

# In Honor of Tu b'Shevat

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The following is from the forthcoming volume of Breslov Research's translation of *Likutey Moharan*. which, with God's help, will see the light of day before Pesach 5771. Translated by Moshe Mykoff, annotated by Chaim Kramer and edited by yours truly. Those big numbers that show up here and there are footnote markers. I apologize for not adding internal links. If I knew HTML I would have.

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## LIKUTEY MOHARAN II #63 1

**“Take from the choice products of the Land in your pouches, and bring down to the man as tribute some balsam and some honey, and gum, resin, pistachio nuts and almonds” (Genesis 43:11).}**

Know! when our forefather Yaakov sent his sons, the ten tribes, to Yosef,<sup>2</sup> he sent with them a melody of the Land of Israel. This is the deeper meaning of “Take from the *ZiMRot* (choice products) of the Land in your pouches...”<sup>3</sup>—the concept of *ZeMeR* (song) and melody, which he sent through them to Yosef. This is as Rashi comments: *me'zimrat*—it connotes *zemer*....<sup>4</sup>

For know!<sup>5</sup> each and every shepherd has his own special melody, according

to the grasses and specific location where he is grazing. This is because each and every animal has a specific grass which it needs to eat. He also does not always pasture in the same place.<sup>6</sup> Thus, his melody is dictated by the grasses and place he pastures. For each and every grass has a song which it sings. This is the concept of *Perek Shirah*.<sup>7</sup> And from the grass's song, the shepherd's melody is created.<sup>8</sup>

This is the deeper meaning of the verse "And Adah bore Yaval; he was the father of tent dwellers with cattle. His brother's name was Yuval; he was the father of all who play harp and flute" (Genesis 4:20-21).<sup>9</sup> As soon as the world had a shepherd of cattle, there were musical instruments.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, because King David, may peace be upon him, was "a skilled musician" (1 Samuel 16:18), he was "a shepherd" (ibid. :11).<sup>11</sup> {We find, too, that humanity's forefathers were all shepherds.<sup>12</sup>}

And this is the concept of "From the end of the earth we heard song" (Isaiah 24:16)<sup>13</sup>—i.e., songs and melodies emerge from the end of the earth, because melody is produced through the grasses which grow in the earth, as mentioned above.<sup>14</sup> And because the shepherd knows the melody, he instills the grasses with energy, and so the animals have what to eat.<sup>15</sup>

And this is the concept of "The first blossoms have appeared in the Land, the time of *ZaMiR* (singing) has arrived" (Song of Songs 2:12).<sup>16</sup> In other words, the "first blossoms" grow in the Land as a result of their particular *ZeMeR* and melody, as mentioned above. It follows, that through the song and melody which the shepherd knows, he instills the grasses with energy and there is pasture for the animals.<sup>17</sup>

The melody is also beneficial for the shepherd himself. Because the shepherd is constantly in the company of animals, it could happen that they draw and drag him down from the category of human-spirit to animal-spirit. The shepherd might end up grazing himself, as in "they went to pasture their father's flock..." (Genesis 37:12), which Rashi explains as:

they went to pasture themselves.<sup>18</sup>

But through the melody he is saved from this. For melody is the refinement of the *ruach*,<sup>19</sup> separating human-spirit from animal-spirit, as in “Who knows that it is the spirit of the human being which ascends on high and the spirit of the animal which descends below” (Ecclesiastes 3:21).<sup>20</sup> This is the essence of melody—gathering and selecting the good *ruach*, as explained elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> The melody therefore saves him from animal-*ruach*, because through the melody the human-*ruach* is separated from animal-*ruach*.<sup>22</sup>

2. And there are many distinctions with regard to melody. There is a whole melody. And there is a melody of various sections, which can be separated into sections and themes.<sup>23</sup>

