



## RENEWAL, JOY, AND PROGRESS

The three cardinal principles of life are taught by the Torah's first three portions. Don't get stuck in the past, don't fall into a rut, and don't become complacent.

TEACHER'S MANUAL



# JEWISH INSIGHTS

A TASTE OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS



PARSHAT LECH LECHA



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# Contents

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**A. The Name Of The Parsha Expresses Its Content.....5**

The name of the Parsha is not coincidental. Rather, it expresses the idea of the entire Parsha.

**B. Bereishit - Don't Get Stuck In The Past.....7**

The negative inclination tries to convince us not to do good deeds, with the excuse that we must first repent, as it is written in the Tanya that it is impossible to worship G-d without first repenting (Source 1).

The lesson from Parshat Bereishit: The world was created out of nothing, and as the Baal Shem Tov explained, it is renewed at every moment (Source 2). This means that the individual person is also created anew every moment, and is therefore not limited to his status and condition from the moment before. It is true that we must remember the past in order to make amends, but we must do this only at specific times - the rest of the time must be dedicated to serving G-d.

**C. Noach - Constant Joy.....16**

The name 'Noach' represents pleasure and joy. Parshat Noach teaches us that we must serve G-d with joy. This is highlighted in the well-known explanation of the Arizal on the verse "Because you did not serve your G-d with joy," that the punishment is for the fact that you worshiped G-d without joy (Sources 3 and 4).

**D. Lech Lecha - Keep Moving Forward.....21**

Parshat Lech-Lecha teaches that a person should not be complacent. Rather, one must always advance further, and strive to rise higher.

# Introduction

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The negative inclination stands against our desire to worship G-d with joy and influence others spiritually, and tries to undermine our confidence by claiming that our personal spiritual condition is deficient and we must, therefore, first repent for our past sins. These claims of the negative inclination may very well be true, but they have no connection with our current service of G-d.

## השיעור לפרשת לך-לך

משיחות שבת פרשת חיי שרה תשי"ג ותשכ"ה, וחג השבועות תשכ"א  
מתוך לקוטי שיחות חלק ה', לך לך שיחה א', אות א'. [מתורגם]  
ומשיחת שבת פרשת נח, ה'תשמ"ג, בלתי מוגה  
תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ג, חלק א' עמוד 437

# A. The Name of the Parshah Expresses its Content

## Student's >> The Rebbe pg. 3

### The Name Of The Parsha Is Not Coincidental. Rather, It Encapsulates The Theme Of The Entire Parsha.

The name of the Parsha is not coincidental. Rather, it completely encapsulates the idea of the entire Parsha.

The names of the Torah portions aren't spelled out definitively in the Talmud. Nevertheless, we have explained many times that the very fact that the names of the Torah portions have been accepted by Jews for over 1000 years at least is sufficient to establish that they are Torah-ordained names.

This point can be derived from an a fortiori argument. The law regarding people's names is that once a name has been accepted for more than thirty days, this becomes the person's legal name. This is then certainly all the more true regarding the names of the Torah portions, which have been accepted for many hundreds of years already, including by the greatest Torah scholars and teachers - they certainly have the status of Torah-ordained names.

It is therefore clear that the essential content of the Torah portion is alluded to in its Torah-ordained name. This is true even

כבר הוסבר פעמים רבות, שלמרות ששמותיהן של פרשיות התורה אינן מוזכרות בוודאות בגמרא, יש הוכחה מספקת שאלו הם שמות מהתורה, מכך שמקובל אצל כלל ישראל לקרוא לפרשות בשמות אלו בוודאי יותר מאלף שנים.

הדבר נלמד ב"קל וחומר" משמות המופיעים בשטרות: אם שם מסוים מקובל במשך שלושים יום נפסקת ההלכה בתורה, ששם זה הוא שמו של אדם זה. קל וחומר בעניננו - ששמות הפרשיות מקובלים כבר במשך מאות רבות של שנים, ובמיוחד כאשר הן נקראות כך על ידי גדולי ומורי ישראל - הרי אלה בוודאי השמות על פי התורה.

מכך מובן, שתוכנה הפנימי של כל פרשה נרמז בשם שקבעה לה התורה. כך הוא הדבר גם אילו נאמר ששמות אלו נקבעו מלכתחילה רק משום שבמילים אלו נפתחות הפרשיות - כי כיון שלמעשה נקראת הפרשה כולה, לפי התורה, בשם זה (ולגבי התורה לא ייתכן לומר

if we accept that the names were originally given simply because they are the words that open the Torah portion, because in practice they are torah-ordained names used for the entire Torah portion. Torah matters cannot possibly be ascribed to chance, because even worldly matters cannot be ascribed to mere chance. It is therefore clear that name of a Torah portion incorporates all of its contents.

שהענינים הם מקריים ח"ו, כי אף בעניני העולם אין מקריות), הכרחי לומר, ששם זה מכיל את הפרשה כולה.

