

## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

Rebbe Nachman was very insistent that we study the *Shulchan Arukh* daily. "Never let a day pass without studying at least one law," he said (*Rebbe Nachman's Wisdom* #29).

**R**eb Noson, the Rebbe's closest disciple, accepted the Rebbe's mandate and adhered to it assiduously throughout his life. Eventually he reviewed the entire *Shulchan Arukh* with its commentaries several times over.

But Rebbe Nachman had another reason for encouraging Reb Noson to learn the *Shulchan Arukh*—he wanted him to develop such familiarity with its laws that he could write *chiddushim*, original insights, on them, drawing from the Rebbe's teachings in the *Likutey Moharan*. Reb Noson was to weave the laws and lessons together in a manner that shows how each *halakhah* enhances the life of each individual, at all times and in every situation. Reb Noson set himself to this task as well, composing multiple discourses on most of the topics in the *Shulchan Arukh* and producing an all-encompassing look at the meaning and spirit of living as a Jew.

When Reb Noson sent the first volume of *Likutey Halakhot* to press, he said, "I did not pen this work for those who do not concern themselves with the meaning of life. Such a person can be compared to an animal (eating, drinking, sleeping, and all the while oblivious to the well-being of his soul). This work is meant for one who thinks about life's ultimate purpose and has a deep yearning to serve HaShem—and therefore finds himself under attack from without and within by 'enemies' that would keep him from realizing his spiritual objective. Such a person will find strength and encouragement in my words" (*Kokhavey Ohr, Anshei Moharan* II, 13).

Indeed, *Likutey Halakhot* fulfills these goals through a combination of inspiration and practical guidance. It also carries the underlying assurance that by applying the Torah in one's life, each person has the power to develop his own unique relationship with HaShem. Each one of us can do this, and even achieve untold greatness, if we but apply ourselves to study and practice.



This new translation and elucidation of *Likutey Halakhot* represents another jewel in the crown of Breslov English-language publishing. While we at the Breslov

Reb Noson first joined Rebbe Nachman's following, the Rebbe openly encouraged him to commence developing his own *chiddushei Torah*.

Reb Noson soon began to do so, though in thought only, until about a year later when Rebbe Nachman instructed him to begin recording his ideas. Over the next 40 years Reb Noson composed the nearly 550 discourses that today comprise *Likutey Halakhot*.<sup>5</sup> Basing his ideas on Rebbe Nachman's lessons, and using the laws in the *Shulchan Arukh* as the springboard for his explorations, Reb Noson was able to uncover the diverse connections between the mystical and practical teachings of the Torah in an entirely original way. He also incorporated into his discourses various topics from the weekly Torah portion, and in his longer discourses from several weekly portions, as well as the "topic of the day"—the current issue affecting him, his students, his community, or even the world at large. Whether discussing a concept from Rebbe Nachman's lesson, a *halakhah* from the *Shulchan Arukh*, the current holiday on the Jewish calendar, or world news—Reb Noson was able to derive from it new foundations and practical advice for serving HaShem.

*Likutey Halakhot* traverses all four sections of the *Shulchan Arukh* and serves as the primary source for understanding Rebbe Nachman's lessons and how to apply them practically. Breslover chassidim have always regarded Reb Noson's discourses as the clearest lens through which to view the Rebbe's teachings in his *Likutey Moharan*.

In style and content, *Likutey Halakhot* is a unique work. Reb Noson deftly weaves together concepts from all branches of the Torah, on all four planes of Torah study: *pshat* (literal meaning), *remez* (allusive meaning), *drush* (homiletical meaning), and *sod* (esoteric or kabbalistic meaning). He was able to accomplish this because he possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of Torah literature: Tanakh, Mishnah, Gemara, Midrash, *poskim* (decisors of Jewish law), Kabbalah and Chassidut. With this, Reb Noson succeeded in connecting the "soul" of the Torah—its mystical dimension—to its "body"—its outer, halakhic and practical dimension.<sup>6</sup>

Each discourse is divided into several sections. Reb Noson generally prefaces his discourse with a citation from, or a paraphrase of, the *halakhah* he is about to explore from the *Shulchan Arukh*. Other times, he simply states the topic. In the first section, he introduces the key concepts from Rebbe Nachman's lesson, or lessons, that are directly relevant to his subject matter. He occasionally reserves one or another of these concepts for later in the discourse, after acquainting the reader

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Notes & Sources

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<sup>5</sup> A number of Reb Noson's discourses were confiscated by the government and never returned. See *Through Fire and Water*, ch. 35, and Appendix B, p. 243 below.

