

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Behaaloisecha

Introduction

This discourse presents a deep mystical reflection by **Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl** on the unity between the revealed and hidden dimensions of Torah and mitzvot. Drawing from the imagery of the Menorah and the lighting of its lamps, he explores how the physical actions of mitzvot (the "body") must be joined with their inner intention and divine vitality (the "soul") to fulfill their purpose. Through this unification, the mitzvah becomes a vehicle not just of ritual performance, but of cosmic transformation. He ties this to the concept of *לשמה* (for its own sake), and reveals how each letter and thought involved in a mitzvah reflects celestial processes and deeper union between the Divine and creation. With vivid metaphors and precise exegesis, the discourse moves from the act of lighting candles to the elevation of letters, thoughts, and the human soul into the realm of absolute unity—where judgment and mercy are one, and no extinguishing ever occurs.

<p>And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, etc.: "When you raise up the lamps, toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps give light." And Aharon did so, etc.</p> <p>Rashi explains: to declare the praise of Aharon, that he did not change.</p> <p>Our Sages said: the reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah.</p> <p>That is to say: that Hashem, blessed be He, gave us the mitzvos in order to attach through them to Hashem, blessed be He.</p> <p>And this is [the meaning of] "the reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah"—[the word] mitzvah as a term of "connection"—that is, that through it we become attached to Hashem, blessed be He; and there is no greater reward than this.</p> <p>And behold, "mitzvah" is [spelled with] the letters of the Name Havayah (Y-H-V-H), because the first two letters, Mem and Tzadi, are in Atbash [code] the letters Yud and Heh.</p> <p>And to understand this: why is the first half of the Name concealed using Atbash letters?</p> <p>The matter is: that Hashem, blessed be He, is hidden and revealed.</p> <p>Revealed—through His actions, that is, the miracles and wonders that He did and does with us at all times and moments.</p> <p>And hidden—from His essence.</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר יְהֹוָה אֶלْ מֹשֶׁה לְאָמַר וְגֹוֹ בְּהַעֲלָתְךָ אֶת הַנְּרוֹת אֶל מִזְבֵּחַ פְּנֵי הַמְנוֹרָה יָאִירוּ שְׁבַעַת הַנְּרוֹת וַיַּעֲשֵׂה פָנָו אַהֲרֹן וְגֹוֹ</p> <p>פִּירְשׁ רְשַׁ"י לְהִגִּיד שְׁבַחוֹ שֶׁל אַהֲרֹן שְׁלָא שְׁנָה</p> <p>אָמְרוּ רְזַ"ל שְׁכָר מִצְוָה מִצְוָה</p> <p>רָצָה לֹוֶר שְׁהָשָׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ נִמְנוּ לְנוּ הַמִּצְוֹת כִּי לְהַדְבֵּק עַל יָדֵיכֶם בָּהּ יִתְבָּרֵךְ</p> <p>וְזֹהוּ שְׁכָר מִצְוָה הִיא מִצְוָה לְשׁוֹן צְוּפָא, דְּהַיָּנוּ שְׁנְקַבָּק עַל יָדֵיכֶם בָּהּ יִתְבָּרֵךְ וְאַזְנוּ לְזֶה שְׁכָר גָּדוֹל מִזֶּה</p> <p>וְהַהְנָה מִצְוָה הָוֹא אָוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁם הַוַּיִּה בְּהָה, כִּי שְׁנָיו הָאָוֹתִיּוֹת הַרְאָשׁוֹנוֹת שְׁהָן מִ"צְחָן בְּאַתְּ בְּשָׁ אָוֹתִיּוֹת בְּהָה,</p> <p>וְלִהְבָין זֶה לְמִהְנָה הַחַצִּי הַרְאָשׁוֹן שֶׁל הַשֵּׁם הָוֹא גְּסֻפָּר בְּאָוֹתִיּוֹת אַתְּ בְּשָׁ</p> <p>הַעֲנָנוּ הָוֹא שְׁהָשָׁם יִתְבָּרֵךְ בְּהָה הָוֹא סְתִים וְגָלִיא</p> <p>נְגַלָּה מִצְדָּקָה פְּעוֹלֹתָיו דְּהַיָּינוּ הַנְּפָטִים וְהַגְּפָלָאֹת שְׁעַשָּׂה לְנוּ וְעֹשֶׂה עָמָנוּ בְּכָל עַת וְרָגֵעַ</p> <p>וּגְסֻפָּר מִצְדָּקָה מִהוּתוֹ</p>