משיחות שבת פרשת חיי שרה תשי"ג  
ותשכ"ה, וחג השבועות תשכ"א  
לקוטי שיחות חלק ה', לך לך שיחה א', אות א'.  
[מתורגם]

*There is an old Jewish joke about a charity collector who arrived at the home of a wealthy benefactor. "What is your name?" inquired the rich man. "Abba," replied the collector.*

*The rich man counted 4 gold coins, corresponding to the numerical value of the word Abba (אבא), and gave them to the collector.*

*The collector sighed. "What are you sighing about?", wondered the rich man.*

*"That my father gave me the name Abba, and not Artachshasta (ארתחשסתא)..."*

*In Judaism, names have great meaning. There is a Divine Spirit involved in the parents' choice of a name for their baby, Kabbalah teaches that the name is the spiritual code that contains the life and energy for its subject.*

*The name of the Torah portion is also not just a means of identification for the portion, but a meaningful title that summarizes the content of the portion, condensing it into one or two words.*

*This study of the names of the parshiyot of the Torah is something that is common in the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.*

*In the following class, we will focus on the names of the first three parshiyot of the Torah - Bereishit, Noach and Lech Lecha, from which we will learn valuable life lessons.*

# B. Bereishit - Don't Get Stuck In The Past

## Student's >> The Rebbe

pg. 5

### I'm Not Worthy Yet

When we are told that we need to study the daily Chitat (Torah, Tehillim, and Tanya) study portions, engage in the mitvzaim campaigns to spread mitzvah observance, etc., the wily negative inclination can argue that, considering our current personal state, it is improper for us to occupy ourselves with such sublime pursuits - first of all we must repent for our sins!

The negative inclination brings support for its argument from the words of the Alter Rebbe in Tanya "it is impossible . . . to serve G-d without first repenting for the past." The negative inclination has also learned Tanya, and quotes it to support its argument...

When we respond that the order in divine service is first to observe the Code of Jewish Law, and only then to study Tanya, the negative inclination opens the Alter Rebbe's Code of Jewish Law, to the section of the Laws of Torah Study, and points to the line "all the Torah and mitzvot a person observes while he is wicked add energy to the negative forces."

כאשר באים ליהודי ואומרים לו שעליו ללמוד שיעורי חת"ת, לעסוק ב"מבצעים", וכיוצא בזה - יכול לבוא ה"קלוגינקער" [ה"פיקח"] ולטעון שבהיותו במעמדו ומצבו עתה (כפי ש"ידע איניש בנפשי") אינו שייך עדיין לעסוק בענינים נעלים כאלו, כי לכל לראש עליו לחזור בתשובה!

ומביא ה"קלוגינקער" ראייה לדבריו ממה שכתב אדמו"ר הזקן בתניא (פרק י"ז) ש"אי אפשר . . . לעבוד ה' בלי שיעשו תשובה על העבר תחלה כו!" - גם ה"קלוגינקער" למד תניא, ולכן מביא את הדברים הנ"ל בתור ראייה לדבריו!

וכאשר אומרים לו שהתחלת העבודה היא לקיים בפועל מה שכתוב ב"שולחן ערוך" (ורק אחר כך לומדים תניא וכו') - פותח הוא (ה"קלוגינקער") את ה"שולחן ערוך" של אדמו"ר הזקן, ומדפדף להלכות תלמוד תורה (פרק ד' הלכה כ') ומראה שכתוב שם ש"כל התורה ומצוות שאדם עושה בעודו רשע", הרי הוא "מוסיף כוח בקליפות לפי שעה"!

**'Mivtzaim'** (meaning: campaigns) - A word in Chabad vernacular for ten campaigns initiated by the Lubavitcher Rebbe to promote specific mitzvot. The most widely known of these are 'Mivtza Tefillin', in which Jewish men (and older boys) are encouraged to put on tefillin, and 'Nerot Shabbat Kodesh', which encourages women and girls to light candles on Friday evening in honor of Shabbat. Additional campaigns include Jewish education, love for our fellow Jews, family purity, charity and more.

**'Chitat'** - An acronym for the words Chumash (five books of the Torah) Tehillim (Psalms) and Tanya (the foundational book of Chabad Chassidus), is the name of a daily study schedule in these three books. In the Chumash one studies the section (Aliyah) corresponding to the day of the week, in Psalms one recites the group of Psalms for that day of the month, so that each month one completes a cycle of reading the entire book, and in Tanya a section is studied from an annual study schedule

It is impossible for the wicked to begin to serve G-d without first repenting for their past, in order to shatter the kelipot that were created by their sins, which form a separation and an "iron wall" that interposes between them and their Father in Heaven.

כִּי בְּאֵמֶת אֵי אֶפְשֶׁר לְרַשְׁעִים  
לְהִתְחִיל לְעַבֵּד ה' בְּלִי שְׂיָעָשׂוּ  
תְּשׁוּבָה עַל הָעֵבֶר תַּחֲלָה,  
לְשִׁבֵר הַקְּלִפּוֹת שֶׁהֵם מְסַךְ  
מְבַדִּיל וּמְחִיצָה שֶׁל בְּרִזָּל  
הַמְּפֻסָּקֵת בֵּינָם לְאֲבֵיהֶם  
שֶׁבַשְׁמַיִם.

People would be willing to pay a fortune to change the past. To correct a wrong choice, to change a critical decision that turned out to be a bitter mistake, to erase things that were written, to take back words that were said.

How significant is the past, in actuality, to us and our lives?

As far as the mitzvah of repentance is concerned, indeed, repentance for past sins is required. But do my past actions define who I am today? Are they supposed to impede me with regard to what I'm supposed to do?

## Student's >> The Rebbe pg. 6

The aim of the negative inclination is to prevent us from practical divine service. To this end it uses various arguments, such as that first we must concentrate on repenting, etc. The goal is that we shouldn't do the things we need to do now.

וזוהי כללות כוונתו של היצר הרע -  
לדחות את האדם מעשיית עבודתו  
במעשה בפועל, תוך כדי הסברות  
שונות - שצריך לכל לראש לעסוק  
בעבודת התשובה, וכיוצא בזה,  
והעיקר - שלא יעסוק עתה בענינים  
שצריכים לעשותם בפועל ממש!

