



## On Tu Bishvat the Truth is Revealed

(Teachings<sup>1</sup> From Rav Berland Shlit"א on Tu Bishvat)

The year begins from the Month of Nisan, and on Nisan it is written<sup>2</sup> **“This Month for you all is the head of the months, for you all it is the first of all the months of the year”** and Pesach is the head, the beginning, of all the holidays. According to Rav Yoshua the First of Nisan is the head of the New Year, the beginning of creation. Accordingly, the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat (Tu Bishvat) is at the end of the year and on a spiritual level the Year is divided up into four parts corresponding to the four evil forces<sup>3</sup> which are; 1) “a storm wind” in the months Nisan, Eyar, Sivan, 2) “a big cloud” in the months Tamuz, Av, Elul, 3) “a volatile fire” in the months Tishre, Chesvon, Kislev and 4) Nogah in the months Tevas, Shevat, Adar.

Some people are hot-tempered “volatile fires,” this person burns like fire! He embarrasses others and he is a complete fanatic. Some people personify the “the storm wind,” this person is fast like the wind his whole being is a whirlwind, a tornado, hurling everything in his path. Some people are dreary like “a big cloud.” This person is grey and gloomy like a cloud, always depressed, always sad. He thinks he is more sophisticated and mature than everyone else, he thinks he has a more advanced mindset but this is just his sadness and depression. Hashem does not want these three personality types, as it is written<sup>4</sup>, “Not in the wind of Hashem and not in the fire of Hashem, but rather the reserved<sup>5</sup> gentle voice.” And this is the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat (Tu Bishvat) since by the end of the year after already refining and cleansing within one’s self his “storm wind” in the first quarter of the year and his “big cloud” in the second quarter, and his “volatile fire” in the third quarter, afterwards he merits the “reserved gentle voice” where Hashem exits. When the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat (Tu Bishvat) arrives it is the center most day<sup>6</sup> of the fourth quarter of the year, and on this day a person reveals his inner most truth, which is the “reserved gentle voice.” To reach this point of deep inner truth, to merit this one must endure thousands of spiritual cleansings, thousands of failures, thousands of disappointments, thousands of insults. One needs to know every insult he receives is because of the “storm wind” within him, the “volatile fire” within him, [and] the “big cloud” within him.

Yet only after overcoming Nogah, the mixture of good and evil, does one merit to reach the “reserved gentle voice.” To overcome Nogah means knowing when to be silent and when to speak. The majority of one’s life a person should be quiet, he should not speak, 99% of his life he should be only silent. A person prays shimona esre<sup>7</sup> for one hour and

<sup>1</sup> Published in the Breslov Magazine Ohr HaGeulah in the year 5775

<sup>2</sup> Bo chapter 12 verse 2

<sup>3</sup> Klipos

<sup>4</sup> מלכים א פרק יט ~ (יא) לא ברוח יקוק ואחר הרוח רעש לא ברעש יקוק: (יב) ואחר הרעש אש לא באש יקוק ואחר האש קול דממה דקה:  
<sup>5</sup> רש"י מלכים א פרק יט פסוק יב ד"ה קול דממה דקה ~ קל דמשבחין בחשאי

<sup>6</sup> The Jewish months Tevas, Shevat, and Adar make up the final quarter of the year, and the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat is the middle day the month.

<sup>7</sup> The 18 blessings of the Amidah (the standing prayer)

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afterwards he learns Torah without taking any breaks to talk to anyone, now maybe it is possible after all this - that one true word will come out of his mouth. A wise person understands real honesty and recognizes that he is complete fallacy, he knows that he speaks lies, but in his wisdom he prays his whole life to Hashem (G-d) that he should merit one time in his life to speak one word of truth, one truly correct word should come out of his mouth, one word completely for the sake Heaven. All of one's speech is complete fallacy, complete arrogance and this is the "storm wind" and the "volatile fire." A person loves Hashem (G-d) with his "storm wind" and his "volatile fire" but he also loves dates<sup>8</sup>, and ice-cream and perhaps his "storm wind" rages most fiercely and his "volatile fire" burns strongest for ice cream more so than for Hashem (G-d), Heaven Forbid. The Baal Shem Tov says, "If a person would merit true love burning within him for Hashem (G-d) he would pass out on the spot." Therefore a wise person knows that he needs to pray his entire life that "perhaps one time in this life I will merit to say one word of truth before Hashem (G-d), one time I should merit to clarify the appropriate words to say." This clarity, this truth we merit now on Tu Bishvat since Tu Bishvat is the end of the year, the culmination off all our hard work, so at this center most point of the final quarter of the year the truth is revealed.

