



THE SHABBOS OF REBBE NACHMAN OF BRESLOV



Parables



The Imperfect Chandelier

There was once a young man who left his family and country for many years to become an apprentice. When he returned home, he boasted to his father that he had mastered the art of chandelier-making. He told his father to summon all the craftsmen of this art and he would display for them a piece of his work.

The father gathered all the chandelier craftsmen to witness his son's expertise. The son took out a chandelier that he had made, but they all found it atrocious. The father went to each of them and asked for the truth, so they could not avoid telling him that, in truth, it was atrocious.

But the son boasted, "Did you see my expertise in this craft?"

His father told him that none of the others thought it was nice. "On the contrary!" said the son. "That proves my expertise! I have displayed the incompetence of each of them. The specific incompetence of each of the craftsmen is embodied in this chandelier. Don't you see? In one's opinion, this part of it is ugly, while another part of it is very beautiful.

In another's opinion it is just the opposite -what was dreadful in the first one's opinion is wondrously beautiful in his opinion, whereas the other part is awful in his opinion. And the same is true of all of them: what is ugly in one's opinion is beautiful in another's, and vice versa. I intentionally made this chandelier solely from incompetence, to show them all how incompetent they are, each one in a different way. For this reason, what one sees as beautiful is incompetence to the other one."

If one knows the deficiencies and imperfections of something, one knows its very nature, even if one has never seen it.

"Great are G-d's works" (Psalms 111:2).

No two human beings are alike. The first man, Adam, embodied all forms, in fact, the very word ADaM contains all these forms. The same is true of other things, such as all types of light are contained within the very word Ch'R. The same applies to everything in existence. There are not even two identical leaves on a tree.

The Rebbe spoke at great length about this idea and added that there are wisdoms in this world through which a person could be sustained without eating or drinking.



The "Pump"

Once, [some of Rebbe Nachman's chassidim] were speaking about someone who had gone to one of the large non-Jewish cities and ended up staying there a long time in the hope that soon, he would accomplish his goal. This was an ongoing story, which is why he was still there.

The Rebbe commented about this, "That is what usually happens in such situations. One thinks, 'Now I will succeed,' and later, 'Now I will succeed.' This goes on indefinitely." Then he told the following story:

There was once a person who did not accept the common belief in the existence of evil spirits and their powers to mislead people, nor did he believe the many stories told about this.

One evening, one such evil spirit (letz) came to his door in the form of a man and called him outside. When he went outside, the letz showed him a beautiful horse for sale. Looking it over, he saw that it was indeed a very beautiful horse.

"How much do you want for it?" he asked.

"Four rubles," answered the letz.

The man realized that the horse was easily worth eight rubles, for it was such a choice, top-rate horse. So he purchased the horse for four rubles and considered it a great deal.

The next day, he took the horse out to sell. Buyers came along and outbid each other. He thought to himself, "If they are willing to pay so much for it, it must be worth double!"

He turned down their offers and took the horse elsewhere. Buyers willingly agreed to his price which was double the purchase price, but he said to himself, "It must be worth even double this amount."

He continued taking the horse onward, until the price had reached into the thousands. But he turned down all offers, for the more willing buyers were to pay for it, the more he thought to himself, "It must be worth twice as much."

Eventually, there was no one who could afford that amount besides the king. So he took the horse to the king, and the king was willing to pay a huge amount, for everyone coveted this horse. But he would not sell it to the king either, saying, "It must be worth more." Thus, even the king was unable to buy it.

He then took leave of the king and brought the horse to drink from a water pump. The horse suddenly jumped into the pump and disappeared. (It appeared to him as such. The entire incident was the work of the letz.)

He began to scream. People gathered around in response to his screaming and asked him, "Why are you screaming?" Upon telling them that his horse had jumped into the pump, they thrashed him soundly, assuming he was crazy. How can a horse jump into the narrow mouth of the pump?

Realizing that they were beating him because they considered him crazy, he decided to leave. But as he was leaving, the horse began to stick its head out of the pump. He again began to scream, "Aha! Do you see?" since it appeared to him that his horse was there.

The people returned and pounded him again, since he was crazy. Again he decided to leave, and as soon as he did, the horse yet again stuck its head out of the pump. He began again to scream and again the people gathered to pummel him.



Thus, the forces of evil always fool people with illusions - outright, baseless fabrications. A person is beguiled by the illusion and pursues it, each time thinking that now he will earn more, now he will enjoy more. But after repeatedly pursuing his illusions, they abruptly disappear. All his desires vanish from his consciousness.

Sometimes, though, the desires only partially disappear, and when a person wishes to detach from them, they return and stick out their heads. The person then pursues them once again. This continues happening, that as soon as they stick out their heads, the person pursues them once again.

The Rebbe explained no further. Understand this well.