## Student's Created Anew Every Day pg. 6

The lesson we learn from the Torah portion of Bereishit addresses this very point.

We must know that "in the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth." This means that our personal existence, and the existence

ועל זה באה ההוראה הנלמדת  
מכללות פרשת בראשית:

יהודי צריך לדעת ש"בראשית ברא  
אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ",  
היינו, שמציאותו ומציאות הבריאה

(3) איוב כא, יד.  
(4) הושע יד, י.

(1) לקו"ת בחוקותי מה, ג. ספר המאמרים תרח"ץ ע' נב. וש"נ.  
(2) ב"ר פמ"ד, א.



**Student's** of the world as a whole, is being renewed right  
pg. 6 now by G-d. As we say in our prayers, "He  
renews in His goodness the act of creation  
every day, continuously." The Baal Shem Tov  
teaches that at every moment creation is  
renewed from absolute nothingness. We are  
therefore instructed to carry out our Divine  
service as a new role, without considering  
our previous state, because at this moment  
our existence, and the existence of the  
entire world, has been created anew, from  
nothingness!

בכללותה מתחדשת זה עתה על ידי  
הקב"ה, כמו שכתוב "המחדש בטובו  
בכל יום תמיד מעשה בראשית",  
וכתורת הבעל שם טוב<sup>1</sup> שבכל רגע  
ורגע מתחדשת מציאות הבריאה  
מאין ואפס ממש, ולכן, דורשים  
ממנו להתחיל בעבודתו בפועל ממש  
באופן חדש, מבלי הבט על מעמדו  
ומצבו הקודם, כי ברגע זה נתחדשה  
מציאותו ומציאות הבריאה כולה  
(שתסייע לו בעבודתו) מאין ליש!

**Student's** **Source 2** Sha'ar Hayichud Vaha'emunah, ch. 1-2  
pg. 7

## Creation Ex Nihilo

*When did G-d create the world? Every child who started learning the book of Bereishit (Genesis) knows the answer: in the six days of creation. This answer is of course correct, but not complete. The more precise answer is: In the six days of creation the world was created for the first time, and since then it is being created anew every moment.*

*This principle is one of the foundations of the teachings of Chassidut, revealed by Rabbi Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov: The recognition that creation is not a one-time act that took place thousands of years ago, in the original six days of creation, but that it is a constant and continuous act, that takes place throughout the entire existence of the world.*

It is written: "Forever, O G-d, Your word stands firm in the heavens." The Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, explained that "Your word" which you uttered, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," these words and letters stand firmly forever within the firmament of heaven and are forever invested within all the heavens to give them life. As it is written, "And

הנה כתיב: "לְעוֹלָם ה' דְּבַרְךָ  
נִצָּב בַּשָּׁמַיִם", וּפְרָשׁ הַבַּעַל  
שֵׁם טוֹב זְכוּרוֹנוֹ לְבִרְכָה, כִּי  
דְבַרְךָ שְׁאֵמַרְתָּ: "יְהִי רָקִיעַ  
בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם" וְגו', תִּיבּוֹת  
וְאוֹתֵיּוֹת אֵלּוּ הֵן נִצְבּוֹת  
וְעוֹמְדוֹת לְעוֹלָם בְּתוֹךְ רָקִיעַ  
הַשָּׁמַיִם וּמְלַבְּשׁוֹת בְּתוֹךְ כָּל  
הָרָקִיעִים לְעוֹלָם לְהַחְיֹתָם,

Student's  
pg. 7

the word of our L-rd shall stand firm forever,” and as it is likewise written, “and His words live and stand firm forever.”

For if the creative letters were to depart even for an instant, G-d forbid, and return to their source, all the heavens would become naught and absolute nothingness. It would be as though they had never existed at all, exactly as before the utterance, “Let there be a firmament.” And so it is with all created things, in all the upper and lower worlds, and even this physical earth and the realm of the completely inanimate. If the letters of the ten utterances by which the earth was created during the Six Days of Creation were to depart from it but for an instant, G-d forbid, it would revert to naught and absolute nothingness, exactly as before the six days of Creation.

פְּדָתֵיב: "וּדְבַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם", וּדְבָרָיו חַיִּים  
וְקַיָּמִים לְעַד כּו'.

כִּי אֱלוֹ הָיוּ הָאוֹתִיּוֹת  
מִסְתַּלְקוֹת כְּרַגַּע חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם  
וְחֻזְרוֹת לְמִקּוֹרָן, הָיוּ כָּל  
הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵין וְאָפֶס מִמֶּשׁ, וְהָיוּ  
כִּלְאֵי הָיוּ כְּלָל, וְכִמוֹ קוֹדֵם  
מֵאֲמַר "יְהִי רָקִיעַ" כּו' מִמֶּשׁ.  
וְכֵן בְּכָל הַבְּרוּאִים שֶׁבְּכָל  
הָעוֹלָמוֹת עֲלִיוֹנִים וְתַחְתּוֹנִים,  
וְאֶפְלוּ אֶרֶץ הַלְּזוֹ הַגְּשָׁמִית  
וּבְחִינַת דּוּמָם מִמֶּשׁ, אֱלוֹ הָיוּ  
מִסְתַּלְקוֹת מִמְּנָה כְּרַגַּע חֵס  
וְשְׁלוֹם הָאוֹתִיּוֹת מְעַשְׂרָה  
מֵאֲמָרוֹת שֶׁבָּהֵן נִבְרְאָה הָאֶרֶץ  
בְּשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי בְּרֵאשִׁית, הִיְתָה  
חוֹזֶרֶת לְאֵין וְאָפֶס מִמֶּשׁ,  
כִּמוֹ לְפָנֵי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי בְּרֵאשִׁית  
מִמֶּשׁ.

