



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

לקוטי תורה

פרשת חקת

מאמר

"ויעש משה נחש נחשת"

"Revealing the Hidden Good"

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Likutay Torah

לקוטי תורה

פרשת חקת

מאמר

ויעש משה נחש נחשת¹

דף 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 Mun (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?!

**“וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה נָחָשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וַיְשִׁימֶהוּ
עַל הַנֵּס. וְהָיָה אִם נָשָׁךְ הַנָּחָשׁ אֶת
אִישׁ, וְהִבִּיט אֶל נָחָשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וְחָיָה”**

“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 לאוניה. ראה גם סה"מ אתהלקך-לאוניה ע' טו, (וע' קנה) באור על מאמר זה עם הגהות מהצ"צ באור"ת חקת כרך-ו ע' א'תתפח. ראה גם ד"ה אם חפץ תשמ"ה.)

(פְּרָשְׁתְּנוּ בֵּא, ט):

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

וְאִיתָא בְּמִשְׁנָה (סוֹף פֶּרֶק ג' דְּרָאשׁ הַשְּׁנָה) עַל
זֶה: "בְּזִמְנָן שִׁישְׁרָאֵל מְסַתְבְּלִין כְּלָפֵי
מַעְלָה וּמִשְׁעַבְדִּין אֶת לִבָּם לְאַבְיָהֶם
שְׁבַשְׁמִים כו".²

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.”**

וְקָשָׁה, לָמָּה לִיָּה לִנְחֹשׁ כָּלֵל – אֲלֵא
"וְהָיָה אִם נָשָׁךְ הַנְּחֹשׁ" יִסְתַּבֵּל כְּלָפֵי
מַעְלָה!

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?

וְעוֹד, מֵהוּ הִתְסַבְּלוֹת כְּלָפֵי מַעְלָה –
הֲלֹא מִבּוֹאֵר בְּעֵינֵין תִּפְלָה שׁ"יִהְיוּ
עֵינָיו לְמַטָּה, וְלָבוּ לְמַעְלָה!³

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?”**

וְלִהְבִּין זֶה, נִקְדִּים לְחִקוֹר בְּעֵינֵין
יְרִידַת הַנֶּשֶׁמָה בְּעוֹלָם-הַזֶּה:

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

² (רֹאשׁ הַשְּׁנָה פֶּרֶק ג', מִשְׁנָה ה': "עֲשֵׂה לָךְ שָׂרָף וְשִׂים אֹתוֹ עַל נֹס, וְהָיָה כָּל הַנֶּשֶׁח וְרָאָה אֹתוֹ וְחָי" – וְכִי נָחַשׁ מִמִּית, אִם נָחַשׁ מְחִיָּה? אֲלֵא, בְּזִמְנָן שִׁישְׁרָאֵל מְסַתְבְּלִין כְּלָפֵי מַעְלָה וּמִשְׁעַבְדִּין אֶת לִבָּם לְאַבְיָהֶן שְׁבַשְׁמִים – הָיוּ מִתְרַפְּאִים, וְאִם לֹא – הָיוּ נִמּוּקִים).
³ (יְבָמוֹת ק"ה, ב').

descent of the soul into this world?

כִּי עֵיקָר תְּכַלִּיתוֹ לִדְבֵק בְּקוֹנוֹ
בְּאַהֲבָה-וְיִרְאָה, וְעֵיקָר הַדְּבִיקוּת
הוּא בְּתַפְלָה,

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,

שֶׁהַתִּיבוֹת הֵם יוֹתֵר קְרוֹבִים לַהֲבִנַּת
הָאָדָם.

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.

וּבְיָדָאֵי קוֹדֶם צֵאת הַנֶּשְׁמָה בְּעוֹלָם-
הַזֶּה, וְגַם אַחֵר הַסְתַּלְקוּתוֹ מִן הַגּוּף,

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

הוּא מִתְדַבֵּק יוֹתֵר בְּאַהֲבָה-וְיִרְאָה
פְּנִימִיּוֹת;

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

שֶׁהַגּוּף אֵינוֹ מְנִיחוֹ לַעֲבוֹד אֶת ה',
וְאֶדְרָבָה מִחֲמַת חוֹמְרוֹ יִכְרִיחַ אֶת
הַנֶּשְׁמָה לִיְהִנּוּת אֶף מְגוּפָנִיּוֹת.