<sup>6</sup> This comparison to the "soul" and "body" should not be construed as a trivialization of the halakhic and practical teachings of the Torah, which are fundamental. As Rebbe Nachman affirms in LM I, 52, and elsewhere, the world was created in order that we fulfill HaShem's will, in particular by performing the *mitzvot*.

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how much more so should one who uses a pejorative nickname for a work of Torah, the words of the Living God! But this is not the place to go into this.) At any rate, to be an author is not at all considered something great or important in these times.

Nevertheless, there are pious and upright individuals in every generation, even this one, "who walk in sincerity, securely,"<sup>8</sup> "and will not sit in the company of cynics";<sup>9</sup> upon whom words of truth drop "like cold water on a weary soul."<sup>10</sup> "As for silver and hidden treasures, they search for and seek"<sup>11</sup> words of truth and righteousness that are "set in sockets of fine gold"<sup>12</sup>—that is, on the teachings of our holy sages.

But in my impoverishment I know that I have not even minimally attained this ability to convey my knowledge even to those on the most rudimentary level. Yet I confess this without embarrassment. I proclaim the truth and do not hold back. "I call out at the head of the busy streets; at the entrance of the gates, in the city, I say what I have to say."<sup>13</sup> "I speak of Your testimonies before kings and feel no shame."<sup>14</sup> For just as I am small in my own eyes, as He Who examines the heart knows, so is my soul exalted in the merit of the holiness of he who has endowed me with wisdom, understanding and knowledge—namely Rebbe Nachman, my esteemed master, my teacher, the holy and awesome teacher and true mentor, may the remembrance of the righteous be a blessing. If I would want to tell of only the tiniest bit of all that he has done for my soul, the entire earth would not suffice to contain all my words. "With what can I come before HaShem and bow down before God on high?"<sup>15</sup> "You have done so much, HaShem my God; Your wonders and Your thoughts are only for us. There is none that compares to You. Were I to talk and tell of them, they would be too prodigious to portray."<sup>16</sup>

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The nature of this work and its format, as the reader will readily see, is based entirely on and follows the order of all the laws in the four parts of the *Shulchan Arukh*. This is what I was instructed to do directly by Rebbe Nachman himself: to ponder and study deeply each law until HaShem enlightens me with some new insight regarding it. And any insight that HaShem granted me is based entirely on the *hakdamot*, introductory principles, and foundational concepts that I received from our holy and awesome Rebbe, as expounded in his holy works *Likutey Moharan* I and II. On several occasions I derived some of these amazing principles from the awesome stories that he told, which are brought down in *Rebbe Nachman's Stories* (*Sippurey Maasiyot*). And though the deeper ideas alluded to in these stories are beyond our grasp, "for the waters have swollen into a stream that we cannot cross,"<sup>17</sup>

Notes & Sources

<sup>14</sup> Tehillim 119:46.

<sup>15</sup> Mikhah 6:6.

<sup>16</sup> Tehillim 40:6.

<sup>17</sup> Paraphrase of Yechezkel 47:5.

הקדמה

4 | ליקוטי הלכות  
דברי אלהים חיים וכו', על אחת כמה וכמה! ואין להאריך בזה כאן] על כל פנים אין חבור ספרים בכלל גדלה וחשיבות בעתים הללו.

אך אף על פי כן נמצאים כשרים ותמימים בכל דור ודור. עתה גם עתה, אשר הולכים בתם בטח, ובמושב ליצים לא ישבו, אשר עליהם תטף אמרי אמת, כמים קרים על נפש עיפה, יבקשו ככסף וכמטמונים יחפשו דברי אמת וצדקה, המיסדים על אדני פז, על דברי רבותינו הקדושים, וזכרונם לברכה.