*The letters are the internal code language of the world, created by the speech of G-d. "And G-d said let there be light", "And G-d said let there be a firmament". Of course, this does not mean talking in the sense of creating sound waves. Human speech is only a gross expression of divine 'speech', which is a means of transmitting spiritual energy and information from a superior source to an inferior destination.*

## The Carpenter Is Not A Creator

*There are people, the Alter Rebbe says, who "compare G-d's act of making heaven and earth to the act of man and his schemes." These people believe that creation is like any other activity known to man. When we make any creation, after we have finished creating it, the creation exists on its own and does not need us anymore. The jewelry no longer needs the craftsman and the table exists by itself without the carpenter. And in the same way, those people believe, G-d created the world: He created the world once, and from then on, it exists on its own.*

This provides the answer to the heretics and exposes the root of the error of their denial of individual Divine Providence and the signs and miracles recorded in the Torah. They err in their false analogy, in comparing the work of G-d, the Creator of heaven and earth, to the work of man and his schemes.

When a silversmith has completed a vessel, that vessel is no longer dependent upon the hands of the smith, and even when his hands are removed from it and he goes his way, the vessel remains in exactly the same image and form as when it left the hands of the smith. These fools conceive the creation of heaven and earth in the same way.

*The Alter Rebbe says about this:*

However, “their eyes are blinded from seeing” the great difference between the work of man and his machinations and G-d’s creation. Human work consists of making one existing thing out of another, already existing thing, merely changing the form and appearance, e.g., from an ingot of silver to a vessel. However, G-d’s creation, of heaven and earth is creation ex nihilo - something out of nothing.”

*This ‘small’ difference between ‘something from something’ and ‘something from nothing’ is the entire story.*

*The explanation is quite simple: the jewelry and the table exist after their creation even without their respective craftsmen, because even before that, they had self-existence. The craftsmen did not initiate their existence, he merely used an existing raw material. His entire creation is external – he only changed the form of the material but not its essence. The person didn’t create anything that did not exist before (even chemical compounds do not create new matter in this sense, since the potential of this matter already existed). Because of this, the work can continue to exist even without the craftsmen who made it. But G-d created the world out of nothing, and that is something else entirely.*

והנה מכאן תשובת המינים  
וגלוי שרש טעותם הכופרים  
בהשגחה פרטית ובאותות  
ומופתיה התורה, שטועים  
בדמיונם הכוזב שמדמין  
מעשה ה' עושה שמים וארץ  
למעשה אנוש ותחבולותיו.

כי כאשר יצא לצורה כלי  
שוב אין הכלי צריך לידי  
הצורה, כי אף שידיו מסלקות  
הימנו והולך לו בשוק, הכלי  
קיים בתבניתו וצלמו ממש  
כאשר יצא מידי הצורה. כך  
מדמין הסכלים האלו מעשה  
שמים וארץ.

אך טח מראות עיניהם  
ההבדל הגדול שבין מעשה  
אנוש ותחבולותיו, שהוא  
יש מיש, רק שמשנה הצורה  
והתמונה מתמונת חתיכת  
כסף לתמונת כלי, למעשה  
שמים וארץ, שהוא יש מאין.

Creation ex nihilo is even more wondrous than, for example, the splitting of the Red Sea. Then, G-d drove back the sea by a strong east wind all the night, and the waters were split and stood upright as a wall. If G-d had stopped the wind, the waters would have instantly flowed downward, as is their nature, and they certainly would not have stood upright like a wall. In fact, the nature of water to flow downward is itself newly created ex nihilo, for a stone wall stands erect by itself without the assistance of the wind, but the nature of water is not so.

וְהוּא פָּלֵא גְדוֹל יוֹתֵר מִקְרִיעַת  
יָם סוּף עַל דְּרֹךְ מִשְׁלַל, שֶׁהוֹלִיד  
ה' אֶת הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קְדִים עֲזָה כָּל  
הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַמַּיִם וַנִּצְבּוּ כְּמוֹ  
גֵּד וְכַחוּמָה. וְאֵלוּ הִפְסִיק ה' אֶת  
הַרוּחַ כְּרָגַע, הָיוּ הַמַּיִם חוֹזְרִים  
וְנֹגְרִים בְּמוֹרֵד כְּדִרְכָּם וְטָבְעוּ,  
וְלֹא קָמוּ כַחוּמָה בְּלִי סִפְקָ. אֶף  
שֶׁהִטְבַּע הַזֶּה בַּמַּיִם גַּם כֵּן נִבְרָא  
וּמִחֲדָשׁ יֵשׁ מֵאִיו, שֶׁהָרִי חוֹמַת  
אֲבָנִים נִצְבָּת מֵעֲצָמָה בְּלִי רוּחַ,  
רַק שֶׁטְבַע הַמַּיִם אֵינוֹ כֵּן.