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 -

וְאֵף כִּי הַנֶּשְׁמָה אֵינָה רוֹצֶה בָּזֶה, כִּי
מִקּוֹר חוֹצְבָה - "חֵלֶק אֱלֹהִים מִמַּעַל"
(איוב לא, ב), וְרִצּוֹנָה לִדְבֵק בְּבוֹרְאָה
יוֹתֵר.

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.

וְהִנֵּה מְבוֹאֵר בְּזוֹהַר: "מֵאֵן" דִּלָּא
מִהֶפֶךְ מְרִירוֹ לְמִתְקָא - לִית לִיה
חוּלְקָא בְּהַאי עֲלֵמָא בְּלוּם"⁵,

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."

כִּי זֶה כָּל הָאָדָם⁶ לֹא נִבְרָא אֶלָּא
בְּשִׁבִיל זֶה.

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:

שֶׁהָיָה בְּבֵית־רֵאשׁוֹן לֹא הָיוּ
מִתְפַּלְלִין⁷ בְּכָל.

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

גַּם בְּבֵית־שְׁנִי תִקְנוּ אֲנָשֵׁי כְּנֻסֶת־
הַגְּדוֹלָה תְּפִלַּה־קְצֵרָה.

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.

וּבְיָדָאֵי כָּל הָעֲבוּדָה שְׁלָהֶם לֹא הָיָה
כִּי אִם עַל דֶּרֶךְ זֶה לְהַפּוֹךְ "מְרִירוֹ
לְמִתְקָא".

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

וְהָעֵינָן הוּא, כִּי הַדִּינִין נִמְתָּקִים

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

⁴ (תְּרַגּוּם: מִי שֶׁלֹּא מִהֶפֶךְ מֵר לְמִתּוֹק - אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּלוּם).

⁵ (עֵינִין בְּזוֹהַר בְּרֵאשִׁית, דָּף ד', עֲמוּד א'. וּבִפְירוּשׁ הָרַמַּ"ז שָׁם).

⁶ (כִּי זֶה כָּל הָאָדָם: קִהְלֵת יב, יג).

⁷ (רֵאָה מְגִלָּה יז, ב').

בְּשִׂרְשָׁן⁸.

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

דִּהְיָה כָּל רָעוֹת וְדִינִים רַחֲמָנָא לְצֻלָּן שְׁנִתְהוּוּ בְּעוֹלָם - שְׂרָשָׁם וּמְקוֹרָם הִמְחִיָּה אוֹתָם הוּא טוֹב.

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.

כַּמְשָׁל הַ"זוֹנָה עִם בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ" הַמְּבוֹאָר בַּזֹּהַר (תְּרוּמָה, דִּף קס"ג, עמוד א')⁹,

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

⁸ (ראה זוהר חלק ג קכט, א).

⁹ [ואי תימא, ביצר הרע היך יכול בר נש למרחם ליה, דהא יצר הרע מקטרגא איהו, דלא יקרב בר נש לפולחנא דקודשא בריך הוא, והיך ירחים ליה ביה. אלא, דא איהו פולחנא דקודשא בריך הוא יתיר, כד האי יצר הרע אתכפאי ליה, בגין רחימו דקא מרחם ליה לקודשא בריך הוא. דכד האי יצר הרע אתכפאי, ותבר ליה ההוא בר נש, דא איהו רחימו דקודשא בריך הוא, בגין דידיע לקרבא ליההוא יצר הרע, לפולחנא דקודשא בריך הוא.

הכא איהו רזא למארי מדין. כל מה דעבד קודשא בריך הוא עילא ותתא, בלא איהו בגין לאחזאה יקרא דיליה, וכלא איהו לפולחניה. וכי מאן חמי עבדא, דלהוי מקטרגא דמאריה, ובכל מה דרעותיה דמאריה, אתעביד איהו מקטרגא, רעותיה דקודשא בריך הוא, דיהון בני נשא תדיר בפולחניה, ויהכון בארץ קשוט, בגין למזכי לון בכמה טבין, הואיל ורעותיה דקודשא בריך הוא בהאי, היך אתיא עבדא בישא, ואשתכח מקטרגא מגו רעותיה דמאריה, ואסטי לבני נשא לארץ ביש, ואדחי לון מארץ טב, ועביד לון דלא יעבדון רעותא דמאריהון, ואסטי לבני נשא לארץ ביש.

