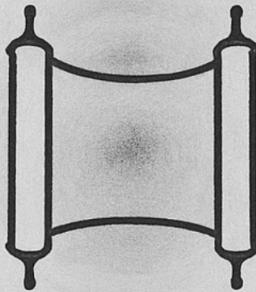


ב"ס

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl Me'or Einayim Parshas Ki Savo



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Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (1730–1797), known as the author of *Me'or Einayim*, was a prominent disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and a bridge between the Baal Shem Tov's teachings and the next generation of Chassidus. He served as the first Rebbe of the Chernobyl dynasty, later succeeded by his son, Rabbi Mordechai of Chernobyl. Rabbi Menachem Nachum was renowned for illuminating the inner dimensions of Torah with a unique blend of deep Kabbalistic insight and warm, practical guidance.

This discourse explores the profound spiritual role of Shabbos not merely as a day of physical rest, but as the very soul of creation, a divine intermediary that unites Israel with their Creator. Through the lens of the “two Shabbosos” the Supernal Shabbos and the earthly Shabbos Rabbi Menachem Nachum explains how true observance brings redemption, perfect unity with Hashem, and the completion of creation itself.

For Hashem you have declared today, and Hashem has declared you, etc. And it is brought in Tosasos in the name of the Midrash: three testify about each other the Holy One, blessed be He, the Sabbath, and Israel. Therefore we say on Shabbos at Minchah: “You are one...” and “Who is like Your people Israel...” “A day of rest and holiness...”

For it is known what is stated in the Talmud: if Israel would keep two Sabbaths, they would immediately be redeemed (Shabbos 118b). And to understand what these two Sabbaths are the matter is that it is known that for the sake of Israel the world was created, as it is said: “In the beginning, God created...” for the sake of Israel, who are called “the first of His crop” (Yirmiyahu 2:3).

For the entire intention of the Blessed Creator in creating the world was for Israel, that they should serve Him with complete service, with cleaving and great longing to the Root, which is the Blessed Creator. And through this they bring forth pleasure and longing in the Blessed Creator, so to speak that the Blessed Creator greatly delights in the deeds and service of those below more than in the hosts above.

As it is said: “Israel sustains their Father in Heaven” that they bring into Him, blessed be He, pleasure, so to speak. And all this is when they truly draw close to Him completely and are not separated from Him, blessed be He. Only, to understand the manner of cleaving and comprehension how it is possible, for behold the Blessed Creator is without end or limit, and man is limited and finite how can these two opposites draw close?

בְּיַהְיָה הַמְּמֻרְךָ הַיּוֹם, וְהִי הַמְּמֻרְךָ וְגֹוִי. וְהַבָּא בְּתוֹסֵף זַיִל בְּשֵׁם הַמְּדָרְשׁוֹ: ג' מַעֲדִים זֶה עַל זֶה הַקְדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, וִשְׁבָתָה, וִיְשְׁרָאֵל. וְלֹכֶד אָוֹמְרִים בְּשֵׁבֶת בְּמִנְחָה: “אַתָּה אֲחֵד” כּוֹ, “וְמֵעַמָּךְ יִשְׁרָאֵל” כּוֹ, “יּוֹם מִגּוֹתָה וְקִדּוֹשָׁה” כּוֹ.

דָנוֹדָע מַה שָׁאָמַרְוּ בְשָׁ"ס: אַלְמִלָּא שָׁמָרוּ יִשְׁרָאֵל שְׁתִי שְׁבָתּוֹת מִזְדִּיקָיו נְגַדְּלָיו. וְלֹכֶד מַה הִמְשֻׁתְּמִי שְׁבָתּוֹת, הַעֲנָנוֹן הָוָא כִּי נָזַע שְׁבָשְׁבֵיל יִשְׁרָאֵל נְגַדְּרָה הָעוֹלָם, כִּמוֹ שָׁנָאָמָר: “בְּרָא שְׁרָאֵלָם” וְגֹוִי בְּשֵׁבֶיל יִשְׁרָאֵל שְׁגָנְקָרָאִים רָאשִׁית פְּבָוֹאָתוֹ.

שֶׁלְכָל נְבָנָת הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרֵךְ קִנְתָּה בְּבִרְיָת הַעוֹלָם עֲבוֹרָה יִשְׁרָאֵל, שִׁיעַרְדוּהוּ עֲבוֹדָה תְּמִימָה, בְּדִקְכוֹתָה וּמִשְׁוֹקָה גְדוֹלָה לְשָׁרֶשׁ שַׁהְוָא הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרֵךְ. וְעַל זֶה זֶה מְולִידָם תְּעַנְגָּג וְמִשְׁוֹקָה בְּבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרֵךְ, בְּכִיכּוֹל שַׁהְבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרֵךְ מְתַעַגָּג מָאֵד מִמְעָשָׂה וּעֲבוֹדָת הַתְּחִתּוֹנִים יוֹתֵר מֵאַבָּא הַעֲלִיּוֹתִים.