*The following example will help us understand the meaning of ex nihilo (something from nothing). Throwing a stone upwards. The stone does not continue to fly forever. At a certain point it slows its flight, stops and falls back down. Why? Because in this scenario we wanted to create something contrary to its original nature. The original nature of the stone is to be down on the ground, whereas we wanted it to fly. As such, it was necessary that the force that started the flight in the stone, should continue to drive it every moment. As long as this power existed in the stone, it flew, but as soon as this power faded - the stone immediately returned to its original state and fell down.*

## The Original Nature: Not To Exist

*Through this parable we can somewhat understand the novelty of creating something from nothing. What does 'from nothing' mean? There was a state of 'nothingness', of the absence of any reality; nothing existed. And suddenly the world was created. How was it created? Out of nowhere. G-d created the world from nothing, from the absence of any reality. Meaning, the world in its own right has no self-existence; it has nothing. What actually gives it its existence? G-d creating it. As a result, it is not possible for the world to exist even for a single moment without the power of G-d. In other words: G-d has to, so to speak, create the world every moment anew in order for it to exist. If the infinite power of G-d who created the world departs from it, the world will instantly return to its initial and 'natural' state - nothingness.*

**Student's** pg. 9 How much more so is it in the creation of something out of nothing, which transcends nature and is far more miraculous than the splitting of the Red Sea. Surely with the withdrawal of the power of the Creator from the thing created, G-d forbid, the created being would revert to naught and utter nonexistence. Rather, the activating force of the Creator must continuously be present in the thing created to give it life and ongoing existence.

וְכָל שֶׁפָּן וְקָל וְחֹמֶר בְּבְרִיאת יְיָ  
מֵאִין, שְׁהִיא לְמַעַלָּה מִהִטְבֵּעַ  
וְהַפְּלֵא וְפִלְא יוֹתֵר מִקְרִיעַת  
יָם סוּף, עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה  
שְׁבַה־סִתְּלָקוֹת כַּח הַבּוֹרָא מִן  
הַנְּבִרָא חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם יָשׁוּב הַנְּבִרָא  
לְאִין וְאָפֶס מִמֶּשׁ. אֵלָא צָרִיךְ  
לְהִיּוֹת כַּח הַפּוֹעֵל בְּנִפְעַל תָּמִיד  
לְהַחְיֹתוֹ וּלְקַיְמוֹ.

*This idea is already implied in the book of Psalms in the verse: "Forever, O G-d, Your word stands firm in the heavens."*

And the Baal Shem Tov explained: that "Your word" which you uttered, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters" are the very words and letters through which the heavens were created stand firmly forever within the firmament of heaven . . . to give them life.

וּפְרַשׁ הַבַּעַל שֵׁם טוֹב זְכוּרֵנוּ  
לְבִרְכָה, כִּי דְבַרְךָ שְׁאֲמַרְתָּ: "יְהִי  
רְקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם" וְגו', תִּיבוֹת  
וְאוֹתִיּוֹת אֵלוֹ הֵן נִצְבוֹת וְעוֹמְדוֹת  
לְעוֹלָם בְּתוֹךְ רְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם...  
לְהַחְיֹתָם.

(Commentary by Rabbi Mendi Brod  
- Musagim Bechasidut)

## **Student's** >> **The Rebbe** pg. 9

### **Don't Get Stuck In The Past**

The past does indeed need to be remembered in order to fix it. But this is a separate matter, relevant for when a person makes an honest accounting of himself during the bedtime shema, etc. At all other times a person must carry out his practical Divine service without considering his previous state, because all of

אִמְנֵם יֵשׁ צוּרֶךְ לְזִכּוֹר אֶת עֵינֵי הָעֶבֶר  
כְּדִי לְתַקְנֵם כּו' - אֲבָל זֶהוּ עֵינֵן בְּפָנֵי  
עֲצָמוֹ, כֹּאֲשֶׁר עוֹרֵךְ חֲשִׁבוֹן צְדָק  
בְּקִרְיַת שְׁמַע שְׁעַל הַמִּיטָה וְכִיּוֹצֵא  
בּוֹה, אֲבָל בְּשֵׁאר הַזְּמַנִּים צָרִיךְ  
לְעִסוֹק בְּעִבּוּדוֹתָּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְּפוֹעֵל  
לְלֹא הַתְּחַשְׁבוֹת בְּמַעֲמָדוֹ וּמִצְבוֹ

existence is renewed at every moment from nothing.

**Student's** Put simply: He must physically put on tefillin.  
pg.10 This achieves the infusion of intellect into emotions in the spiritual realm as well as the physical realm, harnessing the heart and mind for Divine service. The same applies to the literal observance of all the other mitzvot, each at their scheduled time.

Regarding influencing others too, practical action is the main thing. We must influence our fellows without considering whether we are personally in such a state that makes us worthy of influencing them.

*Naturally, our self-worth is determined by weighing different parameters. What is our spiritual status? What does our past say about us? Our history is part of the 'I' that creates who we are, for good or the opposite.*

*Yet here the Rebbe clarifies that our self-worth is not a function of our ability to influence others. We have to be focused on the task, not on ourselves. At the center of it all, is the other person who needs my influence.*

## **Student's** Acting Without Considering The Past pg.10

In previous generations there was a process of first “adorn yourself,” and then “adorn others.” But in our generation my father in law the Rebbe instructed us that all of us must influence others. He quoted the teaching of his father the Rebbe Rashab that our current Divine service must be in the mode of “grab and eat, grab and drink.” When we have an opportunity to influence someone else to observe a single mitzvah, we must grab

הקודם, מאחר שבכל רגע מתחדשת המציאות מאין ואפס ממש.

