



TORAH OHR • PARSHAS BO • MAAMAR 2

למען תהי' תורת ה' בפיך כי ביד חזקה...

“So that the Torah of G-d may be in your mouth”



Out of love for the Jewish people, G-d went beyond His own nature: at the Exodus He held back His mercy to judge Egypt, and in the Torah He contracted His infinite will and wisdom into physical matters. Having the Torah “in your mouth,” day and night, is the answer to that love: making our will like His, beyond our own nature.

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ”ל

Dedicated in honor of the Rebbe’s father, Reb Levi Yitzchok



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THE BIG IDEA

Out of love for the Jewish people, G-d went beyond His own nature: at the Exodus He held back His mercy to judge Egypt, and in the Torah He contracted His infinite will and wisdom into physical matters. Having the Torah “in your mouth,” day and night, is the answer to that love: making our will like His, beyond our own nature.

Each section: the Hebrew, then the translation, then a short explanation under a gold rule. Small numbers in the Hebrew are the notes at the end.

THE MAAMAR IN BRIEF

Why does the verse tie the Torah in one’s mouth to the Exodus, and how can one study Torah “day and night” when many laws are not in practice? The Alter Rebbe distinguishes two loves for G-d, a steady love like water and a surging love like fire, born of two kinds of awareness. Knowing that G-d loves us as a father loves his son awakens the steady love. The second awareness is that G-d set aside the heavens to dwell in the lowest realm, contracting His infinite intellect into the Torah, which speaks of physical things. This love beyond nature comes from His will, so the reasons for the mitzvos stay hidden until Moshiach. Taking this to heart, a person sets aside his own will for G-d’s, and his intellect follows; studying Torah day and night means never ceasing to look to G-d’s will. At the Exodus the “strong hand” was G-d’s right hand, mercy, held in check out of love for Israel. Therefore the Torah is in our mouths: we make our will like His. Since His will is simple, He contracts it to what the world can receive, as Moshe’s words to the people show.

OUTLINE

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|--|--|------|
| 1 | The questions | ¶1 |
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| Why the verse links the Torah to the Exodus; why Scripture records both G-d’s word to Moshe and Moshe’s word to the people; and how the mitzvah to study Torah day and night applies to laws that are not in practice. | | |
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| 2 | Two loves, two kinds of awareness | ¶2–3 |
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| A love like water is steady and a love like fire surges, running and returning. Knowing that G-d loves us as a father loves his son awakens the steady love, as water reflects a face. | | |
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| 3 | G-d’s love beyond nature | ¶4–6 |
| <hr/> | | |
| G-d desired a dwelling below and contracted His infinite intellect into the Torah, out of a love beyond nature that comes from His will, which is why the reasons for the mitzvos are hidden. He can be grasped only through His descent into the wisdom on earth. | | |
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4 Making our will His

¶7-8

Taking this to heart, a person sets aside his own will for G-d's, and the intellect follows, as with the judge who found himself arguing for the litigant. Studying Torah day and night means never ceasing to look to G-d's will, and doing as He does.

5 The strong hand and the Torah in the mouth

¶9-10

The strong hand was G-d's right hand, mercy, held in check out of love for Israel so that He could judge Egypt. Therefore the Torah is to be in our mouths, making our will like His; and His word is contracted to what each recipient can bear, as in Moshe's words to the people.

KEY CONCEPTS

Love likened to water אהבה שנמשלה למים

A steady love for G-d that never grows or lessens. It comes from knowing that G-d loves us as a father loves his son, a love that never changes.

Love likened to fire אהבה שנמשלה לאש

A surging love for G-d, always in motion, running and returning (ratzo vashov).

A dwelling place among the lower realms דירה בתחתונים

G-d's desire to be at home in the lowest, physical realm. In this maamar it is the Torah: His infinite intellect contracted into physical matters.

Not in the way of nature שלא כדרך הטבע

Acting beyond one's natural mode: G-d's descent into lim-its out of love, His holding back His mercy at the Exodus, and the person who separates himself from body and nature to cleave to Him.

Will and intellect רצון ושכל

The will leads and the intellect follows. In G-d, His wisdom accords with His will; in a person, once the will is given to G-d, the mind comes along.

Tzimtzum (contraction) צמצום

G-d's contracting Himself to what the world can bear. It is why Scripture sometimes records G-d's word to Moshe and sometimes Moshe's word to the people, according to their capacity.

The strong hand יד חזקה

The right hand, mercy, held in check so that G-d could carry out judgment on Egypt and bring Israel out.

SECTION 1 • 11

The questions

1 למען תהיי¹ תורת² ה' בפיה כי ביד חזקה הוצאך ה' ממצרים. ולכאורה הוא תמוה וכי מה ענין התורה ליצי"מ להזכירם.

“So that the Torah of G-d may be in your mouth, for with a strong hand G-d brought you out of Egypt.” At first glance this is puzzling: what does the Torah have to do with the Exodus from Egypt, that they should be mentioned [together]?