And know! the king has all the melody, in its entirety. But the ministers have only a part of the melody, each according to his station.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, Daniel said to Nevuchadnezzar: “The tree—it is you! ...there was food for all in it” (cf. Daniel 4:17-19).<sup>25</sup> Nevuchadnezzar was a king and had the entire melody, and so all the food was drawn through him, because the food is drawn via the melody, as mentioned above.<sup>26</sup>

3. Thus, our forefather Yaakov—not knowing then that it was Yosef, but only what the tribes told him about Yosef’s conduct—sent him a melody suitable for such a minister, based on what he heard from his sons about his ways and conduct.<sup>27</sup> Through the melody Yaakov wanted to get from him what he needed.<sup>28</sup> He therefore sent him that melody of the Land of Israel.<sup>29</sup>

This is the meaning of what he said to his sons: “Take from the *zimrot* of the Land in your pouches”—i.e., they should take the aforementioned concept of melody, which is the concept of “*zimrot* of the Land,” in their pouches.<sup>30</sup> “And bring down to the man as tribute some balsam and some honey, and gum, resin, pistachio nuts and almonds.” These are the concepts of the melody’s scale and rhythm, because the melody is created

out of what grows in the Land, as mentioned above.<sup>31</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. **Likutey Moharan II, 63.** The main themes of this lesson are: melodies, especially those from the Land of Israel; Jewish leaders (shepherds); and bounty. Rebbe Nachman gave this lesson sometime in the summer of 1809. Someone mentioned in the Rebbe's presence that earlier in the year Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichov had collected considerable sums of money while traveling to the Moldavian city of Iassi. Speaking about people's desire for wealth and their reluctance to give charity, the Rebbe said, "A melody is better than this. A melody of the Land of Israel certainly! Hearing that melody eliminates a person's insatiable desire for wealth altogether" (*Until the Mashiach*, p.169; *Tzaddik* #585; *Magid Sichot*).

2. **sent his sons, the ten tribes, to Yosef.** Scripture relates that when the famine which plagued the Land of Israel had again depleted their supplies, Yaakov's sons pleaded with him to send them back to Egypt to purchase food. This time, the "ten tribes" whom Yaakov sent (not to be confused with the Ten Tribes which later comprised the Israelite Kingdom) included Binyamin. Shimon, who had been one of the ten on the first journey, was being held in Egypt as assurance that the brothers would return.

3. **Take from the choice products of the Land in your pouches....** Yaakov acceded to his sons' request and agreed to send Binyamin to the viceroy of Egypt, the "man" who, unbeknownst to them, was Yosef. Scripture relates: "Then their father Yisrael (Yaakov) said to them, 'If it must be so, do this: Take from the *zimrot* (choice products) of the Land in your pouches, and bring down to the man as tribute some balsam and some honey, and gum, resin, pistachio nuts and almonds.'" Yaakov sent this gift hoping to win the viceroy's (Yosef's) favor.

4. **me'zimrat-it connotes zemer....** Rashi cites *Targum Onkelos* that the

items which Yaakov sent as tribute were the Land's choice products, whose praises were universally sung. In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman reads this as Yaakov having sent a melody from the Land of Israel. The Rebbe will return to this at the end of lesson.

5. For know! Rebbe Nachman next explains how melody is conceptually a "product" of the earth, shaped and influenced by the particular place in which it "grows."

6. specific grass...not always pasture in the same place. Rebbe Nachman introduces here the metaphor of a shepherd grazing his flock, leading them from one pastureland to another depending on their different needs. "Shepherds" refers to the leaders of the Jewish people in the different generations (see *Maharsha* on *Sukkah* 52b, s.v. *sheva ro'im*). Yaakov was a shepherd, as were the other patriarchs, Avraham and Yitzchak, as was Moshe Rabbeinu (see also below, nn.12 and 16). The proof-text from Samuel which the Rebbe brings in the following paragraph shows that King David, too, was a shepherd. The Midrash relates that David would ensure that the lambs and young goats grazed on soft grass, and the mature goats and sheep on tough grass. Seeing this, God said: "This one is suited to the shepherd of My people, Israel" (*Midrash Tehilim* #109). In a wider sense, each leader of the Jewish people and every genuine tzaddik is a shepherd whose job it is to ensure that his flock receives the nourishment and *shefa* (bounty) it requires. (Below, in §3, the Rebbe speaks of the melody through which a king provides sustenance for his people.)

