

LESSONS IN LIKUTAY TORAH

PRECIOUS TEACHINGS THAT AWAKEN THE HEART
TO DIVINE SERVICE FROM THE HOLY MASTER
♪ RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI ♪
TRANSLATED AND EXPLAINED

ליקוטי תורה

פרשת חקק

מאמך

"ויעש משה נחש נחשת"

"Revealing the Hidden Good"

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Likutay Torah

ליקוטי תורה

פרק ח' חק'ת

מאמר

ויעש משה נחש נחשת¹

ה' סא עמוד ד'

“Revealing the Hidden Good”

In Parshas Chukas, we find the following story: The Jewish People were complaining about being in the desert, where there is no natural food or water, only Manna (Manna) from heaven and water from a rock.

For complaining, they were punished by having snakes come and bite people.

(Since the people were speaking negatively about Hashem, saying that He shouldn't have taken them out of Mitzrayim, they were punished with the snake, who also sinned with his speech by convincing Chava to eat from the Tree of Knowledge).

When people started being attacked by snakes, they asked Moshe to pray to Hashem to save them. When Moshe prayed to Hashem on their behalf, Hashem told him to make the image of a venomous snake and place it on top of a pole, and whoever looks at that snake-image will live.

We need to understand the meaning behind this: Why would looking at the image of a snake cure someone?!

ויעש משה נחש נחשת וישימחו
על הניס. והיה אם נחש הנחש את
איש, והביט אל נחש הנחשת וחי

“And Moshe made a copper snake, and he placed it on a banner. And so it was, that if a snake had bitten someone, then

¹ (נאמר בתקופת לאוニア. ראה גם סה"מ אתחלך-לאוニア ע' טו, (וע' קנה) באוור על מאמר זה עם הנקודות מהע"ז באואה"ת חק'ת פרה-ו' ע' א'תתפה. ראה גם ד"ה אם חפץ תשם"ה.)

(פרק ט, ט):

he would stare at the copper snake and live.” (Bamidbar 21:9)

וְאַיִתָּא בְּמִשְׁנָה (סּוֹף פָּרָקָג' דָּרָאשׁ הַשְׁנָה) עַל
זֶה: ”בָּזְמָן שִׁישְׁרָאֵל מִסְתְּכָלֵין כְּלֹפִי
מַעַלָּה וּמַשְׁעַבְדִּין אֶת לְבָם לְאַבְיכֶם
שְׁבָשְׁמִים כֹּו²”.

It says in the Mishna (Rosh Hashana 3:8) regarding this: “When the Jewish People would look up [to the top of the banner where the copper snake was, they would also see the heavens] and remember Hashem and dedicate their hearts to their Father in Heaven, and then they would be healed.”

וְקַשְׁחָה, לְפָמָה לִיהְיָה לְנַחַשׁ כָּלֵל – אֶלָּא
”וְהִיא אָם נִשְׁרָה הַנַּחַשׁ“ יִסְתְּכָלֵל כְּלֹפִי
מַעַלָּה!

וְעוֹד, מַהוּ הַהִסְתְּכּוּלֹת כְּלֹפִי מַעַלָּה –
הַלָּא מִבּוֹאָר בְּעַנְנֵנוּ תְּפִלָּה שׁ”י הַיּוֹנָה
עִינֵּינוּ לְמַטָּה, וְלִבּוּ לְמַעַלָּה!³!

ולְהַבִּין זֶה, נִקְדִּים לְחַקּוּר בְּעַנְנֵנוּ
יִרְידֵת הַנְּשָׁמָה בְּעוֹלָם-הַזֶּה:

Q1: This is difficult to understand: If so, then why did they need the copper snake at all- if someone were bitten by a snake, he could just look up to Hashem and do teshuva. What is added by the copper snake?

Q2: Furthermore, what is the idea of staring up to the heavens: Does it not say explicitly (Yevamos 105b) regarding prayer that “a person’s eyes should face downwards to the ground, and only in his heart should he be focused upwards to Hashem?”

Q3: To understand this, we first need to look into the following: What is the purpose of the

² ראש השנה פרק ג, משנה ה: ”עָשָׂה לְךָ שָׁרֶף וִשְׁם אָתוּ עַל נִסְ, וְהִיא כָּל הַגְּשׁוּר וְרָאָה אָתוּ וְחִי – וְכִי נַחַשׁ מִמְיִתָּה, או נַחַשׁ מִחִיה? אֶלָּא, בָּזְמָן שִׁישְׁרָאֵל מִסְתְּכָלֵין כְּלֹפִי מַעַלָּה
וּמַשְׁעַבְדִּין אֶת לְבָם לְאַבְיכֶם שְׁבָשְׁמִים – הַיּוֹ מַתְרְפָּאִים, וְאָם לְאֹ – הַיּוֹ נִמְוקִים.”

³ יְבָמּוֹת קה, ב).

descent of the soul into this world?

כִּי עִקָּר תְּכִלִּיתוֹ לְדִבֶּק בְּקוֹנוֹ
בָּאֶהָבָה־יְוִירָאָה, וְעִקָּר הַדְּבִיקָות
הוּא בַּתְּפִלָּה,

שְׁהִתְבּוֹת הָם יוֹתֵר קְרוּבִים לְהַבְנָתָ
הָאָדָם.

וּבוֹדָאי קָוָדָם צָאת הַנֶּשֶׁמָה בַּעוֹלָם
הַזֶּה, וְגַם אַחֲר הַסְּתָלָקָות מִן הַגּוֹפָ

הָוָא מַתְדַּבֵּק יוֹתֵר בָּאֶהָבָה־יְוִירָאָה
פִּנְיָמוֹת;

שַׁהְגּוֹפָ אִינוֹ מַנְיחָו לְעַבְדָּ אֶת הָאָתָה
וְאֶרְרֶבֶה מִחְמָת חֹמְרוֹ יִכְרִיחַ אֶת
הַנֶּשֶׁמָה לִיהְנוֹת אֶפְ מְגֻפְנִיּוֹת.

וְאֶפְ כִּי הַנֶּשֶׁמָה אִינָה רֹצֶחֶת בָּזָה, כִּי
מִקּוֹדֵחַ חֹצֶבֶת - "חַלֵּק אֲלֵיהֶ מִמּוּעֵל"
(איוב לא, ב), וּרְצֹונָה לִידְבֶּק בְּבָבוֹרָאָה
יוֹתֵר.

Seemingly, the main purpose of a person is to connect to his Creator with love and fear, and the main connection is experienced through prayer,

since the words of prayer, which are describing the greatness of Hashem in a manner understandable to people, making love and fear of Him accessible.

Now, it is certain that before the soul left the spiritual realm to descend into this World, and also after it leaves the body,

it connects to Hashem much more strongly, with a deeper level of love and fear of Him,

since the body doesn't allow the soul to serve Hashem, and actually, it does just the opposite- because of its coarse nature, it forces the soul to enjoy bodily pleasures -

even though the soul doesn't want that - since its source, from which it derives is "a portion of Divinity from Above," (Iyov 31:2) and it desires to connect to its Creator more than any desire for physical enjoyment.

