**Elevating the Sparks**

***Rabbi Nachman of Breslov: The Deepest and Simplest of Jews***

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1. **Biography: An Incredible, Brief, Tragic Life**

* Born in 1772 in Międzybóż to Chassidic Royalty. Feiga his mother was the daughter of Udel the daughter of the Baal Shem Tov. Reb Simcha his father was the son of Rabbi Nachman Horodenker, a leading disciple of the Baal Shem Tov
* An Incredibly Precocious Child, Rebbe Nachman was acutely sensitive to his spiritual welfare as a child. He describes fasting to combat his evil inclination. At, the age of six he would pray at his great grandfather’s grave at the age six and immerse in the mikveh afterward.
* Married at 13 (Sashia) and moved to live near his Father in law. He moved to take a rabbinic post in Medvedenka when his father in law remarried.
* 1798- He set out on a pilgrimage to Israel.
* 1800- moved to Shpola. He got into a great dispute with Rabbi Leib, the Shpola Zeida.
* 1802- moved to Breslov. Here he attracted a multitude of Chassidim including Rabbi Nosson of Nemirov who is responsible for writing down his teachings.
* 1806- 1807- His infant son dies and a year later his wife dies of tuberculosis. Rabbi Nachman ultimately lost four children in infancy
* 1808- Likkutei Moharan is completed.
* 1810- His house in Breslov burnt down. Rabbi Nachman moved to Uman where he passes away that Sukkot.

1. Likkutei Moharan Tanina 25

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| *Hitbodedut* is the highest asset and greater than everything. That is, to set aside for oneself at least an hour or more for secluding oneself in some room or a field, and, using claims and excuses, speak one’s piece with one’s Maker; using words that evoke favor, placate and conciliate in order to entreat and plead with God that He bring one closer to Him—to genuine Divine worship.  This prayer and conversation should be in the language one normally uses, one’s native tongue, because it is difficult for a person to say everything he wants to say in the Holy Tongue. Also, being unfamiliar with that language, one’s heart is not moved by the words, as we are not accustomed to speaking Hebrew. But in our native tongue, in which we normally speak and converse, it is much easier and so more likely for one to feel contrition. This is because the heart is drawn to a person’s native tongue and closer to it, on account of his familiarity with it.  And in one’s native tongue one can express oneself fully. Everything that is in his heart he should express and tell to God: be it remorse and repentance for the past, or pleas to genuinely merit drawing closer to God from this day forward, or the like; each individual according to his level.  One should be very careful to make this a daily practice, at a scheduled time. But the rest of the day one should be happy, as mentioned above.  The benefit of this practice is extraordinarily great. It is an extremely good path and guideline for drawing closer to God, because it is a universal guideline that encompasses everything.  No matter what a person is lacking in worshiping God—even if he is totally and absolutely distant from God’s service—he should speak about it all and ask it of God, as mentioned above. | הַהִתְבּוֹדְדוּת הוּא מַעֲלָה עֶלְיוֹנָה וּגְדוֹלָה מִן הַכֹּל, דְּהַיְנוּ לִקְבֹּעַ לוֹ עַל־כָּל־פָּנִים שָׁעָה אוֹ יוֹתֵר לְהִתְבּוֹדֵד לְבַדּוֹ בְּאֵיזֶה חֶדֶר אוֹ בַּשָּׂדֶה, וּלְפָרֵשׁ שִׂיחָתוֹ בֵּינוֹ לְבֵין קוֹנוֹ בִּטְעָנוֹת וַאֲמַתְלָאוֹת, בְּדִבְרֵי חֵן וְרִצּוּי וּפִיּוּס, לְבַקֵּשׁ וּלְהִתְחַנֵּן מִלְּפָנָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ, שֶׁיְּקָרְבוֹ אֵלָיו לַעֲבוֹדָתוֹ בֶּאֱמֶת.  וּתְפִלָּה וְשִׂיחָה זוֹ יִהְיֶה בַּלָּשׁוֹן שֶׁמְּדַבְּרִים בּוֹ, דְּהַיְנוּ בִּלְשׁוֹן אַשְׁכְּנַז (בִּמְדִינָתֵנוּ), כִּי בִּלְשׁוֹן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ קָשֶׁה לוֹ לְפָרֵשׁ כָּל שִׂיחָתוֹ, וְגַם אֵין הַלֵּב נִמְשָׁךְ אַחֲרֵי הַדִּבּוּרִים, מֵחֲמַת שֶׁאֵינוֹ מֻרְגָּל כָּל־כָּךְ בְּהַלָּשׁוֹן, כִּי אֵין דַּרְכֵּנוּ לְדַבֵּר בִּלְשׁוֹן־הַקֹּדֶשׁ. אֲבָל בִּלְשׁוֹן אַשְׁכְּנַז, שֶׁמְּסַפְּרִים וּמְדַבְּרִים בּוֹ, קַל וְקָרוֹב יוֹתֵר לְשַׁבֵּר לִבּוֹ, כִּי הַלֵּב נִמְשָׁךְ וְקָרוֹב יוֹתֵר אֶל לְשׁוֹן אַשְׁכְּנַז, מֵחֲמַת שֶׁהוּא מֻרְגָּל בּוֹ.  וּבִלְשׁוֹן אַשְׁכְּנַז יָכוֹל לְפָרֵשׁ כָּל שִׂיחָתוֹ. וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עִם לְבָבוֹ יָשִׂיחַ וִיסַפֵּר לְפָנָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ, הֵן חֲרָטָה וּתְשׁוּבָה עַל הֶעָבָר, וְהֵן בַּקָּשַׁת תַחֲנוּנִים לִזְכּוֹת לְהִתְקָרֵב אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ מֵהַיּוֹם וְהָלְאָה בֶּאֱמֶת, וְכַיּוֹצֵא בָּזֶה כָּל חַד לְפוּם דַּרְגֵּהּ.  וְיִזָּהֵר מְאֹד לְהַרְגִּיל עַצְמוֹ לְהַתְמִיד בָּזֶה מִדֵּי יוֹם בְּיוֹם שָׁעָה מְיֻחֶדֶת כַּנַּ"ל, וּשְׁאָר הַיּוֹם יִהְיֶה בְּשִׂמְחָה כַּנַּ"ל.  וְהַנְהָגָה זוֹ הִיא גְּדוֹלָה בְּמַעֲלָה מְאֹד מְאֹד, וְהוּא דֶּרֶךְ וְעֵצָה טוֹבָה מְאֹד לְהִתְקָרֵב אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ, כִּי זֹאת הִיא עֵצָה כְּלָלִיוּת, שֶׁכּוֹלֵל הַכֹּל  כִּי עַל כָּל מַה שֶּׁיֶּחְסַר לוֹ בַּעֲבוֹדַת הַשֵּׁם, אוֹ אִם הוּא רָחוֹק לְגַמְרֵי מִכֹּל וָכֹל מֵעֲבוֹדָתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ – עַל הַכֹּל יְפָרֵשׁ שִׂיחָתוֹ וִיבַקֵּשׁ מֵאִתּוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ כַּנַּ"ל. |