אלא, ודא רעותיה דמאריה עביד. למלכא דהוה ליה בר יחידאי, והוה רחים ליה יתיר, ופקיד עליה ברחימו, דלא יקרב גרמיה לאתתא בישא, בגין דכל מאן דיקרב לגבה, לאו כדאי איהו לאעלא גו פלטרין דמלכא. אויז ליה ההוא ברא, למעבד רעותיה דאבוי ברחימו.

בביתא דמלכא, לבר, הות חדא זונה, יאה בחיזו, ושפירא ברינא. ליומין אמר מלכא, בעינא למחמי רעותיה דברי לגבאי. קרא לה לההיא זונה, ואמר לה זילי ותפתי לברי, למחמי רעותיה דברי לגבאי. ההיא זונה מאי עבדת, אזלת אבתריה דבריה דמלכא שראת לחבקא ליה ולנשקא ליה, ולפתי ליה בכמה פתויין. אי ההוא ברא יאות, ואצית לפקודא דאבוי, גער בה, ולא אצית לה, ודחי לה מניה. כדן אבוי חדי בבריה, ואעיל ליה לגו פרגודא דהיכליה, ויהיב ליה מתנן ונבזבזא ויקר סגיא. מאן גרים כל האי יקר להאי ברא, הוי אימא ההיא זונה.

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, the whole inner desire is for the prince to withstand the test, even while she is the one charged with administering that test of loyalty.

שְׁכָל רְצוֹנָה וְחִפְצָה - שְׁלֹא לְצִיִּית
אוֹתָהּ,

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

וּבִזָּה תִתְעַנֵּג יוֹתֵר - שֶׁתִּהְיֶה אֲהוּבָה
לְמַלְכָּהּ.

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

מֵה שְׂאִין כֵּן בְּשִׁמְפֻתָּהּ אוֹתוֹ וְתוֹכָל¹⁰
לוֹ - אֵין זֶה רְצוֹן 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,

וְהָיָה זֶוֹנָה אֵית לָהּ שְׂבָחָא בְּהָאֵי אוֹ לֹא. וְדָאֵי שְׂבָחָא אֵית לָהּ מִכָּל סֻרְיִן. חֵד, דְּעֵבֶדֶת פְּקוּדָא דְּמִלְכָּא. וְחֵד, דְּגִרְמַת לִיָּהּ לְהֵוּא בְּרָא, לְכָל הָהוּא טִיבּוּ, לְכָל הָאֵי רְחִימוּ דְּמִלְכָּא לְגַבִּיָּהּ. וְעַל דָּא כְּתִיב, (בְּרֵאשִׁית א) וְהָיָה טוֹב מְאֹד. וְהָיָה טוֹב, דָּא מִלְּאָךְ חַיִּים. (ס"ח ע"ב) מְאֹד, דָּא מִלְּאָךְ הַמֶּנֶּת, דְּאִיְהוּ וְדָאֵי טוֹב מְאֹד, לְמֵאֵן דְּאֶצִּית פְּקוּדִין דְּמֵאֲרִיָּה. וְתָא חֲזִי, אֵי לֹא יְהֵא הָאֵי מְקֻטְרָגָא. לֹא יִרְתֹּן צְדִיקָא הֵנִי גְנוּזָא עֲלָאֵן, דְּזְמִינִין לִירְתָא לְעִלְמָא דְּאֶתִּי.
¹⁰ (עַל פִּי יִרְמְיָה כ, ז: "פְּתִיתֵנִי . . וְתוֹכָל").

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

וְהוּא מֵאֵמֵר רַ"ז¹¹: "שָׁטָן וּפְנִינָה לְשֵׁם שְׁמַיִם נִתְכַּוְּנוּ."

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:

- A. Iyov was afflicted with terrible suffering, and the "cause" of it was the Satan's prosecution of him on Rosh Hashana.
- B. 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.

וּבְמָקוֹם אַחֵר (סוּכָה נ"ב, א') אָמְרוּ¹²: "נָתַן עֵינָיו בְּמִקְדָּשׁ רִאשׁוֹן וְהִחְרִיבוֹ" - מִשְׁמַע שְׁנִתְקַנָּא בּוּ.