וְהַנֶּה מִבּוֹאָר בָּזָהָר: "מְאָן" דָּלָא
מַהְפֵּךְ מְרִירוֹ לְמַתְקָא - לִית לֵיה
חוֹלְקָא בְּהָאִי עַלְמָא בְּלָוָם",⁴

כִּי זֶה כָּל הָאָדָם⁵ לֹא נִבְרָא אֶלָּא
בְּשִׁבְיל זֶה.

A3: Now, it explains in the Zohar, (I, 4a) “Someone who does not transform [spiritual] bitterness into [spiritual] sweetness, has no portion in this [Divine] World [of Hashem’s revelation], at all.”

Since this process of transforming bitterness is the entire purpose of man, and this is the main reason he was created.

The Alter Rebbe proves that we cannot say that connecting to Hashem in prayer alone is the ultimate purpose of man:

שָׁהָרִי בְּבֵית־דָרָשׁוֹן לֹא הָיו
מַתִּפְלִין⁶ כָּל.

Since, in the time of the first Beis Hamikash, people weren’t required to recite any fixed prayers at all.

גַם בְּבֵית־שְׁנִי תָּקַנוּ אֲנָשִׁי בְּנֵשֶׁת
הַגְּדוֹלָה תְּפִלָּה־קָצָרָה.

Even in the time of the second Beis Hamikdash, the Sages, known as the “Men of the Great Assembly,” only established a short version of prayer.

וּבָזְדָאֵי כָּל הַעֲבֹדָה שְׁלָהֶם לֹא הָיָה
כִּי אָم עַל דָּרָךְ זֶה לְהַפּוֹךְ "מְרִירוֹ
לְמַתְקָא".

We can be certain that in those times, their main service of Hashem was specifically in this context of “transforming bitterness into sweetness.”

וְהַעֲנִין הָוֹא, כִּי הַדִּינִין נִמְתְּקִים

The idea behind this is that the “strict judgements” of Hashem, as manifest in negative things in

⁴ (תרגום: מי שלא מהפך מר למתק - אין לו חלק בעולם הזה בלאם).

⁵ (עיין בזוהר בראשית, דף ד', עמוד א'. ובפירוש הרמ"ז שם).

⁶ (פ' זה פ' האזדום: קהילת יב, יג).

⁷ (ראה מגילה יז, ב.).

בְּשָׁרְשָׁן.⁸

דְּהַנֶּה בְּלַדְעָת וְדִינִים רְחַמְנָא לְצַלֵּן
שְׁנַתְּהָרוּ בְּעוֹלָם - שָׁרָשָׁם וּמִקּוֹרֶם
הַמְּחִיה אָוֹתָם הַוָּא טָב.

this world, can be “sweetened,” i.e., transformed into revealed good, by connecting them to their spiritual Source.

Since all the bad things and “harsh judgements” - Heaven forbid - that come into existence in this world, are rooted in a source that gives them life, which is good and holy.

כְּמַשְׁלֵךְ הַזָּוָנָה עִם בֵּן הַמֶּלֶךְ⁹
הַמְּבוֹאָר בְּזָהָר (תְּרוּמָה, זֶה קְסִ"ג, עַמּוֹד א'),

This concept is explained by the analogy of the “harlot and the

⁸ (אהה זהר חלק ג' כבט, א).

⁹ [נא] תִּמְאָא, בִּיצְרָה הָרָע הַיְּךְ בָּר נְשׁ לְמַרְחָם לְיהָ, דְּהָא יַצֵּר הָרָע מַקְטְּרָא אִיהָו, דְּלָא
קָרְבָּר בָּר נְשׁ לְפּוֹלְחָנָא דְּקוֹדֵשׁ אֲבָרִיךְ הַוָּא, וְהַיְּךְ יְרָחִים לְיהָ בֵּיהָ. אֶלָּא, דְּאִיהָו פּוֹלְחָנָא
דְּקוֹדֵשׁ אֲבָרִיךְ הַוָּא יִתְּהָר, פְּדָהֵי יַצֵּר הָרָע אַתְּכְפֵּאָל לְיהָ, בְּגִינָן רְחִימָו דְּקָא מַרְחָם לְיהָ
לְקוֹדֵשׁ אֲבָרִיךְ הַוָּא. דְּכָר הַאִי יַצֵּר הָרָע אַתְּכְפֵּאָל, וְתַבְרֵר לְיהָ הַהְוָא בָּר נְשׁ, דְּאִיהָו רְחִימָו
דְּקוֹדֵשׁ אֲבָרִיךְ הַוָּא, בְּגִינָן דִּידְעַשׁ לְקָרְבָּא לְהַהְוָא יַצֵּר הָרָע, לְפּוֹלְחָנָא דְּקוֹדֵשׁ אֲבָרִיךְ הַוָּא.

הַכָּא אִיהָו רְזָא לְמַאְרִי מִדֵּין. כִּל מַה דְּעַבְדָּה קָוְדְשָׁא בָּרִיךְ הַוָּא עַלְלָא וְתַתָּא, כְּלָא אִיהָו בְּגִינָן
לְאַחֲזָה יַקְרָא דִּילָה, וּכְלָא אִיהָו לְפּוֹלְחָנָה. וְכִי מִאֵן חַמִּי עַבְדָּא, דְּלָהֵי מַקְטְּרָא דְּמָאָרָה,
וּבְכָל מִה דְּרוּתִיה דְּמָאָרָה, אַתְּעַבְדָּה אִיהָו מַקְטְּרָא. רְעוּתִיה דְּקוֹדֵשׁ אֲבָרִיךְ הַוָּא, דִּיהְוָן בְּנֵי
נְשָׁא פְּדִיר בְּפּוֹלְחָנָה, וּנְכָבֵן בְּאֶרְחָה קְשׁוּט, בְּגִינָן לְמַנְכִּי לְזֹן בְּכֶמֶה טָבָן, הַוָּאיל וְרְעוּתִיה
דְּקוֹדֵשׁ אֲבָרִיךְ הַוָּא בְּהָאֵ, הַיְּךְ אַתְּאֵי עַבְדָּא בִּישָׁא, וְאַשְׁתְּכַח מַקְטְּרָא מְגֹן רְעוּתִיה דְּמָאָרָה,
וְאַסְטִי לְבָנֵי נְשָׁא לְאֶרְחָה בִּישָׁ, וְאַדְחֵי לְזֹן דְּלָא יַעֲבֹדוּן רְעוּתָא דְּמָאָרָה,
וְאַסְטִי לְבָנֵי נְשָׁא לְאֶרְחָה בִּישָׁ.

אֶלָּא, וְדָאֵי רְעוּתִיה דְּמָאָרָה עַבְדֵי. לְמַלְכָא דְּהַנוּ לְיהָ בָּר יְחִינָא, וְהַוָּה רְחִימָו לְיהָ יִתְּהָר,
וּפְקִיד עַלְיהָ בְּרָחִימָו, דְּלָא יַקְרֵב גְּרָמִיה לְאַתְּתָא בִּישָׁא, בְּגִינָן דְּכָל מִאֵן דִּיקְרֵב לְגַבְהָ, לְאוֹ כְּדָא
אִיהָו לְאַעֲלָא גּוֹ פְּלַטְרִין דְּמַלְכָא. אַזְׁוִי לְיהָ הַהְוָא בָּרָא, לְמַעְבֵּד רְעוּתִיה דְּאַבְוִי בְּרָחִימָו.

