



Behar–Bechukotai

“PULL YOURSELF UP BY YOUR OWN BOOTSTRAPS,” THEY SAID. IT’S A LIE.

You Can’t Jump out of Your Own Skin. Get an Objective Opinion.

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Behar

On the mountain of Sinai, G-d communicates to Moses the laws of the sabbatical year. Every seventh year, all work on the land should cease, and its produce becomes free for the taking for all, human and beast. Seven sabbatical cycles are followed by a fiftieth year—the jubilee year, on which work on the land ceases, all indentured servants

are set free, and all ancestral estates in the Holy Land that have been sold revert to their original owners. Behar also contains additional laws governing the sale of lands, and the prohibitions against fraud and usury.

PARSHAH OVERVIEW

Bechukotai

G-d promises that if the people of Israel will keep His commandments, they will enjoy material prosperity and dwell securely in their homeland. But He also delivers a harsh “rebuke” warning of the exile, persecution, and other evils that will befall them if they abandon their covenant with Him. Nevertheless, “Even when they are in the land of their

enemies, I will not cast them away; nor will I ever abhor them, to destroy them and to break My covenant with them, for I am the L-rd their G-d.” The parshah concludes with the rules on how to calculate the values of different types of pledges made to G-d, and the mitzvah of tithing produce and livestock.



The expression, “Pull yourself up by your bootstraps” is a common phrase that means to succeed by the merit of your own efforts.

The origin of the phrase was a snarky comment demonstrating something absurd.

TEXT 1

Leviticus 25:47–49

מִזֹּכֵר וְכִי תִשְׁיֵג יָד גֵּר וְתִוָּשֵׁב עִמָּךְ וּמָךְ אֶחָיִךְ עִמּוֹ
וְנִמְכַּר לַגֵּר תִּוָּשֵׁב עִמָּךְ אוֹ לְעֵקֶר מְשֻׁפָּחַת גֵּר:

מִתּוֹ אַחֲרֵי נִמְכַּר גֵּאֲלָהּ תִּהְיֶה־לּוֹ אֶחָד מֵאֶחָיו יִגְאָלֵנּוּ:

מִטּוֹ אוֹ־דָדוֹ אוֹ בֶן־דָּדוֹ יִגְאָלֵנּוּ אוֹ־מִשְׁאֵר בָּשָׂרוֹ
מִמְשֻׁפָּחָתוֹ יִגְאָלֵנּוּ אוֹ־הַשִּׁיגָה יָדוֹ וְנִגְאָל:

47. If a resident non-Jew gains wealth with you, and your brother becomes destitute with him and is sold to a resident non-Jew among you or to an idol of the family of a non-Jew:

48. After he is sold, he shall have redemption; one of his brothers shall redeem him.

49. Or his uncle or his cousin shall redeem him, or the closest [other] relative from his family shall redeem him; or, if he becomes able to afford it, he can be redeemed [on his own].

Anyone closely related can redeem this slave by paying off his remaining years of servitude—including himself.



QUESTIONS

Where is the father on the list?
And why is redeeming himself
only a last resort?

The story of a Jewish man sold as a slave to a non-Jewish owner is not only a physical story.

It is one of a Jew who has suffered spiritual bondage, i.e., a sense of being locked out of religious feeling.



TEXT 2

Rashi, Leviticus 26:1

הפרשיות הללו נאמרו על הסדר: בתחלה הזהיר על השביעית, ואם חמד ממון ונחשד על השביעית סופו למכור מטלטליו, לכך סמך לה "וכי תמכרו ממכר", מה כתיב ביה? "או קנה מיד עמיתך", דבר הנקנה מיד ליד.

The passages [in this whole section] are written in a meaningful order, as follows: At first, Scripture admonishes us to observe [the laws of] *shemita*. Then, if one covets money and becomes suspect of [unlawfully doing business with produce of] *shemita*, he will eventually [become destitute and] have to sell his personal belongings. Therefore, Scripture juxtaposes to it, “And when you make a sale [to your fellow Jew].” What is written therein? “Or make a purchase from the hand . . .” (Leviticus 25:14); something that is transferred from hand to hand.