1. Sichot HaRan 3

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| You may fall to the lowest depths, Heaven forbid. But no matter how far you have fallen, it is still forbidden to give up hope. Repentance is higher even than the Torah – therefore there is absolutely no place for despair.  If you are worthy, even your worst sins can be turned into something good. We are taught that sin can be transformed into merit (Yoma 86b). This idea contains deep mysteries, but the main lesson is that even from one’s failings and declines, one can easily return to God. Nothing is beyond His power. The most important thing is never to give up, but to continue to cry out and pray to God (cf. Tzaddik #565). | וַאֲפִלּוּ כְּשֶׁנּוֹפְלִים מְאֹד ח"ו, וְכָל אֶחָד נָפַל לְמָקוֹם שֶׁנָּפַל רַחֲמָנָא לִצְלָן, אַף־עַל־פִּי־כֵן אָסוּר לְיָאֵשׁ עַצְמוֹ. כִּי תְּשׁוּבָה גָּבוֹהַּ לְמַעְלָה מִן הַתּוֹרָה, עַל־כֵּן אֵין שׁוּם יֵאוּשׁ בָּעוֹלָם!  כִּי אִם יִזְכֶּה יִהְיוּ נַעֲשִׂין מֵעֲווֹנוֹתָיו עִנְיָן אַחֵר לְגַמְרֵי. וּכְמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרוּ חַכָמֵינוּ ז"ל (יוֹמָא פו:): שֶׁנִּתְהַפְּכִין הָעֲווֹנוֹת לִזְכֻיּוֹת. וְיֵשׁ בְּעִנְיָן זֶה סִתְרֵי נִסְתָּרוֹת. רַק הַכְּלָל: שֶׁמִּכָּל הַנְּפִילוֹת וְהַיְרִידוֹת שֶׁבָּעוֹלָם רַחֲמָנָא לִצְלָן יְכוֹלִים לַחֲזֹר אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּנָקֵל, כִּי לִגְדֻלָּתוֹ אֵין חֵקֶר. וְהָעִקָּר שֶׁהַכֹּל תָּלוּי בּוֹ: שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה מְיָאֵשׁ עַצְמוֹ מִלִּצְעֹק אֶל ה' וּלְהִתְחַנֵּן וּלְהִתְפַּלֵּל אֵלָיו יִתְבָּרַךְ תָּמִיד. |