**It is also good to make a prayer from the Torah – meaning when you learn or hear a Torah from the True Tzadik then you should make a prayer from it. Likeutey Moharan Part 2, Torah 25**

**A Prayer<sup>9</sup> for Tu Bishvat:** Please Hashem, warm us with your mercy and please make an effort that we should succeed in fixing our souls. Help us from this moment onwards that we should not have any enthusiasm in our hearts for any vice<sup>10</sup> in this World even for a permissible vice, and all the more so that there should not be any inclining in our hearts for any vice that is forbidden. Help us and have mercy on us and pour your wealth upon us in compassion, and our hearts should have enthusiasm for holiness, for serving your name in truth, to pray and to strengthen ourselves, to learn and to teach, and to do all the Mitzvos (Commandments) with great enthusiasm in holiness and purity which is your true will. And through this may we fix our faults blemishing the enthusiasm in our heart and merit to truly purify our heart. And through this may we merit to speak out our feelings before you always with holy and true words. And may we merit connecting to you in truth with a complete heart. And may we merit in your abundant mercy to truth and to emunah<sup>11</sup>, have pity on us in your abundant mercy and save us from all sorts of heresy and anything else that will blemish our emunah, that there should not be in my heart any question or any doubt about your truth Hashem, and the truth of your Tzadikim<sup>12</sup> and the truth of your kosher<sup>13</sup> Jews, and the truth in all your holy and pure Torah writings and the truth of all holy things. And I should merit to serve you in truth and in complete emunah until I will merit to reveal deeper and deeper understandings of your holiness. And I should merit to see the light of your face Hashem and to recognize you in this World and in the next World in truth and in emunah which is your desire for all of us.

<sup>8</sup> A type of fruit

<sup>9</sup> This prayer is from Reb Nosson's book Likutey Tefilos and Rav Berland's book Tefilah LiAni

<sup>11</sup> Faith, belief

<sup>12</sup> Righteous ones

<sup>13</sup> Jews living a proper Jewish life yet they have not reached the level of being a Tzadik

# A Baal Shem Tov Story from Today

Story 1 of 2: During one of the early trips to Rebbe Nachman’s Burial Site (located in the Ukrainian city of Uman) led by Rav Berland Shlit"א, the KGB (the secret police of Communist Russia) kidnapped the Rav from his hotel before the group arrived in Uman. The KGB “official”<sup>14</sup> coldly told the Breslov Chassidim staying at the hotel that the Rav is going into detainment for intense interrogations. He further explained that due to the seriousness of the allegations against the Rav, the KGB does not know when the Rav will be released. The KGB officers<sup>15</sup> placed the Rav in their squad car and drove off. Not long after the kidnapping the Rav showed up at his hotel where the Breslov Chassidim were staying. Everyone received the Rav with tremendous joy and happiness, many had thought they may never see the Rav again, Heaven Forbid! The Breslov Chassidim immediately asked the Rav, “How did you do it? How did you escape from the KGB?! The Rav told them, “They took me to their police station and put me in a room off to the side and there were two KGB policemen there, one questioning me and one standing guard. After a few minutes the guard left and then the interrogator told me ‘to wait a moment’ and he left too. After a moment I got up and walked to the doorway, no one was there so I walked into the hallway. I walked down the hallway and no one stopped me. So I walked around the station until I found the front door and left. Then I caught a cab strait to the hotel.” Everyone was amazed, and then the Rav said, “Come on! We have to get to Uman, where are the buses that are supposed to take us?”

Story 2/2: Reb Shmuel Shapira z"l, was a Tzadik of Breslov in the previous generation and the Rav<sup>16</sup> said about him, “Rav Shmuel Shapira...the whole World exists in this great Tzadik’s merit, [meaning] ONLY in his merit [does the World exist].” Rav Shmuel Shapira had the custom to travel to Meron the day before Rosh Chodesh (the new month) each month. In those days the taxi would drive from Jerusalem to Meron stopping at the Holy Burial sites located in Arab villages along the way, like the resting place of YOSHUA Ben Nun in Kfar Kifel Chartie<sup>17</sup> and Yosef HaTzadik in Nabulus (Schem). A young rabbi would regularly accompany Rav Shmuel Shapira on this excursion however, before one trip this young rabbi heard on the news that Arabs were throwing stones and doing violence against Jews in those villages that Rav Shmuel Shapira regularly visited on his trip. The young rabbi was too scared to go and too embarrassed to let Rav Shmuel Shapira know the true reason he declined accompanying him on this excursion. On the eve of Rosh Chodesh, Rav Shmuel Shapira set out on his trip and visited these regular holy sites, arrived in Meron, and returned to Jerusalem. This young rabbi could not hold himself back and asked, “How could you go to Meron through the Arab villages, it was not dangerous, you were not scared?” Rav Shmuel Shapira replied, “Why should I be scared?” The young rabbi said, “You have not heard the news at all? There is violence and stone throwing from those Arab villages.” Rav Shmuel Shapira responded, “You heard the news so you should be scared, I did not hear the news so I have no reason to be scared.”