→ CONTINUE

TEXT 2

Rashi, Leviticus 26:1

לא חזר בו, סוף מוכר אחוזתו.
לא חזר בו, סוף מוכר את ביתו.
לא חזר בו, סוף לווה ברבית.
כל אלו האחרונות קשות מן הראשונות.
לא חזר בו, סוף מוכר את עצמו. לא חזר בו, לא דיו
לישראל אלא אפילו לנכרי

If he still does not repent, he will eventually have to sell his inheritance (Ibid., 25:25).

If he even then does not repent, he will eventually have to sell his home.

If even then he does not repent, he will eventually have to borrow money with interest (Ibid., 25:35–38).

Now, the later the scenario in this passage, the more severe it is.

If he still does not repent, he will eventually have to sell himself [to his fellow Jew as a servant] (Ibid., 25:39–46); and [finally,] if he has still not repented, it is not enough that he had to be sold to his fellow Jew, but he will [be forced to sell himself] even to a non-Jew!



The person spoken about is going through both a physical and spiritual decline.

TEXT 3A

Leviticus 26:1

א לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֱלִילִים וּפְסֵל וּמִצֵּבָה לֹא־תִקְיִמוּ
לָכֶם וְאֶבֶן מִשְׁכִּית לֹא תִתְּנוּ בְּאַרְצְכֶם לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת
עָלֶיהָ כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

You shall not make idols for yourselves,
nor shall you set up a statue or a
monument for yourselves. And in your land
you shall not place a pavement stone on
which to prostrate yourselves, for I am the
L-rd your G-d.

TEXT 3B

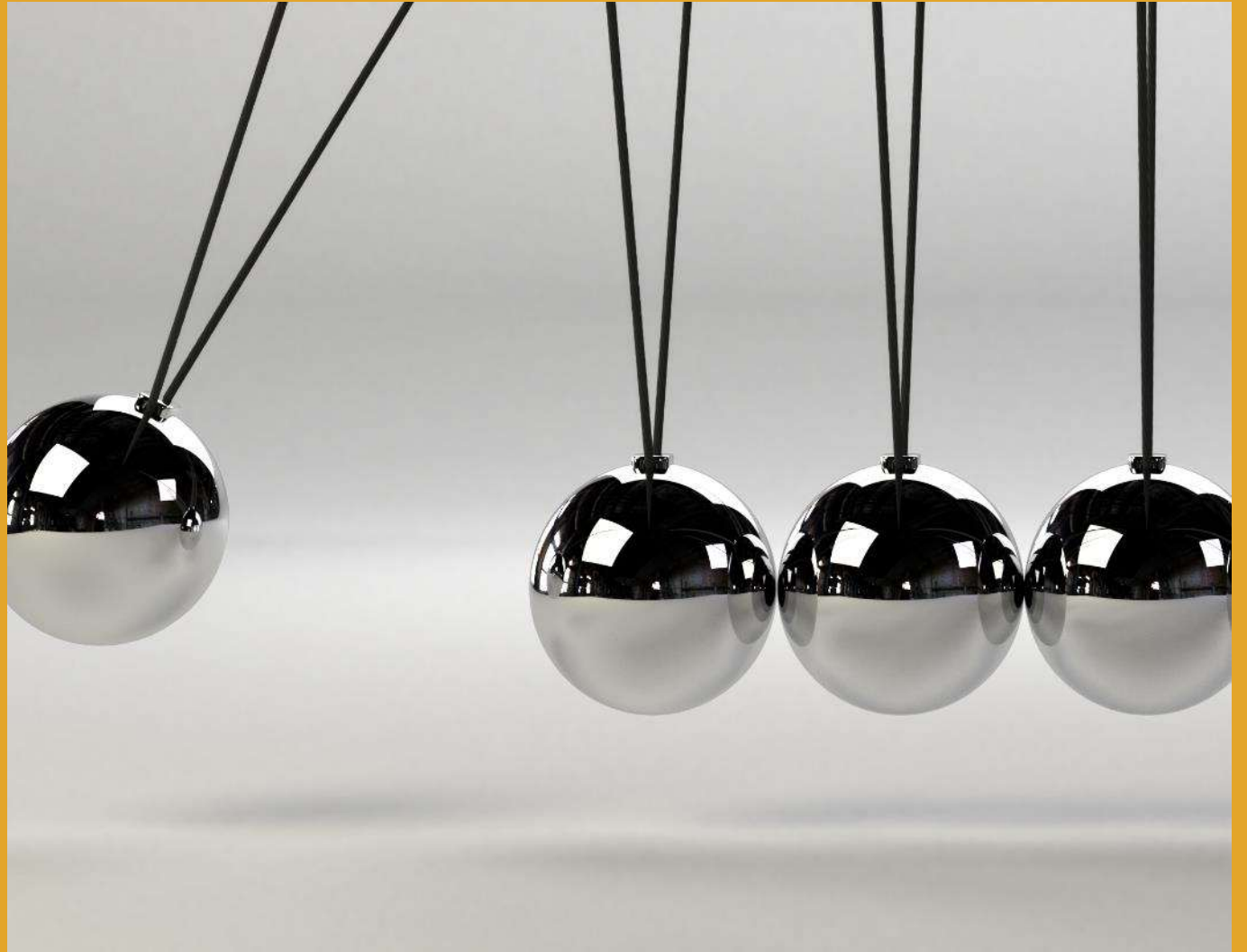
Rashi, ad loc.