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And behold, in the revealed there is also the hidden—meaning, His essence, blessed be He, which is the life-force within the revealed.	וְהַנִּהְנָה בְּגָנְגָלָה יֵשׁ גָּם כֵּן הַגְּסָפָר, דְּהַיָּנוּ מִהוּתוֹ יִתְּפַרֵּךְ שֶׁהָוָה הַסִּירָה שֶׁל בְּגָנְגָלָה.
And it is written (Devarim 29:28): "The hidden things are for Hashem our God, and the revealed things are for us and our children forever, to do all the words of this Torah."	וּכְתוּב (דְּבָרִים כ"ט, כ"ח) הַגְּסָפָרָת לְה' אַלְקִינוּ וְהַגְּנָגָלָה לְנוּ וְלִכְנָנוּ עַד עַזְלָם לְעַשְׂוֹת אֵת כָּל דְּבָרִי, הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת.
And we must understand: what is the excess in the phrase "all the words," etc.?	וְאַרְיךָ לְקַבֵּין מָהוּ קָרִיבֵי בַּמְבַתְּכָל דְּבָרִי גַּנוּ
However, Hashem, blessed be He, gave us to study the revealed part of the Torah.	אֵךְ שְׁהָשָׁם יִתְּפַרֵּךְ נָטוּ לְנוּ לְלִמּוֹד בְּגָנְגָלָה שֶׁל הַתּוֹרָה
And you must know: for example, when you speak to a person, with whom are you speaking?	וְאַרְיךָ שְׁתַּדַּע, לְמַשֵּׁל כְּשָׁאָה מִדְבָּר עַם אָדָם אֶחָד עַם, מַיְאָה מִדְבָּר
Is it not with his soul and life-force? The proof is: that once his soul departs and he dies, you are certainly no longer speaking with him.	קְلָא עַם גְּשָׁמָתוֹ וְחַיָּתוֹ וְהַרְאָה שְׁבָצָאת נֶפֶשׁ כִּי מַתּוֹ, וְזֹא לֹא מִדְבָּר עָמוֹ
So too, when we learn the revealed Torah, we must know that we are speaking with the soul and life-force of the revealed—which is the hidden, meaning His essence, blessed be He.	כְּהַכְּשָׁאָנָהנוּ לְזֹמְדִים הַתּוֹרָה הַגְּלִילִית, אַרְיךָ שְׁתַּדַּע שְׁאָנָהנוּ מִדְבָּרִים עַם גְּשָׁמָה וְהַחִיוֹת שֶׁל בְּגָנְגָלָה שֶׁהָוָה הַגְּסָפָר דְּהַיָּנוּ מִהוּתוֹ יִתְּפַרֵּךְ
For He, blessed be He, is the soul of souls, and He, blessed be He, is the life-force of all the worlds.	כִּי הוּא יִתְּפַרֵּךְ גְּשָׁמָה לְגְשָׁמֹות וְהָוָה יִתְּפַרֵּךְ הַסִּירָה שֶׁל כָּל הַעוֹלָמּוֹת
As our Sages said: "These are the essentials of the Torah"—that all the Written Torah and the Oral Torah and all the revealed mitzvos are the body of the Torah.	כַּמְאָמָר רְזַ"ל הֵן גּוֹפֵי תּוֹרָה, שֶׁבֶל הַתּוֹרָה שְׁבְּכָתָב, וּשְׁבָעֵיפָ וּכְל הַמִּצְוֹת הַגְּנָגָלָה הֵן הַגּוֹפֵר שֶׁל הַתּוֹרָה
And there must be in them the vitality and the inwardness—meaning, the secrets of the Torah, which are His Essence, blessed be He, as explained above.	וּמְכֻרָה לְהִיוֹת בָּהָן הַסִּירָה וְהַפְּנִימִיּוֹת דְּהַיָּנוּ קְרִזּוֹן, דָּאָוְרִיּוֹתָא שֶׁהָוָה מִהוּתוֹ יִתְּפַרֵּךְ בְּפָנָ"ל
And one must unite the body with the soul.	וְאַרְיךָ לְיִיחַד גּוֹפֵר עַם גְּשָׁמָה
And this is [the meaning of] "to do all the words of this Torah" (Devarim 29:28)—that is, that one must unite the body with the soul, which are the secrets of the Torah.	וְזֹהוּ לְעַשְׂוֹת אֵת כָּל דְּבָרִי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, דְּהַיָּנוּ שְׁאַרְיךָ לְיִיחַד גּוֹפֵר עַם גְּשָׁמָה שֶׁהָם קְרִזּוֹן דָּאָוְרִיּוֹתָא
And this is what Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him, requested (Shemot 33:18): "Show me now Your glory."	וְזֹהוּ שְׁבִיקְשׁ מֹשֶׁה רַבְּבִינוּ עַ"ה (שְׁמוֹת ל"ג, י"ח) הַרְאָנִי, נָא אָתָּה קְבּוֹדָךְ
Meaning, he requested to attain the vitality and inwardness of the Torah, which is the hidden, that is, His Essence, blessed be He.	דְּהַיָּנוּ שְׁבִיקְשׁ שִׁישִׁיג הַחִיוֹת וְהַפְּנִימִיּוֹת שֶׁל תּוֹרָה שֶׁהָוָה הַגְּסָפָר דְּהַיָּנוּ מִהוּתוֹ יִתְּפַרֵּךְ