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 (בבא בתרא טז, א).

¹² (ושם: וְאֵת הַצִּפּוֹנִי אֶרְחִיק מֵעֲלֵיכֶם - זֶה יֵצֵר הָרָע, שֶׁצִּפּוֹן וְעוֹמֵד בְּלִבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם. וְהִדְחַתִּיו אֶל אֶרֶץ צִיָּה וּשְׁמָמָה - לְמָקוֹם שֶׁאֵין בָּנֵי אָדָם מְצוּיִין לְהִתְגַּדֵּל בָּהֶן. אֵת פָּנָיו אֶל הַיָּם הַקְּדָמִי - שֶׁנָּתַן עֵינָיו בְּמִקְדָּשׁ רִאשׁוֹן וְהִחְרִיבוֹ").

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

וְהֵעֵנִין הוּא, שְׁשָׂרְשׁ הָרַע הַמְּחִייהוּ -
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.

כְּמִבּוֹאֵר בְּזוֹהַר שָׁם: "וְכִי¹³ יֵשׁ עֲבָדָא
דְּמַרְיָד בְּמַאֲרִיחָא?"

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

הֲגַם שֵׂישׁ כְּמָה עֲבָדִים הַמִּתְפָּרְצִים
מֵאֵת אֲדוֹנֵיהֶם¹⁴,

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

אֲמָנָם הֵם בְּשָׂר וָדָם, וְחֵיוֹתָם נִפְרָדִים
זֶה מִזֶּה.

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

אָבֵל "עֲבָדֵי ה'", שֶׁמְקַבְּלִים חַיּוּתָם
מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרֵךְ, וְהוּא הַמְּחִיָּה אֶת הַכֹּל

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,

אִיךָ יֵשׁ חַיּוּת לְדַבֵּר שְׂכָנִגְרוֹ?

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

וּמִשְׁנֵי, שֶׁהוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ מִשַּׁל "הַזּוֹנָה
עִם בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ", וְזֶהוּ דְּבַר הַמְּחִיָּה אֶת
כָּל הָרַעוּת.

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 (וְכִי יֵשׁ עֲבָד שְׂמֹרֵד בְּאֲדוֹנוֹ?).

¹⁴ (עַל פִּי שְׂמוּאֵל-א כה, י: "עֲבָדִים הַמִּתְפָּרְצִים אִישׁ מִפְּנֵי אֲדוֹנוֹ").

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.

וְשָׂרָשָׁם לְמַעַלָּה הוּא טוֹב,

Now, even though the source of unholiness is good,

וּבְשִׁיּוּרֵד לְמַטָּה עַל דֶּרֶךְ הַשְׁתַּלְשָׁלוֹת
נַעֲשֶׂה בְּאֶמֶת רַע גָּמוּר וְדִינִים
גָּמוּרִים, הֵן בְּמִלִּי דַעְלָמָא וְהֵן בְּמִלִּי
דְּשִׁמְיָא.

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 unholy: 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 unholy and sadistic reasons.

וְהִנֵּה, כְּשֶׁבָּא לְאָדָם אִיזָה יְסוּרִים
רַחֲמָנָא לְצִלָּן, יַחֲשׁוּב, כִּי לֹא לְמַרְאֵה
עֵינָיו יִשְׁפּוּט¹⁵ שְׂרַע הוּא, אֲלֵא בְּאֶמֶת
שְׂרָשׁוֹ 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 (לא לְמַרְאֵה עֵינָיו יִשְׁפּוּט: יִשְׁעִיָּה י"א, ג).

כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ יִתְבָּרַךְ "לֹא תֵצֵא הָרְעוֹת"¹⁶,
כִּי אִם רַק טוֹב גָּמוּר.