"לא תעשו לכם אלילים". כנגד זה הנמכר לנכרי,
שלא יאמר: הואיל ורבי מגלה עריות, אף אני
כמותו! הואיל ורבי עובד עבודה זרה, אף אני
כמותו! הואיל ורבי מחלל שבת, אף אני כמותו!
לכך נאמרו מקראות הללו.

This is addressed to the one who has been sold [as a servant] to a non-Jew, that he should not say, "Since my master has illicit relations, I will also be like him! Since my master worships idols, I will also be like him! Since my master desecrates the Sabbath, I will also be like him!" This is why these verses are stated here.

What causes this
Jew to reach such
a low state?

The downfall
happens when a
Jew forgets their
Father in Heaven.



TEXT 4

Malachi 1:6

בֶּן יִכְבֵּד אָב וְעֶבֶד אֲדֹנָיו וְאִם־אָב אֲנִי אֵיךְ כְּבוֹדִי
וְאִם־אֲדֹנִים אֲנִי אֵיךְ מוֹרָאִי אָמַר ה' צְבָאוֹת לָכֶם
הַכֹּהֲנִים בּוֹזִי שְׁמִי וְאָמַרְתֶּם בְּמָה בָזִינוּ אֶת־שְׁמִי:

“A son honors a father, and a slave his master. Now if I am a Father, where is My honor? And if I am a Master, where is My fear?” says the L-rd of Hosts to you, the priests, who despise My name. But you said, “How have we despised Your name?”

TEXT 5

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson,
Likutei Sichot 17, p. 299

על פי איז מובן דער טעם (פנימי) וואס "אביו"
ווערט ניט דערמאנט דא . . . דער ענין המיתה
ברוחניות — "רשעים שבחייהן קרויין מתים",
אדער בדקות יותר: "מאן דנחית מדרגא . . .
קארי ביה מיתה" — נעמט זיך דערפון וואס עס
פעלט דער געדיינקען דעם אביו שבשמים.

We can now understand the spiritual reason why “father” isn’t mentioned in the verse. . . . The verse speaks of someone who is spiritually dead, for “the wicked are called dead even while alive” (Talmud, Berachot 18b). In more abstract terms, anyone experiencing spiritual decline is considered to be experiencing a form of death. What causes this? The fact that the person forgets their Father in Heaven.



Every Jew
possesses a
belief and
commitment to
G-d that can
never be snuffed
out.

TEXT 6A

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of
Liadi, *Tanya, Likutei
Amarim*, ch. 18

אֲפֹלוּ לְקַל שְׂבָקִים וּפּוֹשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִמְשָׁךְ בְּזוּגָם
נֶפֶשׁ דְּנֶפֶשׁ דְּמַלְכוּת דְּעֵשְׂיָה . . . שְׂבָתוּכָה
מְלִבְשֵׁת חֲכָמָה דְּאַצִּילוּת, שְׂבָה מְאִיר אֹר אֵין
סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִמֶּשׁ . . . וְנִמְצָא כִּי אֵין סוּף בְּרוּךְ
הוּא מְלִבְשׁ בְּבַחֲיַנַּת חֲכָמָה שְׂבָתוּכָה הָאָדָם, יְהִיָּה
מִי שְׂיִהְיָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל . . .

הֵנָּה הַחֲכָמָה הִיא מְקוֹר הַשְׂכָּל וְהַהֲבָנָה, וְהִיא
לְמַעַלָּה מִהַבִּינָה שֶׁהוּא הֶבְנַת הַשְׂכָּל וְהַשְׁגָּתוֹ,
וְהַחֲכָמָה הִיא לְמַעַלָּה מִהַהֲבָנָה וְהַשְׁגָּה, וְהִיא
מְקוֹר לָהֶן . . . וְלָכֵן מְתַלַּבֵּשׁ בָּהּ אֹר אֵין סוּף
בְּרוּךְ הוּא, דְּלִית מַחְשְׁבָה תְּפִיסָא בִּיהּ כָּלָל.
וְלָכֵן כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲפֹלוּ . . . עַמִּי הָאֲרֶץ, הֵם
מֵאֲמִינִים בָּהּ, שֶׁהָאֱמוּנָה הִיא לְמַעַלָּה מִן הַדַּעַת
וְהַשְׁגָּה

Even the most insincere and sinful Jews possess by birthright in their soul . . . the level of *chochmah* that contains the essence of G-d Himself. It turns out that the essence of G-d is integrated within the soul of every Jew, whoever they may be. . . .

This *chochmah* serves as the source of all cognition, yet it is higher than the cognitive process that breaks down intellectual matter, for it is the source of it all. . . . This explains how it is the landing spot for the essence of G-d Himself that transcends all reason. Thus, even the simplest Jew believes in G-d, for this faith is beyond reason.

TEXT 6B

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of
Liadi, *Tanya*, Ibid.

וְלִכֵּן אֶפְלוּ קַל שְׂבִיקִים וּפּוֹשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מוֹסְרִים
נִפְשָׁם עַל קִדְּשַׁת ה' עַל הָרֵב, וְסוֹבְלִים עֲנוּיִים
קוֹשִׁים שְׂלֹא לִכְפֹּר בַּה' אֶחָד, וְאַף אִם הֵם בּוֹרִים
וְעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְאִין יוֹדְעִים גְּדֻלַּת ה'.

וְגַם בְּמַעַט שִׂיּוּדְעִים אֵין מִתְּבוֹנְנִים כָּלֵל, וְאֵין
מוֹסְרִים נִפְשָׁם מִחֲמַת דַּעַת וְהִתְּבוֹנְנוּת בַּה' כָּלֵל,
אֲלֹא בְּלִי שׁוּם דַּעַת וְהִתְּבוֹנְנוּת, רַק כְּאִלוּ הוּא
דָּבָר שְׂאִי אֶפְשָׁר כָּלֵל לִכְפֹּר בַּה' אֶחָד, בְּלִי שׁוּם
טַעַם וְטַעֲנָה וּמַעֲנָה כָּלֵל.

וְהִינוּ מְשׁוּם שֶׁה' אֶחָד מְאִיר וּמְחַיֶּה כָּל הַנֶּפֶשׁ עַל
יְדֵי הִתְּלַבְּשׁוּתוֹ בְּבְחִינַת חֻכְמָה שְׂפָה, שֶׁהִיא
לְמַעַלָּה מִן הַדַּעַת וְהַשְׂכָּל הַמְּשֻׁג וּמוֹכֵן

This also explains why even insincere and sinful Jews will typically give up their lives for G-d, or opt to suffer extreme pain rather than revolt against G-d, choosing to do so even though they are completely ignorant of anything about G-d's greatness.

Even the little they do know, they don't really process; their tremendous sacrifice is not due to any great awareness about G-d's greatness, rather it is entirely beyond reason. It's as if it is impossible to revolt against G-d, without any sort of explanation or negotiation.

The explanation for this is because the Oneness of G-d energizes and animates the soul by integrating into the *chochmah* that is higher than reason and cognition.

TEXT 6C

President of Israel
Moshe Katsav,
Quoted in Judea and
Ruth Pearl (Eds.), *I Am
Jewish: Personal
Reflections Inspired by
the Last Words of Daniel
Pearl* (Woodstock ,VT.:
Jewish Lights
Publishing, 2004), p. 67

The late Daniel Pearl, of blessed memory, by stating “I am a Jew” to his terrorist captors before being murdered, proclaimed his affiliation to a religious and national entity and his being part of Jewish history. This declaration encompasses a way of life, beliefs, and views. To be a Jew means an outlook on worldwide issues, founded on Jewish principles based on the Bible.