בְּבִיאָה דְּמַלְכָא, לְבָר, הוֹתְּחָרָא זָוָנָה, יְאָה בְּחִיזָוּ, וְשְׁפִירָא בְּרִינוּא. לְיוֹמִין אָמָר מַלְכָא, בְּעִינָא
לְמַחְמִי רְעוּתִיה דְּבָרִי לְבָאֵי. קָרָא לְהָה לְהַהְיָה זָוָנָה, וְאָמָר לְהָזָוָנָה וְתַפְתִּי לְבָרִי, לְמַחְמִי
רְעוּתִיה דְּבָרִי לְגַבְאֵי. הַהְיָה זָוָנָה מַאי עַבְדָת, אַזְׁלָת אַכְתְּרִיה דְּבָרִיה וּדְמַלְכָא שְׁרָאָת לְחַבְקָא
לְיהָ וּלְנַשְּׁקָּא לְיהָ, וּלְפִתְחֵי לְיהָ בְּכֶמֶה פְּטוּרִין. אֵי הַהְוָא בָּרָא יְאָוֹת, וְאַצְּוּת לְפָקָודָא דְּאַבְוִי, גַּעַר
בָּהּ, וְאַפְתִּית לְהָ, וְדָחֵי לְהָ מִנְיָה. בְּרִין אַבְוִי חַדִּי בְּבָרִיה, וְאַעֲלֵיל לְיהָ לְגֹזְגֹּזָא דְּהַיְּכִילָה,
וְיַהְיֵב לְיהָ מַתְּנָן וּגְבוּזָנוֹ וַיְקַרְבֵּן סְגִינָה. מִאֵן גָּרִים כָּל הַאִיְקָר לְהַהְיָה בָּרָא, הַוָּי אִימָא הַהְיָה זָוָנָה.

son of the king,” as explained in the Zohar. (II, 163a)

The analogy: A king wanted to test the moral strength of his son. To test him, he hired a harlot to try to seduce his son. If the son refused to be seduced, then the king planned to bring him into his private chamber and reward him greatly.

Now, the harlot knew that if she succeeded in seducing the prince, then the king would be devastated. However, she was also hired to test the prince. In her mind, she really wanted the son to resist her seduction, even as she was actively trying to seduce him. Since she was hired by the king and was loyal to the king, she would also be devastated if the prince would fail the test. Therefore, her whole inner desire is for the prince to withstand the test, even while she is the one charged with administering that test of loyalty.

**שֶׁבֶל רָצְוָה וְחַפְצָה – שֶׁלֹּא לְצִיָּת
אוֹתָהּ**

Her entire inner will and desire is actually that the prince should not listen to her,

**וּבָזָה תַּתְעַנְגֶּה יוֹתֵר – שַׁתְּהָא אֲהֹובָה
לְמֶלֶךְ.**

she will enjoy that moral victory of the prince much more, since then, the king will appreciate her and honor her.

**מַה שָׁאֵן בָּן בְּשִׁמְפְּתָה אָוֹתוֹ וְתוּכָל¹⁰
לו – אַיִן זוּ רָצְוָה הַמֶּלֶךְ.**

Which is not the case if she succeeds in seducing him, she will then be in big trouble, since that was not the real desire of the king.

Similarly, the ultimate source of our Yetzer Hara-unholy desires, is from a good and holy place, from the holy desire of Hashem to test us, so that,

זה היא זוֹנָה אֵיתָ לָה שֶׁבֶל בָּהָאֵי אוֹ לָאֵוֹ. וְרַאֵי שֶׁבֶל אֵיתָ לָה מִכְלָסְטְּרִין. חֶרֶד, רַעֲבָדָת פְּקוּדָה דְמֶלֶכָא. וְחֶדֶד, דְגַרְמָת לִיהְיָה לְהָהָוָא בָּרָא, לְכָל הָהָוָא טִיבוֹ, לְכָל הָאֵי רְחִימָוּ דְמֶלֶכָא לְגַבְיהָ. וְעַל דָּא בְּתִיבָ, (בראשית א) וְהַגָּה טֹב מְאָד. וְהַגָּה טֹב, דָא מְלָאָךְ חִימָם. (ס"ח ע"ב) מְאָד, דָא מְלָאָךְ הַמְּפּוּת, דָא יְהוָה דָא טֹב מְאָד, לְמַאַן דְאַעֲצִית פְּקוּדָה דְמֶאָרִיה. וְתָא חֹזֵי, אַיְלָא הָאֵי מְקֻטְרָנָא, לֹא יַרְתֹּהוּן צְדִיקִיאָה נְנִי גּוֹנִיא עַלְאֵין, דְזִמְנִין לִירְתָּא לְעַלְמָא דְאָתִי.

¹⁰ על פִּי יְרִמְיָה ב, ז: "פָּתַחְתִּי .. וְתוּכָל".

by overcoming the test, we connect to Hashem in a way that is much deeper than if we were not tested.

וְזַהוּ מִאָמֵר רַזְ"ל¹¹: "שָׁטָן וּפְנִינָה לְשֵׁם
שָׁמִים נִתְחַבּוּנוּ".

Q4: This is the meaning of the teaching of our Sages, (Bava Basra 16a) “When the Satan and Penina did something negative, their intention was for the sake of Heaven.”

This statement refers to two stories:

- Iyov was afflicted with terrible suffering, and the “cause” of it was the Satan’s prosecution of him on Rosh Hashana.
- Chana, the mother of Shmuel, the prophet, was constantly harassed by her co-wife, Penina, who made fun of her for being childless.

In both of these stories, there was an inner good intention behind the suffering of Iyov and Chana. Iyov attained atonement for not protesting Pharaoh’s decree against the Jewish children, and Chana was forced to pray to Hashem until she was blessed with a child. Since, in both cases, there was a good purpose behind the suffering, we say that even the perpetrator of the suffering, the Satan and Penina, were “motivated” by holy intentions.

וּבָמָקוֹם אֶחָר (סֻקָה נ"ב, א") אָמְרוּ:¹² "נָתַן
עֵינָיו בַמִקְדָשׁ רָאשׁוֹן וְחַרְיבָוּ"
- מִשְׁמָעָ שְׁנַתְקָנָא בָו.

However, in another place, our Sages said, (Sukka 52a) “The Satan ‘placed his eyes’ on the first Beis Hamikdash and destroyed it.” This implies that he was actually jealous of the Beis Hamikdash and really hated it, with no holy motive whatsoever.

¹¹ (בְּבָא בְתְרָא טו, א).