ובפשטות: עליו להניח תפילין בפועל ממש, שעל ידי זה נפעל שעבוד הלב והמוח. ועל דרך זה בנוגע לקיום כל שאר המצוות בפועל ממש - כל מצוה ומצוה בזמנה הקבוע.

וכמו כן צריך להיות בנוגע לפעולת ההשפעה על הזולת - שלכל לראש נוגע המעשה בפועל, היינו, לפעול ולהשפיע על הזולת, ללא עשיית חשבונות אם אכן נמצא הוא במעמד ומצב המתאים עד שביכולתו להשפיע על הזולת.

בדורות שלפנינו היה צריך להיות הסדר של “קשוט עצמך” תחלה ואחר כך “קשוט אחרים”, אבל בדורנו זה - תובע כבוד קדושת מורי וחמי אדמו"ר נשיא דורנו שכל אחד ואחד צריך לפעול ולהשפיע על הזולת, וכפי שמביא את דברי אביו (כבוד קדושת אדמו"ר מהורש"ב נשמתו עדן) שהעבודה עתה צריכה להיות באופן של “חטוף ואכול

**Student's** the opportunity and act on it, without  
pg. 10 considering whether we are indeed  
worthy of it.

This is the basic lesson derived from the Torah portion of Bereishit, the renewing of all existence, "in the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth." This teaches us that we must take action, without any consideration of our previous state.

חטוף ושת"י"; כאשר ישנה אפשרות לפעול על הזולת שיקיים מצווה אחת, צריכים "לחטוף" ולעשות זאת בפועל ממש, מבלי לחשוב האם מעמדו ומצבו הוא בהתאם לכך.

וזוהי ההוראה הנלמדת מכללות פרשת בראשית - החידוש דכללות המציאות כולה, "בראשית ברא אלוקים את השמים ואת הארץ", ולכן, נדרשת ממנו כללות העבודה במעשה בפועל, ללא התחשבות וחשבונות מצד מעמדו ומצבו הקודם.

*Ignoring the past is not just a form of psychological motivation. It is an absolute truth, which is part of the fabric of all of creation. The world is created every moment anew, and even the person of the present moment has new and unique elements in them that were not present in the previous moment.*

# C. Noach - Constant Joy

Student's  
pg. 11

## >> The Rebbe

### The Flood Brought Happiness

Following the general lesson derived from the portion of Bereishit, there is the general lesson derived from the portion of Noach.

The word Noach means pleasure. In our Divine service, this means that we need to serve with pleasure and joy.

נוסף על ההוראה מכללות פרשת  
בראשית - ישנה גם הוראה הנלמדת  
מכללות פרשת נח:

"נח" הוא מלשון "נייחא דרוחא".  
וענינו בעבודת האדם - עבודה באופן  
של "נייחא" - מתוך שמחה ותענוג.

*Seemingly, there's a question, how can one call the flood - Mei No'ach - the pleasant waters? It was literally the destruction of the entire world!*

*In order to understand this, the Rebbe (elsewhere) asks a different question: Why was the generation of the flood punished with water specifically? After all, G-d could have punished the people and destroyed the world in any number of ways. And as we just learned, He could have simply stopped creating certain parts of the world, and they would have ceased to exist. Why did He decide to bring a flood?*

*The answer is that the flood came to cleanse the world. Just as a ritual mikvah, which is made up of water measuring 40 se'ah, purifies the impure, so too did the 40 days of the flood purify the world. And because they purified the world, they are called the pleasant waters, as they brought rest and pleasantness to the world, giving it the positive future of a new and re-established world.*

*In conclusion, here we see that No'ach symbolizes joy and pleasure. And from this the Rebbe learns that in every situation one should be happy and joyful.*

## Required Joy

The absolute imperative of joy and pleasure can be understood based on the teaching of Tanya that "the verse speaks clearly - [punishment

וגודל ההכרח בעבודה מתוך שמחה  
(ותענוג) - מובן, על פי המבואר בתניא<sup>2</sup>  
ש"מקרא מלא דבר הכתוב תחת אשר



**Student's** will be administered] because you didn't serve  
pg. 11 your G-d with joy,' and the Arizal's commentary  
on this verse is well-known." Maimonides also  
explains the great importance of Divine service  
with joy.

לא עבדת את ה' אלוֹקֶיךָ בשמחה וגו',  
וְנוֹדַע לְכֹל פִּירוּשׁ הָאַרִיזוֹ"ל עַל פְּסוּק  
זֶה". וְכַמְבֹּאֵר בְּרַמְבַּ"ם<sup>3</sup> אֹדוֹת גּוֹדֵל  
הָעִלּוּי שֶׁבַעבוֹדָה מֵתוֹךְ שִׂמְחָה.

**Student's** **Source 3** Tanya Ch:26  
pg. 11

The following must be known as a cardinal principle. To achieve victory over a physical opponent, such as in a case of two people wrestling each other, if one of them is lazy and sluggish, he will easily be defeated and will fall, even if he is stronger than the other. Likewise concerning the conquest of one's evil nature. It is impossible to conquer the evil nature with laziness and sluggishness, which stem from sadness and a stonelike dullness of the heart, but rather with alacrity, which derives from joy and an open heart that is unblemished by any trace of worry and sadness in the world. . . .

Furthermore, the verse states explicitly (Deuteronomy 28:47): "Because you did not serve G-d your L-rd with joy...[the punishment described in the ensuing verse will be administered, G-d forbid]" and everyone is familiar with the explanation of the Arizal on this verse.