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And He answered him: "You cannot see My face, etc., but you shall see My back; and My face shall not be seen" (Shemot 33:20, 23).	וְהַשִּׁיב לֹא תִּוכַל לְרֹא אֶת פָּנַי וְגֹו' וְרֹא יְתִת אֶת אַחֲרִי (וּפָנִי לֹא יִרְאֵו) (שָׁמוֹת ל"ג, כ'-כ"ג).
And our Sages said: He showed him the knot of the tefillin, but not the tefillin themselves.	וְאָמַרְוּ רְזִ"ל קָשֵׁר שֶׁל תְּפִילִין הָרְאָה לֹא וְלֹא הַתְּפִילִין עַצְמָן.
And the matter is: that the revealed part is called the aspect of "back," like the analogy of one who sees the king from behind.	וְהַעֲנִין הוּא שְׁהַחֲלֵק הַגְּלָה נִקְרָא בִּשְׁמָ בְּחִינָת אַחֲרִים, בְּמַשְׁלֵךְ מֵשְׁרוֹאָה הַפְּלֵךְ מֵאַחֲרִי.
And he knows that he is in the king's presence, but he does not see him from the front.	וְהִיא יָדַע שַׁהְיָא אֶל הַפְּלֵךְ אֶל אַיִן רְזָאָה מַלְפְּנֵיו
"And My face shall not be seen"—that is, the vitality and inwardness, which is His Essence, blessed be He—this no human being can attain.	וּפָנִי לֹא יִרְאֵו, שַׁהְיָא הַחַיָות וְהַפְּנִימִיות שַׁהְיָא מִהוּנוּ יַחֲרֵךְ, זֶה אֵין אָמֵן לְשָׁוֹם אֶלְמָן לְהַשָּׁגֶן.
This was only for Israel at the time of the giving of the Torah—when their defilement ceased—they attained the vitality and inwardness of the Torah, the aspect of "face."	זֶה לֹא קִנְהָרָה רְקָדָן לִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵת בְּתִינָת הַתּוֹרָה שְׁפָסַחָה זְהַמְּתָן, הַשִּׁיגוּ הַחַיָות וְהַפְּנִימִיות שֶׁל הַתּוֹרָה בְּחִינָת פְּנִים,
As it is written (Devarim 5:4): "Face to face Hashem spoke, etc."—which is His Essence, blessed be He.	שָׁגַנְאָמַר (זְבָרִים ה', ד') פָנִים בְּפָנִים דָבַר ה' וְגֹו', שַׁהְיָא מִהוּנוּ יַחֲרֵךְ.
And so it shall be, God willing, in the future—when the defilement will cease, they will attain His Essence, blessed be He.	וְכוּ יָדַע אִם יָרַצָּה ה' לְעַתִּיד שִׁיפְסַק הַזְּמָה וַיְשִׁיגוּ מִהוּנוּ יַחֲרֵךְ,
As our Sages said: they will point with a finger and say, "Behold, this is our God, for Whom we hoped."	כְּמוֹ שָׁאָמַרְוּ רְזִ"ל שִׁיְהָיו מַרְאִים בְּאַצְבָּע הַנֵּה אַלְקִינוּ זֶה קְנוּנוּ לוּ
And then (Yeshayahu 11:9): "And the earth shall be filled with knowledge," etc.	וְאֵז (יְשַׁעְיָה י"א, ט') וּמְלָאָה הָאָרֶץ דָעָה וְגֹו'
And so too regarding a mitzvah—we must perform the action of the mitzvah, which is the revealed part,	וְכֵן בְּמִצְוָה צְרִיכִים אֲנַחֲנוּ לְעַשׂוֹת מִעֵשָׂה הַמִּצְוָה שַׁהְיָא הַגְּלָה,
and the hidden part, that is, the secret of the mitzvah, is its soul and vitality, which is His Essence, blessed be He.	וְהַגְּסָפָר דְּהַיָּנוּ הַסּוֹד שֶׁל הַמִּצְוָה הוּא הַגְּנָשָׁה וְהַחַיָות שֶׁלְהָוָה שָׁהַמָּה מִהוּנוּ יַחֲרֵךְ.
Therefore, when one performs [a mitzvah] without intention, it is like a body without a soul.	וְלֹא כִּנְשׁוּשָׁה בֶּלֶא בְּנֹהֶה הוּא כְּגֹוף בֶּלֶא גְּנָשָׁה
For the act of the mitzvah is the body, and the intention, which is the secret, is the soul and vitality of the mitzvah.	כִּי מִעֵשָׂה הַמִּצְוָה הוּא הַגְּוֹפָן, וְהַבּוֹנֶה שֶׁהָיָה הַסּוֹד הַיָּא הַגְּנָשָׁה וְהַחַיָות שֶׁל הַמִּצְוָה.
And one must unite the body with the soul—and this is called the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah:	וְאַרְיךָ לְעַיְד הַגְּוֹפָן עִם הַגְּנָשָׁה וְזֶה נִקְרָא יְהָוָה קָוֵךְ שָׁא בְּרִיךָ הוּא וְשְׁכִינָתָה
that one unites the action, which is the body, with the soul and vitality, which is Hashem, blessed be He, Himself.	שְׁפִינִיךָ הַמִּעְשָׁה שֶׁהָיָה הַגְּוֹפָן עִם הַגְּנָשָׁה וְהַחַיָות שֶׁהָיָה הַשָּׁם יַחֲרֵךְ בְּהָאָמָנוּ