¹² (וּשְׁמָ: וְאֵת הַצְפָנִי אֶרְחִיק מַעֲלִיכֶם - זה יִצְרָא הַרְעָ, שְׁצִפּוֹן וְעוֹמֵד בְלִבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם. וְהַדְחַתְיוֹ אֶל אָרֶץ צִיה וְשִׁמְמָה - לִמְקוֹם שָׁאֵין בְנֵי אָדָם מִצְוִין לְהַתְגִּרוֹת בָּהֶן. אֵת פְנִינָה אֶל הַיּוֹם הַקָּרְמָנִי - שְׁנַתְקָנָא עֵינָיו בַמִקְדָשׁ רָאשׁוֹן וְחַרְיבָוּ").

How do we resolve these two statements: Did the Satan (and Penina) have holy intentions, or not?

- והענין הוא, ששורש הרע המחייבו
הוא טוב.

A4: The idea is as follows: Bad things are rooted in it, and receive their lifeforce from, a source that is good and holy.

במבואר בזוהר שם: "וכי יש עבד
דריר במאיריה?"¹³

As explained in the Zohar: "Can there be a spiritual servant who rebels against his Master?"

הנוגם שיש במה עבדים המתחפרים
מאית אדרוניהם",¹⁴

Even though, in the physical world there are many servants who act rebelliously towards their masters,

אמנם הם בשר ודם, וחיוותם נפרדים
זה מזו.

nevertheless, this is only possible with physical, human servants, whose lifeforce is separate from their master's.

אבל "עבדי ה", שמקבלים חייהם
ממנו יתברר, והוא המחייב את הכל

However, the spiritual "servants of Hashem" who feel how they receive their lifeforce from Hashem, which is obviously the case, since Hashem gives life to everything,

איך יש חיות לדבר שכונגדו?

How can something be aware that it receives its lifeforce from Hashem, and at the same time rebel against Hashem?

ומשנני, שהוא על דרך משל "הזונה
עם בן המלך", וזה דבר המחייב את
כל הרעות.

And the Zohar answers that it is similar to the analogy of the "harlot with prince," as explained above, and it is this holy intention to test us or to

¹³ (וכי יש עבד שמוריד באדרונו?).

¹⁴ על פי שמואלי-א כה, י: "עבדים המתחפרים איש מפני אדרונו").

cleanse us **that gives life to all the bad things.**

Just like the immoral conduct of the harlot's seduction is derived from the good intention and desire of the king to test his son, so too, the spiritual forces of unholiness that produce bad desires and suffering derive from Hashem's good desire to test us or to cleanse us.

וְשֶׁרֶשֶׁם לְמַעַלָּה הוּא טוֹב,

Now, even though the source of unholiness is good,

וְכַשְׁיוֹרֵד לִמְטָה עַל דָּרְךָ הַשְׁתַּלְשָׁלוֹת
נָעֲשָׂה בָּאַמְתָּה רָע ְגָמוֹר וְדִינִים
גּוֹמְרִים, הֵן בִּמְילֵי דָעַלְמָא וְהֵן בִּמְילֵי
דְּשָׁמְנָא.

when it descends below through the chainlike order of spiritual levels (Hishtalshelus), it turns into truly bad things and mercilessly harsh judgements, in both material suffering and spiritual suffering at the hands of the Yetzer Hara.

Now, we have answered the contradiction posed above, regarding the question of whether the Satan's intentions are holy or unholly: In the ultimate source of the Satan, in Hashem's desire to test us or to cleanse us, the desire and intention is purely holy and good. Now, the spiritual forces of unholiness are still aware of their source, and therefore do not rebel against Hashem, because they know that the only reason they exist is to carry out Hashem's mission to test or cleanse people. Therefore, as they exist spiritually, they still have "holy intentions."

However, as this unholiness descends into this world, they lose all contact with their source and become totally unaware of any deeper purpose and intention to their desire to harm; they only intend to do harm for purely unholly and sadistic reasons.

וְהַנָּה, בְּשַׁבָּא לְאָדָם אֵין הַיְסָרִים
רְחַמְנָא לְצַלְנוּ, וְחַשּׁוּב, בַּי לֹא לְמִרְאָה
עַיִּין וְשִׁפּוּט¹⁵ שְׁרֵעַ הוּא, אַלְאָ בָּאַמְתָּה
שְׁרַבּוּ הוּא טוֹב.

Now, when a person has suffering – Heaven forbid – he should realize that he shouldn't judge the situation superficially to think that it is nothing more than the bad that it appears to be, since in truth its source is good.

¹⁵ (ג) אַלְכְּמָא עַיִּין וְשִׁפּוּט: יְשֻׁעָה יַא, ג).

כִּי מִפְנֵנו יִתְבָּרֵךְ לֹא תֵצֵא חֶרְעוֹת¹⁶,
כִּי אֵם רָק טוֹב גָּמוֹר.

רָק שֶׁהוּא אִינוֹ מְוֹשָׁגָן, בְּשִׁבְיָל שֶׁלֹּא
יָבוֹל לִירֹד לְעוֹלָם הַשְּׁפֵל, וּנְשָׁאָר
לִמְעָלָה.¹⁷

וְזַהוּ נִקְרָא "מִיכְלָא דְקִיק"¹⁸, שֶׁהוּא
בְּאֵמֶת חַיּוֹתָו יִתְבָּרֵךְ.¹⁹

וְזַהוּ "בְּכָל מְאָדָר",

Since, (Eicha 3:38) “**No bad things come forth from Him,**” only absolute good.

It is just that it cannot be perceived, since the revealed aspect of this good could not descend into this lowly world, and it therefore remained Above.

This spiritual source of suffering is called its “**ethereal lifeforce**,” which is its true life-force that derives from Hashem.

This deeper level of connection to Hashem through suffering is referred to as loving Hashem “**with all of your might**,” i.e., loving Hashem without any limits,

כְּמַאֲמָר: “טֹב מְאָד” (בראשית א, לא) –

“טֹב” זה מְלָאֵךְ-הַחַיִּים²⁰, “מְאָד” זה
מְלָאֵךְ-הַמְּמוֹת;

As our Sages explain the verse, (Bereishis 1:31) ‘Hashem saw all that he had made, and it was **טֹב-good** **מְאָד-exceedingly** so,’

Our Sages comment, (Bereishis Rabba 9:9) ‘**טֹב-good** is a reference to the angel of life, and **מְאָד-exceedingly** is a reference to the angel of death,’

¹⁶ (אייבָה ג, לח: “מִפְיָעָלָיוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא חֶרְעוֹת.”)

¹⁷ (עיין ב”ספר של בינוֹנִים” פרק כ”ג. וב”אגרת הקדש” (סימן יא) דבריו המתחילה
”להשכילך בינה”).

¹⁸ (ראה זוהר בראשית ב, א: “היכלָא דְקִיק.”).

¹⁹ (יעין בזוהר בראשית, דף ח’, עמוד ב’: “בְּחַוֹתָא דְקִיק כּוֹ”).

²⁰ (ראה בראשית רבבה ט, ט. זוהר חלק א יד, א).

שַׁהוּא "טוֹב מְאָד" - בְּלִי שִׁיעָוָר
וּגְבוּל, אֶלָּא שְׁעַרְיוֹן לֹא בָּא לִידֵי גִּילִּוי
וְאַינוּ מִושָׁגֶן.²¹

Meaning that this Yetzer Hara, who is also the angel of death, is in truth “טוֹב מְאָד”-extremely good,” beyond any measure or limit. It is just that this unlimited good didn’t come into revelation in our world and is not perceived.