The maamar opens with a verse from the Torah's passage about remembering the Exodus by a sign on the hand and between the eyes, the first of the passages in tefillin. The verse gives the Exodus as the reason for having the Torah in one's mouth, and the Alter Rebbe asks what the one has to do with the other.

ולהבין ענין התורה דהנה כתיב וידבר הוי' אל משה לאמר קדש לי כל בכור³ ובאמירת משה כתיב ויאמר משה אל העם⁴ זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים כו' וכמוהו רבים במקרא.

And to understand the matter of the Torah: now, it is written, “And G-d spoke to Moshe, saying: Sanctify to Me every firstborn,” and of Moshe's saying it is written, “And Moshe said to the people: Remember this day, on which you went out of Egypt,” etc.; and there are many like it in Scripture.

Before answering, the Alter Rebbe points to a pattern in Scripture. G-d's words to Moshe are “Sanctify to Me every firstborn,” but what Moshe then says to the people begins differently: “Remember this day, on which you went out of Egypt.” Such pairs, G-d's saying to Moshe and Moshe's saying to the people, are frequent, and the last paragraph of the maamar explains them.

ולהבין זאת ביאור מצות והגית בו יומם ולילה⁵ ואף שיש כמה דינים שאינן נוהגין בזה הזמן והנהוגים אינם שוה לכל נפש:

And to understand this, [one needs] the explanation of the mitzvah “And you shall meditate on it day and night,” even though there are several laws that are not in practice in our time, and those that are in practice do not apply alike to every soul.

A further question belongs to the same inquiry: the mitzvah to study Torah “day and night,” from G-d's charge to Yehoshua. Many of the Torah's laws are not in practice in our time, and those that are do not apply to every person alike, so what does it mean to be immersed in all of it day and night?

SECTION 2 • 112-3

Two loves, two kinds of awareness

2 אמנם הנה יש ב' מיני אהבות. יש אהבה שנמשלה למים כדכתיב מים רבים לא יוכלו לכבות את האהבה שהולך תמיד בלי שינוי ותוספות ומגרעת כלל כתמול שלשום כמאז כן עתה.

Now indeed, there are two kinds of love. There is a love that is likened to water, as it is written, “Many waters cannot quench the love,” which flows on constantly, without any change, increase or decrease at all, as yesterday and the day before; as it was then, so it is now.

To answer, the Alter Rebbe first distinguishes two kinds of love for G-d. The first is like water: calm and steady, never growing or shrinking, the same today as yesterday. He brings the verse “Many waters cannot quench the love” for this love likened to water.

ויש אהבה שנמשלה לאש כדכתיב רשפיה רשפי אש^{7, 6} כו'. והוא שמתנענע תמיד ברצוא ושוב.⁸ ובי אהבות הללו נמשכו מב' דעות שבאדם.

And there is a love that is likened to fire, as it is written, “Its flashes are flashes of fire,” etc. That is, it is constantly in motion, running and returning (ratzo vashov). And these two loves are drawn from two kinds of awareness that are in a person.

The second love is like fire, whose flashes leap up and fall back: it is always in motion, “running and returning” (ratzo vashov), surging toward G-d and returning. Each love grows from a different awareness a person can have of G-d, and the next paragraphs describe the two.

3 והנה כתיב בנים אתם להי'⁹ אלהיכם שהוא ית' אוהב אותנו כאב את בנו וממיל' נמשך לדעת אותו כמים הפנים¹⁰ כו'

Now, it is written, “You are children to G-d your G-d”: that He, blessed be He, loves us as a father [loves] his son. And as a matter of course, [love] follows from knowing this, “as water [reflects] the face,” etc.

The first awareness: the verse calls the Jewish people G-d's children, so He loves them as a father loves his son. Knowing this, a person loves Him in return as a matter of course, just as water reflects back the face of the one who looks into it.

והוא כמים דייקא שהולך בתמידות שוה בלי שום שינוי. שכן אהבת האב שעל בנו לא ישתנה לעולם.

And it is specifically “like water,” which flows on constantly and evenly, without any change at all; for a father's love for his son will never change.

This love is called “water” precisely because it is steady and unchanging. It answers G-d's love as a father, and a father's love for his son never changes, so the love it awakens does not change either.

SECTION 3 • ¶4-6

G-d's love beyond nature

4 ויש דעה אחרת שמכיר בוראו שהניח כל צבא השמים ושמי השמים העליונים ורצה להיות לו דירה בתחתונים¹¹

And there is another awareness: that one recognizes one's Creator, Who set aside all the host of heaven and the supernal heavens of heavens, and desired to have a dwelling place among the lower realms;

The second awareness looks at what G-d chose: He set aside the hosts of heaven and the highest heavens and desired "a dwelling place among the lower realms," the lowest, physical world. Recognizing this is a different kind of knowledge from knowing that He loves us as a father.

דהיינו שיהי' שכלו הא"ס ליצמצם בגבולים גשמיים וזאת התורה אשר שם הוא מדבר בדברים גשמיים. that is, that His infinite intellect should be contracted into physical limits. And this is the Torah, where He speaks of physical matters.