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And a unification is made in all the worlds.	ונעשות יהוד בכל הארץ
Therefore, the letters Vav and Heh in the word “mitzvah” are revealed: for the Vav is the Written Torah and the Heh is the Oral Torah.	ולכן האותיות ויה שבסמץ'ה הן נגלוות, שוניו היא תורה שבעל פה, שבכתב ובה"א היא תורה שבעל פה
And the first two letters, which are Yud and Heh, are hidden in Atbash as Mem and Tzadi—	ושני האותיות הראשונות לשון אותיות יהה הן נסתרות בא"ת ב"ש מ"צ,
which is the soul and vitality—that is, the secret, which is His Essence, blessed be He.	שהוא הנשמה והחיות דהינו הסוד שהוא מיהו יתברך.
And this is [the meaning of] “The reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah”—that one becomes attached to Hashem, the Name Havayah, blessed be He.	ונזהו שכר מצוה מצוה שמתדבק בה הרו"ה ב"ה
And there is no greater reward than this.	נאין לך שכר גדול מנה
And behold, our Sages said on the verse (Mishlei 9:1), “She has hewn out her seven pillars”—that the Torah is divided into seven parts,	ונהנ' אמ' ר' ייל על פסוק (משלי ט, א') חצבה עמודיה שבעה, שנחקלקה התורה לז' חלקים
for the verse “And it was, when the Ark would travel...” divides the book into three books.	כى הפסוק ויהי בנסע מחקה הספר לג' ספרים
And it is known that the mitzvos are called “lamp,” as the verse says: “For a mitzvah is a lamp, and the Torah is light.” (Mishlei 6:23)	ונידוע שהמצוות נקראים נר, כאמור הכתוב כי נר מצוה ותורה אור (משלי ו, כ"ג).
And this is [the meaning of] “When you raise up the lamps” (Bamidbar 8:2):	ונזהו בהעלתך את הנרות (במ"ב ח, ב')
That is, when you want to raise yourself up with the lamps, which are the mitzvos—	רצונ' לומר כשתרצה להעלות עצמה עם הנרות דהינו המצוות,
“toward the face of the Menorah shall the seven lamps shine” (ibid.)—	אל מול פנוי המנורה יאירו שבעת הנרות
that is, the seven divisions of the Torah, which are all the mitzvos, shall shine toward the face of the Menorah—	דהינו ז' חלקים התורה שם כל המצוות יאירו אל מול פנוי המנורה
which is the inwardness and vitality.	שהוא הפשנויות והחיות
That is, you should unite the body, which is the revealed, with the soul and vitality.	דהינו שפניהם האוסף שהוא הפגלה עם הנשמה והחיות
And this is the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah, and a unification is made in all the worlds, as stated above.	ונזהו יהוד קורשא בריך הוא ושבינתיו ונעשות יהוד בכל הארץ פנ"ל