כִּמוֹ שָׁנָאָמָר: “יִשְׁרָאֵל אַפְרָנִיסִים לְאַבְיכֶם שְׁבָשְׁמִים” שְׁמָכְנָנִיסִים בּוֹ יִתְבָּרֵךְ תְּעַנְגָּג, כְּבִיכּוֹל. וְכָל זֶה כְּשַׁאֲמָרְכִים אֶת עַצְמָם בְּאֶתְמָת גָּמָר וְאֵין גְּפָרִים מְמָנוּ וִתְבָרֵךְ. רַק לֹכֶד אֶפְנָה כְּדִקְכוֹת וְסְשָׂגָה אֲזֵד הוּא אָפְשָׁר, כִּי קְלוֹא הַבּוֹרָא יִתְבָּרֵךְ הוּא בְּלֹפִי בָּעֵל פְּכָלִית וְגּוֹבָל, וְהַאֲדָם הוּא בָּעֵל גְּבָיל וְתְכִילִת וְהַיאָךְ אָפְשָׁר לְשִׁנִּי הַפְּכִים לְהַתְּקִרְבָּה.

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

For this the Blessed Creator gave Israel the Sabbath, which is an intermediary between Israel and their Father in Heaven, and unites and binds them to the Blessed Creator for it contains two aspects resembling both Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He. As it is known, anything that is intermediate between two opposites must resemble both aspects. And it is known from what is stated in the Zohar that the Sabbath is the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, complete from all sides, for the Sabbath is the life-force of the upper world and the life-force of this world.

Which is the emanation of His blessed Glory, that descends and contracts into this seventh day, which is in this world. And the seventh day, which is called Shabbos for us, is like a body and garment for the Supernal Shabbos which is the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, as stated above.

And the aspect of the Supernal Shabbos is the soul of the entire world, which continually returns in a cycle during the six days; and the seventh day is Shabbos, wherein the Supernal Shabbos contracts into this day, and it is the life-force of the entire world.

Therefore it is said: "He shall surely be put to death," for when one desecrates the Shabbos and does not keep it, he removes the higher life-force the Supernal Shabbos, which is the soul of the world from the world, and is thus killing the world by removing its soul from it.

And the term "mechallel" is from the expression "ki yimotzei chalal" meaning a slain body which is an expression for the taking of a soul. Therefore his punishment is likewise, "He shall surely be put to death."

And through the Shabbos when they keep the Shabbos which is the aspect of two Sabbaths: the Supernal Shabbos and the Lower Shabbos, which is in the soul and life-force of His blessed Name's Glory, enclothed in the seventh day which is in time and limit, there is power for the Shabbos to be an intermediary between Israel and their Father in Heaven, to cleave to Him, blessed be He.

לזה נון הבונא יתברך לישראל את השבת, שהיא מומוצעת בין ישראל לאביהם שבשימים, ומאחרת ומקשרה אותם בבורא יתברך על ידי שיש ביה שני הפללים מתודמיין בין לישראל ובין לחקוזש ברוך הוא. וכן שפלו דבר המומוצע בין שני הפלים ארך להוה דומה לשתי הבחינות. וכן מה שאמר הוה: שבת שמא דךשא בריך הוא שלים מכל פטירין, שהשבת הוא חיota עולם העליון וחיות זה הקוון.

שהוא אצילות קבועו יתברך שפלו של ומתקצמצם בזה יום השביעי שהוא בזה העולם, והוא יום השביעי שנקררא שבת אצלנו הוא כמו גוף ולבוש ליום השבת עלאה דאייה. שמא דךשא בריך הוא כאמור לעיל

ובחינת שבת עלאה הוא נשמה כל הקוון, שהזיר חילקה תמיד בששת ימים, ביום השביעי הוא שבת, שהשבת עלאה מתקצמצם בזה היום, והוא חיota כל הקוון.

ועל כן נאמר: "מות יומת", כי בזה שהוא מחלל את השבת ואינו מקומו, מסלק החיה העליון שבת עלאה שהוא בבחינת נשמה הקוון מן הקוון, ונמצא הורג את הקוון שאלק נשמתו מפנו.

ולשון "מחלל" הוא מלשון: "כפי ימצא חלל" שהוא לשון נטילת נשמה. ועל כן עבשו גם כן ב: "מות יומת".