1. Sichot HaRan 6

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| The Evil Inclination is like a prankster running through a crowd showing his tightly-closed hand. No one knows what he is holding. He goes up to each one and asks, “What do you suppose I have in my hand?”  Each one imagines that the closed hand contains just what he desires most. They all hurry and run after the prankster. Then, when he has tricked them all into following him, he opens his hand. It is completely empty.  The same is true of the Evil Inclination. He fools the world, tricking it into following him. All men think that his hand contains what they desire. In the end, he opens his hand. There is nothing in it and no desire is ever fulfilled.  Worldly pleasures are like sunbeams in a dark room. They may actually seem solid, but he who tries to grasp a sunbeam finds nothing in his hand. The same is true of all worldly desires. | הַיֵּצֶר הָרָע דּוֹמֶה כְּמוֹ מִי שֶׁהוֹלֵךְ וְרָץ בֵּין בְּנֵי־אָדָם, וְיָדוֹ סְגוּרָה וְאֵין אָדָם יוֹדֵעַ מַה בְּתוֹכָהּ. וְהוּא מְרַמֶּה בְּנֵי אָדָם וְשׁוֹאֵל לְכָל אֶחָד "מָה אֲנִי אוֹחֵז?"  וּלְכָל אֶחָד נִדְמֶה כְּאִלּוּ הוּא אוֹחֵז מַה שֶּׁהוּא מִתְאַוֶּה. וְעַל־כֵּן הַכֹּל רָצִים אַחֲרָיו, כִּי כָּל אֶחָד סוֹבֵר שֶׁיֵּשׁ בְּיָדוֹ מַה שֶּׁהוּא חָפֵץ. וְאַחַר־כָּךְ הוּא פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדוֹ וְאֵין בָּה כְּלוּם.  כְּמוֹ כֵן מַמָּשׁ הַיֵּצֶר הָרָע, שֶׁהוּא מְרַמֶּה כָּל הָעוֹלָם, וְהַכֹּל רָצִים אַחֲרָיו וּמְרַמֶּה לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד, עַד שֶׁנִּדְמֶה לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד כְּאִלּוּ יֵשׁ בְּיָדוֹ מַה שֶּׁהוּא חָפֵץ, כָּל אֶחָד כְּפִי שְׁטוּתוֹ וְתַאֲוָתוֹ. וְאַחַר־כָּךְ בַּסּוֹף הוּא פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדוֹ וְאֵין בָּהּ כְּלוּם, כִּי אֵין מִי שֶׁיְּמַלֵּא תַּאֲוָתוֹ אֶצְלוֹ.  גַּם נִדְמוּ כָּל הַתַּאֲווֹת שֶׁל הָעוֹלָם כְּמוֹ עַמּוּדֵי אוֹר הַנִּכְנָסִין בַּבַּיִת מִן אוֹר הַחַמָּה, כַּנִּרְאֶה בְּחוּשׁ שֶׁהֵם נִדְמִין לְעַמּוּדִים מֵחֲמַת הַזְּרִיחָה שֶׁל הַחַמָּה. וּכְאִלּוּ רוֹצִים לִתְפֹּס אוֹתָן הָעַמּוּדֵי אוֹר שֶׁתּוֹפְסִים וְחוֹטְפִים וְאֵין בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּד כְּלוּם, כָּךְ הֵם כָּל הַתַּאֲווֹת שֶׁל עוֹלָם הַזֶּה |