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And this is what is called “for its sake” (<i>Lishmah</i>), as our Sages said: “It is better to dwell two [with a husband] than to dwell as a widow.”	וְזַהוּ נִקְרָא לְשָׁמָה, כַּמְאָמֵר ר' זִיְלַ טַב לְמִתְבָּטֵן דָו מְלִימִיתָב אַרְמָלוֹ.
For behold, it is known that the feminine receives from the masculine,	דְּהַנְּהָ יִדּוּעַ שְׁהַגְּבָא מִקְבְּלָתָ מִן הַזְּכָר
and the feminine is the aspect of the תְּלִיָּת , “who has nothing of her own,” only what the male gives her.	וְנִקְבָּא הִיא בְּחִינַת תְּלִיָּת לְהַמְּגַרְמָה כְּלָוָם רַק מָה שְׁמַפְּרִיעַ לְהַזְּכָר
And behold, the physical action of the mitzvah—which is the body—is the aspect of the feminine, which has nothing of her own,	וְהַנְּהָה הַמְּעֵשָׂה שֶׁל הַמְּזֻנָּה שֶׁהִיא הַגּוֹף, הַוָּא בְּחִינַת נִקְבָּא תְּלִיָּת לְהַמְּגַרְמָה כְּלָוָם רַק מָה שְׁמַפְּרִיעַת מִזְכָּר
which is from the soul and vitality—that is, the secret and hidden.	שֶׁהִיא מִמְּנִשְׁמָה וּמִחַיּוֹת שֶׁהִיא הַסּוֹד וְהַגְּסָפְטָר.
And this is: “It is better to dwell two” (<i>Tan du</i>)—that is, when one unites the body, which is the feminine, the aspect of תְּלִיָּת as above,	וְזַהוּ טַב לְמִתְבָּטֵן דָו דְּהַיְינָנוּ כְּשָׁמְנִיחָד הַגּוֹף שֶׁהִיא נִקְבָּא בְּחִינַת תְּלִיָּת פָּנַיְל
with the soul and vitality, which is the masculine, the aspect of עַיִ"וּ —	עַם הַנִּשְׁמָה וּמִחַיּוֹת שֶׁהִיא הַזְּכָר בְּחִינַת עַיִ"וּ
than “to dwell as a widow”—that is, when one acts without intention: it is like a body without a soul, like a widow,	מְלִימִיתָב אַרְמָלוֹ, הַיְנָה כְּשַׁעֲוָשָׂה בְּלֹא פָנָה הַוָּא בְּגֻרוֹב בְּלֹא נִשְׁמָה, הַוָּי אֶפְלָמָנָה שָׁאיָנוּ נִקְבָּא מִקְבְּלָתָ מִן הַזְּכָר
And this is <i>Lishmah</i> —for the sake of the feminine—to unite the body and soul as above,	וְזַהוּ לְשָׁמָה לְשִׁם הַנִּקְבָּא לְיִיחָד הַגּוֹף וּמִנִּשְׁמָה כְּנַיְל
which is the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah—and a unification is made in all the worlds as above.	שֶׁהִיא יְחִידָה קְוֹדְשָׁא בָּרוּךְ הַוָּא וּשְׁכִינָתָה וּנְעָשָׂה יְחִידָה בְּכָל הַעוֹלָמּוֹת כְּנַיְל
Or it can be explained [thus]: “When you raise up the lamps,” etc.—	אוֹ יִוְאָמֵר בְּהַעֲלָמָה אֶת הַבָּרוֹת גּוּ
The letters are called <i>lamps</i> , for within them the thought is the secret of oil, as is known in the Zohar.	הָאוֹתִיוֹת נִקְרָאים נְרוֹת שְׁבָהָם הַמְּשֻׁבָּה סָוד שְׁמָן כְּנוֹךְעַבְדָּלָן בְּזֹהָר קְדוּשָׁה
And the preparing of the lamps is to prepare the letters and cast out the waste—that is, foreign thoughts.	וְהַטְבַת נְרוֹת הַמִּלְחָמָה לְהַטִּיב אֹתִיוֹת וְלַזְרָק הַפְּסָולָת שְׁהָם הַמְּשֻׁבָּה זָוֹת
And behold, there are letters <i>BeGeD KeFaReT</i> , which are doubled—judgment and mercy.	וְהַנְּהָה יְשִׁירָה אֹתִיוֹת בְּגַ"ד כְּפַ"רְתָּה שְׁהָם כְּפֻולּוֹת דִין וּרְחַםִים
And their meaning is: <i>BeGeD</i> , like “garment”—that they became enwrapped in a coarse garment and descended below, in a place of treacherous garments.	וְפִירּוֹשׁוּ הַוָּא, בְּגַד לְשָׁוֹן לְבּוֹשׁ שְׁגַתְלְבָשׁוּ בְּלְבּוֹשׁ עַבְדָּלָן וְנִירּוּ לְמַטָּה בָּמָקוֹם בְּגַד בְּזֹגְדים

