

ליקוטי מוהר"ן תנינא סימן ק"י

שְׁמַעְתִּי, שְׂאִישׁ אֶחָד שָׁאַל אוֹתוֹ: כִּיצַד הוּא הַבְּחִירָה? הַשִּׁיב לוֹ בְּפִשְׁטוֹת: שֶׁהַבְּחִירָה הִיא בְּיַד הָאָדָם בְּפִשְׁטוֹת, אִם רוּצָה-עוֹשֶׂה, וְאִם אֵינוֹ רוּצָה-אֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׂה.

וְרַשְׁמֵתִי זֹאת, כִּי הוּא נִצְרָךְ מְאֹד, כִּי כַּמָּה בְּנֵי-אָדָם נְבוֹכִים בְּזֶה מְאֹד, מִחֲמַת שֶׁהֵם מְרַגְּלִים בְּמַעֲשֵׂיהֶם וּבְדַרְכֵיהֶם מְנַעֲוִרֵיהֶם מְאֹד, עַל-כֵּן נִדְמָה לָהֶם שְׂאִין לָהֶם בְּחִירָה, חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם, וְאֵינָם יְכוּלִים לְשַׁנּוֹת מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם. אֲבָל בְּאַמַּת אֵינוֹ כֵּן, כִּי בּוֹדְאֵי יֵשׁ לְכָל אָדָם בְּחִירָה תָּמִיד עַל כָּל דְּבָר, וְכִמוֹ שֶׁהוּא רוּצָה עוֹשֶׂה. וְהֵבֵן הַדְּבָרִים מְאֹד:

4. **Understand this well.** Elsewhere, Reb Noson writes that free will is the most astounding creation. God created humanity to serve Him. Yet, he gives each person the freedom to choose whether to follow, ignore, or even rebel against His Will. Whichever direction a person chooses, God corroborates his decision, as it were (see *Makkot* 10b). Reb Noson illustrates this with the evil Bilaam, who wanted to destroy the entire Jewish people. Although he knew that it was God's Will that he not curse the Israelites, Bilaam chose to ignore that knowledge and to go against God's Will. Reb Noson concludes from this that God allows people to pursue the paths they choose no matter how terrible the choice, and despite the great harm it might cause. Nevertheless, because God is filled with compassion and wants the world to exist, He intervenes to keep the wicked from perpetrating the full measure of evil and destruction they aim for (see *Likutey Halakhot, Birkhot HaShachar* 5:76; see also *Likutey Halakhot, Yayin Nesech* 4:10).

The *Parparaot LeChokhmah* (on *Likutey Moharan* I, 49) states that there is no greater manifestation of God's Kingship than when man, acting with complete free will, accepts upon himself the yoke of His laws and commandments.

LIKUTEY MOHARAN II #110¹

I heard that someone asked Rebbe Nachman about the nature of free will.² The Rebbe responded matter-of-factly, that free will is in a person's hands, simply: If he wants, he does, and if he doesn't want, he doesn't do.³

I recorded this because it is crucial. Many people are very perplexed by this. Having become creatures of habit, following the same old patterns of behavior since childhood, people think that they no longer have any free will, God forbid, and that they are incapable of changing the way they act. In fact, this is not the case. For without a doubt, every individual has free will—always, and in all matters. A person does what he wants!

Understand this well.⁴

1. **Likutey Moharan II, 110.** The main theme of this lesson is free will, *bechirah*.

2. **I heard that someone asked Rebbe Nachman....** This is Reb Noson, who, after Rebbe Nachman's passing, personally compiled *Likutey Moharan Tinyana* (II) from the Rebbe's teachings.

3. **free will is in a person's hands....** God gives every human being free will. At any moment of decision he has the ability to choose between good and evil. Rebbe Nachman once said: "Everything you see in the world—everything that exists—is all for the sake of free will, in order to test people" (*Rabbi Nachman's Wisdom* #300).

See *Likutey Moharan* II, 54, where Rebbe Nachman teaches: "Free will is the ability a person has to act as he wishes. Even [in] all things, a Jew has the power to behave entirely as he wishes—in the manner he chooses...." Here, the Rebbe states this even more simply: "If he wants he does; and if he doesn't want, he doesn't do."