וְזֹהוּ "יִסְרֵר יִסְרָאֵל יְהָה" (תְּהִלִּים קִי. יח),
שַׁהוּא בְּתִחְלַת הַשֵּׁם, תִּחְלַת
הַתְּגִלוֹתָה, שְׁעַרְיוֹן לֹא בָּא לִידֵי גִּילִּוי
וְאַינוּ מִושָׁגֶן, שְׁעַרְיוֹן לֹא נִתְגָּלֶה הַכָּל.

This is also the meaning of the verse (Tehillim 118:18): “יְהָה-Hashem has given me suffering,” since the name “יְהָה” are the first two letters at the beginning of Hashem’s Name of י-ה-ו-ה, referring to the beginning and higher form of the revelation of Hashem, when the good still did not yet come into revelation and is not perceived, since the whole good is not yet revealed.

וְזֹהוּ עֲנֵנִין "נָחוּם אִישׁ גָּם זֹהַ שְׁחִיה
אוֹמֶר: "גָּם זֹהַ לְטוּבָה",

This is also the idea of the Tzadik, “Nachum Ish Gamzu, the man who would say, ‘This is also for the good.’” (See Taanis 21a)

One of the most famous stories of Nachum and his favorite saying: One time, the Sages sent him to Rome with a chest full of jewels and precious stones as gift to the Emperor, to help improve his conduct towards the Jewish People.

On the way there, he stopped over in a hotel for the night. During the night, the people in the hotel stole all the jewels, and filled the chest with sand. Instead of getting worried, he said “This is also for the good.” He truly

²¹ (ועיין בזוהר ריש פְּרִישָׁת יִתְרוֹ, זֶה ס"ח ב'. וּבְהַרְמָן זֶה שֵׁם. וְעַיִן מִה שְׁנִתְבָּאֶר עַל פְּסָוק
"אֶלָּה מִסְעֵי" (לקמן צא, ג)).

²² (חֲעַנִּית בָּא, אַרְשֵׁם וְסִמְךָן).

believed that Hashem had a good intention in causing someone to steal the jewels and replace them with sand.

When he arrived in Rome, the officials took the chest and opened it and were shocked to see sand, and wanted to make a decree to kill the entire Jewish People, G-d forbid. Then, Eliyahu the prophet appeared, dressed as a roman officer, and explained that it cannot be that the Jews would mock the Romans by bringing ordinary sand; this must be magical sand that turns into arrows and spears when thrown at an enemy army. They tried out the magical sand, and it worked - a handful of this sand defeated an entire enemy army! The Roman officials were so impressed that they immediately nullified the decree against the Jews, and instead sent back a chest of precious jewels.

It turned out that the jewels being stolen was a blessing, since it impressed the Roman Emperor much more than jewels.

מן פנוי שְׁחִיה מִרְבּוֹנִין בְּאֶמֶת - שְׁשָׁרֶת
 הַרְעָה הוּא הַטּוֹב, וְהַבְּיאוֹ לְמַעַלָּה אֶל
 שְׁרַשׁוֹ - לִמְקוֹם אֵין,

He would say this motto because he would contemplate the fact that, in truth, the source of bad things is good, and – in his thoughts – he would elevate those bad things to their source in holiness, to a level called “אין-intangible,” i.e., a spiritual level that is not yet formed and defined, and therefore, matters are able to change before they become manifest in our physical world,

וְשֵׁם הַיְהָ יִכּוֹל לְעַשׂוֹת הַשְׁתָנוֹת.

and there, he was able to change things from hidden good to revealed good.

בְּמַאֲמָר רַבִּי חָנִינָא בֶן דּוֹסָא:²³ “מַיְ
 שָׁאָמָר לְשָׁמָן וַיְדַלֵּיק כָּוּ”²⁴.

Like Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa said, (Taanis 25a) “The One (Hashem) who said that oil

²³ (תענית כה, א בגירסת העין יעקב: “מי שאמיר לשבון וידליך – הוא יאמר לחומץ וידליך.”)

²⁴ (ועיין מה שנכתבear סוף דבר המתחיל “זאת חקמת התורה”, בענין “מי יתן טהורה מטמא”).

should burn, can tell vinegar to burn as well.”

This is referring to the following story: One Friday afternoon, Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa saw that his daughter was sad. He asked for the reason, and she replied that she had accidentally filled up the Shabbos lamp with vinegar rather than oil, and tried lighting it for Shabbos. He replied, “The One who told oil to burn should tell the vinegar to burn!” Those vinegar lamps burned the whole night and the next day, until they used them for lamps for Havdala.

How was Rabbi Chanina able to produce this miracle? Because he connected the physical things below to their spiritual source. In the source of oil and vinegar, both have the potential to burn, but when they come down into this world, oil burns and vinegar doesn’t. By connecting the vinegar to its source, he transformed it into flammable vinegar.

Similarly, Nachum was able to transform the hidden good into revealed good by reconnecting the hidden good to its source in holiness and goodness.

וְזַה עַנְנֵן הַתְּפִלָּה שְׁבָגוֹף הָאָדָם
בָּעוֹלָם־הָזֶה: שְׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בַּתּוֹר הַגּוֹף
סּוֹבְלָת צְרוֹת וִיסּוּרִים, שְׁרָצָוֹנָה
לִקְבַּק בִּיוֹצְרָה וְהַגּוֹף אֵינוֹ מַנִּיחָה.

This is the idea of prayer for a person’s soul as it exists, in a body, in this world: When the souls exists in the body, it endures great suffering, since its desire is to connect to its Creator, and the body does not allow this.

וְכִמו גָּלוֹת הַשְׁכִּינָה, שְׁמַוְכְּרָתָה
לְהַחִיּוֹת גַּם הַרְשָׁעִים - כִּר הַנְּשָׁמָה
מוֹכְרָת לְהַחִיּוֹת אֶת הַגּוֹף.

This is just like the Exile of the Shechina-Divine Presence: It is ‘forced’ to give life also to the wicked, even though it doesn’t truly want to. **So too, the soul is forced to give life to the body** even though it would rather not.

וְכֹל פָּנִינָה אֵינָה בְּשִׁבֵּיל עַצְמָה רַק
בְּשִׁבֵּיל לְהַעֲלֹת הַגּוֹף מַעֲפָר;

Its entire intention in existing in a body is not for its own benefit, but rather, it is only in order to elevate the body from “the dirt” of its coarse physicality,

וְצִירֵךְ לְבָרְרוֹ בְּפֶסֶף בֵּין הַצּוֹרֶף²⁵,

כֹּל מָה שִׁישׁ תְּעֻרּוֹבֹת יוֹתֶר - צִירֵךְ
לְבָרְרָה וְלִבְנָה בְּלַהֲבָב אֲשֶׁר הַיּוֹתֶר גָּדוֹלָה.

