this is precisely the meaning of "I will sing," which alludes to the concept of melodies and songs of prayer that one creates through finding the little bit of good he still has left.

Now, it is not enough to search only for one's own good points. A person should also judge others favorably. He must look for and find some good point in everyone, even in a person who is seen by others as thoroughly wicked. Study the Rebbe's words there, that just as finding the good in himself lifts a person out of despair and into merit, finding the good inside another lifts up that other person into merit so that he too will feel closer to HaShem.<sup>5</sup> Every Jew is required to do this.<sup>6</sup>

And whoever can do this, to find a good point even in Jewish sinners, can be the congregation's *chazan*, who reveals the good points in each and every worshipper as he leads them in prayer.<sup>7</sup> Study the Rebbe's explanation there.

Notes &amp; Sources

4 The word *ruach* (רוח) has two separate but interrelated meanings: air/wind and spirit. Here Rebbe Nachman alternates between the two. A musical instrument creates sound when part of it vibrates rapidly, causing the air around it to vibrate. We hear this vibrating *ruach*, or sound waves, as musical notes. The skill is to play on the instrument in such a way as to select the "good *ruach*," the music, and avoid the dissonance and noise, which the Rebbe equates with a melancholy spirit, a "*ruach* of gloom and despair."

5 Chazal teach that each Jew is responsible for his fellow Jew: "All Jews are guarantors for one another" (*Shevuot* 39a). In LH, *Geirim* 3:19, Reb Noson writes, "Each Jew has a responsibility to speak with others about how best to fulfill HaShem's commandments and draw closer to Him." In a second discourse (LH, *Karchah VeKetovat Kaaka* 3:1), Reb Noson reads Chazal's maxim homiletically as "All Jews are included in one another." In other words, in each Jew there is literally a part of every other Jew. Because of this, each Jew has the power to bring the entire Jewish people to repent, and thus has an obligation to endeavor to do so. From this we

can understand how each Jew can lift up his fellow Jew by judging him favorably, even when they are physically very far apart. It is possible precisely because every Jew is included in and bound up with every other Jew (cf. *Taamei HaMitzvot, Kedoshim: Mitzvat VeAhavta LeRei'akha Kamokha*). Reb Noson teaches (ibid.) that in fact all Jewish souls are, at their root, a single soul. Therefore finding the good in another is, in essence, finding the good in oneself—it lifts one's spirits and raises him up spiritually, to the side of merit.

6 Once while traveling to Brody, a city in the western Ukraine, Reb Noson began enthusiastically discussing *Azamra* (LM I, 282). Reb Nachman Tulchiner, who had heard his teacher talk about this lesson on numerous occasions, commented that finding the good in a fellow Jew was obviously something everyone must do. "So tell me," Reb Noson rejoined, "how many people have you already gotten to repent by virtue of this teaching?" (*Siach Sarfey Kodesh* 2:527).

7 In Hebrew, the prayer leader is called the *shallach tzibbur* (lit. the people's messenger or emissary), as he stands before HaShem representing all the members

אומרים לנפשי אין ישועתה לו באלקים סלה" - ואזי הוא בבחינת שנה כנ"ל. וזהו "אני שכבתי ואישנה" - כי זה בחינת שנה, כנ"ל.

אבל באמת האדם אסור ליאש עצמו, וצריך להתגבר לעורר משינתו על ידי המעט טוב שמוצא בעצמו עדיו כנ"ל. וזהו "הקיצתי כי ה' סמכני" - שאני מתגבר ומתעורר משינתי, כי איני מיאש עצמי עדיו - "כי ה' סמכני" - כי הנקדה טובה שצאדם מוצא בעצמו - זה בחינת אלקות, כביכול. כי כל הטוב מאתו יתברך.

כי אורייתא וישראל וקודשיתא בריה הוא כלא חד (זהר אחרי עג). נמצא, כשיש בישוראל איזה נקדה טובה, דהינו איזה מצוה או דבר טוב, זה הטוב הוא אחדות גמור עמו יתברך, כי טוב ה' לכל" (תהלים קמה, ט), וכמו שכתוב (שם לד, ט): "טעמו וראו כי טוב ה'", כי כל הטוב שגממצא

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*chas ve-shalom.* This is the meaning of the verse that follows, "Many say of me, 'He will never be saved by HaShem,' *selah.*" On account of a person's many sins, the *Yetzer Hara* tricks him into thinking that all is lost. Then he is conceptually asleep, as in "I lay down and slept." This alludes to the hopelessness and downheartedness of spiritual slumber.