ועל ידי השבת שמקימים את השבת שהוא בבחינת שמי שבותות: שבת עלאה ושבת מטה, שהוא בנטף וחיות קבוע שמו יתברך המלוכש ביום הוה שהוא בזמן וגביול יש כה לשבת להיות ממייצע בין ישראל לאביהם שבשימים, לדקה בו יתברך.

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

Therefore our Sages said, regarding what is written (Bereishis 2:2): “And He finished on the seventh day...” what was the world lacking? Rest. Shabbos came, rest came; the work was completed and finished. To understand: rest is not considered work on the contrary, it is cessation from work. If so, for what purpose does the verse call it “work,” as it says there, “the work which He had done”?

But the truth is, as stated, that the Shabbos is the soul of the entire world and its hosts. And all the things that were created in the six days of Creation did not have their work completed with bodily and soulful garments so as to have a soul, until the arrival of Shabbos when the work was finished and completed, in body and soul, as the higher life-force from the Blessed Creator was bestowed upon all creatures. Then the creation reached its perfection and completion.

And this is the meaning of “If Israel would keep two Sabbaths” which, as stated above, is the aspect of the Supernal Shabbos, which is the light of His blessed Glory, the higher life-force, about which it is said “the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, is complete from all sides”; and the lower Shabbos, which is the actual seventh day in this world, in time they would immediately be redeemed.

For through this they would draw themselves very close to the Blessed Creator, and all the good would be separated from the evil in complete perfection, until Mashiach would come. For each person, according to how he keeps the Sabbaths, so is his closeness to the Blessed Creator. And if it is without completeness if the observance is not complete then there is no perfect completion to be redeemed.

But if there were complete observance, in the aspect of the two Sabbaths, in full perfection then the closeness would also be in complete perfection, until they would be redeemed. And thus it is said in the Zohar, that on Shabbos all angers are removed, and all sadness, and all judgments, and all difficult labors.

שעלכו אמרו רבינו זכרונם לברכה, על מה שכתוב בראשית ב', ב'): “זינכל ביום השביעי” וגו' מה היה קעולם חסר? מנוחה. בא שבת, בא מנוחה; בלילה וגmrה הפלאקה. להבין: הלא מנוחה לא לאקה יחשב והרי היא שבייתה מז הפלאקה. ואם כן, לאיזו בנה קורה? “זכחוב מלאקה, פמו שנאמר שם: “מלאקה אשר עשה”

אכל הנטה הוא פאמיר שהשפת הוא נשמת כל העולם וצבאותיו, וכל הקרים שנבראו בששת ימי בריאת לא נגmrה מלאקה בלבוש גופני ונפשי שייהי להם נשמה עד באתה שבת שאז קלטה וגmrה הפלאקה בגוף ונשמה, שהושפע בכל הנבראים החיות השלוין מהבזיא יתברך, ואז הוא שלמות הבריאה וגmrה

וזהו: “אל מלא שמריו ישראל שפי שבתות” שהוא פאמיר לעיל, בחייבת שבת עלייה, שהוא אור בזוז יתברך, היהת הצלון, שיעליו נאמר: “שמא זקנשא בריך הוא שלימוד כל טרין”; ושבת התקאה, שהוא הימים השבעי בפועל, הוא באה קעולם, בזמנן מיד קי גנאיין

שעל ידי זה קי מקרים את עצם מאד לבורא יתברך, ויתברר כל הטוב מן הרע בשלמות גמור, עד שיבוא מישת. כי כל אחד, כפי ששומר הוא השבתות כה היא קרתו לבורא יתברך. ואם הוא כל שלמות, שאין שמייתו שלמה לנו אין שלמות גמורה שייהי גנאיין

אכל אם קומה שמירה גמורה בחייבת שפי השבתות בשלמות קופה קרכבה גם כן בשלמות גמור, עד שקי נגאלים. וכן אמרו בזוהר, זבחתא מתנשי מכלחו רוגין, וכל עבות, וכל דין, וכל פולחן קשין

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

This is as it is written: “On the day that Hashem will give you rest from your sadness, and from your anger, and from your hard labor” (Yeshayahu 14:3). For since Shabbos is the perfection of all sides which is the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He in a place of perfection there is no deficiency, since through Shabbos comes the cleaving to the Blessed Creator, which is the intermediary; and since they cleave to the Blessed Creator, there is certainly no deficiency.

And on this they said: On Shabbos it should be as if all your work is done. For the need for work is because, if one does not do that work, something needed will be lacking. But on Shabbos, which is perfection, there is nothing lacking, and one does no work, for he is cleaving to perfection understand this.