Every Jew feels a spiritual bond and an emotional attachment to Judaism even if, in the era of globalization,

he hardly knows the basic concepts of Judaism; even if in his bookcase there are no books dealing with the Jewish faith, the Jewish People, or Jewish culture and history.

From the video of his beheading:

My name is Daniel Pearl. I’m a Jewish American from Encino, California, USA. I come from, uh, on my father’s side the family is Zionist. My father’s Jewish, my mother’s Jewish, I’m Jewish. My family follows Judaism. We’ve made numerous family visits to Israel.

TEXT 7

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of
Liadi, *Tanya, Likutei
Amarim*, ch. 19

הַרְשָׁעִים וּפּוֹשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל קִדְּמוּ שְׂבָאוֹ לִידֵי גָסִיוֹן
לְקַדֵּשׁ ה', כִּי בְּחִינַת הַחֲכָמָה שֶׁבִּנְפֶּשׁ הָאֱלֹקִית עִם
נִיצוּץ אֱלֹקוֹת מְאֹר אֵין סוּף בְּרוּךְ הוּא הַמְּלִבֵּשׁ
בָּהֶם בְּבְחִינַת גְּלוּת בְּגוּפָם, בְּנֶפֶשׁ הַבְּהֵמִית מֵצֵד
הַקְּלָפָה . . . הַמוֹלֶכֶת וּמוֹשְׁלֵת בְּגוּפָם.

Before they are faced with the ultimatum of giving their life for G-d, the *chochmah* in the soul of sinful Jews along with the G-dly spark invested in it are in virtual captivity. The body and animal soul . . . are the ones who control their body.



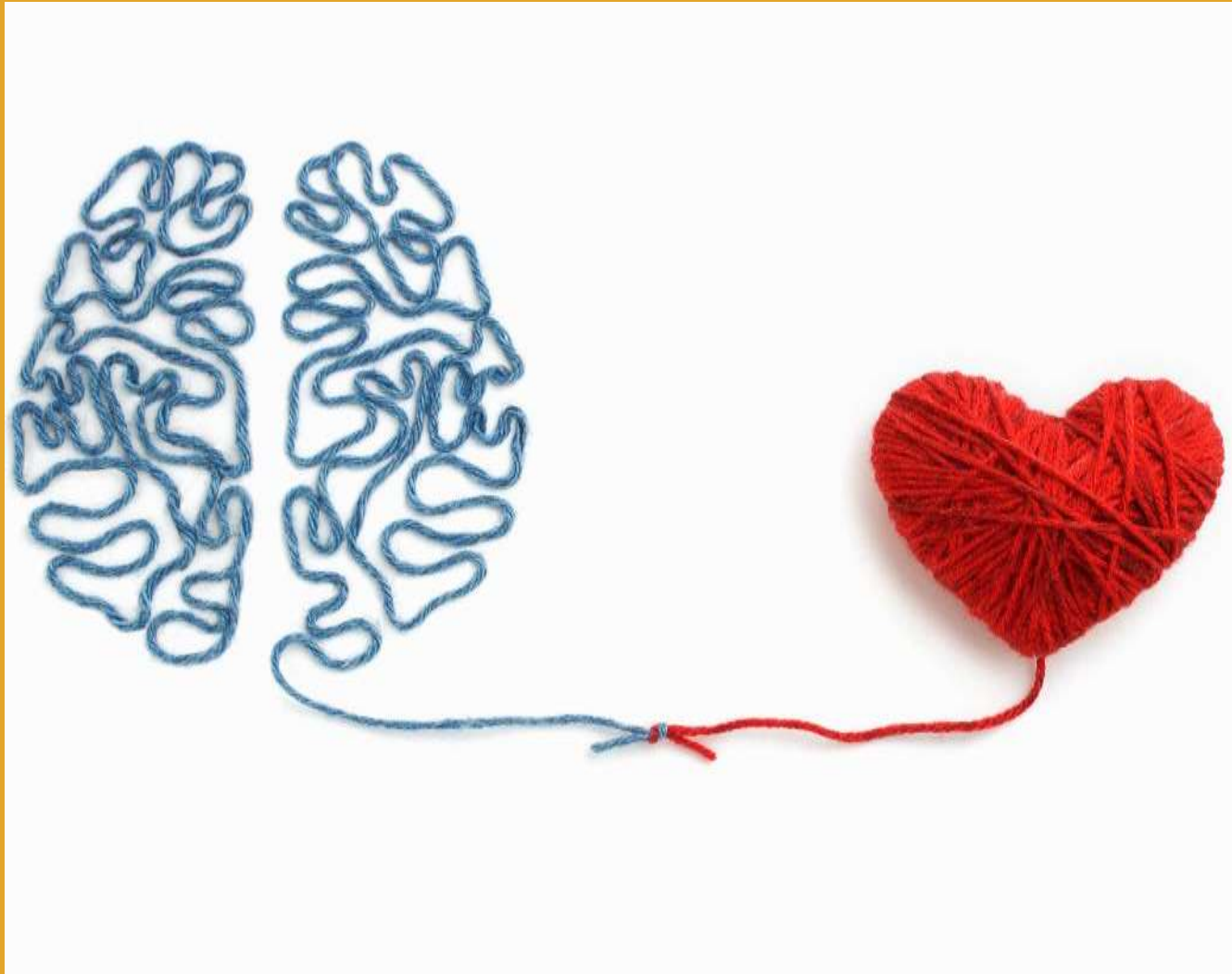
If people *really* appreciated how much they're being ripped away from G-d with every sin, they would never transgress.