On a deeper level, the Ari teaches that there are fallen sparks of holiness everywhere in the creation, in all aspects of the four basic classifications of existents. Whether it fall into *domeim* (inanimate), *tzomeach* (vegetation), *chai* (animate) or *medaber* (speaker, i.e., human), each holy spark must undergo a process of ascent in order to achieve rectification (*Shaar HaGilgulim* #22, p.59ff). In the example from our lesson, the shepherd who takes his flock out to graze

elevates the sparks of holiness which have fallen in that place. This includes sparks which fell to the vegetation level, in the grasses that grow there, and sparks which originally fell to the inanimate level, in the earth and water and have subsequently become absorbed in the grasses. When the animals feed on these grasses, all the sparks are elevated to the animate level. This is true in each place the flock grazes. The shepherds therefore take their flocks from place to place, to rectify the holy sparks specific to each location.

7. **Perek Shirah.** The purpose of each thing God creates—every sentient being and even all non-sentient matter—is to recognize His *Malchut* (Kingship) and sing His praises. Segments of the creation's praise of God are recorded in *Perek Shirah* ("Chapter of Song"), a collection of Biblical verses recited by heaven and earth, celestial bodies and flora and fauna, reflecting each creation's role in the universe (see *Shaar HaMitzvot*, v'Etchanan, p.87). Indeed, each individual blade of grass, leaf, shrub and tree sings praise to God. The flow of blessing (*shefa*) which these songs invoke brings new vitality to the entire creation, which is dependent on these praises and prayers for its survival (*Shaar Maamarei Rashby, Perek Shirah*, p.299).

8. **from the grass's song...melody is created.** Shepherds are accustomed to singing a tune while tending their flocks. Rebbe Nachman teaches here that each shepherd gets his melody, which is unique to him, from the flora in the fields where he takes the animals to graze. As mentioned in the previous note, each blade of grass and every shrub and tree sings praise to God. The shepherd draws from the energy in these songs of praise to create his own personal song and melody.

9. **Yaval...dwellers with cattle...Yuval...who play harp and flute.** Scripture relates that Kayin's (Cain's) descendent Lemekh married two women. One, Adah, bore him both Yaval, the first of all shepherds, and Yuval, the first to play musical instruments.

10. ...cattle...musical instruments. Rebbe Nachman explains that Yuval's invention of musical instruments was a direct outcome of his brother's choice of occupation. Yaval's tending of animals brought about the need for instruments on which the shepherds could play their melodies when taking their flocks out to pasture.

11. a skilled musician...a shepherd. After Shmuel anointed David in place of King Shaul, God's spirit left the king. Shaul's counselors advised him to call for someone who would comfort him and calm his spirit with music and song (1 Samuel 16:18). One of Shaul's attendants suggested David, lauding him to the king: "I have observed the son of Yishai the Bethlehemite who is a skilled musician; he is a stalwart fellow and a warrior, understanding and handsome; and God is with him." In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman teaches that David's skill as a musician was a direct outcome of his being a shepherd assigned to tend his father's flock.

12. forefathers were all shepherds. This bracketed text was inserted into the lesson by Reb Noson. Elsewhere, he explains that the patriarchs specifically chose this vocation because it involved rectifying the sparks of holiness (n.6) which fell into the realm of vegetation when Adam sinned. By taking their flocks to graze in different pasturelands, they were able to use their melodies to refine the sparks which had fallen in each of these various locations (*Likutey Halakhot, Mekach U'Memkar* 4:3).

13. From the end of the earth we heard song. This verse appears in Yeshayahu's prophecy about the time to come. From one end of the earth to the other those who rejected God's Kingship will be destroyed, after which the righteous will rejoice.