Therefore they said: “And He rested and was refreshed,” and our Sages expounded: Once Shabbos came “woe” for the soul is lost. This is as stated in the Zohar above: once Shabbos arrives, the “woe” of the soul the aspect of ‘woe’ which implies lack and sadness is lost from the soul through Shabbos.

This is also what they said: “I have a good gift in My treasury, and its name is Shabbos; go and inform them.” And the term “inform them” implies connection, for it is known that through Shabbos they will have connection and bonding with the light of My great Name. Without it they could not draw close to Me, as it is two opposites, as stated.

But with the descent of the Supernal Shabbos the light of the glory of His blessed Name into this world, Israel can cleave to the Blessed Creator, in the light of the flow of His radiance, as He causes His Shechinah to rest upon them, since they are called “the portion of Hashem is His people.”

And they become with Him a perfect unity, blessed be His Name, and are called “one nation on earth,” and the Blessed Creator is called One, as it is said: “Hashem is One.” But to understand how it is possible that Israel are called “one” with the Name applied to Hashem, when He is One and there is no second to Him...

ה' הוא דכתיב: “בַּיּוֹם קִנְחָה לְךָ מַעֲצָבָה, וּמְרוֹגָזָה, וּמְעַבְּךָ הַקְּשָׁה” (ישעיהו י"ד, ג'). כי על ידי שבחת הוא שלימנו כל סתרינו זה הוא שמי דקונשא בריך הוא ובמקום שלימוט אין שום חפרון, מאחר שעיל ידי קשחת הוא הקשחות בבורא יתברך, שהוא האמצעי, ומחר שמות בבורא יתברך, פוזאי אין שום חפרון.

ועל זה אמרו: בישחת יהנה דומה לך כאלו כל מלאכתה עשויה. מצרך הלאכה הוא מתקמת שאם לא עיששה זאת הלאכה יהנה קסר אותו ורק נאכricht לו לעשות. אבל בשחת שהא שלימוט אין לו לעשות מלאכה, שאינו קסר כללום, שהוא דבוק בשלים, והכו

ולכן אמרו: “שבת וינפש”, וקרשו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה: בינו שבת ווי אבראה גבש. שהוא פאמיר בז'הר הינפר בעיל, שפינו שבת אבראה גנפש בחינתו “וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה מֹרֶה עַל חֶסְרוֹן וְעַצְיָהוּת, עַל לְשׁוֹן אֶת אָמֵר “זֶה”, רק שעיל ידי השבת נאבד ה “זֶה” מון גנפש

וזה גם בנו מה שאמרו: “מִתְנַהַּתְּ טוֹבָה יִשְׁלַׁחְ לִי בְּבִית גָּנִי, וְשַׁבְּתַ שָׁמָה לְךָ וְהַזְּדִיעַם”. ולשון “הַזְּדִיעַם” הוא לשון התהברית, כנ"ע, שעיל ידי השבת יהנה לקם התהברות והתקשרות באורי שמי הגדול. שבעלעדי לא קיו יוכלים להתקבר אצל, מאחר שהוא ב' הפקים, פאמיר.

אבל בהזורת השבת העליון אור שם כבודו יתברך באה העלם, יוכלים ישראל לדקה בבורא יתברך, באור שפעת אורו, שפושפיע בהם שכינתו, על ידי שם נקראיים “ חלק ה' עמו ”.

ונעשים עמו אחדות גמור, יתברך שם, ונקראיים “גוי אחד הארץ”, והבורא יתברך נקרא “אחד”, כמו שפנאמר: “ה אחד”. אבל להבין איך אפשרות נקבר שמי יהו ישן אל נקראיים “אחד” בשם האכונה לה יתברך, וכלו הוא אחד לאין שני לו...

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

For anything else is “one” only by contrast, as it has a “two.” But the truth is that when the Blessed Creator and Israel unite, they too are called “one” in His blessed Name, for when they unite and cleave to Him, there is bestowed and emanated into them an actual part of Him.

For the entirety of Israel, when cleaving to the Whole from which the parts flow, become truly one and this is the unification of His great Name. Only through this is He called One; not when they are separate, for then His Name is, so to speak, not complete.

As it is said (Shemos 17:16): “War for Hashem with Amalek from generation to generation,” which is the war with the evil inclination, called “the talebearer who separates the ruler” (Mishlei 16:28) who separates the Master of the World from His Shechinah that dwells below, so that His Name and His Throne are, so to speak, not complete.

As explained by us elsewhere at length. And through uniting with Him, blessed be He, they become with Him a complete One, and His Name becomes complete, through erasing the memory of Amalek which is overcoming the evil inclination.

For “one” equals thirteen, and two times “one” is twenty-six the numerical value of the Name Havayah, blessed be He. For when Israel are also called “one,” through uniting their parts in the Whole, it becomes “Hashem is One and His Name is One and Israel is One.” Through the two times “one” in Him and in Israel one unity is formed, which is the numerical value of the Name Havayah.