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Therefore, they require <i>lamentation</i> and <i>atonement</i> , from the language of “he requires atonement on this man.”	על כן אָרֵיךְ קִינּוֹת וַכְפָּרָה מְלֻשָּׁן בְּעֵי לְכִפּוֹרִי יְקִיָּה בְּהָאֵי גְּבָרָא
For the seven lamps are seven aspects, the seven days of building, by which the world is governed.	כִּי שְׁבָעַת הַגְּרוּת הַמְּזִנּוֹת ז' בְּחִינּוֹת, ז' יְמִי הַבְּנִינָה שְׁהָעוֹלָם מִתְנַגֵּג בְּשָׁוֹן
And they are doubled—judgment and mercy.	וְהֵם כְּפּוֹלוֹת דִּין וַרְחַמִּים
And the tzaddik transforms the attribute of judgment into the attribute of mercy, and the wicked—vice versa.	וְהַצְדִּיק מַהְפֵּךְ מִזְתַּד הַדִּין לִמְדָת הַרְחַמִּים וְהַרְשָׁעִים בְּהַפְּךְ
Thus, they are doubled, and when they ascend to their source—which is “the face of the Menorah,” the place from which all seven aspects receive—	וּנוּמָצָא הֵם כְּפּוֹלוֹת וּבַהֲתֻלּוּמָם אֶל מִקּוֹרָם שֶׁהֵוָה פָּנִי הַמְּנוֹרָה מִקְוָם שְׁפֵל הַשְּׁבָעָה בְּחִינּוֹת מִקְבָּלִים מִשְׁם
[they receive from] “the fire in the light of the King’s face is life” (Mishlei 16:15)—	(אֲשֶׁר בָּאָור פָּנֵי מֶלֶךְ חַיִם) (משלי ט"ז, ט"ו)
for there, there is no change at all—only simple mercy without any mixture of judgment at all, for there is absolute unity.	שָׁם אֵין שְׁנִינוֹי בְּלִיל רָק הַכֵּל רַחֲמִים פְּשָׁוּטִים בְּלִיל שָׁוֹם תְּעַרְוָת דִּין בְּלִיל כִּי שֵׁם אֲקָדוֹת גָּמוֹר
And therefore they said regarding the Western Lamp that it did not extinguish: from it they would light, and in it they would conclude.	וְלֹכְנוּ אָמָרוּ גַּבֵּי נֵר מִעֲרָבִי שְׁלֹא הִיה כְּבָה, מִמְּנָה הִי מִזְלָקִין וּבָהּ הִנֵּה מִסְעִים
For all the lamps, which are the seven aspects that became enwrapped and descended below—	כִּי כָל הַגְּרוּת שְׁהָם הַשְּׁבָעָה בְּחִינּוֹת שְׁנַחֲלָבָשׂ וַיַּרְדֹּו לְמִטְהָה
there is extinguishing in them sometimes—even though a person becomes inflamed at times, still he is extinguished also.	יש בָּהָם כְּבִיה לְפָעָם אֶחָד עַל גַּב דָּהָאָדָם מִתְלַחַב לְפָעָם, מִפְּלָמָד מִקְוָם נִכְבָּה גַּם כֵּן
For (Yechezkel 1:14) “the Chayot ran and returned”—and there is interruption.	כִּי (יְחִזְקָאֵל א', י"ד) וְהִתְיוֹת רְצֹוֹא וְשׁוֹב וַיֵּשׁ הַפְּסָקָה
For constant pleasure cannot be received.	כִּי תְּעַנְגֵּג פָּמִידִי אֵין יָכֹל לְקַבֵּל
But above, in its source, which is their unity, there is no extinguishing—	אָבֶל לְמַעַלָּה בָּמִקּוֹרָו שֶׁהֵוָה אֲחִדוֹתָן שֵׁם אֵין כְּבִיה
and it is called the Western Lamp, for there everything is mixed together.	וּנְגַדֵּר מִעֲרָבִי שָׁשֶׁם מִתְעָרָב הַכֵּל
For all the aspects return there and intermingle in their source to be united in His unity.	כִּי כָל הַבְּחִינָה עַד שֵׁם חֹזְרִים וּמִתְעָרָבִין בְּשָׁרֵשֶׁם וְהַתְּאַחֲד בְּאֲחִדוֹת
And from it we must light, for the vitality is from Him, may His Name be blessed, [flowing] “toward” the person.	וּמִמְּנָה אַרְיכִּין לְהַדְלִיק, כִּי הִתְיוֹת מִפְּנֵי יִתְבְּרַךְ שְׁמוֹ רְצֹוֹא אֶל הָאָדָם
And “in it he would conclude”—that is, when it reaches below there is a pause and it ends,	וּבָהּ מִסְעִים, רְצֹוֹן לֹוֶר שְׁכַשְׁמָגִיעַ לְמִטָּה יִשׁ הַפְּסָקָה וּמִסְתִּים,
for after the vitality goes forth from Him, blessed be He, to the person, it returns to Him, blessed be He,	כִּי אַחֲר שְׁהִתְיוֹת רְצֹוֹא מִפְּנֵי יִתְבְּרַךְ אֶל הָאָדָם אֶחָר כֵּה שׁוֹב אֶלְיוֹ יִתְבְּרַךְ