TEXT 8

Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, Ibid., ch. 24

דאָפּלוּ אַזשׂהּ הַמִּנְאַפֶּת, שְׂדַעְתָּהּ קִלָּה, הִיָּתָה
מוֹשְׁלֵת בְּרוּחַ תַּאֲוָתָהּ לִוְלֵי רוּחַ שְׁטוּת שְׂפָה,
הַמְכַסֶּה וּמַסְתִּיר וּמַעְלִים אֶת הָאֱהָבָה מְסֻתֶּרֶת
שְׂבִנְפִשָּׁה הָאֱלֵקִית לְדָבָקָה בְּאַמוּנַת ה' וַיַּחֲדוּ
וְאַחֲדוּתוֹ, וְלֹא לִפְרֵד חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם מֵאַחֲדוּתוֹ . . .
אַבָּל בְּאַמֶּת לְאַמְתּוֹ, אֶפְלוּ עֲבָרָה קִלָּה - הֲרִי
הָעוֹבְרָה עוֹבֵר עַל רְצוֹן הָעֲלִיוֹן בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְהוּא
בְּתַכְלִית הַפְּרוּד מִיַּחֲדוּ וְאַחֲדוּתוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ.

Even an adulterous women who is obviously out of her senses would control her impulses if not for the “spirit of folly” that conceals the innate love within the G-dly soul that yearns to be close with G-d and never be ripped apart from His Oneness. . . . The truth is, even the slightest sin tears one entirely apart from the oneness and exclusiveness of G-d.



The deep-seated belief is called “*chochmah*,” as it is suprarational.

“*Chochmah*” is considered the paternal partner that “births” emotions.

TEXT 9

Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, Ibid., ch. 3

בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם שְׁנֵחָלֶקֶת לְשֵׁתִים - שֶׁכֶּל וּמַדּוּת.
הַשֶּׁכֶּל כּוֹלֵל חֻכְמָה בִּינָה וְדַעַת, וְהַמַּדּוּת הֵן אֶהְבֵּת
ה' וּפְחָדוֹ וַיִּרְאָתוֹ וּלְפָאָרוֹ כּו'. וְחֻכְמָה בִּינָה וְדַעַת
נִקְרְאוּ אֲמוּת וּמִקּוּר לַמַּדּוּת, כִּי הַמַּדּוּת הֵן
תּוֹלְדוֹת חֻכְמָה בִּינָה וְדַעַת.

The human soul is divided into two broad categories, cognition and emotion. Cognition subdivides into three capacities of creativity (*chochmah*), processing (*binah*), and application (*daat*). Emotions subdivide into loving G-d and fearing G-d. The three cognitive capacities are called the “mother,” i.e., the source of all emotion, for emotions are born out of a cognitive process.