14. as mentioned above. See also notes 7 and 8.

15. instills the grasses with energy...animals have what to eat. Earlier Rebbe Nachman taught that the shepherd gets his melody from the

energy in the songs of praise sung by the grasses on which he feeds his flock. However, here it seems the Rebbe is teaching the reverse, that the shepherd's knowledge of the melody instills energy into the grasses so that the animals have what to eat. This apparent contradiction can be explained with another of the Rebbe's lessons. In *Likutey Moharan* II, 1:9-11, he teaches that all the grasses instill their energy into a person's prayers. When these prayers ascend on high, they arouse the Word of God, which then renews the energy and returns it to the grasses. In the same manner, the grasses instill their energy into the shepherd's melody (= prayer). Empowered by that energy, the shepherd then returns it to the grasses, giving them the power and vitality to nourish the animals.

16. **The first blossoms have appeared in the Land...** This verse from Song of Songs depicts springtime, when the first blossoms appear in the Land and birds fill the air with song: "The first blossoms have appeared in the land, the time of singing has come and the song of the turtledove is heard in our land." The Midrash (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah* 2:12) interprets "first blossoms" as alluding to the two leaders of Israel, Moshe and Aharon, and says that "the time for *zamor* (singing)," alludes that the time had come: the time for Israel to be redeemed from Egypt and sing the Song of Redemption at the Red Sea. The *Zohar* teaches (I, 1b): The "first blossoms" are the patriarchs (who, as brought in n.12, were shepherds, and the first ones to reveal God's Oneness to the world; see also *Likutey Moharan* II, 5:1 and n.18).

17. **the song and melody...instills the grasses with energy...** In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman teaches that "first blossoms" alludes to the grasses that grow in the Land of Israel. This relates to what the Rebbe taught above, that when the grasses/"first blossoms" appear and instill energy into the shepherd's melody (or prayer), the shepherd becomes energized with their prayers and praise of God and then returns that energy to the grasses, providing nourishment to his flock.



18. **grazing himself...pasture themselves.** Scripture relates that Yosef's brothers "went to pasture their father's flock." The Midrash teaches that the brothers actually went to eat, drink and indulge—i.e., pasture themselves (*Avot d'Rebbi Natan* 34:4); apparently, so as to rid themselves of any misgivings about what they were about to do to Yosef (*Torah Temimah* on Genesis 37:12, #14). Having taught that as a consequence of the shepherd's constant closeness to his animals, his spirit is in jeopardy of being dragged down to their level, Rebbe Nachman brings Yosef's brothers as proof. In the context of our lesson, this is the meaning of brothers grazing *themselves*. They succumbed to animalistic behavior, became jealous of Yosef and plotted to kill him, before selling him into slavery. But by singing his melody, the shepherd elevates his spirit to the higher, more refined human level, as the Rebbe explains next.

19. **the ruach.** The Hebrew term *ruach* means both "spirit" and "wind." Rebbe Nachman explains that a melody (whether played on an instrument or sung) is conceptually a gathering of *ruach*—wind and spirit (see n.21).

20. **spirit of the human being which ascends on high...the animal which descends below.** Commenting on this verse from Ecclesiastes (*loc. cit.*), Rashi explains that whereas the human spirit ascends on high to be judged for its deeds, an animal never has to account for its actions. Kohelet asks: "Who knows" or understands that he must not behave like an animal which pays no attention to the way it acts? In the context of our lesson, Rebbe Nachman shows that this knowledge and understanding through which one distinguishes between human-spirit and animal-spirit allude to the song and melody which the shepherd knows.

