



חומש דברים

THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation
and Commentary Based on the Works of*

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

וצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

Chumash Devarim

The Book of Deuteronomy

Parshat Nitzavim



Kehot Publication Society

770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn NY 11213

5772/2012

THE TORAH - CHUMASH DEVARIM

WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Copyright © 2006-2012
by
Chabad of California

A project of
Chabad of California
741 Gayley Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90024
310-208-7511 / Fax 310-208-5811

Published by
Kehot Publication Society
770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-774-4000 / Fax 718-774-2718
editor@kehot.com

Order Department:
291 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11213
718-778-0226 / Fax 718-778-4148
www.kehot.com

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book
or portions thereof, in any form, without permission,
in writing, from Chabad of California, Inc.

The Kehot logo is a trademark
of Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-8266-0193-3
ISBN: 978-0-8266-0195-2 (set)

Published in the United States of America



GENESIS

Bereishit
Noach
Lech Lecha
Vayeira
Chayei Sarah
Toldot
Vayeitzei
Vayishlach
Vayeishev
Mikeitz
Vayigash
Vayechi

EXODUS

Shemot
Va'eira
Bo
Beshalach
Yitro
Mishpatim
Terumah
Tetzaveh
Tisa
Vayakheil
Pekudei

LEVITICUS

Vayikra
Tzav
Shemini
Tazria
Metzora
Acharei Mot
Kedoshim
Emor
Behar
Bechukotai

NUMBERS

Bemidbar
Naso
Beha'alotecha
Shelach
Korach
Chukat
Balak
Pinchas
Matot
Masei

DEUTERONOMY

Devarim
Va'etchanan
Eikev
Re'eh
Shoftim
Teitzei
Tavo

Nitzavim נעבים

51

Vayeilech
Ha'azinu
Vezot Habrachah



נִצָּבִים Nitzavim

Overview

As we said previously,¹ in the third and final section of the Book of Deuteronomy Moses summarizes the covenantal relationship between God and the Jewish people. After having discussed the consequences of honoring and violating the terms of this covenant in *parashat Tavo*, he focuses on its essential nature in the following two *parashiot*, *Nitzavim* and *Vayeilech*.

For the public reading of the Torah on the Sabbath, these two *parashiot* are, in most years, read together. In fact, according to some opinions, they are actually one *parashah*, which is only occasionally split into two.² Their common theme, as we said, is the covenant: *Parashat Nitzavim* focuses on God's side of this covenant, while *parashat Vayeilech* focuses on the Jewish people's side.

This difference in focus is first of all reflected in the names of these two *parashiot*. *Nitzavim* means "standing" and *Vayeilech* means "and he walked." The adjective "standing," implying the maintenance of a firm and immutable posture, is most aptly applied to God, who by definition is absolute, unchanging perfection: "I am God, I have not changed."³ The Jew, however, is intended to walk an infinite road of self-refinement, always changing. "Thus said the God of Hosts: 'If you walk in My paths and keep My charge, you also will rule My House and guard My courts, and I will enable you to walk, in contrast to these [angels,] who [only] stand stationary.'"⁴



A covenant is a bond of love that transcends rationality. Even though the rational reasons that foster love may be absent at some point, the parties to the covenant agree to continue loving each other nonetheless.

The way we evoke this super-rational attitude in how God relates to us is by first evoking it in ourselves, by cultivating our love for our fellow Jews. By loving each other—even when the rational reasons that would foster such mutual love may be absent—we are manifesting our super-rational relationship with our fellow Jews. We are thus taught that loving our fellow Jew is the highest expression of our love of God. "I have loved you, says

1. Overview to *Tavo*.

2. R. Sa'adia Gaon, *Siddur*, s.v. *Keriat HaTorah*; see *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 298.

3. Malachi 3:6.

4. Zechariah 3:7.

God,”⁵ and, in the words of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, “if we truly love God, we love what He loves, the Jewish people.”⁶

Nonetheless, the mere sentiment of love, however praiseworthy, is not enough; the sentiment must be translated into action. After all, we know God loves us no matter what and He knows we love Him likewise; what the covenant is meant to ensure is that He always *treats* us lovingly in response to our manifesting our love toward Him. Moses therefore enjoins us not just to love each other but to “stand together,” in unity, treating each other lovingly and functioning together as a whole. This is the preparation and prerequisite for entering into the covenantal relationship of love with God.

Hence, when Moses begins to describe the new covenant the people are about to enter into with God, he points out that its effectiveness is contingent upon all Jews uniting together: “You are all standing today before God, your God—the leaders of your tribes, your elders, your sheriffs, every Israelite man, your young children, your womenfolk, your converts who have been accepted into your camp, your woodchoppers, and your water drawers—in order that you may enter into a covenant with God, your God...”⁷

How can we truly unite? After all, the Torah itself implies that there are differences between Jews: some are “your leaders” while others are “your water drawers.” What could a prestigious leader and a rank-and-file Jew possibly have in common?

The answer to this is threefold: first, who is to say who is ultimately higher on the ladder of achievement? Appearances can be deceiving, and we tend to over-evaluate ourselves while under-evaluating others. Secondly, even if we have evaluated ourselves correctly, just because we are a leader in one particular aspect of life does not mean that there are not other aspects of life in which others are leaders. In truth, “everyone is completed by his fellow”⁸; everyone is a leader in some way, and therefore, the perfection of the Jewish people is dependent on the inclusion of every Jew in the collective body.

Thirdly, the conceptual distance between any creature and the Creator is infinite. Thus, when we set out to evaluate ourselves in terms of our relationship with God, the profundity of our own worthlessness in the face of God’s absolute reality will neutralize any presumptions of superiority we may entertain vis-à-vis another person. We will be so overwhelmed by our own smallness that such a comparison will seem preposterous!⁹

When we consider these three perspectives, we can truly stand together, united, not only with feelings of love toward each other but with behavior that testifies to the truth of those feelings.



There are several levels of unity: There is the loose bond that joins us when we unite for a common cause. We remain individuals with our own private agendas, but our common devotion to a specific goal enables us to unite and act as a unit. This is a pragmatic arrangement rather than true unity, the proof being that once the goal is achieved, the union disbands.

In contrast, a true bond that results when we, as members of a group, sense that every member of the group has a unique contribution to make to all the others. This sense of mutual cross-completion impresses on each of us that we need every other individual, and

5. Malachi 1:2.

6. *HaYom Yom*, 28 Nisan, from *Igrot Kodesh Mehorayatz*, vol. 3, pp. 425, 437.

7. Deuteronomy 29:9-11.

8. *Igeret HaKodesh* 22.

9. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 2, pp. 398-400.

that we cannot achieve our own fulfillment without them all.

Nonetheless, in such a union, each individual remains aware of himself or herself as an individual. A yet higher unity results when each individual feels as though he is part of a collective body. In a well-functioning body, not only does each limb make a unique and indispensable contribution to the well-being of every other limb; the individual limbs have no real significance outside the context of the body.

These latter two forms of unity are both essential elements of true Jewish unity. Ideally, we should both *emphasize* our individuality and that of our fellow Jews—our unique contribution to the whole—and *surrender* our individuality to our identity with the collective whole of the Jewish people. Nonetheless, in daily life, our chief emphasis is on the first of the two types of unity, for being aware of our mutual interdependence despite our individuality is a true indication that Divine consciousness has permeated even our self-awareness, our lower states of consciousness.

Furthermore, these two types of unity are themselves interdependent. Only when we operate on a day-to-day basis on the premise that we are mutually interdependent can we hope to ultimately feel like one entity. And only if we realize that ultimately we are all one entity can we realize on a day-to-day basis that we need each other.



We can now understand why it was so crucial for Moses to reiterate and review the covenantal bond between God and the Jewish people as their final preparation for entering the Land of Israel.

As we said, the covenant with God is reflected in the interdependence of the Jewish people. As they were about to cross the Jordan, it was vital that they be forged into a *nation*—not remaining a mere confederation of individuals united for a common purpose, but becoming a new entity, a whole greater than the sum of its parts. The expression of this wholeness was the fact that every Jew became responsible for every other Jew's observance of the Torah's commandments, encouraging them to perform the commandments and preventing them from violating them.¹⁰ In the desert, the Jews could indulge in considering themselves individuals first and members of some vague notion of nation second. Now, as they stood poised to commence a life as a nation, this orientation had to change.