However, the truth is that a person is forbidden to despair. He must overcome any feelings of hopelessness and wake up from his spiritual sleep by means of the little bit of good that he still finds inside himself. Thus the verse concludes, "I awoke, for HaShem supports me." Although "I lay down and slept," I strengthen myself to wake up from my sleep. I keep myself from despair because I know that "HaShem supports me." In this context, "HaShem" signifies a person's good. The good point that a person finds inside himself is an aspect of Godliness, as it were, since whatever good exists in the world emanates from HaShem.

REB NOSON NOW BRINGS further proof of the connection between HaShem and good.

For the *Zohar* teaches that Torah, the Jewish people, and HaKadosh Barukh Hu are entirely one.<sup>13</sup> It follows that when a good point exists inside a Jew—namely some mitzvah or something good that he did—that good is completely bound up in unity with HaShem.<sup>14</sup> For "HaShem is good to all"—He is all that is good, the origin and essence of all the good in existence. This is also as the verse states, "Taste and see that HaShem is good." Any good, no matter where it exists or what form it takes, emanates solely from Him. This is

"HaShem is good to all."  
(*Tehillim* 145:9)

"Taste and see that  
HaShem is good."  
(*ibid.* 34:9)

Notes & Sources

13 *Zohar* III, 73a teaches that the three are bound together in a complete unity; see also LM I, 251:3 and *Kedushat Levi, Masekhet Avot*, s.v. *ita be-midrash*.

14 In LMI, 5:2, Rebbe Nachman teaches that "HaKadosh Barukh Hu is in simple unity with the *mitzvot*." Note 27 there explains that unlike man, HaShem and His will

are one. Neither duality nor change can be ascribed to His will. It is therefore impossible to separate HaShem's will or His thoughts from HaShem Himself. The same applies to the *mitzvot* of the Torah, which, as spiritual expressions of HaShem's will, are in simple unity with Him.

ב ■ זה בחינת התעוררות השנה, כי כשאדם רואה שרוחק מהשם יתברך וכו', זה בחינת שנה שיהא אחד משטים במיתה (ברכות נז:). וכשמחפש ומבקש גמוצא בעצמו איזה נקדה טובה עדיו, ומחיה ומשומח את עצמו, ומעורר את עצמו לעבודת השם יתברך על ידי זה, זה בחינת התעוררות השנה.

זה בחינת (תהלים ג, ב): "ה' מה רבו צרי, רבים וכו'", הינו הצרים של הנפש, שהם החטאים והפגמים של כל אחד, שזה עקר צרות האדם, וכשהם מתגברים על האדם, חס ושלום, אזי הם רוצים להפיל אותו לגמרי, חס ושלום, כאלו אין לו עוד שום תקוה חס ושלום. וזהו "רבים

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REB NOSON HAS HIGHLIGHTED some of the major topics of *Azamra*, Rebbe Nachman's lesson on always focusing on the good in oneself and in others. This simple act raises a person spiritually and enables him to experience HaShem's true closeness.

## 2 ■ ARISING FROM SPIRITUAL SLUMBER

REB NOSON BEGINS HIS DISCOURSE on the deeper meaning of rising in the morning by linking the finding of good points with waking up from spiritual slumber.

This searching for one's good points is the concept of waking up from sleep. When a person recognizes that he is far from HaShem he is likely to be despondent, to feel low in both energy and spirit; this is akin to being in a state of sleep, which, Chazal teach, is "one-sixtieth of death."<sup>11</sup> But when he seeks and searches and finds inside himself some remaining good point, and he revives himself and cheers himself up, using that fragment of good to rouse himself to serve HaShem—that is the concept of waking up from sleep.

BEFORE SHOWING HOW HE READS Rebbe Nachman's lesson into the words of the *Shulchan Arukh* (he will address this in §5 and §6 below), Reb Noson first explores a number of verses that show that people's good points wake them up from sleep. He begins with the words of David HaMelekh in *Tehillim* 3.

This is the significance of the verse "O HaShem, so numerous are my tormentors, so many..." These "tormentors" are the tormentors of the soul—namely each person's sins and spiritual blemishes, which are the source of mankind's greatest suffering.<sup>12</sup> When they overpower a person, they seek to defeat him totally by making it seem as if he has no hope,

"O HaShem, so numerous are my tormentors, so many are those who rise up against me. Many say of me, 'He will never be saved by God,' *selah.*... I lay down and slept; nevertheless, I awoke, for HaShem supports me. I have no fear of the many thousands who have arrayed against me on every side."  
(*Tehillim* 3:2-3, 6-7)

Notes & Sources

11 *Berakhot* 57b.

12 Citing the verse (*Tehillim* 120:1) "In my distress I called out to HaShem," *Midrash Shmuel* (on *Avot* 2:4) teaches that whenever David HaMelekh cried out to HaShem about his suffering and the torment of being

pursued by his enemies, he was referring to the spiritual anguish of his soul. The soul's torment is greatest when its principal enemy, the *Yetzer Hara*, induces it to sin (see also LM II, 101 and II, 125).