רַק שֶׁהוּא אֵינוּ מוֹשָׁג, בְּשִׁבִּיל שְׁלֹא
יֻכַּל לִירֹד לְעוֹלָם הַשָּׁפֶל, וְנִשְׁאַר
לְמַעַלָּה.¹⁷

זֶהוּ נִקְרָא "מִיכְלָא דְקִיק"¹⁸, שֶׁהוּא
בְּאֻמַּת חַיּוֹתוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ.¹⁹

זֶהוּ "בְּכָל מְאֹדָה",

בְּמֵאמֶר: "טוֹב מְאֹד" (בְּרֵאשִׁית א, לא) -

"טוֹב" זֶה מְלֶאכֶת הַחַיִּים²⁰, "מְאֹד" זֶה
מְלֶאכֶת הַמָּוֶת;

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,

As our Sages explain the verse, (Bereishis 1:31) 'Hashem saw all that he had made, and it was טוב-טוב-good מְאֹד-exceedingly so,"

Our Sages comment, (Bereishis Rabba 9:9) "טוב-good is a reference to the angel of life, and מְאֹד-exceedingly is a reference to the angel of death,"

¹⁶ (איכה ג, לח: "מִפִּי עֲלִיּוֹן לֹא תֵצֵא הָרְעוֹת").

¹⁷ (עֵינַי בְּסֹפֶר שֶׁל בִּינוּנִים" פָּרָק כ"ו. וּבְ"אַגְרֵת הַקֹּדֶשׁ" (סִימָן יא) דְּבוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "לְהַשְׁכִּילָה בִּינָה").

¹⁸ (רֵאָה זֶהֱרָ בְּרֵאשִׁית כ, א: "הִיכְלָא דְקִיק").

¹⁹ (וְעֵינַי בְּזֶהֱרָ בְּרֵאשִׁית, דָּף ח', עֲמוּד ב': "כְּחוּטָא דְקִיק כו").

²⁰ (רֵאָה בְּרֵאשִׁית רָבָה ט, ט. זֶהֱרָ חֵלֶק א יד, א).

שֶׁהוּא "טוֹב מְאֹד" - בְּלִי שִׁיעוּר
וּגְבוּל, אֲלָא שְׁעָדִיין לֹא בָא לִידֵי גִילוּי
וְאִינוּ מוֹשָׁג.²¹

Meaning that this Yetzer Hara, who is also the angel of death, is in truth "טוֹב מְאֹד-exceedingly 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.

וְזֶהוּ "יִסַּר יִסְרָנִי יְהוָה" (תהלים קיח, יח),
שֶׁהוּא בְּתַחֲלֵת הַשֵּׁם, תְּחִלַּת
הַתְגַּלוּתוֹ, שְׁעָדִיין לֹא בָא לִידֵי גִילוּי
וְאִינוּ מוֹשָׁג, שְׁעָדִיין לֹא נִתְגַּלָּה הַכֹּל.

This is also the meaning of the verse (Tehillim 118:18): "יְהוָה-Hashem has given me suffering," since the name "יְהוָה" 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.

וְזֶהוּ עֲנִין "נַחוּם אִישׁ גַּם זֶה" שֶׁהִיא
אוֹמֵר: "גַּם זֶה לְטוֹבָה",

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 (וְעֵינֵינוּ בְּזֶה רִישׁ פְּרִשְׁתַּי יְתָרוֹ, דָּף ס"ח ב'. וּבְהֶרֶם"ז שֵׁם. וְעֵינֵינוּ מֵה שְׁנִתְבָּאָר עַל פֶּסוּק
"אֵלֶּה מִסְעֵי" (לְקַמֵּן צֹא, ג).).

²² (תַּעֲנִית כֹּא, א וְשֵׁם נִסְמָן).

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.

מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיָה מִתְּבוּנָה בְּאַמֶּת - שֶׁשָּׂרֵשׁ
הָרַע הוּא הַטּוֹב, וְהִבִּיאוּ לְמַעַלָּה אֶל
שָׂרְשׁוֹ - לְמָקוֹם 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 “אֵין-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,

וְשֶׁם הָיָה יָכוֹל לַעֲשׂוֹת הַשְׁתַּנּוּת.

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

כְּמֵאמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶּן דּוֹסָא²³: "מִי
שֶׁאָמַר לְשֶׁמֶן וַיִּדְּלִיק כּוֹ"²⁴.

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

²³ (תענית כה, א בגירסת העין יעקב: "מי שאמר לשמן וידליק - הוא יאמר לחומץ וידליק").

²⁴ (ועיין מה שנתבאר סוף דבור המתחיל "זאת חקת התורה", בענין "מי יתן טהור 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.