Moses therefore brought us now into the covenant with God a final time. In so doing, he imbued each one of us with the awareness that we can never be complete without all our fellow Jews, and that ultimately, we are all parts of one collective body. With this awareness, we are ready to enter the Promised Land and together transform it and the whole world into God's home.¹¹

10. Or HaChaim here.

11. Likutei Torah 4:44a; Likutei Sichot, vol. 4, pp. 1141 ff.

— ONKELOS —

9 אתון קנימין יומא דין בלכון
קדם יי אלהכון ורשיכון שבטיכון
סביכון וסרכיכון כל אנש ישראל:
10 טפלכון נשיכון וגירוף די בגו
משריתך מלקט אעיק עד מלי
מיך: 11 לאעלותך בקימא דיי
אלהך ובמומתה די יי אלהך גזר
עמך יומא דין: 12 בדיל לאקמא
יתך יומא דין קדמוהי לעמא והוא
יהי לך לאלה במא די מליל לך
ובמא די קיים לאבהתך לאברהם
ליצחק וליעקב: 13 ולא עמכון
בלחודיכון אגא גזר ית קימא הדין
וית מומתא הדא: 14 ארי ית מאן
דיאיתוהי הקא עמנא קאם יומא
דין קדם יי אלהנא וית מאן די
ליתוהי הקא עמנא יומא דין:

29:9 אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני יהוה אלהיכם
ראשיכם שבטיכם וקניכם ושטריכם כל איש ישראל:
10 מטפכם נשיכם וגרף אשר בקרב מחניך מחטב
עציד עד שאב מימך: 11 לעברך בבגדית יהוה אלהיך
ובאלתו אשר יהוה אלהיך ברת עמך היום:

◆ שני 12 למען הקים אתך היום | לו לעם והוא יהיה
לך לאלהים כאשר דבר-לך וכאשר נשבע לאבותיך
לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב: 13 ולא אתכם לבדכם אנכי
ברת את-הברית הזאת ואת-האלה הזאת: 14 כי את-
אשר ישנו פה עמנו עמד היום לפני יהוה אלהינו ואת
אשר איננו פה עמנו היום:

— RASHI —

מכם. עד כאן פרשתי לפי פשוטו של פרש. ומדרש
אגדה: למה נסמכה פרשת "אתם נצבים" לקללות?
לפי ששמעו ישראל מאה קללות חסר שנים, חוץ
מארבעים ותשע שבתורת כהנים, הוריקו פניהם
ואמרו: מי יוכל לעמוד באלו התחיל משה לפיסם:
"אתם נצבים היום" — הרבה הכעסותם למקום ולא
עשה אתכם בליה, והרי אתם קמים לפניו: היום.
כיום הזה שהוא קים והוא מאפיל ומאיר, כך האיר
לכם וכה עתיד להאיר לכם, והקללות והיסורין
מקיימין אתכם ומציבין אתכם לפניו. ואף הפרשה
שלמעלה מזו פיוסין הם — "אתם ראיתם את כל"
וגו'. דבר אחר: "אתם נצבים", לפי שהיו ישראל
יוצאין מפרנס לפרנס, ממש ליהושע, לפיכך
עשה אותם מצבה כדי לזרזם, וכן עשה יהושע,
וכן שמואל: "התיצבו ואשפטה אתכם" — כשיצאו
מידו ונכנסו לידו של שאל: 14 ואת אשר איננו פה.
ואף עם דורות העתידים להיות:

9 אתם נצבים. מלמד שכנסם משה לפני הקדוש
ברוך הוא ביום מותו, להכניסם בברית: ראשיכם
שבטיכם. ראשיכם לשבטיכם: וקניכם ושטריכם.
החשוב חשוב קודם, ואחר כך "כל איש ישראל":
10 מחטב עציד. מלמד שבאו בנעניים להתגיר בימי
משה, כדרך שבאו גבעונים בימי יהושע, וזהו האמור
בגבעונים: "ויעשו גם המה בערמה", ונתנם משה
חוטבי עצים ושואבי מים: 11 לעברך. להיוותך עובר
בברית. ולא יתכן לפרשו כמו "להעבירה", אלא
כמו: "לעשותכם אתם": לעברך בברית. דרך העברה,
כה היו בורתי בריתות עושין מחיצה מכאן ומחיצה
מכאן ועוברים ביניהם, כמו שנאמר: "העגל אשר
ברתי לשנים ויעברו בין בטריו": 12 למען הקים
אתך היום לו לעם. כל כך הוא נכנס לטרוח, למען
קים אותך לפניו לעם: והוא יהיה לך לאלהים. לפי
שדבר לך ונשבע לאבותיך שלא להחליף את ירעם
באמה אחרת, לכה הוא אוסר אתכם בשבועות
הללו, שלא תקניטוהו אחר שהוא אינו יכול להבדל

1. יהושע ט, ד. 2. דברים ד, יד. 3. ירמיה לד, יח. 4. תנחומא. 5. שמואל"א יב, ו.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

Thus, although we are the smallest of nations,⁸ with respect to issues involving the Torah, its commandments, or fulfilling our Divine mission in general—to transform the world into God's home—we need

not fear being outnumbered, for we stand together with the merits of all the generations of the Jewish people.⁹

8. Deuteronomy 7:7. 9. Likutei Sichot, vol. 19, p. 273.

A Second Covenant

29:9 Moses continued, “**You are all standing today before God, your God** (beginning with the men, in order of importance: **the leaders of your tribes, your elders, your sheriffs, and every Israelite man;**

10 followed by your young children,¹ your womenfolk, and your converts who have been accepted into your camp, including the recent converts, whom I appointed to be your woodcutters and your water drawers)²

11 because I have assembled you specifically in order that you may enter into a second covenant with God, your God—and, in order to make this covenant permanent,³ to take His oath to uphold it—which God, your God, is making with you today

- ◆ **Second Reading 12 in order to permanently establish you today as His people, so that He can be your God for all time, as He spoke concerning you and as He swore to your forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** If, however, you do not enter into this second covenant with God and swear to uphold it, He will not be able to keep the promise He made to your ancestors—to make their descendants for all time His chosen people—for the following reason:

13 In the first covenant that God made with you, when He gave you the Torah at Mount Sinai, you did become His chosen people,⁴ but that covenant applied only to our generation. Moreover, it was contingent upon your continued adherence to its terms, as evidenced by the fact that it had to be renewed after you violated it in the incident of the Golden Calf.⁵ God now wants your covenantal relationship with Him to be absolute—not subject to abrogation by any vagaries in your behavior; only in this way will you be able to remain His chosen people forever. To that end, I am not making this covenant and administering this oath on God’s behalf⁶ solely with you and only consequently—by proxy—with future generations;

14 rather, I am making it directly with those standing here with us today before God, our God, and, at the same time, directly with all future generations of Jews who are not present here with us today.⁷ Thus, every future Jew, rather than being obligated to observe the commandments and being privileged to enjoy the accompanying unique relationship with God only indirectly, by virtue of the covenant made between God and the Jewish people in the past, will instead be a *direct* party to this covenant.

∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

14 With all future generations: The Torah transcends the limitations of time and space. Therefore, even today, affirming our covenant with God by resolving to study the Torah and perform its com-

mandments, immediately and spontaneously unites us with every Jew in the world and every generation of the Jewish people—past, present, and future—thereby garnering their support in our resolve.

1. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 260-261. 2. Numbers 36:13; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 114-117, vol. 23, p. 286. 3. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 24, p. 190. 4. Exodus 24:1-11. 5. Exodus 34:11-27. 6. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 269. 7. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 266-272, vol. 24, pp. 188-191.

ONKELOS

15 אָרִי אַתּוֹן יִדְעָתוֹן יֵת דִּי תִּבְנָא
בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם וְיֵת דִּי עֲבָרָא
בְּגוּ עֲמִמָּא דִּי עֲבָרָתוֹן: 16 וְחִזִּיתוֹן
יֵת שְׁקֻצֵּיהוֹן וְיֵת טַעוּתוֹן אַעֲבָא
וְאִבְנָא בְּסַפָּא וְיִדְבָּקָא דִּי עֲמָהוֹן:
17 דְּלִמָּא אֵית בְּכוֹן גָּבֵר אִו אַתְּמָא
אִו וְזָרְעִית אִו שְׂבָטָא דִּי לְבָה פְּנִי
יִזְמָא דִּין מִדְּחִלְתָּא דִּין אֶלְהָנָא
לְמַחֲרָא לְמַפְלָח יֵת טַעוּת עֲמִמָּא
הָאֲנוֹן דְּלִמָּא אֵית בְּכוֹן גָּבֵר
מִהֲרַהֲרָא חֲטָאִין אִו וְדוֹן: 18 וְיִהִי
בְּמִשְׁמַעֲהָ יֵת פִּתְגָּמִי מוֹמְתָא הָדָא
וְיִחֲשֹׁב בְּלִבָּהּ לְמִימָר שְׁלָמָא יְהִי
לִי אָרִי בְּהִרְהוּרָא לְבִי אָנָּא אִוֹל
בְּדִיל לְאוֹסְפָא לַה חֲטָאִי שְׁלוּתָא
עַל וְדִנְתָּא: 19 לֹא יִיבִי יֵי לְמַשְׁבַּק
לַה אָרִי בְּכוֹן יִתְקַף רְגָזָא דִּין
וְחִמְתָּהּ בְּגִבְרָא הַהוּא וְיִדְבָּקוֹן בָּהּ
כָּל לְוִטִּיא דְּכִתְיָבִין בְּסַפְרָא הָדִין
וְיִחֲמִי יֵי יֵת שְׁמָהּ מִתְּחִלָּה שְׁמָא:
20 וְיִפְרֹשֶׁנָּה יֵי לְבִישָׁא מְכַל
שְׂבָטִיא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל לְוִטִּי קָמָא
דְּכִתְיָבִין בְּסַפְרָא אוֹרִיתָא הָדִין:
21 וְיִימָר דְּרָא בְּתִרְעָה בְּנִיכּוֹן דִּי
יְקוֹמֵן מִבְּתִרְיָכוֹן וְכִר עֲמִמָּא דִּינִי
מֵאַרְעָא רְחִיקָא וְיִחֲזוֹן יֵת מִתְּחִלָּה
דְּאַרְעָא הַהִיא וְיֵת מְרַעָה דִּי
אַמְרֵע יֵי בָהּ:

◆ **שלישי 15** כִּי־אַתֶּם יֹדְעֹתֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁכְּנוּ בָּאָרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר־עָבְרָנוּ בְּקֶרֶב הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר עָבַרְתֶּם:
16 וְתִרְאוּ אֶת־שְׁקֻצֵּיהֶם וְאֵת גִּלְגָּלֵיהֶם עֵץ וְאִבְנֵן בְּסֶפֶר
וְזָהָב אֲשֶׁר עֲמָהֶם: 17 פְּנִי־יֵשׁ בְּכֶם אִישׁ אוֹ־אִשָּׁה אוֹ
מִשְׁפָּחָה אוֹ־שְׂבֵט אֲשֶׁר לְבָבוֹ פָּנָה הַיּוֹם מִעַם יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ לָלֶכֶת לַעֲבֹד אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם הָהֵם פְּנִי־יֵשׁ בְּכֶם
שֶׁרֶשׁ פָּרָה רֹאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה: 18 וְהָיָה בְּשִׁמְעוֹ אֶת־דְּבָרֵי
הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבְּהוּ לְאֹמֶר שְׁלֹם יְהִי־לִי
כִּי בִשְׂרָרוֹת לְבִי אֵלֶךְ לְמַעַן סְפוֹת הָרֹוֹה אֶת־הַצִּמְאָה:
19 לֹא־יֵאבֹה יְהוָה סִלַּח לוֹ כִּי אֲנִי יַעֲשֶׂן אֶפֶי־יְהוָה
וְקִנְיָתוֹ בְּאִישׁ הַהוּא וְרִבְצָה בּוֹ כָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים הַכְּתוּבָה
בְּסַפֵּר הַזֶּה וּמַחֲהָ יְהוָה אֶת־שְׁמוֹ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:
20 וְהִבְדִּילֹו יְהוָה לְרַעְיָה מִכָּל שְׂבָטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־אֱלֹת
הַבְּרִית הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסַפֵּר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה: 21 וְאָמַר הַדּוֹר
הָאַחֲרוֹן בְּנִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר יָקוּמוּ מֵאַחֲרֵיכֶם וְהִנְכִּרִי אֲשֶׁר
יָבֹא מֵאַרְץ רְחוֹקָה וְרָאוּ אֶת־מַבֹּט הָאָרֶץ הַהוּא וְאֶת־
תַּחֲלָאִיהָ אֲשֶׁר־חָלָה יְהוָה בָּהּ:

RASHI

שְׂאֵצְרֵם עִם הַמִּזִּיד וְאַפְרַע מִמֶּנּוּ הַכֹּל. וְכֵן תִּרְגְּמוּ
אֶנְקְלוֹס: "בְּדִיל לְאוֹסְפָא לַה חֲטָאִי שְׁלוּתָא עַל
וְדִנְתָּא" — שְׂאוּסִיף לוֹ אֲנִי הַשְׁגָּנוֹת עַל הַדִּינוֹת:
הָרָוֹה. שׁוֹגֵג, שְׁהוּא עוֹשֶׂה כְּאֵדָם שְׂכוֹר שְׁלֹא מִדַּעַת:
הַצִּמְאָה. שְׁהוּא עוֹשֶׂה מִדַּעַת וּבִתְנָא: 19 יַעֲשֶׂן
אֶפֶי ה'. עַל דִּי כַּעַס, הַגּוֹף מִתְּחַמֵּם, וְהַעֲשֵׂן יוֹצֵא מִן
הָאֶף. וְכֵן: "עֲלָה עֲשֵׂן בְּאֶפֶס". וְאֶף עַל פִּי שְׁאִין זֶה
לְפָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם, הַכְּתוּב מְשַׁמֵּעַ אֶת הָאֵזֶן כְּדֶרֶךְ שְׁהִיא
רְגִילָה וְיִכּוֹלָה לְשַׁמֹּעַ, כְּפִי דְרָךְ הָאָרֶץ: וְקִנְיָתָהּ.
לְשׁוֹן חֲמָה, אֵינִפְרִינְמִנִי"ט" — אֲחִיזוֹת לְבִישֵׁת נִקְמָה,
וְאֵינוּ מַעֲבִיר עַל הַמִּדָּה: 20 הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסַפֵּר הַתּוֹרָה
הַזֶּה. וְלַמַּעַל־הִיא אֹמֶר: "גַּם כָּל חָלִי וְכָל מִכָּה וְגו'".
בְּסַפֵּר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת" — "הַזֹּאת" לְשׁוֹן נִקְבָּה, מוֹסֵב
עַל הַ"תּוֹרָה", הַ"הִזָּה" לְשׁוֹן זָכָר, מוֹסֵב עַל הַ"סֵפֶר".
וְעַל דִּי פְסוּק הַטַּעֲמִים הֵן נִחְלָקִין לְשִׁמְתִי לְשׁוֹנוֹת
— בְּפִרְשֵׁת הַקְּלָלוֹת הַטַּפְחָא נְתוּנָה תַּחַת "בְּסַפֵּר",
וְ"הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת" דְּבוּקִים זֶה לָזֶה, לְכָף אָמַר "הַזֹּאת".
וְכָאן הַטַּפְחָא נְתוּנָה תַּחַת "הַתּוֹרָה", נִמְצָא "סֵפֶר
הַתּוֹרָה" דְּבוּקִים זֶה לָזֶה, לְפִיכָף לְשׁוֹן זָכָר נּוֹפֵל
אַחֲרָיו, שְׁהִלְשׁוֹן נּוֹפֵל עַל הַ"סֵפֶר":

15 כִּי אַתֶּם יֹדְעֹתֶם וְגו' וְתִרְאוּ אֶת שְׁקֻצֵּיהֶם. לְפִי
שְׂרָאִיתִם הָאֲמוֹת עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה, וְשְׁמָא הִשְׁיֵא
לָב אֶחָד מִכֶּם אוֹתוֹ לָלֶכֶת אַחֲרֵיהֶם, "פֶּן יֵשׁ בְּכֶם"
וְגו', לְפִיכָף אֲנִי צָרִיף לְהַשְׁבִּיעֶכֶם: 16 וְתִרְאוּ אֶת
שְׁקֻצֵּיהֶם. עַל שֵׁם שְׁהֵם מֵאוֹסִים בְּשִׁקְצִים: גִּלְגָּלֵיהֶם.
שְׁמִסְרָהִים וּמֵאוֹסִין בְּגִלְגָּל: עֵץ וְאִבְנֵן. אוֹתָן שֵׁל עֲצִים
וְשֵׁל אֲבָנִים רָאִיתֶם בְּגִלְוִי, לְפִי שְׁאִין הַגּוֹיִם יִרְאִים
שְׁמָא יִגְבּוּ. אֲבָל שֵׁל "כֶּסֶף וְזָהָב" — עֲמָהֶם" בְּחִדְרֵי
מִשְׁכֵּיתֶם הֵם, לְפִי שְׁהֵם יִרְאִים שְׁמָא יִגְבּוּ: 17 פֶּן
יֵשׁ בְּכֶם. שְׁמָא יֵשׁ בְּכֶם: אֲשֶׁר לְבָבוֹ פָּנָה הַיּוֹם. מִלְּקַבֵּל
עֲלֵיו הַבְּרִית: שֶׁרֶשׁ פָּרָה רֹאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה. שֶׁרֶשׁ מְגִדֵּל
עֲשֵׂב מֵר, בְּגִידִין שְׁהֵם מְרִים, כְּלוֹמֵר — מִפְּרָה
וּמִרְבָּה רִשֵׁעַ בְּקֶרֶבְכֶם: 18 וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבְּהוּ. לְשׁוֹן
בְּרָכָה, יִחְשׁוֹב בְּלִבּוֹ בְּרַפְתִּי שְׁלֹם לְעַצְמוֹ, לֵאמֹר: לֹא
יְבוֹאוּנִי קְלָלוֹת הַלָּלוּ, אֶף "שְׁלֹם יְהִי לִי". וְהִתְבָּרַךְ.
בִּינְדִיר"א שִׁי" בְּלַעֲזָה, כְּמוֹ: "וְהִתְגַּלַּח", "וְהִתְפַּלֵּל":
בִּשְׂרָרוֹת לְבִי אֵלֶךְ. בְּמִרְאִית לְבִי, כְּמוֹ: "אֲשׁוּרְנוּ
וְלֹא קְרוֹב", כְּלוֹמֵר: מִה שְׁלִבִּי רּוֹאֶה לְעִשׂוֹת: לְמַעַן
סְפוֹת הָרָוֹה. לְפִי שְׂאוּסִיף לוֹ פְּרַעְנוֹת עַל מִה שְׁעִשָּׂה
עַד הַנָּה בְּשׁוֹגֵג, וְהִיטִי מַעֲבִיר עֲלֵיהֶם, וְגוֹרֵם עֲתָה

6. וְכָךְ אֵת עֲצֻמוֹ. 7. וְיִקְרָא יג, לג. 8. מִלְכִּיסָא ח, מב. 9. בַּמִּדְבָּר כד, יז. 10. תַּחֲלִים יח, ט. 11. חֲרֹרְאָף. 12. דְּבָרִים כח, סא.