And all this is through keeping Shabbos properly, which brings Israel, as stated above. Therefore they said in Maseches Shabbos: “One who keeps Shabbos from desecrating it” do not read “from desecrating it” but “it is forgiven him,” for the essence of teshuvah is through keeping Shabbos.

For one cannot come to complete teshuvah except through Shabbos, which is the same letters as “teshuv” for it brings back and returns a person to the Blessed Creator. And one cannot come to Torah except through keeping Shabbos.

שכל אחד וולתו הוא “אחד” על ידי מה שיש לו “שנוי”. אבל קאמת הוא “אחד” כי הבורא יתברך וישראל כשםם מתחדדים בו יתברך נקראיים גם כן “אחד” בשמו יתברך, מאחר שכשםם נתחדדים ומודבקים אצלו נטע ונאצל בתוכם חילקו מפש

שכללות ישראל כשםם וקוברים לכל, שמשם נפשעים הפלחים נעשה “אחד” באמת. והוא יהוד טמו הגדל, דוקא על ידי זה, שאז דוקא נקראי הוא יתברך “אחד” לא כשםם נפרדים חס ושלום, שאו כביכול אין שמו שלם

כמו שנאמר (שמות י"ז, ט"ז): “מלקמה לה בעמלק מדור” שהיא מלכמת הימר הרע, שנקרה “נראן מפראיד אלוף” (מלכי ט"ז, כ"ח) מפראיד אלופו של עולם משכניתיה השוכן בתקותנים, שאין השם שלם ואין הפה נשלם כביכול

פמברא אצלו במקומ אחר באלה מזנה. ועל ידי שם מתחדדים בו יתברך נעשה עמו “אחד” גמור, ונעשה שמו שלם, על ידי שמוין זכר עמלק שהוא התגברות על הימר הרע

כ “אחד” עולה י"ג, ושני פעמים “אחד” הוא כ"ו, במספר שם הויה ברוך הוא. שעיל ידי ישראלי נקראיים גם כן “אחד” בהתחמד חילוקיהם בכל ונמצאה הוא “אחד” ושמו “אחד” וישראל “אחד”, שמקמת היב פעמים “אחד” שבו ובישראל נעשה אחדות אחד ומספר שם הויה ברוך הוא. והכו

וכל זה על ידי שמירת שבת כהכלכה, שambilאת ישראל, בזכור ליעיל. שלכן אמרו במקצת שבת: “שומר שבת מהלו” אל תקרי “מחללו” אלא “מחול לו”, שעקר התשובה הוא על ידי שמירת השבת

שאינו יכול לבוא לידי תשובה גמורה, אלא על ידי שבת שהוא אותיות “מושב” שהוא המקרקב ומושיב את האדם לבורא יתברך. ואינו יכול לבוא לידי תמורה גם כן, כי אם על ידי שמירת שבת

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

Therefore, before the giving of the Torah, they were commanded about Shabbos at Marah, so that afterwards they would be able to draw close to Him to receive His Torah. And it is also known that, according to all opinions, the Torah was given on Shabbos, for this reason that through it is the essence of the receiving of the Torah.

And so it is always: to make the Shabbos for their generations for through Shabbos one always merits Torah and teshuvah. Amen, netzach, selah, va'ed. Blessed is Hashem forever, amen and amen.

שָׁלֹכוּ, קְנָם נְתִינָת הַתּוֹרָה, שְׁבָתוֹ בְּמִרְאָה נְצִיטָיו, בְּכָדִי
שָׁאַחֲרֵה זוּ הָיָה בָּכוֹלִים לְהַתְּקַרְבָּה לוּ יְתַבְּרַךְ לְקַבֵּל תּוֹרָתוֹ.
וְגַם נְזַקֵּע שְׁלֹכוֹלְכּוֹל עַלְמָא בְּשַׁבָּת נְתִינָת הַתּוֹרָה, לְכַוּנָה זוּ
שְׁעַל יְהָה הָיָה עַקְרָב קָבְלָת הַתּוֹרָה.

וְכֹן הוּא פָמִיד: "לְעַשּׂוֹת אֶת הַשְּׁבָת לְדוֹרָתֶם" שְׁעַל יְהָיָה
הַשְּׁבָת זֹכָה לְתּוֹרָה וּמִשּׁוֹבֶה פָמִיד. אָמֵן נְצָח סְלָה וְעַד.
בָּרוּךְ הָיָה לְעוֹלָם, אָמֵן וְאָמֵן.