21. **as explained elsewhere.** In *Likutey Moharan* I, 54:7, Rebbe Nachman teaches: "[Playing] a musical instrument is a gathering of the *ruach* (spirit or wind), which is a mixture of good and evil. There is a *ruach* of depression, a gloomy *ruach*, a *ruach* of evil...and there is also a good *ruach*...an aspect of a *ruach* of prophesy, Divine *ruach*. But when a person is a mixture of good

and evil, he cannot receive [the good *ruach*]... The person who plays an instrument collects and gathers up with his hand the good *ruach*... Thus he must be “skilled at playing,” knowing how to collect and gather and find the components of the *ruach* one by one, in order to build the melody—i.e., to build the good *ruach*... For he has to raise and lower his hand on the instrument he is playing in order to direct the build up of the melody to perfection... This is because the essential beauty of the music is achieved through the extraction of the *ruach* which is the air from which the sound comes...”

**22. the human-spirit is separated from animal-spirit.** Having shown that melody signifies the refinement of *ruach*—i.e., the ability to distinguish between the good *ruach*, which is human-spirit, and the evil *ruach*, which is animal-spirit—Rebbe Nachman explains that, like the grasses (vegetation) and the animals (animate), the shepherd (human), too, benefits from his melody. The shepherd’s melody protects his spirit and keeps him from “grazing himself” with animalistic desires.

In review: Each shepherd/leader has a unique melody through which he brings sustenance to his flock and also refines his own *ruach*.

**23. a whole melody...a melody of various sections...and themes.** The distinction which Rebbe Nachman makes here with regard to melody is not clear. He seems to be speaking of a melody comprised of several sections (e.g., introduction, exposition, refrain and conclusion) and themes. It is possible to relate to the melody as a single unit, “a whole”, or to each of its sections and themes separately.

**24. the king has all the melody...But the ministers...each according to his station.** The distinction Rebbe Nachman just made with regard to melody he now applies to a king (“whole melody”) and his ministers (“sections and themes”).

**25. The tree—it is you!...there was food in it for all.** Rebbe Nachman’s

proof-text is Daniel's words to Nevuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Chapter 4 of the Book of Daniel tells of Nevuchadnezzar's nightmare and his calling for all the kingdom's sages to interpret it for him. When neither magicians, nor stargazers, nor diviners provided Nevuchadnezzar with the meaning of his dream, he called for Daniel, whom he had pressed into his service after conquering Yerushalayim. Nevuchadnezzar gives the account of his dream: "These were the visions of my mind [while I lay] in bed: I was watching, when a tree of great height [appeared] in the midst of the earth. The tree grew and became strong. Its top reached to the heavens, and it was visible to the ends of the earth. Its foliage was beautiful and its fruit plentiful; there was food for all in it...and all flesh took sustenance from it. I was watching the visions of my mind in bed, when I saw a holy angel coming down from heaven. He cried out loudly and said: 'Cut down the tree! Lop off its branches! Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit!'" (vv.8-11). Daniel was silent. Then, after recounting the dream, he said: "It is you, O king, who have grown and become powerful; whose greatness has grown and reaches to heaven, and whose dominion extends to the end of the earth" (v.19). Daniel informed Nevuchadnezzar that he was the tree whose fruit was so abundant that "there was food for all in it."

26. the food is drawn via the melody, as mentioned above. Based on this proof-text from Daniel (*loc. cit.*), the *Zohar* (II, 153a) teaches that when the *shefa* (bounty) descends from on high, it first passes through the king (here, Nevuchadnezzar). He is the agency and means through which all sustenance is drawn to the rest of the world (see also *Likutey Moharan* II, 7:10 and n.140; *ibid.* 16:1 and n.5). At the lesson's outset, Rebbe Nachman showed the connection between *zimrot* (the choice products) of the Land, i.e., sustenance, and *zemer* (song). Therefore, here the Rebbe explains that the king, who is responsible for everyone in his kingdom, must have "all the melody, in its entirety" so that he can instill energy into the grasses. The

king's ministers, however, are each accountable for a particular division or section of the kingdom, and so each possesses "only a part of the melody," that particular section or theme which corresponds to his station.