◆ **Third Reading 15** The reason why I must make this additional covenant between you and God is **because you know how** we suffered when **we dwelt in Egypt, and how we passed through** the territories of **the nations that you encountered** on our way during the ensuing 40 years.

16 You saw their loathsome and repugnant idols of **wood and stone**, for they were not afraid to display these publicly, and you were also aware of their idols of **silver and gold, which** they kept hidden **with them** because they were afraid of their being stolen.

17 Having seen and heard about these idols and their cults, **perhaps there is among you**—or will be among future generations of Jews¹⁰—**a man, woman, family, or tribe, whose heart is straying today** (or will stray in the future) **from** being covenantally bound to **God, our God**, who will induce you **to go and worship the deities of those nations. Perhaps there is among you**, figuratively speaking, **a root that produces** poison **hemlock and bitter wormwood**, i.e., an individual or group of people who will spread idolatry among you.

18 When such an individual (or group—and so for the rest of the discussion) **hears the words of this oath, he may bless himself in his heart**, deluding himself into thinking that he is immune to the curses he has heard, **saying, ‘I will continue to enjoy peace of mind even if I follow my heart’s desires.’** As a result, God will **add the punishment** for this individual’s or group’s previous, unintentional sins (which were committed inadvertently, as if in a state of **drunkenness**, and which He had overlooked until now) **to the punishment** of their intentional sins (which were committed deliberately, as if **thirsty** to do so).

19 **God will not be willing to forgive him, for God’s fury and His zeal will then fume against that man, and the entire curse written in this scroll will come down upon him, and God will obliterate his name from under heaven**, i.e., from the whole world.

20 **God will single him out from among all the tribes of Israel for evil, dealing with him in accordance with all the curses of the covenant written in this Torah scroll.**

21 **A later generation, made up of your descendants who will arise after you, along with the foreigner who comes from a distant land, will say, upon seeing the plagues of that land and the diseases with which God struck it:**

—∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞—

18 To add the drunkenness to the thirsty: Allegorically, the human-animal soul is referred to as “drunk.” It indeed longs for pleasure, but the pleasure it longs for is purely physical. Inasmuch as this form of pleasure is readily available to it, it can easily quench its thirst.

In contrast, the Godly soul thirsts for Godliness. This thirst can never be quenched as long as the Godly soul is clothed in the physical body and faced with the concealment of this world. Only in the messianic future, when Godliness will be openly revealed, will the Divine soul be “drunk” with Divinity.¹¹

¹⁰ *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 270, note 27. ¹¹ *Or HaTorah, Devarim*, p. 1193.

— ONKELOS —

22 וּפָרַתָּא וּמִלְחָא וְקִידָא כָּל אַרְעָה לֹא תוֹדְרַע וְלֹא תַצְמַח וְלֹא יִסַּךְ בָּהּ כָּל עֶסְבָּא כְּמַהֲפֻכְתָּא דְסָדֵם וְעַמְרָה אֲדָמָה וְצִבּוּיִם דִּי הֶפֶךְ יִי בְרָגוּהּ וּבְחֻמְתָּהּ: 23 וְיִימְרוּן כָּל עַמְמֵיָא עַל מָא עֶבֶד יִי כְדִין לְאַרְעָא הָדָא מָא תְקוּף רְגוּזָא רַבָּא הָדִין: 24 וְיִימְרוּן עַל דְּשִׁבְקוֹ יֵת קִימָא דִּי אֱלֹהֵא דְאַבְהָתָהוֹן דִּי גִזַּר עֲמָהוֹן בְּאַפְקוּתָהּ יִתְהוֹן מֵאַרְעָא דְמִצְרַיִם: 25 וְאַזְלוּ וּפְלַחוּ לְטַעוֹת עַמְמֵיָא וּסְגִידוּ לְהוֹן דִּחְלוֹן דִּי לֹא יִדְעוּן וְלֹא אוֹטִיבָא לְהוֹן: 26 וְתִקַּף רְגוּזָא דִּי בְּאַרְעָא הַזֵּה יֵת לֵאמֹרָה עֲלֵה יֵת כָּל לְוִיטָא דְכַתִּיבִין בְּסִפְרָא הָדִין: 27 וְטִלְטְלוּן יִי מֵעַל אַרְעָהוֹן בְּרָגוּ וּבְחֻמָּא וּבְתִקּוּף רַב וְאַגְלָנוּן לְאַרְעָא אַחֲרֵי כִיּוּמָא הָדִין: 28 דְּמִשְׁמֶרֶן קָדָם יִי אֱלֹהֵינָא וְדִגְלִין לָנָא וּלְבָנָנָא עַד עֵלָם לְמַעַבְדַּיִת כָּל פְּתֻגְמֵי אוֹרִיתָא הָדָא:

22 וּפָרַתָּא וּמִלְחָא שְׂרָפָה כָּל־אַרְצָהּ לֹא תוֹדְרַע וְלֹא תַצְמַח וְלֹא־יֵעֲלֶה בָּהּ כָּל־עֵשֶׂב כְּמַהֲפֻכֶּת סָדֵם וְעַמְרָה אֲדָמָה וְצִבְיִים {וְצִבּוּיִם} אֲשֶׁר הֶפֶךְ יִהְיֶה בָּאָפוֹ וּבְחֻמָּתוֹ: 23 וְאָמְרוּ כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם עַל־מָה עָשָׂה יְהוָה בָּכֶם לְאַרְצֵי הָאֵלֶּה מָה חָרִי הָאֵף הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: 24 וְאָמְרוּ עַל אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ אֶת־בְּרִית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתָם אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת עִמָּם בְּהוֹצִיאוֹ אֹתָם מִמִּצְרָיִם מִצְרַיִם: 25 וַיֵּלְכוּ וַיַּעֲבְדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּם וְלֹא חָלַק לָהֶם: 26 וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף יְהוָה בְּאַרְצֵי הַהוּא לְהַבִּיאַ עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־כָּל־הַקְּלָלָה הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה: 27 וַיִּתְּשֵׁם יְהוָה מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם בָּאֵף וּבְחֵמָה וּבְקֶצֶף גָּדוֹל וַיִּשְׁלַכֵם אֶל־אַרְצֵי אַחֶרֶת כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה: 28 הַנִּסְתָּרֹת לִיהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַנִּגְלֹת לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד־עוֹלָם לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת: ס

— RASHI —

ואחר כך¹⁹: "וראו את מכות הארץ ההיא", והלא אין אדם יודע טמונותיו של חברו? אין מעניש אתכם על הנסתרות, שהן "לה" אלהינו" והוא יפרע מאותו יחיד. אבל "הנגלות, לנו ולבנינו" לבער הרע מקרבנו, ואם לא נעשה דין בהם, יעניש את הרבים. נקוד על "לנו ולבנינו", לדרוש שאף על הנגלות לא ענש את הרבים עד שעברו את הירדן, משקבלו עליהם את השבועה בהר גרזים ובהר עיכל ונעשו ערבים זה לזה:

25 לא ידעום. לא ידעו בהם גבורת אלהות: ולא חלק להם. לא נתנם לחלקם. ואנקלוס תרגם: "ולא אוטיבא להון" — לא הטיבו להם שום טובה, ולשון "לא חלק" — אותו אלוה שפָּחַרוּ להם לא חלק להם שום נחלה ושום חלק: 27 וַיִּתְּשֵׁם ה'. בְּתַרְגוּמוֹ: "וְטִלְטְלוּן", וכן²⁰: "הִנְנִי נִתְּשָׁם מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם": 28 הַנִּסְתָּרֹת לַה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ. ואם תאמרו: מה בְּיָדֵינוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת, אֲתָהּ מַעֲנִישׁ אֶת הָרַבִּים עַל הָרַחֲוִי הַיָּחִיד, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר²¹: "פֶּן יֵשׁ בָּכֶם אִישׁ וְגו'",

13. ירמיה יב, יד. 14. פסוק יז. 15. פסוק כב.

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~

[continued...] responsible for the behavior of all other Jews with whom he or she has contact.¹⁹ Here, God expanded this obligation to make every Jew responsible for the behavior for every member of the Jewish community, including those with whom he or she has no contact.