ואני בעניי ידעתי כי לא הגעתי למדה זו, לא מיניה ולא מקצתה, לחוות דעי אפלו לפני קל שבקלים והפחות שבפחותים, אך זאת אודה ולא אבוש והאמת אגיד ולא אכחד, ובראש הומיות אקרא בפתחי שערים בעיר אמרי אמר, ואדברה בעדותי נגד מלכים ולא אבוש, שפשם שאני קטן בעיני מצד עצמי, כאשר בוחן לבות הוא יודע, כן יקרה נפשי מצד מעלת קדשת המשפיע עלי חכמה ובינה ודעת, הוא כבוד אדוני, מורי, הרב הקדוש והנורא, הרב האמת, זכר צדיק לברכה. ואם אמרתי אספירה כמו אפס קצה מאת כל אשר עשה לנפשי, לא תספיק הארץ להכיל את כל דברי בפה אקדם ה' אפי' לאלהי מרום. רבות עשית אתה ה' אלקי נפלאותיה ומחשבותיה אלינו. אין ערוך אליה אגידה ואדברה עצמו מספר.

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והנה מהות הספר ומעשהו יראה הרוצה בעיניו שכלו מיסד ומסדר על כל ההלכות שבארבעה חלקי שלחן ערוך, כי כן צויתי מפיו הקדוש, לחשב ולעין בכל הלכתא והלכתא עד שיאיר ה' עיני לחדש בהם איזה חדוש. וכל מה שזכרתי ה' יתברך לחדש בהם, הכל מיסד על פי ההקדמות והיסודות שקבלתי מרבנו הקדוש והנורא, זכר צדיק וקדוש לברכה, המבארים בספריו הקדושים, שהם, לקוטי מוהר"ן א' וב'. ולפעמים הוצאתי איזה הקדמות נוראות מהמעשיות הנוראות שספר, המבארים בספר "ספורי מעשיות". כי אם אמנם רמזי המעשיות שגבו מדעתנו, כי גאו המים נחל אשר לא נוכל לעבר, אף על פי כן ה' יתברך חונן לאדם דעת. והאיר עיני

Notes & Sources

<sup>11</sup> Paraphrase of Mishlei 2:4.

<sup>12</sup> Shir HaShirim 5:15.

<sup>13</sup> Paraphrase of Mishlei 1:21.

<sup>8</sup> Paraphrase of Mishlei 10:9.

<sup>9</sup> Paraphrase of Tehillim 1:1.

<sup>10</sup> Mishlei 25:25.

HaShem, Who grants understanding to man, nevertheless enlightened my eyes so that here and there I found in the stories some amazing ideas, as the reader will see in LH, *Tefillin* 5 and LH, *Birkhot HaShachar* 3, and elsewhere. Other times, I collected various principles from *The Aleph-Bet Book* (*Sefer HaMiddot*).

All the *hakdamot* that I derived from the Rebbe's works, and all the original insights that HaShem has helped me to innovate from them, He has enabled me to find clearly explained in verses of Tanakh and the discourses of Chazal in the Gemara, midrashim, the holy *Zohar*, and the writings of the Arizal. Then HaShem enlightened me further so that I could use these insights to explain the laws of the *mitzvot* according to the four methods of interpretation known as *PaRDeS*,<sup>18</sup> following the arrangement of the laws elucidated in the four parts of the *Shulchan Arukh*.

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I hope to HaShem that your eyes will see amazing wonders in most places. "How great are HaShem's deeds, how mysterious His thoughts!"<sup>19</sup> With what is explained in these books, every person can understand and comprehend from afar the awesome and amazing greatness of each mitzvah and every law that derives from the details of that mitzvah. This is true even of the laws of interpersonal relations clarified in *Choshen Mishpat*, from which no one even considers deriving guidance, implicit or explicit, for serving HaShem. Yet HaShem's kindness prevails, so that through these books, one who is thirsty to hear the word of HaShem will satisfy his soul.