ג ■ וְזֶה בְּחֵינֵת (תהלים נז, ט): "עֲנֵה כְבוֹדִי, עֲנֵה הַנָּבֶל וְכִנּוֹר, אֲעִירָה שְׁחָר", הֵינִי שֹׁצְרֵה הָאָדָם לְהִתְעוֹרֵר אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִשְׁנֵתוֹ וּמִזְּמֵתוֹ. וְעַל־יְדֵי מָה יִתְעוֹרֵר אֶת עַצְמוֹ? עַל־יְדֵי הַנְּקֻדּוֹת טוֹבוֹת שֶׁמוֹצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ עֲדָיו, וְזֶה: "אֲעִירָה שְׁחָר".

כִּי הַנְּקֻדָּה טוֹבָה הִיא בְּבַחֲיֵינֵת שְׁחָר, בְּבַחֲיֵינֵת (שִׁיר־הַשִּׁירִים א, ה): "שְׁחוֹרָה אֲנִי וְנֶאֱוָה בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם", כִּי מִחֲמַת שְׂזָאת הַנְּקֻדָּה מְעַרְבֶת בְּפִסְלֵת הַרְבֵּה וּבְפִגְמִים הַרְבֵּה שֶׁפָּגַם זֶה הָאָדָם, עַל־יְדֵי־זֶה נִדְמָה שֶׁהִיא שְׁחוֹרָה, כִּי מִנְחַת בְּקָדְרוֹת וּבְשִׁחְרוּת, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם, אֲצִלוּ.

אֲבָל כְּשֶׁדָּן אֶת עַצְמוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת וּמְעוֹרֵר וּמוֹצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ הַנְּקֻדָּה טוֹבָה כִּנְל, אֲזִי הִיא אוֹמֶרֶת: "שְׁחוֹרָה אֲנִי וְנֶאֱוָה, אֵל תִּרְאֵנִי שֶׁאֲנִי שְׁחָרְחַרְתְּ וְכוּ", כִּי אִין הַשְּׁחָרוֹת מִשְׁלִי וְכוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁפָּרַשׁ

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3 ■ WAKING THE GOOD POINTS

REB NOSON HAS THUS FAR EXPLAINED that waking up from spiritual sleep requires finding one's good points. He will next show the link between a person's good points and waking up before the dawn.

And this is the significance of yet another verse in which David HaMelekh alludes to rousing from spiritual slumber, "Awake, my soul! Awake the harp and lyre! I will awaken the *shachar*."

In other words, a person must stir himself from his sleep and lift himself up from his spiritual decline. How does he wake himself up? By looking deep inside himself and finding the good points that he still can find within. To do so is to "awaken the dawn."

For a person's good point is akin to the *shachar*. Like the dawn, it emerges out of the darkest darkness, as in the verse "I am *shachor* but pleasing, O daughters of Yerushalayim."<sup>17</sup> Mixed in with this good point are many impurities and many spiritual blemishes of which this person is guilty, and so it seems to be black, displeasing. He is unable to appreciate how pleasing and beautiful it actually is, since for him the good point lies buried in gloom and darkness, *chas ve-shalom*.

But when a person judges himself favorably, and wakes up and finds in himself the good point, its beauty is revealed. Then his good point says about itself, "I am black but pleasing"—though I may appear to be black, I am actually very beautiful. And so, "Do not look down on me on account of my blackness"—I do not deserve to be disparaged because the blackness is not inherent to me, as Rashi comments

"Awake, my soul! Awake the harp and lyre! I will awaken the *shachar* (dawn)." (Tehillim 57:9)

"I am *shachor* (black) but pleasing, O daughters of Yerushalayim. Do not look down on me on account of my blackness, for I have been scorched by the sun." (Shir HaShirim 1:5-6)

Notes & Sources

17 Rashi comments that "I am black but pleasing" are the words of the Jewish people to the nations, the "daughters of Yerushalayim." The Jews say, "My deeds are black, but the deeds of my forefathers are beautiful. And even some of my own deeds contain beauty.

Although I sinned with the golden calf, I have the merit of receiving the Torah." Though *SHaCHoR* (שחור, black) and concealed in darkness, their deeds nevertheless break through into the light like the *SHaCHaR* (שחר, dawn).