In review: Each shepherd/leader has a unique melody through which he brings sustenance to his flock and also refines his own *ruach* (§1). A king is responsible for his entire people, and so he has the complete melody to instill energy into the grasses and so provide all his subjects with sustenance. Each of his ministers, however, has only that section or theme of the melody associated with his area of responsibility (§2).

27. **suitable for such a minister...ways and conduct.** Although Yosef's official position was Egypt's viceroy, Pharaoh's second in command, God had arranged for Yaakov's son to be put in charge of the country's entire sustenance. Thus, in the context of our lesson, Yosef was a king. As such, he certainly possessed "all the melody, in its entirety." Yaakov, however, had no way of knowing the true identity of Egypt's viceroy, and so presumed he was just another of Pharaoh's ministers. Rebbe Nachman therefore emphasizes the point that Yaakov knew only what his sons had told him about the Pharaoh's viceroy, and so sent tribute, a melody, suitable for such a minister.

28. **what he needed.** In need of sustenance for his household, Yaakov sent a melody to Egypt's viceroy (Yosef) so that he might instill energy into the grasses and increase the supply of sustenance in the Egyptian storehouses. Based on Rebbe Nachman's earlier discussion of the animal- and human-spirit, we might additionally conclude that Yaakov also hoped the melody of the Land of Israel which he sent would refine and elevate the Egyptian viceroy's spirit (see the following note).

29. **melody of the Land of Israel.** As father of all twelve tribes, Yaakov was the reigning patriarch of the Jewish people, Israel's "king." He was consequently in possession of "all the

melody, in its entirety.” This should have ensured sufficient sustenance for his entire family. But God had decreed that there would be famine in the Land of Israel, where Yaakov lived, and so he had to send his sons to Egypt, whose viceroy had “collected produce in very large quantity...until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured” (Genesis 41:49). Scripture then relates: “All the world came to Egypt to Yosef to purchase provisions, for the famine had become severe throughout all the earth” (v.57). Of the great wealth which this brought to Pharaoh, the Talmud states: Yosef collected all the silver and gold in the entire world and brought it to Egypt (*Pesachim* 119a). Yaakov would have therefore seen the Egyptian viceroy as opportunistic, desirous of great wealth. Sending him a melody from the Land of Israel was intended to increase Egypt’s supply of sustenance and so counter this greed, so that Yaakov could “get from him what he needed.”

30. **in their pouches.** Rebbe Nachman teaches here that Yaakov, being a shepherd (see n.6) and a “king,” knew the entire melody. When he instructed his sons to take from the *zimrot/zemer* of the Land, he gave each one the section of the song suited to him, for as Yaakov’s “ministers” each of the brothers could have only a part of the melody.

31. **melody is created out of what grows in the Land, as mentioned above.** See section 1 and notes 6, 8 and 15. This is why Yaakov described the melody as the “choice products” of the Land (see n.4). In the very next verse, Scripture relates that Yaakov instructed his sons to also take along “double money” in order to pay for the provisions they sought to purchase (Genesis 43:12). In *Likutey Moharan* II, 40:4 (and see n.38), Rebbe Nachman teaches that bounty which comes from the Land of Israel is twofold, and so has the power to counter what is otherwise a person’s insatiable desire for wealth. Yaakov had his sons take along the bounty of the Land of Israel to counter the Egyptian viceroy’s greed. This is the meaning of the Rebbe’s remark mentioned above, in note 1: “A melody is better than this. A

melody of the Land of Israel certainly! Hearing that melody eliminates a person's insatiable desire for wealth altogether."

In review: Each shepherd/leader has a unique melody through which he brings sustenance to his flock and also refines his own *ruach* (§1). A king is responsible for his entire people, and so he has the complete melody to instill energy into the grasses and so provide all his subjects with sustenance. Each of his ministers, however, has only that section or theme of the melody associated with his area of responsibility (§2). Yaakov (a king) sent his sons (ministers) with produce/a melody from the Land of Israel as tribute to the Egyptian viceroy (Yosef) in order to get from him what the sustenance Yaakov needed (§3).

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