*In Deuteronomy (28:47), at the end of the rebuke about the troubles and sufferings that Moses gave to the Jewish people, he concludes and says that all this will happen, G-d forbid, "because you did not serve the L-rd your G-d with happiness and with gladness of heart."*

בְּרַם כְּגוֹן דָּא צְרִיךְ לְאוֹדוּעֵי  
כָּלֵל גְּדוּל. כִּי כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּצְחוֹן לְנִצְחָה  
דְּבַר גְּשָׁמִי, כְּגוֹן שְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים  
הַמְתַּאבְּקִים זֶה עִם זֶה לְהַפִּיל  
זֶה אֶת זֶה, הִנֵּה אִם הָאֶחָד הוּא  
בְּעֲצָלוּת וְכִבְדוּת, יִנָּצַח בְּקֵל  
וְיִפֹּל, גַּם אִם הוּא גְבוּר יוֹתֵר  
מִחֵבֵרוֹ. כִּכָּה מְמַשׁ בְּנִצְחוֹן הַיֵּצֶר,  
אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְנִצְחוֹ בְּעֲצָלוּת וְכִבְדוּת  
הַנְּמַשְׁכוֹת מֵעֲצָבוֹת וְטִמְטוּם הַלֵּב  
כְּאֲבֹן, כִּי אִם בְּזִרְיוֹת הַנְּמַשְׁכָּת  
מִשְׂמִחָה וּפְתִיחַת הַלֵּב וְטְהָרָתוֹ  
מִכָּל נְדָנוּד דְּאִגָּה וְעֲצָב בְּעוֹלָם.

...וּמִקְרָא מְלֵא דְבַר הַכְּתוּב:  
"תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת ה'  
אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה" וגו', וְנוֹדַע לְכֹל  
פִּירוּשׁ הָאַרִיזוֹ"ל עַל פְּסוּק זֶה.

(The simple meaning of the verse is (as Rashi explains) that all of this will happen because you did not fulfill the mitzvot when you were “with happiness and gladness of heart”, i.e. in a state of peace and tranquility. As the verse continues, “when you had an abundance of everything.” Therefore, the joy, peace and all the goodness will be taken away from you, G-d forbid, and trouble and suffering will come upon you.)

But the Arizal interprets the verse differently - that “joy and gladness of heart” is not a description of the good physical condition that you had earlier, when you did not serve G-d, but rather, it is an explanation of why whatever happened to you actually happened. Even if you did serve G-d, but you did not do it with joy and gladness of heart, because of this alone, all the troubles will, G-d forbid, come upon you. “And the verse states, that although you worshiped G-d with the fulfillment of the mitzvos, but you did not worship with joy and gladness of heart, therefore this happened to you.”

In fact, this interpretation is already stated by Rambam, that “Whoever holds himself back from this rejoicing is worthy of retribution, as it states: “because you did not serve G-d, your L-rd, with happiness and a glad heart.” Meaning, that he too interprets the punishment as a consequence for not serving (G-d) with joy.

**Student's** **Source 4** Mishneh Torah, Laws of Lulav, 8:15  
pg. 12

The happiness with which a person should rejoice in the fulfillment of the mitzvos and the love of G-d who commanded them is a great service. Whoever holds himself back from this rejoicing is worthy of retribution, as it states [Deuteronomy 28:47]: “...because you did not serve G-d, your L-rd, with joy and a glad heart”.

הַשְּׂמִיחָה שֶׁיִּשְׂמַח אָדָם  
בְּעִשְׂיַת הַמִּצְוָה וּבְאַהֲבַת  
הָאֵל שְׂצוּהָ בְּהוֹ, עֲבוּדָה  
גְּדוּלָהּ הִיא. וְכָל הַמוֹנֵעַ עֲצֹמוֹ  
מִשְׂמִיחָה זוֹ רְאוּי לְהַפְרֵעַ  
מִמֶּנּוּ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דְּבָרִים כח  
מִז): “תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עֲבַדְתָּ  
אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב  
לֵבָב.”

## >> The Rebbe

**Student's** **Being new and happy**  
pg. 12

The order of these portions is Bereishit, and then Noach.

וזהו הסדר של שתי הפרשיות - בראשית ואחר כך נח:

We must first know that our Divine service must be carried out like new, "Bereishit - in the beginning," irrespective of our previous state, because our existence and the existence of all of creation has just been renewed from absolute nothingness. We are then told that our service must be with pleasure and joy, "Noach" - a cardinal principle of Divine service.

לכל לראש צריך יהודי לדעת שעבודתו צריכה להיות באופן חדש - "בראשית גו", מבלי להתחשב במעמדו ומצבו הקודם, כי מציאותו ומציאות הבריאה כולה מתחדשת זה עתה מאין ואפס.

ואחר כך אומרים לו שעבודתו צריכה להיות באופן של "ניחא" ("נח") - מתוך שמחה ותענוג, שזהו ענין עיקרי בעבודת ה'.