וְזֶהוּ עֲנֵן הַתַּפְלָה שֶׁבְּגוֹף הָאָדָם
בְּעוֹלָם-הַזֶּה: שֶׁהַנֶּשְׁמָה בְּתוֹךְ הַגּוֹף
סוֹבֶלֶת צָרוֹת וְיִסּוּרִים, שְׂרָצוֹנָה
לִידְבֵּק בְּיוֹצְרָהּ וְהַגּוֹף אֵינוֹ מְנִיחָהּ.

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.

וּכְמוֹ גָלוּת הַשְּׂכִינָה, שֶׁמוֹכְרַחַת
לְהַחְיֹת גַּם הָרָשָׁעִים - כֵּן הַנֶּשְׁמָה
מוֹכְרַחַת לְהַחְיֹת 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.

וְכָל כּוּוֹנֶנֶתָ אֵינָהּ בְּשִׁבְלִי עֲצָמָהּ רַק
בְּשִׁבְלִי לְהַעֲלוֹת הַגּוֹף מֵעָפָר;

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,

וְצִרִיךְ לְבַרְרוֹ כְּכֶסֶף בְּיַד הַצּוֹרֵף,²⁵

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

כָּל מֶה שֵׁישׁ תַּעְרוּבוֹת יוֹתֵר - צִרִיךְ לְבַרְרוֹ וּלְלַבֵּן בְּלֶהֱבֹא אֵשׁ הַיּוֹתֵר גָּדוֹל.

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

כֵּן צִרִיךְ לְבַרְרוֹ הַגּוֹף מֵהַיִּצְרָהָרַע וּלְהַבְיִאוֹ אֶל שְׂרֵשׁוֹ.

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,

כַּמְשָׁל בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם הַזֹּנוֹה הַנִּ"ל.

as was explained regarding the analogy of the "harlot and the prince."

וְכָל מֶה שֵׁישׁ תַּעְרוּבוֹת רַע בְּיוֹתֵר - צִרִיךְ לְהַפְרִיד עַל יְדֵי אֵשׁ יוֹתֵר גָּדוֹל וְחֹזֶק בַּתְּפִלָּה לְדַבֵּק בְּקוֹנוֹ²⁶.

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.

וְלָכֵן, בְּבֵית־רֵאשׁוֹן שֶׁלֹא הָיָה הָרַע הַרְבֵּה, לֹא הָיוּ צְרִיכִין לְתַפְלָה בְּהַתְלַהֲבוֹת,

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.

כִּי אִם כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם הָיָה לְהַבְיֵא הָרַע וְהַדִּינִים אֶל שְׂרֵשָׁם,

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

עַל יְדֵי הַקְרִבָּנוֹת - הָיָה דְיָם.

and this was mainly accomplished through the

²⁵ (כְּכֶסֶף בְּיַד הַצּוֹרֵף: פִּיּוּט "כִּי הִנֵּה כְּחוֹמֶר בְּיַד הַיּוֹצֵר").

²⁶ (וְעֵינֵינוּ מֵה שֶׁנִּתְבָּאָר בַּפְּרָשָׁת אֶמּוֹר עַל פֶּסוּק "וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי").

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.

אָבֵל בְּבֵית־שְׁנֵי הַתְּחִילוֹ לְתַקֵּן
הַתְּפִלָּה, וְהִיטָה קֶצֶרָה -

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.

לְפִי עֶרֶךְ הַצִּטְרוֹנוֹת הָאֵשׁ וְתַעֲרוּבוֹת
הָרַע שֶׁהָיָה בְּקִרְבָּם.

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.

וְאֵנַחְנוּ צְרִיכִים לְהַתְּפַלֵּל יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר
בְּהַתְּלֵהבוֹת מְאֹד.

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

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר לְמִטָּה, צָרִיךְ לְהַתְּפַלֵּל
בְּהַתְּלֵהבוֹת גְּדוּלָּה.

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

וְכֵן וְלֹא כִּי אֶכְשֶׁר דְּרִי²⁷,

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

²⁷ (לְשׁוֹן הַגְּמָרָא יְבֻמוֹת לט, ב. וּבְרֵשׁ"י שָׁם: נִתְכַּשְּׁרוּ הַדּוֹרוֹת).

a higher spiritual level than the previous one.