בֶּן צִירֵךְ לְבָרְרָה הַגּוֹף מִמְּצִירֵךְ הַרְעָה
וְלִהְבִיאוֹ אֶל שָׁרֶשׁוֹ.

כְּמַשְׁלֵךְ בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם הַזּוֹנָה הַפְּנַיָּה.

- כֹּל מָה שִׁישׁ תְּעֻרּוֹבֹת רָע בַּיּוֹתֶר
צִירֵךְ לְהַפְּרִיד עַל יְדֵי אַשְׁר יוֹתֶר גָּדוֹלָה
וְחֹזֶק בְּתִפְלָה לְרַבֵּק בְּקוֹנוֹןוֹ.²⁶

וְלֹכֶן, בְּבִיתֵּר-אַרְאָשׁוֹן שֶׁלָּא הִיה הַרְעָה
הַרְבָּה, לֹא הִי צִירֵיכִין לְחַפְלָה
בְּהַתְּלִקְבּוֹת,

כִּי אִם כָּל מִעְשֵׁיכֶם הִיה לְהַבֵּיא הַרְעָה
וְהַדִּינִים אֶל שָׁרֶשֶׁם,

עַל יְדֵי הַקְּרָבָנוֹת - הִיה דִּינִים.

and it needs to be refined, like a silversmith refines silver,

the more dross that is mixed into silver, the more intense fire the silversmith will need to sift out and refine the silver.

Similarly, the person needs to refine the body and separate it from the negative effect of the Yetzer Hara, by bringing the Yetzer Hara back to its source,

as was explained regarding the analogy of the “harlot and the prince.”

The more spiritual bad is mixed into the person, the greater and stronger his connection to his Creator must be during prayer, in order to separate and remove that bad.

Therefore, in the time of the first Beis Hamikdash, when there was not so much bad mixed into people, they did not need as much fiery passion in prayer.

Rather, the entire main focus of their service of Hashem was to elevate the bad and “harsh judgements” to their source in holiness,

and this was mainly accomplished through the

²⁵ (כַּפְעַמִּים בַּיּוֹד הַצּוֹרֶף פִּוּזֶת “כִּי הַנִּיה בְּחַזּוֹמֶר בַּיּוֹד הַיּוֹצֵר.”).

²⁶ (וְעַזְיָן מָה שְׁנִתְּבָאֵר בְּפִרְשָׁת אַמְוֹר עַל פְּסָוק “וְנִקְדְּשָׁתִי”).

physical **Korbanos-offerings**, and this was sufficient to separate the bad and elevate it to its source, while the service of prayer was of secondary importance to serve this purpose.

אבל בבית שני התחילו לתקן התפלה, והייתה קצרה -

However, in the time of the second Beis Hamikdash, the Sages instituted the fixed order of the **prayers**, which was a shorter version than the current version of prayers that we say nowadays.

לפי ערך העטרות האש ותערובות הרע שהיה בקרם.

This was corresponding to the need of the fiery passion in prayer required to separate the bad that was mixed into the people in those times.

Since there became a greater mix-up of spiritual bad in people during the time of the second Beis Hamikdash, moreso than during the first Beis Hamikdash, they required more fiery love of Hashem in prayer in order to remove that bad. This is why the Sages established the order of the daily prayers, which added to people's involvement in prayer, as compared to the previous era.

ואנחנו צריכים להתפלל יותר ויותר בהתקבות מוד.

However, nowadays, we need to be involved in prayer with much, much more passion than in the times of the second Beis Hamikdash.

בכל דור ודור למטה, צריך להתפלל בהתקבות גדולה.

Since, the lower the spiritual level of the generation, the more intensely passionate has to be their involvement in prayer.

ובן ולא כי אכשר דברי,²⁷

In fact, the trend is that each succeeding generation is not on

²⁷ לשון הגמרא יבמות לט, ב. וברש"י שם: נתכושו הדורות).

a higher spiritual level than the previous one.

אֲדֹרֶבָה, מִפְנֵי גּוֹדֵל הָרָע אֲשֶׁר
נִתְעַרְבֵּן וְנִתְרַבֵּה בְּכָל דָּוָר דָּוָר,

Just the opposite; each generation is generally lower than the previous, and because of the great increase of bad that becomes more mixed into people in each succeeding generation,

צָרִיךְ לְהַפְּרִידוּ עַל יְדֵי אֲשֶׁר חָזַק
בְּתַפְּלָה, וְלִבְרֹר הָרָע אֲשֶׁר בְּקָרְבָּנוּ,
וְלִהְבִיאוּ אֶל שְׁرָשׁוֹ.

we need to continuously intensify the fiery passion in prayer in order to separate that bad, and to remove the bad that is inside of us, and elevate it to its source in holiness.

בָּמַשְׁלֵךְ בֵּין הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם הַזָּוֹנָה הַנְּגַל,

As was explained above, in the analogy of the “harlot and the prince.”

שִׁיחָשׁוֹב הַחַיּוֹת שֶׁל הָרָע הַמְּחִיָּהוּ,
אִיר יִשְׁלֹׁו חַיּוֹת מִהְקָדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא,
כִּי בְּלֹעַדּוּ לֹא הָיָה יִכְלֶל לְחַיּוֹת,
וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַחֲיָהוּ עַל דָּרָךְ
הַנְּגַל -

This means that a person should contemplate the fact that there is a lifeforce in the bad, and this life-force comes from Hashem; without it, the bad would not be able to live, and Hashem gives it life for the reason explained above, namely, in order to test the person and bring him to a deeper connection to Hashem.

אִם בֵּן אֵין רָע בְּכָל.

If so, then it is not really bad at all, since his Yetzer Hara exists for his own benefit, and it is not truly “bad,” even though it appears to be.

The Alter Rebbe now applies this same concept to material suffering:

וְכֵן בְּלִ הַיִּסְוָרִים בְּעַנְיָנִי עֲלָמִים-הַזָּה
בְּשַׁחַחֲשֵׁב עַל דָּרָךְ הַנְּגַל “יַתְפְּרִדוּ כָּל

So too, regarding all the suffering in material matters, if a person will reflect on them in

פּוּעָלֵי אָוֹן" (תְּהִלִּים צב. י).

the way that was explained above, how their source is good and holy and for the person's benefit, then "all the doers of evil will disperse." (Tehillim 92:10)

This means that when a person is able to see the source of the suffering, and how it is coming from Hashem for the person's own benefit, he will be able to "disperse" and remove the painful and negative state of things as they exist in this world. As explained above, as the "judgements" exist Above, they are connected to holiness, but as they descend into this world, they lose that revealed connection to their source, turning into "doers of evil," i.e., purely harsh judgements that have no holy intention. However, when a person uses his mind to reconnect these "harsh judgements" to their source, he reveals in them their connection to their source, which causes their "harshness" to disappear.

ובענין נחום איש גם זו - גם כל
הצדיקים היו על דרכם זהה.

This is the idea of "Nachum Ish Gamzu, the man who said 'this is also for the good,' and in fact, **all the Tzadikim had the same approach** towards suffering.