## Optional enrichment section:

### Joy

*Say, you're an artist, and you are asked to make a painting that will illustrate the character of a Chassid. You will most likely draw a Jew with one leg raised in the air, hands waving in a typical dance manner, a face lit up with joy. Joy is so closely identified with Chassidut, that by saying 'Chassid', you're saying 'a happy Jew'.*

*Indeed, joy is one of the most important principles of Chassidut, to the point where it is impossible to separate them. The Baal Shem Tov, and all the following leaders of Chassidut, placed great emphasis not only on worshipping G-d out of joy, but that the Chassid be joyful in all areas and aspects of his life.*

*In the Torah and in the teachings of the Sages, the need for joy, its benefits, and its importance, are discussed countless times. It would be appropriate at this point to mention the well-known verse from Psalms: "Serve the L-rd with joy". Maimonides, in his code of law, extols the praise of the worship of G-d that is done with joy. The masters of Kabbalah have also said incredible things in praise of joy. The Arizal said that he attained all his lofty comprehensions only because of joy. He also explains the verse in Deuteronomy, "Because you did not serve the L-rd your G-d with joy and gladness of heart" in a unique way. According to his explanation, the emphasis is on the words "with joy", meaning: although you worshiped the L-rd your G-d, you did not worship Him with joy, and that is the sin.*

*A mistake that is commonly made with regard to joy is that it is likened to a lack of respect and 'taking life easy' - this is a major error. Joy is a very serious matter - even when it brings one to break out in a boisterous dance. Chassidut makes a clear distinction between wild conduct, which is a bad and harmful thing, and joy which has the unique ability of bringing about exaltation and purification.*

*True joy stems from a firm belief in the Divine unity of creation. When a Jew starts from the premise*

*that G-d fills all reality - he feels the presence of G-d at any time and in any place. He understands that just as a person whom the king of the country accompanied him on his way would be very happy about this gesture, surely there is immense joy to be had over the fact that the King of Kings, G-d Almighty, accompanies man in all his steps and is always with him!*

## **Joy removes difficulties**

*The joy in serving G-d indicates, first of all, that the person doing it is doing it with love and desire, not by compulsion and lack of choice. Additionally, joy greatly alleviates difficulties that are sometimes associated with keeping the Torah and mitzvot. The Lubavitcher Rebbe used to give an example of a person who carries a heavy box: if he has no idea of its contents, he may get tired and even complain about the heavy load; but as soon as he finds out that this box is actually full of precious stones and gems - not only will the weight of the box be as light as a feather, but he will ask to have another box loaded on top of it... Such is the power of joy!*

# D. Lech Lecha - Keep Moving Forward

Student's  
pg. 14

## >> The Rebbe

### Don't Become Complacent

Then we have the general lesson derived from the portion of Lech Lecha. Even when our Divine service is fresh and new - "Bereishit" - and carried out with joy and pleasure - "Noach" - we can't be satisfied with our current state. We must continue to advance, "Lech Lecha" - go for yourself. This must be true "going," to an incomparably different position that our previous state.

The negative inclination can argue to us: Why think now about tomorrow's work, that tomorrow you must reach incomparably greater heights? Tomorrow creation will be renewed, as the Baal Shem Tov teaches, and then you can think about tomorrow's work. At the moment, be fully invested in today's work, in accordance with your current state.

The lesson of Lech Lecha is a response to this argument. Today's work is only complete when we acknowledge that we haven't yet reached perfection, and that we are required to take a quantum leap to an incomparably higher level. As a result, today's work is not done with a feeling of complacency, but with the aspiration and preparation to reach a higher level - Lech Lecha.

ולאחרי זה באה ההוראה הנלמדת מכללות פרשת לך לך: גם כאשר עבודתו היא באופן חדש ("בראשית") ומתוך שמחה ותענוג ("נח") - אין לו להסתפק במעמדו ומצבו בהווה, אלא עליו להמשיך בעבודתו באופן של הליכה - "לך לך" - הליכה אמיתית, שהיא באופן שבאין ערוך לגמרי לגבי מעמדו ומצבו הקודם.

כי הנה, היצר הרע יכול לבוא ולטעון: לשם מה לחשוב עתה אודות העבודה של מחר (שאינן לו להסתפק במעמדו ומצבו שביום זה, אלא למחרת עליו להוסיף בעבודתו באופן של הליכה לדרגה שבאין ערוך לגבי דרגתו הקודמת) - הרי מחר תתחדש הבריאה באופן חדש (כתורת הבעל-שם-טוב), ואז יחשוב אודות עניני העבודה השייכים למחר, ולעת עתה - יהיה מונח בעניני העבודה השייכים ליום זה, בהתאם למעמדו ומצבו ביום זה.

ועל זה באה ההוראה מפרשת לך לך - ששלימות העבודה של היום זה היא רק כאשר יודע שעדיין לא הגיע לתכלית השלימות בעבודתו, ויודע שנדרשת ממנו הליכה לדרגה שבאין ערוך לגבי דרגתו הקודמת, ולכן עבודתו ביום זה גופא היא באופן שאינו מסתפק במעמדו ומצבו בהווה, אלא שואף ומתכוון להגיע לדרגה נעלית יותר - "לך לך".

**Student's** **Renewal, Joy, and Progress**  
pg. 15

The three Torah portions Bereishit, Noach, and Lech Lecha are the first portions of the Torah. As such, the lessons we learn from their content and order is relevant to the entire year. Our Divine service all year round must be in the spirit of renewal (Bereishit), joy (Noach), and boundless progress (Lech Lecha).

והנה, שלוש הפרשיות בראשית, נח ולך לך, הן הפרשיות הראשונות שבתורה, ולכן, ההוראה הנלמדת מתוכנן וסדרן של פרשיות אלו שייכת לכל השנה כולה - היינו, שכללות העבודה במשך השנה כולה צריכה להיות באופן של חידוש ("בראשית"), מתוך שמחה ותענוג ("נח"), ובאופן של הליכה בלי גבול ("לך לך").

משיחת שבת פרשת נח, ה'תשמ"ג, בלתי מוגה.  
תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ג, חלק א' עמוד 437