אֲדָרְבָּהּ, מִפְּנֵי גֹדֶל הָרַע אֲשֶׁר
נִתְעָרַב וְנִתְרַבָּה בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר,

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 לְהַפְרִידוֹ עַל יְדֵי אֵשׁ חֲזָק
בְּתַפְלָה, וּלְבַרֵּר הָרַע אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבוֹ,
וּלְהַבִּיאוֹ אֶל שָׂרְשׁוֹ.

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.

כַּמֶּשֶׁל בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ עִם הַזֹּנוֹת הַנִּלְל,

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

שִׁיחֹשֵׁב הַחַיּוֹת שֶׁל הָרַע הַמְּחַיֶּהוּ,
אִיךָ יֵשׁ לוֹ חַיּוֹת מִהַקְדֹּשׁ בְּרוּךְ־הוּא,
כִּי בִלְעָדוֹ לֹא הָיָה יָכוֹל לַחַיּוֹת,
וְהַקְדֹּשׁ בְּרוּךְ־הוּא מְחַיֶּהוּ עַל דֶּרֶךְ
הַנִּלְל -

This means that a person should contemplate the fact that there is a life-force 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 כֵּן אֵין רָע כָּלָל.

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 כָּל הַיְסוּרִים בְּעֻנְיֵי עוֹלָם־הַזֶּה -
כְּשֶׁחֹשֵׁב עַל דֶּרֶךְ הַנִּלְל "יִתְפָּרְדּוּ כָּל

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

פועלי און" (תהלים צב, ז). 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.

וּכְעֵינֵן נַחוּם אִישׁ גַּם זֶה - גַּם כָּל הַצַּדִּיקִים הָיוּ עַל דְּרָךְ זֶה. 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.

רַק נַחוּם אִישׁ גַּם זֶה הָיָה יָכוֹל לְשַׁנּוֹת הַמִּשְׁכָּה מִלְּמַעְלָה לְמַטָּה, 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,

שֶׁהָיָה נִרְאָה בְּאֵמֶת לְמַטָּה שֶׁהוּא טוֹב בְּגִשְׁמִיּוֹת. so that it should be actually visible below in this world, that it is good, even on a physical level.

וְלָכֵן נִקְרָא "גַּם זֶה" - שֶׁהוּא מוֹשֶׁג.²⁸ This is why he was named after his saying that **"also-in-this is**

²⁸ (וְעֵינֵי ב' עֵץ חַיִּים", שֶׁעַר יֵאָה וְרַחֵל, פָּרָק ה', בְּעֵינֵי "גַּם". וּבִמְהֵדוּרָא בְּתָרָא שָׁם: "וְהִנֵּה הָגַם מֵאִיר כּו' וְהוּא הַמִּשְׁכָּה מִלְּמַעְלָה דְּאֵתְכַסִּיָּא לְעֵלְמָא דְּאֵתְגַּלְיָא הַנִּקְרָא זֶה". וְעֵינֵי עוֹד מֵעֵינֵי "גַּם" - ב' עֵץ חַיִּים" שֶׁעַר אֲרִיָּה אֲנִפִּין, פָּרָק י"ד. וְעֵינֵי מַה שֶׁנִּתְבָּאָר לְעֵיל (בְּהַעֲלוֹתָךְ לָא, א) בְּדַבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל "זֶה מַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּנוּרָה", בְּעֵינֵי

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

אָבֵל כָּל הַצַּדִּיקִים, אֶפִּילוּ שֶׁהָיָה
מַחְשְׁבוֹתָם עַל זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ,

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

הָיָה נִשְׁאָר לְמַעַלָּה כִּךְ כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיָה
בְּתַחֲלָה, בְּלִי מוֹשָׁג הַטּוֹב הַהוּא.

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

“וְאֵנֶכִי אֶעֱלֶךְ גַּם עָלָה” (מקץ מו, ד), דְּהֵינּוּ שְׁבַחֲנִית “גַּם” יִהְיֶה לוֹ גַּם-כֵּן עָלֶיָּהּ. וּמִזֶּה
הוּא עֵינֵן “נְחוּם אִישׁ גַּם זֶה”.

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.

וַיְהִי עֵינָן "נָחַשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת", שֶׁהִיָּה
צָרִיךְ לְהַשִּׁימוֹ עַל הַנֶּס,

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

שֶׁהִיָּה צָרִיךְ לָהּ לְהִגָּבֶהֶת הַנְּחֹשׁ
לְמַעַלָּה, וּמִסְתַּכְּלִים כְּלָפִי מַעַלָּה.