[NOTE Summary]

The maamar opens with the teaching that three testify about one another: Hashem, Shabbos, and Israel. Shabbos serves as the bridge between finite man and the infinite Creator, containing qualities that connect to both. Citing the Zohar's description of Shabbos as "the Name of Hashem, complete from all sides," Rabbi Menachem Nachum explains that the seventh day draws the soul of creation from the higher worlds into our physical reality.

Desecrating Shabbos removes this life-force, while keeping it unites Israel with their Father in Heaven. The "two Shabbosos" the higher (spiritual) and the lower (physical) together bring the world to perfection and redemption. When kept completely, they separate good from evil fully, remove all judgments and sadness, and bring closeness to Hashem that leaves no spiritual lack.

Shabbos is described as a "good gift" that enables attachment to the light of Hashem's great Name, an attachment otherwise impossible due to the gulf between Creator and creation. Through Shabbos, Israel and Hashem unite as "one," completing His Name and Throne by overcoming Amalek the force of separation. The unity of "Hashem is One and His Name is One" is numerically expressed in the dual "echad" (13 + 13 = 26, the value of the Name Havayah).

Shabbos is also the key to teshuvah and Torah. Without it, one cannot return to Hashem in full nor truly receive Torah. This is why Shabbos was commanded before Matan Torah and why the Torah was given on Shabbos. Continual observance ensures ongoing access to Torah and teshuvah.

Practical Takeaway

Shabbos is not just a day off from work it is the spiritual life-blood of creation and the channel through which we unite with Hashem. By keeping Shabbos in both its higher and lower dimensions spiritually and physically we participate in completing creation, bringing redemption closer, and perfecting the unity of Hashem's Name. Shabbos observance also empowers our teshuvah and deepens our connection to Torah. Approach Shabbos as a divine meeting point where you and Hashem become one.

Chassidic Story

Once, on a Friday afternoon, Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl arrived in a small village just before candle-lighting. He noticed that the townspeople, in their poverty, had little prepared for Shabbos. With a warm smile, he gathered them together and spoke of the holiness of the day how Shabbos is the soul of creation and the moment when Hashem's presence rests most intimately with His people. His words lit a fire in their hearts.

The villagers quickly pooled whatever food they had, lit the Shabbos candles with joy, and sang as they welcomed the day. Later, during the meal, the Rebbe explained that when Jews keep Shabbos with unity and joy even with the simplest provisions they are enacting the very perfection of creation and binding themselves to Hashem in complete oneness.

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

Those present said they had never before felt such closeness to the Creator.

(Source: *Me'or Einayim*, Parshas Beshalach, teaching on “Shabbos Hi Miliz’ok”)

END NOTE]

Introduction

Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl (1730–1797), author of *Me'or Einayim*, was a leading disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch and among the first to spread the Baal Shem Tov’s teachings throughout Ukraine. Revered for his depth in Chassidus and mastery of hidden and revealed Torah, he emphasized seeing the divine spark in all creation and in every Jew. As the first Chernobyl Rebbe, he built a dynasty that would influence generations.

This discourse delves into a puzzling debate in the Gemara about how the Torah was inscribed when Israel entered the Land and whether the nations were meant to learn from it. Rabbi Menachem Nachum uses this as a springboard to teach about the nature of holiness, the sparks of divinity found in the nations, the process of conversion, and the absolute boundary of Torah truth. He explains why only those with an innate spark of holiness can truly connect to Torah, how falsehood arises when one steps outside the “boundary of holiness,” and why the Torah’s ultimate purpose is bound up with revealing that spark.

In Tractate Sotah: How did Israel write the Torah? Rabbi Yehudah says: They wrote it upon the stones, as it is said: “And you shall write upon the stones...”; and afterwards they covered it with plaster.

Rabbi Shimon said to him: According to your words, how did the nations of the world learn the Torah? He said to him: Extra understanding the Holy One, blessed be He, gave to the nations of the world they sent their scribes, scraped off the plaster, and read it.

Rabbi Shimon says: They wrote it upon the plaster, and wrote for them below: “In order that they will not learn...,” as it says there in the Gemara.

For the main point of the dispute is that Rabbi Shimon holds that those who are outside the boundary of the Land of Israel are not included in “You shall not let live,” and they wrote it for them so they would return in repentance and learn the Torah.

But Rabbi Yehudah holds that all are included in “You shall not let live,” in such a way that they covered the Torah for them so they would not learn it, as Rashi wrote. And behold, the dispute is not understood for what reason, according to Rabbi Yehudah, did they write the Torah?