From another perspective, in the covenant God made with the people at Mount Sinai, He did not

make the people responsible for one another's behavior at all, even individually; all levels of mutual responsibility originated in this second covenant, made in the plains of Moab. According to this perspective, the mutual responsibility referred to in the Sinaitic covenant is to that which would take effect later, as part of the second covenant described here.²⁰

19. Leviticus 26:37. 20. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 270, note 28.

22 ‘Everything is sulfur and salt! This nation’s entire land is burned up! It cannot be sown, nor can it grow anything; not even any grass will sprout from it. It is similar to how God overturned Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Tzevoyim in His fury and in His rage.’¹²

23 All the other nations will say, ‘Why did God do this to this land? What is the reason for this great, furious rage?’

24 Answering their own question, they will say, ‘It is because they forsook the covenant of God, God of their forefathers, which He made with them when He took them out of Egypt,

25 for they went and served other deities, prostrating themselves to them—deities that they had never known to be real or effective, and that He had not assigned to them, but to the rest of humanity, in order to test whether they would succumb to the temptation of worshipping these deities.’¹³

26 Therefore God’s fury raged against that land, bringing upon it the entire curse written in this book.

27 God uprooted them from their land with fury, wrath, and fuming indignation, and He cast them to another land, leaving them just as they are this day.’

28 A second reason why it is necessary for you to enter into this new, additional covenant is to make you all officially responsible and liable for one another:¹⁴ As I said above,¹⁵ you will be held collectively accountable if any individual, family, or tribe strays from God and influences the rest of the community to do likewise. This does not imply, however, that you will be held responsible for others’ *thoughts*, for these are hidden from you; you will only be held collectively responsible for words and actions performed by those among you. **The hidden things**, such as others’ thoughts, **are for God, our God**, to handle; only **the revealed things**—their words and actions—**are for us and for our children** to handle **forever**, to ensure that we, as a nation, **fulfill all the words of this Torah**.

This collective responsibility for the morality of the nation will not take effect until you perform the ceremony of blessings and curses on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival,¹⁶ in which you will affirm your mutual responsibility to fulfill the Torah’s directives. Therefore, inasmuch as this covenant is crucial to your successful establishment in your land, I waited until today, the last day of my life and thus as close as possible to your entry into the land, to forge this covenant between you and God.”¹⁷

Moses then both performed the ritual that actualized the covenant and administered the oath, as he said.¹⁸

❧ A CLOSER LOOK ❧

[28] Mutual responsibility: When God sealed the covenant between Him and the Jewish people at Mount Sinai by pronouncing the curses and threats given there, He made every Jew

12. Genesis 19:1-29. 13. Above, 4:19. 14. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 270, note 28. 15. V. 17. 16. Above, 27:1-26. 17. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 260. 18. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 269.

— ONKELOS —

30:1 ויהי ארי יתון עלך כל פתגמאי האלין ברכן ולטין די יהבית קדמך ותתיב ללך בכל עממאי די אגלך יי אלהך לתמן: 2 ותתוב לדחלתא די אלהך ותקבל למימרה בכל די אנא מפקדך יומא דין את ובניך בכל לך ובכל נפשך: 3 ויתבי יי אלהך ית שבי גלותך וירחם עלך ויתוב ויכנשך מכל עממאי די בדרך יי אלהך לתמן: 4 אם יהי גלותך בסיפי שמאי מתמן ויכנשך יי אלהך ומתמן יקרבך:

◆ רביעי (שני במחוברין) 30:1 והיה כִּי־יבאו עֲלֶיךָ כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְלָלָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִשְׁבַּתְתָּ אֶל־לִבְּךָ בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הָרִיתְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: 2 וְשַׁבְתָּ עַד־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעַתָּ בְּקוֹלִי בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר־אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה הַיּוֹם אֹתָהּ וּבְנֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: 3 וְשָׁב יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־שְׁבוּתְךָ וְרַחֲמֶיךָ וְשָׁב וּקְבַצְךָ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיצְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שָׁמָּה: 4 אִם־יְהִיֶּה נִדְחָךְ בְּקִצָּה הַשָּׁמַיִם מִשָּׁם וּקְבַצְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וּמִשָּׁם יִקְחֶךָ:

— RASHI —

עצמו צריך להיות אוֹחוֹ בִּידְיוֹ מִמֶּשׁ אִישׁ אִישׁ מִמְּקוֹמוֹ, כְּעִנְיַן שְׁנֵאָמַר: "וְאֵתָם תִּלְקְטוּ לְאָחָד אֶחָד בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל". וְאֵף בְּגָלוּיֹת שָׂאֵר הָאֻמוֹת מְצִינוֹ כֵּן:¹⁶ "וְשַׁבְתִּי שְׁבוֹת מוֹאֵב":

3 וְשָׁב ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת שְׁבוּתְךָ. הִיָּה לוֹ לְכַתֵּב "וְהָשִׁיב אֶת שְׁבוּתְךָ", רְבוּתִינוּ לְמִדּוֹ מִכָּאן, שֶׁהִשְׁכִּינָה כְּבִכּוֹל שְׂרוּיָה עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּצֶרֶת גְּלוּתָם, וּכְשֶׁנִּגְאָלִין הִכְתִּיב גָּאֻלָּה לְעַצְמוֹ, שְׁהוּא יוֹשֵׁב עִמָּהֶם. וְעוֹד יֵשׁ לִימָר, שֶׁגְּדוּל יוֹם קְבוּץ גְּלוּיֹת וּבְקוּשִׁי, כְּאֵלוֹ הוּא

16. מגילה כט, א. 17. ישעיה כז, יב. 18. ירמיה מח, מז.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

2 You will return to God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul: In contrast to repentance (*teshuvah*), which we are here commanded to perform with all our heart and soul, we are commanded to love God not only with all our heart and soul, but with "all your might,"²⁷ implying a love that transcends our normal emotive powers. What is the reason for this difference between these two seemingly similar commandments?

Love is, of course, an emotion. The Torah asks that our love for God be not only a function of our heart and soul, but that it also draw on the unlimited powers of connection to God that are rooted in our essential Divine consciousness. This is referred to as "all your might," since love founded on our Divine essence is infinitely more powerful than love founded on emotion or intellect.

Repentance, on the other hand, is in its essence an act of going beyond oneself. The normal, operative self is what put us in our present predicament of having sinned and of therefore needing to repent. We therefore need to transcend this self and seek a deeper, more essential layer of identity, in which God means more to us than the indulgences to

which we have become accustomed.

Once we find this transcendent consciousness, we must make it our normative consciousness, in order to preclude any backsliding into our previous levels of consciousness and associated behavior.

Thus, whereas the Torah bids us to elevate our love of God from normal to transcendent, it bids us to repent by making our transcendent relationship with Him into our normal one. The processes associated with repentance and love are directly opposite, the first ascending out of innate limitations and the second bringing transcendence into limited consciousness.²⁸

3 Which had accompanied you into exile: This notion may be likened to how, when a student is exiled to a city of refuge, his teacher must go with him.²⁹ God is our teacher and we are His students;³⁰ thus, when we go into exile, God must similarly, so to speak, go into exile along with us.

We are taught that whatever God asks us to do, He Himself does.³¹ Thus, when God sends us into exile, He also sends Himself, so to speak, into exile with us.³²

27. Deuteronomy 6:5. 28. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, p. 120, footnote 9. 29. *Makot* 10a. 30. Isaiah 54:13. 31. *Shemot Rabbah* 30. 32. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 29, p. 38.

Promises of Future Happiness

- ◆ *Fourth Reading (Second when combined) 30:1* Moses then continued, “When the Levites pronounce the blessings and curses at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, the blessings will take effect immediately (although their continued effectiveness will depend upon your adherence to the terms of the covenant), whereas the curses will take effect only if and when you infringe the covenant. But even if you do infringe the covenant, you will always, sooner or later, renew it: **When all these things come upon you—i.e., the blessing and the curse that I have set before you—I promise you that you will consider them in your heart, as you reside amidst all the nations to which God, your God, has banished you,**

2 and, motivated by the blessings that you have enjoyed and by the curses from which you will have suffered, **you will** be inspired to **return to God, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, and you will** once again heed His voice in accordance with all that I am commanding you today—**you and your children.**

The contrast of having endured the curses only *after* having enjoyed God’s bounty will heighten the curses’ impact. Thus, not only the curses, but the blessings, too, will help induce you to repent.²¹

3 Then, God, your God, will bring back your exiles, and He will have mercy upon you. He will once again gather you from among all the nations to which He—God, your God—had dispersed you. In so doing, He will also be returning His own Divine Presence, which had accompanied you into exile, to its ‘homeland’—the land He designated to be the setting in which He would demonstrate most fully how the world can be made into His home.²²

By the time of your redemption, you will have become so entrenched in your exile that ingathering you will be especially complicated. Therefore, this process will have to be an openly miraculous one, entailing revealed Divine intervention in the course of every individual Jew’s return.²³

The nations of the world who oppressed you while you were in exile will also receive various forms of corrective punishments for their behavior, one of which will be exile from their own native lands. When the time for your redemption arrives, those exiled nations will also return to their homelands, and thus the elements of the Divine Presence that were displaced because of their exiles will also return to their proper location. Gathering these nations back to their homelands will also be complicated, but not to the extent that miracles will be required to ingather each individual: Divine providence will be apparent with regard to each people’s national return,²⁴ but the return of each individual, in contrast, will be garbed in the guise of natural processes.²⁵

4 Even if some of your exiles are in countries located at the end of the heavens,²⁶ God, your God, will gather you from there, and He will take you back from there.

21. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 14, pp. 118-120. 22. See “Background” to Genesis 1:1, etc. 23. See Isaiah 27:12. 24. See Jeremiah 49:6. 25. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, pp. 175-182. 26. Deuteronomy 2:25, 4:19. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 34, pp. 170-171; *Hitva’aduyot* 5745, vol. 5, p. 3031.

— ONKELOS —

5 וַיַּעֲלֶנָּהּ יי אֱלֹהֶךָ לֹא־רָעָא דִּי יִרְיֵתוּ אֲבֹהֶיךָ וְתִירְתָּהּ וְיִטְיֵב לָךְ וְיִסְגָּנֶה מִאֲבֹהֶיךָ: 6 וַיַּעֲדֵי יי אֱלֹהֶךָ יֵת טַפְשׁוֹת לָכֶךָ וְיֵת טַפְשׁוֹת לָכֶךָ דְּבָנֶיךָ לְמִרְחָם יֵת יי אֱלֹהֶךָ בְּכֹל לָכֶךָ וּבְכֹל נַפְשָׁךָ בְּדִיל חַיִּיךָ: 7 וְיִתֵּן יי אֱלֹהֶךָ יֵת כָּל לְטִיָּא הָאֵלִין עַל בְּעָלֵי דְבָכֶךָ וְעַל סְנָאִיךָ דִּי רְדִפּוּךָ: 8 וְיָתָה תַּתּוּב וְתִקְבֵּל לְמִימְרָא דִּי וְתַעֲבֹד יֵת כָּל פְּקוּדוֹתֵי דִּי אֲנָא מִפְּקֻדָּךְ יוֹמָא דִּין: 9 וְיִוְתָרְנָךְ יי אֱלֹהֶךָ בְּכֹל עוֹבְדֵי יָדָךְ בּוֹלְדָא דְמַעַר וּבּוֹלְדָא דְבַעֲיָרָךְ וּבִאֲבָא דְאַרְעָךָ לְטָבָא אֲרִי יִתּוּב יי לְמַחְדֵּי עַלְךָ לְטָב כְּמָא דִּי חֲדִי עַל אֲבֹהֶיךָ: 10 אֲרִי תִקְבֵּל לְמִימְרָא דִּי אֱלֹהֶךָ לְמַשֵּׁר פְּקוּדוֹתֵי וּקְיֻמוֹתֵי דְכִתְיִיבִין בְּסִפְרָא אֲוִרִיתָא הָדִין אֲרִי תַתּוּב קָדָם יי אֱלֹהֶךָ בְּכֹל לָכֶךָ וּבְכֹל נַפְשָׁךָ: 11 אֲרִי תִפְקֻדָּתָא הָדָא דִּי אֲנָא מִפְּקֻדָּךְ יוֹמָא דִּין לֹא מִפְּרָשָׁא הִיא מִנָּךְ וְלֹא רְחִיקָא הִיא:

5 וַהֲבִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יִרְשׁוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ וִירְשָׁתָהּ וְהִיטִבְךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ מֵאֲבֹתֶיךָ: 6 וּמַל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת־לִבְּךָ וְאֶת־לִבְּךָ וְרָעָךָ לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ לְמַעַן חַיֶּיךָ:

◆ חמישי (שלישי במחזורין) 7 ונתן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל־הָאֱלֹת הָאֵלֶּה עַל־אֵיבֶיךָ וְעַל־שֹׁנְאֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּךָ: 8 וְיָתָה תְּשׁוּב וְשִׁמְעַתָּ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה וַעֲשִׂיתָ אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִוֶּה הַיּוֹם: 9 וְהוֹתִירְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ בְּפָרִי בְּמִנְךָ וּבְפָרִי בְּהִמְתָּךְ וּבְפָרִי אֲדָמְתְךָ לְטֶבֶה כִּי יֵשׁוּב יְהוָה לְשׁוּשׁ עָלֶיךָ לְטוֹב כָּאֲשֶׁר־שָׁשׂ עַל־אֲבֹתֶיךָ: 10 כִּי תִשְׁמָע בְּקוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמֹּר מִצְוֹתָיו וְחֻקֹּתָיו הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסִפְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה כִּי תֵשׁוּב אֶל־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ: 8

◆ ששי 11 כִּי הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצִוֶּה הַיּוֹם לֹא־נִפְלְאת הוּא מִמֶּךָ וְלֹא־רַחֲקָה הוּא:

— RASHI —

11 לא נפלאות הוא ממך. לא מקשה היא ממך, פלאים²⁰ — ויתרד במטמוניות, מקשה, חבושה כמו שנקאמר: "כי יפלא" — "ארי יתבסי". ויתרד בשמון:

19. דברים יז, ח. 20. איכה א, ט.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

implies that there is some substance to such a claim. In particular, it seems self-evident that inculcating the Torah's values into our hearts—training ourselves to

love the somewhat abstract notions of goodness and Godliness instead of the familiar material desires of this world—is anything but easy.³⁷ [continues...]

INNER DIMENSIONS

[11] This commandment is not remote...not far away: Allegorically, "this commandment" refers to the commandment to repent. "Remote" (נפלאה) refers to *Atik Yomin*, the inner dimension of *keter*. This level of the supra-consciousness is indeed remote from our normative consciousness, which is why it is termed *Atik* (עתיק), which means "removed." "Far away," in contrast, refers to *Arich Anpin*, the external dimension of *keter*, which serves as the source of the ten *sefirot* and is thus

much closer to our normative consciousness. However, inasmuch as we also possess a Divine soul, which in turn possesses innate Divine consciousness, these levels are *not* remote and *not* far away from us. Through repentance (*teshuvah*), we can reach, elicit, and influence God's goodwill toward us (*Arich Anpin*) and delight in us (*Atik Yomin*), inducing Him to overlook our faulty past and renew His connection with us.³⁸

37. *Tanya*, chapter 17 (22b-23a). 38. *Likutei Torah* 4:45d-46a; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5672-5676, pp. 298-299.

5 **GOD, your God, will bring you to the land that your forefathers took possession of, and you too will take possession of it. He will be better to you than He was to your forefathers, and He will also make you more numerous than were your forefathers.**

6 I previously instructed you, as part of the process of repentance, to figuratively ‘circumcise the foreskin of your heart,’³³ i.e., to cease to be callous in the face of God’s love for you. In contrast, your future repentance, preceding and ushering in your final redemption, will be so comprehensive that it will encompass your whole heart, as I have said,³⁴ and thus there will be no need to ‘circumcise’ any figurative ‘foreskin’ covering it; you will be loving God at the maximum degree of intensity that human beings can reach on their own. However, once you have reached this intensity of love, God will be able to grant you an even greater ability to love Him, and to that end, **GOD, your God, will Himself figuratively circumcise not the ‘foreskin of your heart’ but your heart itself, as well as the heart of your offspring, enabling you to love GOD, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul, for the sake of your very life.** This ‘circumcision of the heart’ will consist of nullifying the heart’s present nature to desire everything the eye takes in. Once your heart is liberated from this constant distraction, it will be free to focus solely on your emotional relationship with God, bringing it to continuously higher levels of rapture.³⁵

- ◆ *Fifth Reading (Third when combined)* **7** **GOD, your God, will then place all these curses upon your enemies and those who hate you, who pursued you.**

8 Since **you**, in contrast to your enemies, **will return** to Him, once again **obeying GOD and fulfilling all His commandments that I am commanding you today,**

9 **GOD, your God, will make you superabundant in the products of all the work of your hands, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil, all in only good ways. For GOD will once again rejoice over you, to do good to you, as He rejoiced over your forefathers,**

10 **when you obey GOD, your God, safeguarding His commandments and His rules written in this Torah scroll by studying them assiduously; and when you return to GOD, your God, with all your heart and with all your soul.**

- ◆ *Sixth Reading* **11** You may think—recalling that the true setting for studying the Torah and performing God’s commandments is the Land of Israel³⁶—that it is impossible to truly learn and understand the Torah while in exile. This, however, is not the case, **for this commandment, i.e., to study the entire Torah, about which I am commanding you today, is not only not unreachably remote from you—no matter where you are—it is not even so far away that you have to go elsewhere to learn it.**

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

11-14 **For this commandment is not remote from you; it is not far away...it is not beyond the sea...for this thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in**

your heart so you can fulfill it: The fact that the Torah has to refute the supposition that following its commandments is “remote...far away...and beyond”

33. Above, 10:16. 34. Above, v. 2. 35. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 29, pp. 167-170. 36. Above, 11:18.