בְּכֵל מְקוֹם שְׁהוּא, הוּא הִכַּל מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבַּרְךָ. וְזֶהוּ "כִּי ה' יִסְמְכֵנִי" - הֵינִי הַנְּקֻדָּה טוֹבָה שֶׁאֲנִי מוֹצֵא בְּעַצְמִי, שֶׁהוּא בְּחֵינֵת אֶלְקוֹת, בְּחֵינֵת "טוֹב ה' לְכָל", זֶה הוּא סוּמְךָ אוֹתִי וּמְקִיֵן אוֹתִי מֵהַשְּׁנָה.

וְאִין (שם נ, ז): "לֹא אֵינְךָ מְרַבּוֹת עִם אֲשֶׁר סָבִיב שִׁתּוֹ עָלַי" - כִּי שׁוֹב אֵינִי מִתְרַא מֵהֶם אֶף־עַל־פִּי שֶׁהֵם כְּמֵה רְבּוּבוֹת פְּגָמִים וְחִטָּאִים שֶׁעוֹמְדִים עָלַי לְהַפִּילֵנִי, חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם, כִּי מֵאַחַר שֶׁאֲנִי מוֹצֵא בְּעַצְמִי עוֹד אֵינְךָ נְקֻדָּה טוֹבָה, עַל־יְדֵי־זֶה אֲנִי מִתְעוֹרֵר מֵהַשְּׁנָה וְעַל־יְדֵי־זֶה אֲנִי נִכְנָס בְּאַמֶּת לְכַף זְכוּת וְעַל־יְדֵי־זֶה אֲנִי לְתַשׁוּבָה וְכוּ כִּנְל, כִּי כָל הָרַע נִדְחָה מִפְּנֵי מַעַט הַטוֹב שֶׁמוֹצֵא בְּעַצְמוֹ, וּמִחֵיהּ וּמִרְמֵיהּ אֶת עַצְמוֹ בְּזֶה, כִּי מַעַט מִן הָאוֹר דּוֹחֵה הַרְבֵּה מִן הַחֹשֶׁךְ, כִּי־דוּעַ.

וְזֶהוּ בְּחֵינֵת (תהלים קלט, יח): "הִקִּיצְתִּי וְעוֹדִי עִמָּךְ", עַל־יְדֵי ה' עוֹד מַעַט וְכוּ" שְׁלִי, דֵּהֵינִי הַנְּקֻדָּה טוֹבָה כִּנְל, בְּחֵינֵת "אֲזַמְרָה לְאֱלֹהֵי בְּעוֹדִי" כִּנְל, וְזֶהוּ "וְעוֹדִי עִמָּךְ", הֵינִי ה' עוֹד מַעַט" שְׁלִי שֶׁהוּא עֲדָיו עִמָּךְ כִּנְל, עַל־יְדֵי־זֶה "הִקִּיצְתִּי", כִּי זֶה בְּחֵינֵת הַתְּעוֹרְרוֹת הַשְּׁנָה, כִּנְל.

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the significance of "for HaShem supports me." In other words, David HaMelekh says, the good point that I find in myself—itself an aspect of Godliness, as in "HaShem is good to all"—is what supports me and also wakes me from sleep.

And then, strengthened by the support of his good point, a person can declare, "I have no fear of the many thousands who have arrayed against me on every side." Instead, I am once again secure, unafraid of those who would persecute me. Even though the spiritual blemishes and sins that threaten to defeat me are many thousands, *chas ve-shalom*, I am untroubled. Seeing that I have found at least some remaining good point inside myself, I am able to wake up from my slumber. This genuinely brings me to a position of merit and enables me to merit doing *teshuvah*. In other words, all the evil of one's spiritual blemishes and sins is cast aside by the little bit of good that he finds inside himself. And with this good, he revives himself and raises himself up, because just a little bit of light chases away a lot of darkness.<sup>15</sup>

This is also implied in the verse "I have awakened, *ve-odee* with You." "I have awakened" by dint of my *od me'at*—that is to say, because of the good point still inside me, as in "I will sing to my God *be-odee*."<sup>16</sup> This is the meaning of "and I am still with You": because of my "still a little bit" which is still completely bound in unity with You, "I have awakened"—this being the concept of waking up and rousing from slumber.

"I have awakened, *ve-odee* (and I am still) with You." (Tehillim 139:18)

"I will sing to my God *be-odee* (with what I still have left)." (ibid. 146:2)

Notes & Sources

15 *Chovot HaLevavot, Shaar 5, Perek 5.*

16 See §1 and note 3 above. Here, Reb Noson cites a third verse from *Tehillim* (139:18) that employs the Hebrew word *od* (וד, still) to allude to the good

point: "I have awakened, *ve-ODEe* (עודי, I am still) with You"—because of my *ve-OD me'at* (עוד מעט, still a little bit), my good point, I can "sing to my God *be-ODEe* (עודי, with what I still have left)."