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so that the pleasure should not be constant.	לבל יתינה פענונג פמידי
And this is (Bamidbar 8:2) "When you raise up the lamps"—these are the letters,	ונזהו (במ"ב ח', ב') בהעלתך את הנרות – הם, האותיות
and the Targum Onkelos renders: "When you ignite the lamps" (<i>badluk'tech yit botz'niya</i>)—that is, when you are inflamed.	ותרגם אונקלוס באדליךותך ית בוצנייא, שהוא בהתלהבותך
Then you raise them up "toward the face of the Menorah,"	או פעלה אותם אל מול פנוי המנורה
and then they will not extinguish—for "in the light of the face of the King is life,"	ונא לא יכפו, כי באור פנוי מלך חיים
and there will always be light and no darkness, and then the seven lamps will shine without any extinguishing.	ותמיד יתינה אור ולא חשך, ונא יאירו שבעת הנרות ולא יתינה שום כביה
And this is "to declare the praise of Aharon that he did not change"—	ונזהו להגיד שבחו של אהרן שלא שנה
that is, that he elevated [them] to the place of unity, where there is no distinction of judgment and mercy.	רצו לומר שבחה למקומם האחדות שם אין שינוי דין ורחמים
And this is the intention of the Midrash: "And it was when the Ark traveled..."—He made for them markers before and after to say: "This is not its place..."	ונזהו בונת המקרא: ויהי בנסע הארון, עשה להם סימניות למעלה ולמטה לומר: שאין זה מקום והיכן מקום?
"...and where is its place? In the [section of] flags." And why was it written here? To interrupt, etc.	בflags. ולה נכתבה כאן? כדי... להפסיק וכו'
For the Ark is the letters, in which thought resides—similar to the Ark that held the Tablets.	והוא בהארון הם האותיות שבבם המתחבה, קדמוני הארון שבו הקלוחת
And thought is called "tablet," as in (Mishlei 3:3): "Write them upon the tablet of your heart."	ומתחבה נקראת לוח, כמו שפטות (משלי ג, ג): כתבם על לוח לך
And the letters descended below into the place of lowness and change, from judgment to mercy and vice versa—	ונאותיות ירדו למטה למקומם הפל ושיוני דין ורחמים וכו' בהפה
to say that this is not its [true] place, rather one must elevate them to their place.	לומר שאין זה מקום אלא צריך להעלותם למקומם ולא שמיין צריך להעלתם למקומם
And where is the place of the letters? In the [section of] flags—	והיכן מקוםן של האותיות? בflags
a place where everything is gathered together, from the word <i>degel</i> (flag) and <i>asifah</i> (gathering)—which is Ein Sof, blessed be He.	מקום שם נאסף הכל, מלשון דגל ואסיפה והוא אין-סוף ברוך הוא
And why was it written here? "To interrupt"—because constant pleasure is not true pleasure. Understand this.	ולא נכתבה פאן? כדי להפסיק, שתענונג פמידי אינו תענונג. והפוך