1. Likkutei Moharan 1:64

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| God created the world as a consequence of His compassion. For He wanted to reveal His compassion, and if Creation had not taken place, to whom would He have shown His compassion? He therefore created the entire creation, from the inception of Atzilut all the way down to the center point of the corporeal world, in order to display His compassion.  Yet when God wanted to create the world, there was no place in which to create it, since there was nothing but Ein Sof (the Infinite One). He therefore contracted the Light to the sides, and through this contraction the Vacated Space was made. Then, within this Vacated Space, all time and space came into existence—this being the creation of the world {as explained at the beginning of Etz Chaim} .  This Vacated Space was necessary for the creation of the world, since without the Vacated Space there would have been no place in which to create the world, as explained above. Yet, understanding and comprehending this contraction [that resulted in the formation] of the Vacated Space will be possible only in the Future, since it is necessary to say about it two contradictory things: existence and nonexistence.  The Vacated Space is the result of the contraction; that [God], so to speak, withdrew His Godliness from that place. Thus there is, so to speak, no Godliness there. Were it not so, it would not be vacated. There would then be nothing but Ein Sof, with no place whatsoever for the world’s creation. However the actual truth is that, even so, there is surely Godliness there as well. For there is surely nothing without His life-force. This is why it is not at all possible to comprehend the concept of the Vacated Space until the Future. | כִּי הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ מֵחֲמַת רַחֲמָנוּתוֹ בָּרָא אֶת הָעוֹלָם, כִּי רָצָה לְגַלּוֹת רַחֲמָנוּתוֹ, וְאִם לֹא הָיָה בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם עַל מִי הָיָה מַרְאֶה רַחֲמָנוּתוֹ. וְעַל כֵּן בָּרָא אֶת כָּל הַבְּרִיאָה מִתְּחִלַּת הָאֲצִילוּת, עַד סוֹף נְקֻדַּת הַמֶּרְכָּז שֶׁל עוֹלָם הַגַּשְׁמִי, כְּדֵי לְהַרְאוֹת רַחֲמָנוּתוֹ.  וְכַאֲשֶׁר רָצָה הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ לִבְרֹא אֶת הָעוֹלָם, לֹא הָיָה מָקוֹם לְבָרְאוֹ, מֵחֲמַת שֶׁהָיָה הַכֹּל אֵין סוֹף, עַל־כֵּן צִמְצֵם אֶת הָאוֹר לִצְדָדִין, וְעַל יְדֵי הַצִּמְצוּם הַזֶּה נַעֲשָׂה חָלָל הַפָּנוּי, וּבְתוֹךְ הֶחָלָל הַפָּנוּי הַזֶּה, נִתְהַוּוּ כָּל הַיָּמִים וְהַמִּדּוֹת, שֶׁהֵם בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם (כמ"ש בעץ חיים בתחילתוֹ).  וְזֶה הֶחָלָל הַפָּנוּי הָיָה מֻכְרָח לִבְרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם, כִּי בִּלְתִּי הֶחָלָל הַפָּנוּי לֹא הָיָה שׁוּם מָקוֹם לִבְרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם כַּנַּ"ל. וְזֶה הַצִּמְצוּם שֶׁל הֶחָלָל הַפָּנוּי אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהָבִין וּלְהַשִּׂיג כִּי אִם לֶעָתִיד לָבוֹא, כִּי צָרִיךְ לוֹמַר בּוֹ שְׁנֵי הֲפָכִים: יֵשׁ וָאַיִן,  כִּי הֶחָלָל הַפָּנוּי הוּא עַל־יְדֵי הַצִּמְצוּם, שֶׁכִּבְיָכוֹל צִמְצֵם אֱלֹקוּתוֹ מִשָּׁם, וְאֵין שָׁם אֱלֹקוּת כִּבְיָכוֹל, כִּי אִם לֹא כֵן אֵינוֹ פָּנוּי, וְהַכֹּל אֵין סוֹף, וְאֵין מָקוֹם לִבְרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם כְּלָל. אֲבָל בֶּאֱמֶת לַאֲמִתּוֹ, בְּוַדַּאי אַף־עַל־פִּי־כֵן יֵשׁ שָׁם גַּם כֵּן אֱלֹקוּת, כִּי בְּוַדַּאי אֵין שׁוּם דָּבָר בִּלְעֲדֵי חִיּוּתוֹ, וְעַל־כֵּן אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהַשִּׂיג כְּלָל בְּחִינַת חָלָל הַפָּנוּי עַד לֶעָתִיד לָבוֹא: |