→ CONTINUE

TEXT 9

Rabbi Shneur Zalman
of Liadi, Ibid., ch. 3

וּבְאוֹר הָעֵינָן, כִּי הֵנָּה הַשֹּׁכֵל שֶׁבִּנְפֹשׁ הַמְּשַׁכֵּלֶת
שֶׁהוּא הַמְּשַׁכֵּיל כָּל דָּבָר, נִקְרָא בְּשֵׁם חֻכְמָה, כ"ח
מ"ה. וְכִשְׁמוֹצִיא כָחוֹ אֶל הַפֶּעַל, שֶׁמִּתְבּוֹגֵן בְּשִׁכְלוֹ
לְהִבִּין דָּבָר לְאֲשׁוּרוֹ וּלְעֻמְקוֹ מִתּוֹךְ אֵיזָה דָּבָר
חֻכְמָה הַמְּשַׁכֵּל בְּשִׁכְלוֹ, נִקְרָא בִּינָה. וְהֵן הֵם אָב
וָאִם הַמּוֹלִידוֹת אֶהְבֵּת ה' וַיִּרְאֶתוּ וּפָחֲדוּ.

To explain: The cognitive capacity of the rational soul that is able to perceive everything is called *chochmah*. This Hebrew word is a portmanteau of the two words “*ko’ach mah*—an abstract, unknown capacity.” When this abstract potential is realized, namely when the person processes the creative flash to try and understand it properly and unpack its full depth, it is called *binah*. These two steps are the mother and father who collectively give birth to the emotions of love and fear of G-d.



One trapped in a spiritual spiral, lacking even a father to help them, is in no way capable of redeeming themselves.

TEXT 10

Talmud, Berachot 5b

אָמְרִי: אֵין חֲבוּשׁ מַתִּיר עַצְמוֹ מִבֵּית הָאֲסוּרִים.

They say, “A prisoner cannot free himself from prison.”

TEXT 11

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Likutei
Sichot* 17, p. 301

וויבאלד אז בחינת הזכרון . . . פון דעם נמכר
לנכרי איז בבחינת שינה, ביז ער איז כאילו
געווארן אויס בעל הבית אויף זיך . . . אין אזא
מצב איז פאר אים ניט מעגלעך צו זיך אליין
גואל זיין, ווי דער כלל: "אין חבוש מתיר עצמו
מבית האסורים";

זיין גאולה מוז קומען בדרך אתערותא דלעילא
(העכער פון זיין מצב), דורך דעם וואס אנדערע
(וואס זיינען ניט משועבד צו הנזכר לעיל) זיינען
אים גואל.

און דערפאר שטייט צום עלעם ערשטן דער ענין
פון גאולת קרובים — די אתערותא דלעילא צו
ארויסשלעפן אים פון זיין שפל המצב.

For a Jew who has been “sold” into the ownership of a non-Jew, the memory of his Father in Heaven is completely forgotten, so much so that it’s as if he no longer has any control over himself. . . . In such a situation, it’s impossible for the slave to redeem himself, as per the rule, “A prisoner cannot free himself from prison.”

His redemption must come through outside intervention, from someone in a position above his station who is not subject to the same servitude.

That is why the first option in the verse is for the relative to redeem him, namely someone from above pulling him out of his desperate situation.



Turning to someone for advice is not a weakness, but rather an opportunity for an objective perspective.

TEXT 12

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Torat
Menachem* 5747:1, p. 208

גם אדם שהולך בדרך הישר, הרי, בודאי ניתן
למצוא כמה וכמה ענינים שבהם יכול להוסיף
עוד יותר.

אמנם, מכיון ש"אדם קרוב אצל עצמו", אינו
יכול לסמוך על עצמו ולהיות בטוח שהנהגתו
היא כדבעי.

ולכן, העצה לזה — "עשה לך רב", למנות לו
מישהו שגדול ממנו, שישאל ויברר אצלו בנוגע
לכל עניניו, הן בנוגע לענינים ד"סור מרע" והן
בנוגע לענינים ד"עשה טוב".

Even someone who is completely upright,
there are certainly matters in which they
can improve.

However, inasmuch as everyone loves
themselves, a person cannot rely on
themselves to be entirely certain that they
are behaving in an appropriate manner.