רק נחום איש גם זו היה יכול לשנות
המשכחה מלמעלה-למטה,

It is just that Nachum Ish Gamzu was able to alter the reality in this world so that it correspond with how it is seen from Above to below,

שהיה נראה באמת למטה שהוא
טוב בשמיות.

so that it should be actually visible below in this world, that it is good, even on a physical level.

ולכן נקרא "גם זו" - שהוא מושג.²⁸

This is why he was named after his saying that "also zo-gam" is

²⁸ וועיין ב"יעץ חיים", שער לאה ורחל, פרק ה', בענין "גם". ובמהדורה בתרא שם: "זהנה הגם מאיר כו' והוא המשכחה מעלה-דעתפיסיא לעלמא-דעתגלאיה הנקרא זו". וועיין עוד מענין "גם" - ב"יעץ חיים" שער אריך-אנפין, פרק י"ז. וועיין מה שנטבאר לעיל (בעהלוותך לג), א בדבור הפתחיל "זזה מעשה המנורה", בענין

for the good,” meaning that the good **should be perceived**, like something you can point with your finger at and say “this is good.”

אבל כל הצדיקים, אפילו שהי
מחשכוטם על זה הדרך,

However, all the other Tzadikim, even though in their minds **they were thinking** about suffering **with the same approach** as Nachum,

היה נשאר למעלהvr בפה במו שהי
בתחילה, בלי מושג הטוב והוא.

the revealed good remained Above as it was originally, without the good becoming perceptible in this physical world.

The Alter Rebbe is pointing out an important point: Only for certain people in certain situations does Hashem make miraculous transformations from hidden good to revealed good in a supernatural manner.

Even though every Tzadik, and every Jew, takes this deeper approach to suffering, elevating it to its source in holiness, for most people, most of the time, the transformation is more subtle.

Most of the time, the result of “elevating” the hidden good to its source in revealed good will cause a transformation, but it will come in seemingly natural means.

For example, someone is sick, and he thinks about how it is really from Hashem for his benefit etc., and then, by Hashgacha Pratis-Individual Divine Providence, he meets just the right doctor who gives him just the right medicine and he recovers.

Or someone lost his job and is suffering financially, and after he thinks into how his suffering is to motivate him to Teshuva-repentance and it is for his own benefit etc., by Hashgacha Pratis he happens to find just the job he was looking for.

So too, each person experiences many of these instances, where his realization of the inner purpose of his suffering and the increase in trust and service of Hashem that results from it, brings him, by Hashgacha

“וְאַנְכִּי אַעֲלֵךְ גַּם עַלְתָּה” (מִקְצֵן מוֹ, ד), דְּהַיָּנוּ שְׁפֵחִינֶת “גַּם” יִהְיֶה לוֹ גַּסְכָּן עַלְתָּה. וּמִזֶּה
הוּא עַנְנִין “נְחוֹם אִישׁ גַּם זֹ”.

Pratis, to the resolution of his physical suffering, as well. However, usually the Hashgacha Pratis is “clothed” in natural means.

Only people like Nachum, or occasionally regular people, experience supernatural, miraculous transformations of their situation by “elevating” the suffering to its source in holiness.

However, the idea of the “copper snake” reflected the mode of Nachum, a supernatural transformation of hidden good into revealed good.

וזהו עניין “נחש הנחשה”, שהיה צריך להשים על הנס,

A1 & 2: **This is the idea of the “נחש-snake of הנחשה-copper” that Moshe had to place on top of a pole.**

שהיה צריך לה להגבהת הנחש למעלה, ומסתכלים כלפי מעלה.

It was needed in order to elevate the “snake” upwards, to its source in holiness, so that people would look upwards to Hashem, the source of everything.

כלומר, שלא יחשוב שהנחש נפרד, אם בין הויא רע ממש ונשאר רע.

Meaning, so that people shouldn’t think that the “snake” is something truly separate and independent from Hashem, in which case it would be truly bad and would always remain bad.

אבל בשייחוב את הנחש בהגבהתו למעלה בשרשו, שאינו נפרד מאותו יתברר,

However, when a person thinks about the snake in terms of how it can be traced back upwards to its source, where it is not separate from Hashem,

וחיוותו ממש הוא על דרכו משל הזונה עם בן המלך הנ"ל,

and its lifeforce from Hashem at that level is like the analogy of the “harlot and the prince,” as explained above,

אם כן "אין רע יורד מלמעלה".²⁹ then “no bad things descend from Above.” (Bereishis Rabbah 51:3)

Since in its source it exists for a holy purpose, to test or to cleanse people, even as it descends, it is not truly bad, but only superficially so.

ולכן היה "נחשות" -

Therefore, this “נחשות-snake” was made of “נחשות-copper,” which includes the letters “נחשות-snake,” since it refers to the spiritual source of the “snake” the way that it is still included in holiness.

شمשתנה לבמה געוניין על ידי "אין".

This making of the “נחשות-snake” into “נחשות-copper” **causes it** – the snake – **to change its colors**, i.e., its appearance, **through** reverting back to **the level of its “אין-intangible source,”** where the bad is not so pronounced and defined, and the “severities” can be transformed into revealed good.

והמבין יבין.³⁰

And the wise will understand the above concepts.

²⁹ (בראשית רביה פרשה נא, ג ושם: "דָּבָר רַע". מורה נבוכים חלק ג פרק יב. ועוד. וראה הנסמן במקומות, הגהות וכו' לתניא אגרת הקידש סימן יא).

³⁰ (עיין מענין "נחשות הנחשות" בזוהר חלק ב', תרומה (קמ"ח, ב'). והובא ב"עץ חיים" שער מ"ט פרק ג. ועיין "מקדש מלך" שם).

והיינו, שמייתוק הגבורות קשות ד"נחשים השנפים", זהו על ידי "נחשות הנחשות", שהוא "תפארת דקליפת נוגה דאצליות". והיינו על ידי ש"מסתכלים כלפי מעלה", להגביה קליפת נוגה לשရשו שמעולם התהוו, ועל ידי זה מתגבר הטוב שבו, ש"אין רע יורד מלמעלה", ואז מתקשר הטוב שבחתפארת דקליפת נוגה דאצליות – בתפארת דקדושה דאצליותכו. (בגוף בכתב יד קדש 1122 נוסף: והיינו על ידי שמתגבר הטוב שבו

Summary of the Maamar:

Q1. The Torah says that Moshe made a copper snake and placed it on a pole, and whoever was bitten by a snake would look up the snake and live. What was the function of the copper snake in the healing process? If the purpose of looking up was to look up to Heaven and remember Hashem, then why not just have people look up to the heavens? What did looking at the snake accomplish?

Q2. Why should someone “look up” to the heavens to remember Hashem? During prayer, we are not supposed to look up. Rather, we look down, and just remember Hashem in our mind and heart?

Q3. What is the purpose of the descent of the soul into this world? If the soul had a more revealed connection to Hashem when the soul was in heaven than it has in this world, then what does the soul accomplish by being here?