במחלוקת סותה: כיצד כתבו ישראל את התורה? ר' יהודה אומר: על גבי אבני כתובות, שנאמר: “וכתבת על האבנים” וכו'; ואחר פך סدواו בסיד

אמר לו ר' שמעון: לדבריך, היאך למדו אומות העולם את התורה? אמר לו: בינה מירה נטן הקדוש ברוך הוא באמותם העולם, ושגורו נוטרין שלדים, וקלפו את הפסיד, וקראו

רבי שמעון אומר: על גבי הפסיד כתובות, וכתבו להם. למיטה: “למען אשר לא ילמדו” וכו', עין שם בגמרא

דעיקר הפלוגתא, שר' שמעון סבר שאותם שם חוץ לגבול הארץ ישראל אינם בכלל “לא תחיה”, וכתבו להם. שיחורי בתשובה וילמדו התורה

ור' יהודה סבר שכלים בכלל “לא תחיה”, בענין שכפה להם התורה כדי שליא ולמדות, וכן שכתב רש"י ז"ל. והנה הפלוגתא איננה מבארה כי לאיזה טעם כתבו והותה לרבי יהודה?

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

But it is known that all the life-force of the nations comes from the souls that have fallen among them, which fell through the sin of Adam HaRishon and the generations after him; and from there come the souls of converts anyone in whom there is a holy spark enclothed comes to convert.

Not so the rest for how could complete evil draw close to complete good, if not that it has some intermediate aspect through which it can unite with holiness? And they must be received into holiness but it is necessary to examine them and inform them of the punishments of the transgressions, so that if they withdraw, they withdraw.

And they are not to be examined too much, as is known all is to test if he comes to convert because there is within him an aspect of good, a holy spark. Therefore converts are not accepted in the days of Mashiach, for the good within them will be clarified from them.

And certainly their desire to convert will be only because of the table of kings, as stated in the Gemara. And the nations that have no souls from holiness even if they come to learn Torah, they see within it words of heresy, according to the will of each one of them.

As it is known, there are gentiles who learn the Torah and from it learn their heresies since they are outside the boundary of holiness, they see no truth at all, as is known; for what is outside the boundary of holiness is the aspect of falsehood and the kelipos.

As our words on what is stated regarding the serpent, who said to Chavah: "Just as there is no death in touching, so there is no death in eating" for he pushed her and she touched it. And she, by adding to the command of the Omnipresent, said: "You shall not eat of it and you shall not touch it..."

And behold, she knew she was not commanded regarding touching so how did she listen to him when he said: "Just as there is no death in touching, so there is no death in eating"? Only that the Torah has a boundary, called the boundary of holiness.

Therefore it is said: "You shall not add to it and you shall not subtract from it" except for what the Scribes added as fences, which is also a boundary of holiness and the measure of the stature of the Torah, as explained elsewhere, which is the aspect of hair that guards the limbs.

אבל דנוך עי כל חיית העמים והוא מונשות ההפליון שביניהם, שנפלו על ידי חטא אדים בראשון והדורות שאחריו; ומשם באים ונשות הגרים כל אותן שאלו בוחינת הנוצחות הקדושים מלובש בא להתגיר.

מה שאנו בו בשאר, כי אם יתקרב רע גמור אל הטוב הגמור, אם לא שיש לו בוחינת מצוע, שעיל ידו יתאחד אל הkadushah? ואיך לא בקהלם אל הקדושה, אבל שאריך לאם עליון ולחדרו עונשן של עבירות, שאם יפרש יפרש.

ואין מדקינו בו יותר מדי, בנוך הכל הוא לבחון אם בא להתגיר מחתמת שיש בו בוחינת טוב, נצוץ הקדש. ולכך אין מבקליין גרים לימות המשיח, כי הטוב שבין יברר מכך.

ובודאי רצונם להתגיר אינו אלא מושום שלתוכן מליכים, שפכאמיר בגמרא. ונהוגים שאין בינם נשות מן הקדושה אף שהן אין למדור התורה, רואים בתוכה דברי מינות, וכי רצון של כל אחד מהם

בנוך, יש גוים שלומדים התורה, ולוזדים מושם מיניהם מאחר שהם חוץ לא בכלל הקדושה, אין רואים שום אמת בנוך; כי מה שחווץ לא בכלל הקדושה הוא בוחינת השקר והקליפה.

במאמרינו על מה שנאמר גבי הנחש, שאמר לתחוה: "כשם שאין מיתה בnegiah כה אין מיתה באכילה", על ידי שדחה ונגעה בו. וזהיא, על ידי שהוסיפה על צווי הפקום, ואמרה: "לא תאכלו ממנה, ולא תצעו בו" וגוי.

והנה היא יקעה שלא נצotta על הנגיעה, והיאך שמשה לו מה שאמרו: "כשם שאין מיתה בnegiah כה אין מיתה באכילה"? רק שהתורה יש לה גבול, שנקרא גבול הקדושה.