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.

כְּלוּמַר, שֶׁלֹּא יִחְשׁוּב שֶׁהַנְּחֹשׁ נִפְרָד,
אִם כֵּן הוּא רָע מִמֶּשׁ וְנִשְׁאָר רָע.

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.

אֲבָל כְּשִׁיחְשׁוּב אֶת הַנְּחֹשׁ בְּהִגָּבֶהֶתוֹ
לְמַעַלָּה בְּשִׁרְשׁוֹ, שְׂאִינוּ נִפְרָד מֵאֲתוֹ
יִתְבָּרָר.

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,

וְחַיּוּתוֹ מִשָּׁם הוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ מִשָּׁל
הַזּוֹנָה עִם בֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ הַזֶּה"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 "נחש" – Therefore, this "נחש-snake" was made of "נחש-copper," which includes the letters "נחש-snake," since it refers to the spiritual source of the "snake" the way that it is still included in holiness.

שמשנתנה לכמה גוונים על ידי "אין". This making of the "נחש-snake" into "נחש-copper" causes it – the snake – to change it 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 יבין³⁰. And the wise will understand the above concepts.

²⁹ (בראשית רבה פרשה נא, ג ושם: "דבר רע". מורה נבוכים חלק ג פרק יב. ועוד. וראה הנסמן במראי מקומות, הגהות וכו' לתניא אגרת הקדש סימן יא).

³⁰ (עיין מעגין "נחש הנחשת" בזהר חלק ב', תרומה (קמ"ח, ב'). והובא ב"עץ חיים" שער מ"ט פרק ג'. ועיין "מקדש מלך" שם).

והיינו, שמיתוק הגבורות קשות ד"נחשים השרפים", זהו על ידי "נחש הנחשת", שהוא "תפארת דקליפת נוגה דאצילות". והיינו על ידי ש"מסתכלים כלפי מעלה", להגביה קליפת נוגה לשרשו שמעולם התהו, ועל ידי זה מתגבר הטוב שבו, ש"אין רע יורד מלמעלה", ואז מתקשר הטוב שבתפארת דקליפת נוגה דאצילות – בתפארת דקדושה דאצילות כו'. (בגוף כתב 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 הרע שבו ואז מתקשר בתפארת דקדושה. והיינו על ידי שמסתכלים כלפי מעלה כו".

והנה, על ידי "תפארת דקדושה" נעשה גם כן מיתוק ה"גבורות דקדושה" בחסדים. וזהו ענין "שלוש בפמליא של מעלה".

וכמו שנתבאר במקום אחר - ב"אגרת הקדש" על פסוק "והיה מעשה הצדקה שלום כו", עיין שם.

ומזה נמשך אחר כך גם כן ה"שלוש בפמליא של מטה", בהיכלות דבי"ע, עד שגם בהיכלות דנוגה מתגבר הטוב ונמתק הרע. והיינו גם כן על ידי תפארת דנוגה, "נחש הנחשת" כו'. אף היינו דוקא על ידי ש"מסתכלין כלפי מעלה ומשעבדין את לבם לאביהם שבשמים".

ועיין עוד בזהר חלק ב': (דף רכ"ט, א'. ר"ס, א'. ודף רלג, א'. קמ"ז, א'). ועיין בזהר פ' ששת מקץ (דף ר"ד, עמוד א'). ועיין ברבות פ' ששת נח, פ' ששה ל"א (דף ל"ג, עמוד א'), מענין "נחש הנחשת". וכעין זה הוא בירושלמי, סוף פ'ק ג' דראש השנה.

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 "נחש-כסף-copper" contains the word "נחש-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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לזכות כל ילדי החסידים שיתנו חסידישע נחת

לכ"ק אדמו"ר ולהוריהם שיחיו

ולזכות יוסף יצחק בן ביילא איטא ולאה בת חנה

דבורה רייזל וכל יוצאי חלציהם שיחיו, שיזכו

ללמוד חסידות ולילך בדרכי החסידות, ויפוצו

מעיינות אור החסידות

לזכות חיזוק ההתקשרות

לכ"ק אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו

שרצונו הק' שכל אחד ואחת ילמדו תורה

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