A3. The purpose of the descent into this world is to transform the spiritual bitterness and darkness of the body, animal soul, and physical world into the spiritual sweetness and Light of Hashem. This is also known as “sweetening the harsh judgements” by elevating the seeming bad things to their source in holiness, thereby transforming them into revealed good. In the time of the first Beis Hamikdash, this was mainly accomplished through the Korbanos-sacrificial offerings. In the time of the second Beis

על הָרָע שָׁבֹו וְאֹז מַתְקָשֶׁר בַתְפָאָרָת דָקְדֹשָׁה. וְהִינֵּנוּ עַל יְדֵי שְׁמִסְתָּכְלִים כְּלַפִי מַעַלָּה כּוֹ").
והנה, על יְדֵי "תְפָאָרָת דָקְדֹשָׁה" נָעָשָׂה גַם כֵן מִתּוֹךְ הַ"גְבוּרוֹת דָקְדֹשָׁה" בְחִסְדִים.
זֶה עַנְנָן "שְׁלוֹם בְּפָמְלִיא שֶׁל מַעַלָּה".

וְכַמּו שָׁנַתְבָאָר בָמִקּוֹם אַחֲר – בְ"אָגָרָת הַקָּדָשׁ" עַל פְסוֹק "וְהִיא מִעְשָׂה הַצְדָקָה שְׁלוֹם
כּוֹ", עַיְינֵן שָׁם.

וְמִזֶּה נִמְשֵׁךְ אַחֲר כֵּה גַם כֵן הַ"שְׁלוֹם בְּפָמְלִיא שֶׁל מַטָּה", בְהִכְלּוֹת דְבִי"ע, עד שָׁגֶם
בְהִכְלּוֹת דָנוֹגָה מַתְגַּבֵּר הַטּוֹב וּנוֹמַתְקָה הָרָע. וְהִינֵּנוּ גַם כֵן עַל יְדֵי תְפָאָרָת-דָנוֹגָה, "נוֹחַ
הַנְּחֹשֶׁת" כִּי. אָךְ הִינֵּנוּ דָזְקָא עַל יְדֵי שְׁמִסְתָּכְלִים כְּלַפִי מַעַלָּה וּמַשְׁעַדְדִין אֶת לְבָם
לְאַבְיָהִם שְׁבָשָׁמִים").

וְעַיְינֵן עוֹד בָזָהָר חָלֵק ב': (דָף ר'כ"ט, א'. ר'ס, א'. וְדָף רַלְג, א'. קמ"ז, א'). וְעַיְינֵן בָזָהָר
פָרְשַׁת מַקְזָן (דָף ר'ד, עַמּוֹד א'). וְעַיְינֵן בָרְבּוֹת פָרְשַׁת נַח, פָרְשַׁה ל'א (דָף ל'ג, עַמּוֹד א').
מְעַנְנֵן "נִחְשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת". וְכַמּוֹזֵה הָא בִּירוּשָׁלָמִי, סֹזְקָרְקָג' דָרָאֵשׁ הַשָּׁנָה).

Hamikdash, this was accomplished through a combination of Korbanos and also through the excitement about Hashem that is awakened during prayer. In the time of Galus-Exile, this is mainly accomplished through the excitement about Hashem in prayer. The lower the generation, the more passionate and fiery love of Hashem a person needs to awaken in prayer in order to separate the spiritual bad from the good and transform it into spiritual sweetness and Light.

Q4. How do we resolve the following contradiction: In one place, it says that the Satan (and Penina) had holy intentions when they brought about suffering, but in another place, it says that the Satan was jealous of the Beis Hamikdash and wanted to destroy it from sheer malice?

A4. All unholiness in this world, including the Satan and the Yetzer Hara, has a source in holiness. This source is like the harlot who is hired to test the prince, in order to bring out his great moral strength of character, in which case her intentions are good. Similarly, the source of unholiness and suffering is from Hashem's desire to test the person and bring out the person's greater inner connection to Hashem, or to cleanse him from sin to be able to connect to Hashem better. However, as the unholiness or suffering comes down into this world, it loses its connection to its spiritual source, and, as it is manifest in the physical world, it has no good intentions at all.

A1 & 2. This is the purpose of the copper snake: The word “**תְּשִׁבְעָה**-copper” contains the word “**שִׁבְעָה**-snake” and represents the spiritual source of the “snake” as it is still connected to holiness, like the harlot who wants the prince to overcome her seduction. The idea of placing the “copper snake” on top of a pole was to represent that we need to elevate the unholiness of the Yetzer Hara and the physical suffering to its source in holiness, and remember that it also comes from Hashem and that there is a good and holy purpose behind it. The purpose of the Yetzer Hara is to challenge us so that we should overcome it, and thereby come to a much deeper connection to Hashem, and the purpose of suffering is to cleanse the person and bring the person to do Teshuva, and thereby connect to Hashem even more than before. Thus, when we see a “snake,” i.e., the Yetzer Hara or suffering, we use our minds to “elevate” it back up to its source in Heaven (represented by “looking up to heaven” to see the “copper snake at the top of the pole”), and focus on the inner, hidden good in the “snake.” By doing this, we transform the hidden good into revealed good, by revealing its source in goodness and holiness.

Lesson in the Service of Hashem from the Maamar:

- 1- Our souls came down into this world to separate the bad from the good in the animal soul, body, and our portion of this world (the aspects of this world that, by Divine Providence, we have to engage with regularly). The main opportunity for separating the good from the bad and transforming the bad into good is the time of prayer. Through a fiery passionate love of Hashem in prayer, we separate out the spiritual impurity, just like the fire of the crucible separates dross from gold and silver. The more unholiness is mixed into the world and into us, the more intense and passionately fiery do we need to invest ourselves in prayer in awakening our love for Hashem.
- 2- The fact that we have a Yetzer Hara is ultimately for our benefit, as well. By overcoming the Yetzer Hara and transforming it, we come to an infinitely deeper connection to Hashem than we would have had without it. When we look at the Yetzer Hara, we need to realize that it only exists in order to bring us closer to Hashem. When we look at it this way, he will never be able to overpower us.
- 3- The fact that we sometimes experience physical suffering in this world must also be for a good purpose. Hashem is the source of all good, and everything He does is for the good. In every situation we are in, we need to remember that, hidden within it, there is a good purpose for which Hashem is creating it. Sometimes it is to awaken us to Teshuva. Sometimes it is to cleanse us from sins which would otherwise desensitize us to feeling Hashem's Presence. Sometimes we cannot fathom the inner purpose of a certain suffering, but just the knowledge and faith that, ultimately, it must be for the good and there is a good and holy reason behind it, takes the "bite" out of the "snake," and gives us the strength to continue serving Hashem with joy, even in difficult situations.

Likutay Torah English translation project:

The original text of the maamarim with נקודות and punctuation is presented side by side with a phrase-by-phrase translation and explanation. The translation of the text is in **bold** whereas the commentary is in regular font. The explanations of general concepts that are not directly relevant to understanding the flow of the maamar are in footnotes.

All of the commentary of the Tzemach Tzedek printed with brackets in the original Likutay Torah have been moved to the Hebrew footnotes and left untranslated.

The Goal

The main purpose of this project is to enable the reader to learn the Likutay Torah in the original. By learning the words, structure, and concepts of the maamarim, eventually they should be able to learn it by themselves in the original.

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