ולכך נאמר: "לא תספו עליון, ולא תגרעו ממנה" וגוי רק מה שהוסיפה הטעפרים גדרים, שהוא גם כן גבול הקדושה, וישור קומת התורה, במובאך אצלנו במקום אחר, שהוא בוחינת השערות שהן משקם לאברים, עון שם

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl

Me'or Einayim

Parshas Ki Savo

But aside from this, one who adds goes outside the boundary of holiness and through this comes to the aspect of falsehood, and cannot see the truth in the Torah. This is the meaning of “he pushed her” that by adding, she went out from the boundary of holiness and pushed herself into the place of falsehood, and therefore did not see the truth.

And this is what Rabbi Yehudah holds that the Torah was written only for those who have within them an aspect of good; but those who have no good on the contrary, we see that “extra understanding” is an expression of excess...

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אֲכָל זוֹלָת הָכָמָסִיף, יָצָא חֹזֵק לְגַבּוֹל הַקָּדוֹשָׁה, וְעַל יָדֵי
כָּנְבָא לְבַחִינַת שְׁקָר, וְאַיִן יָכֹל לְרֹאֹת הַאֲמָת בַּתּוֹרָה.
וְזֶהוּ “דְּחַפֵּה” רְצֹן לִזְמָר, עַל יָדֵי שְׁהוֹסִיףָה, יָצָאָה מַגְבִּיאָה
הַקָּדוֹשָׁה, וְדְחַפֵּה לְמַקּוֹם הַשְּׁקָר, וְלֹכֶן לֹא רְאָתָה הַאֲמָת

וְזֶהוּ שְׁפָסֶבֶר רְבִי יְהוּדָה, כִּי הַתּוֹרָה לֹא בְּנִקְבָּה אֶלָּא בְּשִׁבְיל
אַוְתָן שִׁישׁ לְהָם בְּבַחִינַת טֻוב; אֲכָל אַוְתָן שָׁאוֹן בְּהָן טֻוב
אֲדֹרְבָא, אַנוּ רֹואִים שׁ “בִּינָה יִמְרָה” הַוָּא לְשׁוֹן מַוְתָּרוֹת

על כאן מצאתי בהעתך

NOTE Summary

The Gemara in Sotah records a debate between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Shimon about how the Torah was written on the stones after crossing the Jordan. Rabbi Yehudah says it was written directly on the stones and then covered with plaster; the nations could scrape off the plaster to read it. Rabbi Shimon says it was written on the plaster itself, with an additional inscription warning them not to learn, unless they repented.

Rabbi Menachem Nachum explains that this debate hinges on a deeper principle: all life-force of the nations comes from sparks of holiness that fell among them through the sin of Adam and subsequent generations. Souls of converts originate from such sparks; when these sparks awaken, the person seeks conversion. Such people must be accepted into holiness but only after being informed of the severity of transgressions, to test whether their motivation is pure. This is why converts will not be accepted in the Messianic era: by then, the good within the nations will have been fully separated from the bad.

Those without any spark of holiness cannot connect to Torah; if they study it, they interpret it according to their own distortions, sometimes drawing heresy from it. This is likened to the serpent’s deception of Chavah: by adding to Hashem’s command (“do not touch”), she stepped outside the boundary of holiness, into the realm of falsehood, and thus could not see truth. Similarly, Torah has a defined “boundary of holiness” that must not be added to or diminished except for protective rabbinic safeguards, which are themselves part of this boundary.

Rabbi Yehudah’s position is now clear: the Torah was written only for those possessing an aspect of good. Those without it are excluded, because for them “extra understanding” (bina yeseirah) only leads to excess and distortion.

Practical Takeaway

Holiness requires both access and boundaries. Access, because anyone carrying a spark of holiness can and should connect to Torah; boundaries, because outside the realm of holiness lies distortion and falsehood. Preserving Torah’s integrity means guarding its borders while ensuring those with true potential are welcomed and guided to full connection.

Chassidic Story

It is told that Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl once encountered a man seeking to convert. The Rebbe looked at him intently and said, “If your desire comes from a place of truth, nothing will turn you away; but if it comes from elsewhere, even the sweetness of Torah will taste bitter to you.” He then taught the man for several weeks, gently probing his motives. Eventually, the man broke down in tears and said, “I have always felt a fire inside to serve the God of Israel.” The Rebbe accepted him for conversion, saying, “This fire is the spark of holiness within you now it will be fed by the

Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl
Me'or Einayim
Parshas Ki Savo

light of Torah."

(Source: *Me'or Einayim*, Parshas Ki Savo)

END NOTE]