We know that from every part of the Torah, from all the laws and precepts contained in all its branches, we need to extract advice, guidance and hints for how to truly come close to HaShem. Rebbe Nachman explains this in the lesson *Chadi Rabi Shimon* in LM I, 61, that one should glean principles for upright behavior from everything he learns; see there. But not everyone is capable of doing this.

Yet with HaShem's help and His wondrous salvation, by means of these books I have somewhat opened the gate to uncover genuine guidance in all aspects of Torah study. In most cases, these are not merely allusions and allegories, but the true, deeper intention of the mitzvah. Reams of pages would not suffice for me to explain my words here. Nevertheless, the truly intelligent person will understand a bit if he sets his heart well to what is stated in these books and in the works of Rebbe Nachman.

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Now, although it may seem to the reader that in many places I have been wordy, going over the same point two or three times, know, dear reader, that this too was from HaShem, "Who is wonderful in counsel and exceedingly wise."<sup>20</sup>

Notes &amp; Sources

19 Paraphrase of Tehillim 92:6.

20 Yeshayahu 28:29.

למצא בהם לפעמים איזה דברים נפלאים, כאשר יראה המעיין בעיניו בהלכות תפילין הלכה ה ובהלכות ברכות השחר הלכה ג ובשאר מקומות. ולפעמים לקטתי איזה הקדמות מספר הא"ב.

וכל ההקדמות שהוצאתי מספרי רבנו ז"ל, וכל מה שערני ה' יתברך לחדש בהם, בכלם האיר ה' עיני למצא אותם באר היטב בפסוקי תנ"ך ובמאמרי רז"ל, בגמרא ומדרשים וספרי הזר הקדוש וכתבי האריז"ל, עד שהאיר ה' עיני להכניס אותם בדרך פרד"ס לתוך דיני המצות על פי סדר הלכותיהם המבארים בארבעה חלקי שלחן ערוך.

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וקויתי לה' אשר עיניך תראינה נפלאות ברב המקומות. מה גדלו מעשי ה' מאד עמקו מחשבותיו, כי על פי דברים האלה המבארים בספרים האלה יוכל כל אדם להבין ולהשכיל מרחוק גדלות נוראות ונפלאות כל מצוה ומצוה וכל דין ודין מפרטי המצוה. ואפלו הדינים שבין אדם לחברו, המבארים בחשן משפט, אשר אין איש שם על לב להבין מהם ומזים ודרכים לעבודת ה' יתברך. ובחסדי ה' באלו הספרים ירוה את נפשו הצמא לשמע דברי ה'.

פי זה ידוע שכל התורה וכל הדינים וההלכות שבכל חלקי התורה, מכלם צריכים להוציא עצות ודרכים ורמזים להתקרב אליו יתברך באמת. וכמבאר בדברי רבנו זכרוננו לברכה בהתורה "חדי רבי שמעון" בסיומן סא, שמכל הלמודים שהאדם לומד צריכים להוציא משפטי הנהגות ישרות וכו', עין שם. אבל לאו כל אדם זוכה לזה.

ובעזרת ה' וישועתו הנפלאה, באלו הספרים פתחתי שער קצת למצא דרכים אמתיות בכל למודי התורה הקדושה. וברב המקומות אינם בדרך רמז ודרוש לבד, פי אם כך הוא אמיתת הענין על פי סוד כונת המצוה. ובאור דברי אלה לא יספיקו המון יריעות לבאדם, אך המשפיל באמת, יבין מעט דברי אלה פשטים על לבו היטב להדברים הנאמרים בספרים אלה ובספרי רבנו.

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והנה אם אמנם ידמה להקורא לפנים ריהטא בכמה מקומות, אשר הארכת למעניתי וכפילתי ושלשתי הדברים בכמה וכמה מקומות. דע, ידי המעיין, כי גם זאת מעם ה' צבאות יצאה, אשר הפליא עצה, הגדיל תושיה.

Notes &amp; Sources

18 PaRDeS (פרדס, orchard) is an acronym for meaning), Drush (דרוש, homiletical meaning), Sod (סוד, esoteric or kabbalistic meaning).  
Pshat (פשט, literal meaning), Remez (רמז, allusive