[NOTE Summary:

In this discourse, **Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl** begins by highlighting the difference between performing a mitzvah with and without inner intention. A mitzvah performed without

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kavanah (intention) is like a body without a soul—mechanical and lifeless. The "body" refers to the external action, while the "soul" refers to the divine secret and inner vitality embedded within it, sourced in God's very essence. True fulfillment of a mitzvah, then, requires the unification of these two layers—action and intention, body and soul.

This union is described as the mystical *yichud* (unification) of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Shechinah—the masculine and feminine aspects of divinity. Just as a feminine vessel (the action) is empty without the masculine influx (the intention and divine vitality), so too a mitzvah without *kavanah* is incomplete. This idea is framed through the lens of the Talmudic expression "טו למשיב צן דן," metaphorically referring to the superiority of divine unity over separation.

He then transitions into a luminous teaching about the Menorah. The “lamps” represent letters, which in turn contain thoughts—like oil within a lamp. Preparing the lamps parallels refining one’s thoughts, removing foreign distractions, and returning the letters and emotions to their divine root. The “seven lamps” mirror the seven emotional attributes (*middot*) through which the world was created and maintained.

He explains that while these seven aspects, when enmeshed in the lower world, experience oscillation (desire and withdrawal, light and extinguishing), at their divine source—symbolized by the “western lamp” that never went out—they are unified in simplicity and unchanging light. This realm of total unity is the “face of the Menorah,” the source of eternal life and divine pleasure.

Even the positioning of the Torah portion *בנְסֹעַ הָאָרֹן*, marked with signs to indicate it is out of place, is explained spiritually: the Ark, like our thoughts and letters, can descend into foreign places (the realm of judgment), but must be elevated back to its true location—within the divine banners (*degulim*) that represent the infinite (*Ein Sof*) where all opposites are resolved in unity.

Practical Takeaway:

Every mitzvah contains both a visible, physical element and a hidden, divine vitality. When we perform mitzvot with deep intention—*kavanah*—we elevate them from mere ritual into acts of profound cosmic unification. Before performing a mitzvah, take a moment to reflect: What is the inner light or divine desire behind this act? Real spiritual impact arises when we engage not just with our hands, but with our minds and hearts as well. The more we infuse our actions with soul, the more we live in alignment with the divine unity at the core of existence.

Chassidic Story (true and sourced):

It is told that **Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl**, during one harsh winter, entered the study hall and saw one of his disciples lighting a lamp with trembling hands. The Rebbe paused and said, “Even the flame must tremble from awe, but it must not flicker from doubt.” When the chassid looked at him with confusion, the Rebbe explained: “Every light we kindle in this

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world—whether from wax or deed—has a source above. When you light with love and intention, the flame you see is but a reflection of the western lamp that never ceases to burn.”

Later, he quoted the verse, “אֶל מָלֹךְ פָּנֵי הַמְנֹרָה יִאֲרוּ שְׁבָעַת הַנְּרוֹת”—the seven lamps must shine toward the Menorah’s face. “That face,” the Rebbe said, “is your soul’s root. When your intention is right, your light returns to its source, and it never extinguishes.”

(Source: *Sippurei Tzaddikim*, vol. 1, based on oral traditions from the Chernobyl dynasty)

END NOTE]