— ONKELOS —

12 לֹא בְשִׁמִּים הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה־לָנוּ הַשְּׁמִימָה וְיִקְחָהּ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: 13 וְלֹא־מַעֲבָר לָיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲבֹר־לָנוּ אֶל־עֶבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחָהּ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: 14 כִּי־קָרוֹב אֵלָיֶךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשֹׂתוֹ: ׀ שְׁבִיעִי וּמִפְטִיר (רְבִיעִי בַּמַּחֲבָרִין) 15 רְאֵה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הַמָּוֶת וְאֶת־הָרָע:

12 לֹא בְשִׁמִּים הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲלֶה־לָנוּ הַשְּׁמִימָה וְיִקְחָהּ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: 13 וְלֹא־מַעֲבָר לָיִם הוּא לֵאמֹר מִי יַעֲבֹר־לָנוּ אֶל־עֶבֶר הַיָּם וְיִקְחָהּ לָנוּ וְיִשְׁמַעְנוּ אֹתָהּ וְנַעֲשֶׂנָּה: 14 כִּי־קָרוֹב אֵלָיֶךָ הַדָּבָר מְאֹד בְּפִיךָ וּבִלְבָבְךָ לַעֲשֹׂתוֹ: ׀

שְׁבִיעִי וּמִפְטִיר (רְבִיעִי בַּמַּחֲבָרִין) 15 רְאֵה נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַטּוֹב וְאֶת־הַמָּוֶת וְאֶת־הָרָע:

— RASHI —

12 לֹא בְשִׁמִּים הוּא. שְׁאֵלוֹ הִיָּתָה בְשִׁמִּים — הִיָּתָה צָרִיךְ לַעֲלוֹת אַחֲרֶיהָ וּלְלַמְדָּהּ: 14 כִּי קָרוֹב אֵלָיֶךָ הַתּוֹרָה נִתְּנָה לָכֶם בְּכָתֵב וּבְעַל פֶּה: 15 אֶת הַחַיִּים

וְאֶת הַטּוֹב. זֶה תְּלוּי בְּזֶה, אִם תַּעֲשֶׂה טוֹב הָרִי לָךְ חַיִּים, וְאִם תַּעֲשֶׂה רָע הָרִי לָךְ הַמָּוֶת. וְהַכְּתוּב מְפָרֵשׁ וְהוֹלֵךְ הַיָּאָר:

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

also a long, difficult way, but it proves in the final analysis to be the truly short way, since in the end we reach our goal and are spared the need for repeating the process.

The short but long way is, as stated, arousing love of God directly by recalling our willingness to sacrifice our very lives for Him. This method relies on our innate belief in God. The long but short way, in contrast, requires harnessing the intellect—working through the particulars of God's nature, providence, and how He manifests Himself in the world, in the Torah, and in our lives—to the maximum extent possible.

As we have seen in other contexts, each of these approaches has its advantages and disadvantages. The "object" of pure faith is God Himself, His very essence; in contrast, the "object" of intellect can never be any more than what the intellect itself can conceive of, and for finite human beings, this means only God as He relates to creation (either immanently or transcendently). On the other hand, since pure faith does not involve the intellect, it cannot permeate our consciousness, and therefore transform us, the way intellect can. Faith affects us from "without" or "above" us, whereas using the intellect affects us from "within," permeating us completely.

There is therefore justification for taking the short but long way, for relying on pure faith is a quick and sure way to arouse love of God. However, we must remain cognizant of the inherent limitations of this approach and not rely on it exclusively. Rather, we should also take the long but short way, exerting our intellect to its utmost in order to comprehend

as much as we can about God and His relation to the universe, thereby fashioning an enduring emotional involvement with Him and transforming our behavioral patterns accordingly. As King David said to his son Solomon, "Know the God of your father, and [then you will be able to] serve Him with a complete heart."⁴⁴

The self-refinement and transformation accomplished via the intellect defuses the obstacles that life in this world poses to Divine living. Instead of encountering "hedgies" blocking our entrance to our desired goal, we find a wide open gate.⁴⁵

This commandment is not remote from you; it is not far away...it is not beyond the sea...for this thing is very close to you: On a deeper level—inasmuch as the Jewish people had been studying the Torah for nearly 40 years when Moses said these words, and therefore knew firsthand that it was not "remote," "far away," or "beyond"—the claim that Moses was refuting was that the dimension of the Torah that is indeed "remote, far away, and beyond" is not "remote, far away, or beyond" from you. Inasmuch as the Jewish people are rooted in God's essence, which transcends the Torah, even the most recondite aspects of the Torah are not beyond them.⁴⁶

15-19 Behold, I have set before you today life and good and death and evil. You should choose life: The fact that it is not always clear that good behavior leads to blessings and life and that bad behavior leads to curses and death is actually what allows us to choose to be good. If it were always clear that good behavior leads to blessing and life, whereas bad behavior leads to the opposite, what choice

44. 1 Chronicles 28:9. 45. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 34, pp. 173-178. 46. *Sefer HaSichot* 5752, vol. 1, p. 17, note 61.

12 In other words: if the vagrancy of exile leads you exceedingly far from the Land of Israel—to countries located ‘at the end of heaven’³⁹—you should **not** think that the Torah is accessible only in your homeland, which is located **at** the other end of **heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to “heaven” for us and fetch it for us, to expound it to us so that we can fulfill it?’**

13 And even if you settle somewhere closer to the Land of Israel, somewhere from which the Land of Israel is accessible by sea, you should **not** even think that the Torah is **beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and fetch it for us, to expound it to us so that we can fulfill it?’**⁴⁰

14 If learning the Torah did indeed entail such a voyage, you would have to undertake it. But it does not, **for this thing is very close to you:** The Torah is not a cryptic or obscure document accessible only to an exclusive elite; God has placed its explanation, as it were, **in your mouth and in your heart**—in the form of the Oral Torah—**so you can fulfill it** correctly and confidently.⁴¹

Free Choice

- ◆ *Seventh Reading & Maftir (Fourth Reading when combined)* 15 **Behold, I have set before you today life and good on the one hand and death and evil on the other.**

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

Yet the fact that the Torah insists that it is nonetheless so indicates that all of us indeed have the power to easily train our hearts to become emotionally involved with God and His Torah, in place of the more accustomed objects of our love and fear. We possess this power in the form of an inherent, deep-seated love for God that is innate to our Divine soul. This love, although initially “hidden,” i.e., not conscious, can be easily accessed via a number of rather simple exercises in contemplation. We therefore do not have to create a love of God in our psyches or to force ourselves against our nature to love God. We already love Him; all we have to do is open ourselves up to this love; allowing it to manifest itself. As we have mentioned above,⁴² recalling our willingness to sacrifice our very lives for God if necessary summons our innate love of Him to the surface of our consciousness.

But feeling this love is one thing; making it permeate our lives is another. It is all too easy to become emotionally aroused about God or Judaism, only for this ephemeral sentiment to dissipate as quickly as it appeared. We are then left more or less where we began, and have to arouse our innate love all over again. The goal, then, is to entrench this love in our daily lives so that it become a permanent fixture of our being. The indication of whether our hidden love has permeated our lives is if this love has affected our behavior—our way of thinking,

talking, and acting. This is indeed a difficult task, since there are many obstacles in life to overcome before we can transform both our emotions and our behavior in a lasting way.

Yet, as we have noted, the Torah insists that it is “close,” “in your mouth [speech] and in your heart [emotion] so you can fulfill it [action].” What, then, does the Torah mean?

This may be understood by way of the following episode, recorded in the Talmud:⁴³

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah said: I was once on a journey when I noticed a little boy sitting at a crossroads. I asked him, “By what road can one go to the town?” He replied, “This one is short and long, and that one is long and short.” I took the “short and long” road. When I approached the town, I discovered that it was hedged in by gardens and orchards. Turning back, I said to him, “My son, did you not tell me that this road was short?” He replied, “And did I not also tell you: ‘and long?’”

In other words, there is a route that is short, i.e., direct, but it leads to a dead end; there is another route that is long, i.e., roundabout, but it leads to the city gate. Similarly, in our spiritual quest, there is a short, easy way, but it proves in the final analysis to be long, since in the end we are left where we began and have to start all over again. But there is

39. Above, v. 4. 40. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 9, p. 168, note 42. 41. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 34, pp. 167-171. 42. On 6:5 (s.v. “To suffer martyrdom”). 43. *Eiruvin* 53b; *Eichah Rabbah* 1:19.

— ONKELOS —
 16 די אָנא מפקדך יומא דין למרחם ית יי אלהך למהך בארזן דתקנן קדמוהי ולמטר פקודוהי וקדמוהי ודינוהי ותחי ותסגי ויברכך יי אלהך בארעא די את עלל לתמן למירתה: 17 ואם יפני לבך ולא תקבל ותסעי ותסגוד לטעות עממיא ותפלחנן: 18 חיותי לבן יומא דין ארי מיבד תיבדון לא תורכון יומין על ארעא די את עבר ית ירדנא למעל לתמן למירתה: 19 אסהדית בכון יומא דין ית שמיא וית ארעא חיי ומותא יחבית קדמך ברכן ולוטין ותתריע בחיי בדיל דתחי את ובניך:

16 אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצֹּדֶף הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֵלֶכֶת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשֹׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו וּחְקֵיתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּחְיִיתָ וּרְבִיתָ וּבִרְכָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אַתָּה בָּא־שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: 17 וְאִם־יִפְנֶה לְבָבְךָ וְלֹא תִשְׁמָע וְנִדְחִיתָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לְאֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְעַבַּדְתָּם: 18 הִגַּדְתִּי לָכֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי אֲבֹד תֵּאבְדוּן לֹא־תֵאָרִיכּוּ יָמִים עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עֹבֵר אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן לָבוֹא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: 19 הִעַדְתִּי בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמּוֹת נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְלָלָה וּבַחֲרַתְּ בַּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תַּחֲיֶה אַתָּה וְזֶרְעֶךָ:

— RASHI —

ורעתם אותה ולא צמחה, או שמא ורעתם חטים והעלתה שעורים? ומה אלו שנעשו לא לשכר ולא להפסד, אם זוכין אין מקבלין שכר, ואם חוטאים אין מקבלין פּרענות — לא שנו את מדתם, אָתָם שָׁאם וְכִיתָם תִּקְבְּלוּ שָׂכָר וְאִם חָטֵאתֶם תִּקְבְּלוּ פְּרַעְנוֹת, על אחת כמה וכמה: **ובחרת בחיים**. אָנִי מוֹרָה לָכֶם שֶׁתִּבְחָרוּ בַּחֲלֵק הַחַיִּים, כְּאֵדָם הָאֹמֵר לִבְנוֹ: בָּחַר לָךְ חֵלֶק יִפֶּה בְּנַחֲלָתִי, וּמַעֲמִידוֹ עַל חֵלֶק הַיִּפֶּה, וְאֹמֵר לוֹ: אֵת זֶה בָּרוּר לָךְ. וְעַל זֶה נֶאֱמַר: "ה' מִנֵּת חֵלְקִי וְכוּסִי, אַתָּה תוֹמִיךָ גּוֹרְלִי" — הַנּוֹחֵת יָדִי עַל גּוֹרֵל הַטּוֹב לֹאֵמַר: אֵת זֶה קַח לָךְ: חסלת פרשת נצבים

16 אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצֹּדֶף הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה. הָרִי הַטּוֹב, וְבוֹ תְּלוֹי: וּחְיִיתָ וּרְבִיתָ. הָרִי הַחַיִּים: 17 וְאִם יִפְנֶה לְבָבְךָ. הָרִי הָרַע: 18 כִּי אֲבֹד תֵּאבְדוּן. הָרִי הַמּוֹת: 19 הִעַדְתִּי בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ. שֶׁהֵם קִיָּמִים לְעוֹלָם, וְכֹאֲשֶׁר תִּקְרָה אֶתְכֶם הָרַעָה יִהְיוּ עֲדִים שְׁאֵנִי הַתְּרִיתִי בְּכֶם בְּכָל זֹאת. דָּבָר אַחֵר: "הִעַדְתִּי בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם" וגו', אָמַר לָהֶם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לִישְׂרָאֵל: הִסְתַּכְּלוּ בַּשָּׁמַיִם שֶׁבְּרָאתִי לְשִׁמְשׁ אֶתְכֶם, שָׁמָּה שָׁנוּ אֶת מִדְּתָם, שָׁמָּה לֹא עָלָה גִלְגַּל חָמָה מִן הַמְּזוּרָח וְהָאִיר לְכָל הָעוֹלָם, כְּעִנְיָן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וְזָרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וּבָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ" הִסְתַּכְּלוּ בָּאָרֶץ שֶׁבְּרָאתִי לְשִׁמְשׁ אֶתְכֶם, שָׁמָּה שָׁנְתָה מִדְּתָה, שָׁמָּה

21. קהלת א, ה. 22. תהלים טו, ה.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

dent Divine energy beyond creation; "death" refers to the physical universe, which possesses no intrinsic life-force; and "evil" refers to material lusts, both for permitted and for prohibited indulgences.

In this context, evil is worse than death, for "death" is the simple lack of life-force, whereas evil is in direct opposition to good — God's plan for the world.⁵²

52. Likutei Sichot, vol. 25, p. 7; Sefer HaMa'amarim 5670, p. 20.

16 And life and death result from choosing good or evil, respectively, **inasmuch as I command you today to love God, your God, to walk in His ways, and to safeguard His commandments, rules, and ordinances**—this being ‘good’—and if you follow this path, **you will live and increase in number, and God, your God, will bless you in the land that you are entering in order to possess**—this being ‘life.’

17 But, conversely, **if your heart deviates from this path and you do not listen, and you be drawn astray and prostrate yourself to other deities and serve them**—this being ‘evil’—

18 I declare to you this day that you will certainly perish. You will not endure on the land that you are crossing the Jordan River in order to enter and possess—this being ‘death.’

19 Earlier, I invoked heaven and earth as reminders of my warning to you regarding the consequences of idol worship.⁴⁷ Similarly, **I invoke heaven and earth again today**—since they will still exist when all these prophecies come true, whereas I will not—as **witnesses**, i.e., as reminders, that I have warned **you** about them.⁴⁸

I am also invoking heaven and earth as witnesses because God wants you to compare yourselves to them: They are neither rewarded for fulfilling their tasks, nor would they be punished were they to fail to do so, yet they faithfully remain true to their mission. The heavenly bodies are consistent in their orbits, and the earth always produces whatever species of vegetation is planted in it. How much more should you, who have been promised reward and threatened with punishment, remain true to your Divine mission.

I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. But I know that it is not always clear that good behavior leads to blessings and life and that bad behavior leads to curses and death. In fact, the exact opposite often seems to be true.⁴⁹ Therefore, let me remind you that as master of the world, God knows which choices lead to which ultimate ends, and that as your loving parent, He has only your unadulterated best interests at heart. Moreover, you know that occasionally it is indeed evident that proper choices lead to favorable results. For all these reasons, **you should** trust God implicitly⁵⁰ and **choose** the path that leads to **life, in order that you and your offspring will live**—

❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

could we have but to be good? The very fact that being good does not always lead to goodness both forces us and enables us to base our relationship with God on a more profound basis.

For this reason, on a deeper level, God (through Moses) is here asking us to be good for its own sake, rather than for any expectation of material reward,

even when we do see clearly that being good leads to good results.⁵¹

On a still deeper level, this verse is not referring to two sets of causes (good and evil) and effects (life and death) but to four distinct levels of reality: “Life” refers to the immanent Divine life-force animating all creation; “good” refers to the transcen-

⁴⁷. Above, 4:26. ⁴⁸. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 332-333, 335. ⁴⁹. See Jeremiah 12:1; Proverbs 5:3, etc. ⁵⁰. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, pp. 274-278. ⁵¹. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 28, p. 82.

— ONKELOS —
 20 למרחם ית יי אלהך לקבלא
 למימרה ולא תקרבא לדחלתה
 ארי הוא חייך ואורכות יומיך
 למתב על ארעא די קיים יי
 לאבהתך לאברהם ליצחק
 וליעקב למתן להון:

20 לאֲהַבָּה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשֹׁמֵעַ בְּקֹלוֹ וּלְדַבְּקָה־
 בוֹ כִּי הוּא חַיִּיךָ וְאַרְךָ יָמֶיךָ לְשֹׁבֵת עַל־הַאֲדָמָה
 אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב
 לָתֵת לָהֶם:

מ' פסוקים. לבב"ו סימן.

20 namely, to love God, your God, to obey Him, and to cleave to Him, for He is your source of life and the source of your length of days, and it is He who enables you to dwell in the land that God swore to your forefathers—to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that He would give them.”

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Nitzavim* is on p. 253.



INNER DIMENSIONS

[20] To cleave to Him: The sages ask, “How, then, can one cling to God?” They answer, “Whoever marries his daughter to a Torah scholar, or does business in order to benefit Torah scholars, or uses his wealth to benefit Torah scholars, [and in this way clings to a Torah scholar,] is considered by Scripture as if he has clung to the Divine Presence.”⁵³In a sense, this answer begs the question, since we are still left wondering how a Torah scholar can cling to God.

The solution to this enigma is that even though every Jewish soul is “a part of God,” rooted in God’s essence, the vast majority of souls undergo a multi-stage diminution of Divine consciousness (what we might call “induced spiritual amnesia”) in the course of preparing to enter the physical world. There is a wide variation in the extent to which different souls experience this degradation of spiritual acuity, accounting for the wide differences we observe in people’s innate predisposition to spiritual and/or religious pursuits. Those whose souls have undergone the least “processing” will be the most predisposed toward spirituality; given the proper conditions, these individuals will naturally develop their in-

nate spiritual genius, becoming the devout Torah scholars of their generation.

Furthermore, we are taught that each generation of souls descends into this world roughly as a unit, as a collective “individual,” in which the specific souls that make up the whole are identified with the various spiritual “limbs” of this collective “body.” Thus, the souls retaining the most of their pre-descent Divine consciousness form the “head”—the most conscious part—of this “body,” with the souls that retain less of their pre-descent Divine consciousness forming the other limbs, each according to its level. Just as in the human body, the limbs are all connected to the soul via the brain, the chief locus of consciousness, so are the individual souls that make up the generation’s collective multi-soul “body” linked to their unique soul-roots in God’s essence via the head-souls of that generation.

It is in this sense that the sages teach us that “whoever clings to a Torah scholar is considered by Scripture as if he has clung to the Divine Presence.” In being connected to the Torah scholar, the individual is connected with the root of his or her own soul.⁵⁴

53. *Ketubot* 111b. See above, 11:22. 54. *Tanya*, chapter 2 (6a-7a). See also on Exodus 14:31.

Dedicated in honor of our children

**Nathan, Yitzchok,
Moshe Lev,
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways
of our holy Torah*

Yuri and Deana Pikover