## The Message

Rav Tzanani taught<sup>18</sup> “There is no need to worry about what the future holds, and this worrying is the evil force of the ‘storm wind.’” Since this type of anxiety over what may happen causes one’s mind to speedily race over all the sorts of

<sup>14</sup> Malicious gangster

<sup>15</sup> ibid

<sup>16</sup> שיעור בזאת חנוכה שנת תשנ"ו [והשיעור מופיע בחוברת 'קובץ שיעורים לחנוכה' מפי רב ברלנד שליט"א עמוד 16]

<sup>17</sup> בכפר הערבי כיפל חאר'ת

<sup>18</sup> Torah class given at Shuvu Bonim on 11 Shevat 5777

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scary and frightening potential future scenarios causing panic and fear. In retrospect these scenarios are not even relevant and all this worrying is completely futile. This “storm wind” is living within one’s own imagination<sup>19</sup> removed from reality and Rav Succot<sup>20</sup> said, “The most important evil force to break out of is the imagination, we need to leave our imagination behind.” Living in the moment means focusing all of one’s energies into serving Hashem through Torah, prayer, and Mitzvos (Commandments) at each moment. Furthermore, when one finds himself in a difficult situation Rebbe Nosson of Breslov<sup>21</sup> advises, “Those who are being pursued need to be careful not to go with any sophistication at all and only to cry out to Hashem (G-d).” This we learn from this week’s Parsha, when the Nation of Israel is surrounded<sup>22</sup> on all 4 sides by wild animals, the Egyptians, and the stormy sea. The Bostoner Rebbe<sup>23</sup> explained to me<sup>24</sup>, “each Jew there had his own opinions about what to do; this one had a political solution, this one had a financial solution, this one had a military solution, but only Moshe had the true solution – to jump into the sea!” Meaning only Moshe knew the secret<sup>25</sup> “to be unmoved<sup>26</sup> and to be quiet and to yearn for Hashem’s (G-d’s) rescue. Most of the time being unmoved and being quiet, leads one’s heart to burn for Hashem (G-d) until he begins to cry out to Hashem” and this is what Moshe did until Hashem<sup>27</sup> came to the rescue and said to Moshe, “The time for lengthy prayers to me is over! Speak with the Nation of Israel and go! Now, raise up your staff and place your hand upon the water and the water will split and the Nation of Israel will go through the water on dry land.” And this is what happened to Rav Berland Shlit"א when the sea split for him in the KGB’s police station.

## Two Halachos

Bircas Hailonos<sup>28</sup> is the special blessing recited once a year generally in the month of Nisan over fruit trees in blossom. Can this blessing be said during other months? Yes. This blessing, Bircas Hailonos, is generally said in Nisan “since this is the usual time for blossoms to appear, but the b’racha (blessing) may be recited any time [a fruit tree is in blossom].”

Can one bless Bircas Hailonos at night? Yes and no. The Piske Teshuvos<sup>29</sup> explains, “If there is light or a full moon so one sees the buds clearly” then even at night the blessing maybe recited.

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**Dedications: הרב אליעזר בן עטיא וברבנית שליט"א Penina bas Malka Ruchama, Nechama bas Esther Neche, Ester Rachel Bas Nurit**

<sup>19</sup> דמיון – meaning: imagination, fantasy, unreal

<sup>20</sup> 9 Shevat 5777 at Shuvo Bonim

<sup>21</sup> לקוטי הלכות הלכות בציעת הפת א אות מ"ד

<sup>22</sup> מדרש תנחומא פרשת שופטים סימן יג ד"ה כי תצא ~ כך היו ישראל הים הולך וסוער עליהם והשונא רודף אחריהם והחיות מן המדבר והיו מוקפין מארבע רוחות

<sup>23</sup> Grand Rebbe (אדמו"ר) Meir Horwitz of the Har Nof and Beitar Bostener Community

<sup>24</sup> During one of the Yuntiff meals on Shivie Shel Pesach תשס"ח in Har Nof.

<sup>25</sup> לקוטי הלכות הלכות בציעת הפת א אות מ"ד

<sup>26</sup> This translation is from the Breslov Research Institute's Likeutey Moharan for the word דום.

<sup>27</sup> שמות פרק יד פסוק טו-טז ~ ויאמר יקוק אל משה מה תצעק אלי דבר אל בני ישראל ויסעו: ואתה הרם את מטך ונטה את ירך על הים ובקעה ויבאו בני ישראל בתוך הים ביבשה: ורש"י שם ~ למדנו שהיה משה עומד ומתפלל, אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא לא עת עתה להאריך בתפלה שישראל נתונין בצרה.

<sup>28</sup> Rav Elozor Barclay, Guidelines – Pesach see questions 10, 12, and 16 on pages 18 - 19

<sup>29</sup> פסקי תשובות חלק ב סימן רכו אות ג עמוד תתקכ