The solution for this problem is, as the
Mishnah states, "Appoint a mentor for
yourself" (Mishnah, Avot 1:6). Everyone
should nominate someone greater than
themselves with whom to ask and clarify
all their personal affairs, be it in their
efforts to abstain from negativity or
proactively doing good things.

While one may be self-aware about their own issues, they need guidance to help with self-improvement.



TEXT 13

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Likutei
Sichot* 29, p. 247

ויש להוסיף, שגם מי שהוא גדול בתורה וביראת
שמים כו', שקשה לו למצוא מי שגדול ממנו —
הרי "אף על פי שלא ימצא חכם גדול כמוהו,
יעשה משלמטה הימנו, כי אין אדם רואה בעניני
עצמו העצה הצריכה לו כמו שיראה זולתו, וזהו
עשה לך רב, אף שאינו ראוי".

וכמפורש שבכגון דא יש צורך בענין של עשיה,
"עשה לך רב", אשר, "לשון עשיה יאמר על
דבר שצריך לטרוח ולעשות על ידו", עד לעשיה
מלשון כפיה.

We should add that even [in the case of] an advanced pious Torah scholar who has trouble finding someone greater than him, then, as the Me'iri suggests, "Even if one cannot find a scholar of their own stature, they should nominate someone inferior, for people are unable to see the solution they need most like someone else can. Accordingly, the Mishnah's directive, 'Appoint a mentor for yourself,' means even if they are unworthy."

It is explicitly stated with regard to such situations that an element of coercion is necessary. The word "appoint" here connotes an active effort that requires exertion, investment, and sometimes even a little force.



Having a mentor
is for everyone,
and for every
type of question.

TEXT 14

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Torat
Menachem* 5747:1, p. 212

יש צורך, איפוא, להבהיר גם ענין זה, שכן, גם אם מפרשי המשנה אינם מבהירים זאת, הרי, ידע איניש בנפשיה שגם לאחר שיעושה לו רב עומד ומתלבט אם לשאול אצל הרב אודות ענין פלוני, או לדחות את השאלה וכו'.

ולכן, מצוה גדולה מדרכי המוסר להדגיש את הצורך לשאול אצל הרב בנוגע לכל ענינו, ואדרבה: דין קדימה — לשאלה אודות הענינים שמונח אצלו שהנהגתו באופן של עקמימות, או באופן גרוע מזה כו', וכן בנוגע לענינים שמסופק בהם, או בנוגע לענינים ששמע מפלוני שאין זה דבר הרצוי, או אפילו אם הבחין אצלו איזו תנועה של הסתייגות ("יענער האט א קרים געטאן מיטן נאז").

We ought to bring up something that even though the Mishnaic commentators may not bring it up, we all know it: even after nominating a mentor, we oftentimes question whether we must bring up every specific thing, or perhaps the question can wait.

And so, a great ethical principle teaches us how critical it is to ask the mentor about everything. In fact, precedence should be given to those matters about which you're fairly certain you're not behaving appropriately, or worse yet; then to matters about which you're doubtful, or things you have heard from others are not up to snuff ("someone turned up their nose").

TEXT 15

The Rebbe, Rabbi
Menachem Mendel
Schneerson, *Likutei
Sichot* 29, p. 248

ומה גם שעצם הידיעה שמזמן לזמן יצטרך לתת
"דין וחשבון" לבשר ודם, תפעל אצלו להיטיב
את הנהגתו, ולהוסיף בכל ענייני טוב וקדושה.

The very knowledge that one will
occasionally be held accountable to
another human being will automatically
improve behavior and motivate them to
increase all positive, holy activity.



The Torah's attitude toward how we should view ourselves includes knowing that we cannot figure it all out on our own.

KEY POINTS

1. The story of a slave seeking redemption in our *parshah* is also the story of a person in spiritual decline.
2. The cause of this spiritual decline is forgetting one's Father in Heaven—G-d.
3. Every Jew possesses an innate and suprarational commitment to G-d deep in their soul. The only way it can be “forgotten” is when it is repeatedly quashed by neglect or overindulgence in materialism.
4. Regardless, this innate commitment will eventually come out.
5. As subjective beings inherently incapable of making honest assessments and decisions about and for ourselves, every person must appoint a mentor for themselves.