That dwelling comes about through the Torah: G-d's infinite intellect contracted into physical limits, so that the Torah speaks of physical matters such as fields, animals and money.

5 והכל בשביל אהבתו אותנו שלא כדרך הטבע כי אהבה מקלקלת את השורה¹² והכל מרצונו ית' שכרצונו ית' חכמתו שבשביל שהוא רם ונשא וגבוה מאד יכול להתלבש ביותר גבולי ומצומצם

And all this is because of His love for us, not in the way of nature, for "love upsets the [proper] order"; and all is from His will, blessed be He, for as His will is, blessed be He, [so is] His wisdom: because He is high and exalted and very lofty, He is able to be clothed in what is most limited and contracted.

Such a descent is not in the way of nature, and it comes from G-d's love for us; as a saying of the Sages puts it, "love upsets the proper order." It stems from His will, and His wisdom follows His will: because He is exalted beyond all limits, He is not confined to the heights and can be clothed even in what is most limited.

וזהו טעמי מצות שהוא רצונו ית' לא נתגלה כי בלתי אפשר להשיגם עד ביאת משיחנו.

And this is [why] the reasons for the mitzvot, which are His will, blessed be He, have not been revealed: for it is impossible to grasp them until the coming of our Moshiach.

Because the mitzvot are G-d's will, which comes before His wisdom, their reasons have not been revealed. The mind cannot grasp them until Moshiach comes.

6 וזהו נודע בשערים בעלה וגוי מה שיכולי להשיג את הקב"ה הוא בשבתו עם זקני ארץ.¹³

And this is [the meaning of] “Her husband is known in the gates,” etc.: the fact that one can grasp the Holy One, blessed be He, is “in His sitting with the elders of the earth.”

The verse from the “Woman of Valor” says, “Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits with the elders of the earth.” The Alter Rebbe reads “her husband” as the Holy One, blessed be He: that we can grasp Him at all depends on His “sitting” with the elders of the earth.

פ"י בשביל שבתו הוא הורדתו והשתלשלותו עם זקני ארץ. פ"י החכמה שבארץ דזקן היינו זה שקנה חכמה.¹⁴

That is: because of His sitting, which is His being brought down and His progression through the chain of descending worlds (hishtalshelus), with the elders of the earth. That is: the wisdom that is on earth, for an “elder” (zaken) is one who has acquired (zeh shekanah) wisdom.

“His sitting” means His descent, step by step, down the chain of worlds into the wisdom found on earth, which in the light of paragraph 4 is the Torah. The word zaken, “elder,” is read as “one who has acquired wisdom,” so the “elders of the earth” are the wisdom that has come down to earth.

SECTION 4 • ¶7-8

Making our will His

7 וזאת ישים האדם אל לבו ויתעורר בו אהבה גדולה מאד שלא לחשוב שום רצון בעניניו

And a person should lay this to heart, and let a very great love be aroused in him, so that he does not think of any will at all in his own affairs,

Contemplating how the Infinite One lowered Himself out of love into the limits of the Torah should awaken a very great love in a person. This love goes so far that he no longer entertains any will of his own in his personal affairs.

רק יבטל רצונו מפני רצון שמים¹⁵ שלא יהיה לו רק רצון א' לעבודת הבורא וכרצונו יעשה השכל ג"כ שהשכל נמשך אחר הרצון.

but only nullifies his will before the will of Heaven, so that he has only one will: for the service of the Creator. And the intellect, too, will act according to his will, for the intellect follows the will.

A person sets his own will aside before G-d's, so that his only will is to serve the Creator. Once the will is set, the intellect follows it and finds reasons for what the will wants, as the next paragraph illustrates.

8 וכמו שמצינו בגמ' גבי שוחד דאמר אי בעי טעין הכי והיינו משום שרצונו נוטה לזה דגם השכל השלים
אתו¹⁶

And as we find in the Gemara concerning a bribe, that [the judge] said, "If he wants, he can argue this way": that is because his will leaned that way, so that the intellect, too, came to terms with it.

The Gemara tells of sages who would not accept what a man with a case before them had brought them, though it was theirs by right, and disqualified themselves from judging him. Even so, as the case was being heard, each caught himself thinking, "If he wants, he can argue this way": his will had leaned toward the man, and his intellect followed it.

וכמו שהשי"ת רוצה להיות לו דירה בתחתונים שלא כדרך הטבע להיות א"ס בלי גבול מוגבל ומצומצם

And just as G-d, blessed be He, desires to have a dwelling place among the lower realms, not in the way of nature, that the Infinite One (Ein Sof), Who is without limit, should be limited and contracted,

The Alter Rebbe now draws the parallel. G-d's desire for a dwelling among the lower realms is not in the way of nature, for it means that the Infinite One, Who has no limit, becomes limited and contracted.

כמו כן יעשה האדם רצונו להפרד מן הגוף והטבע לדבקה בו יתב' ושלא כדרך הטבע. ולכן נאמר והגית
בו יומם ולילה.¹⁷ לא ישובות יומם מלראוי לרצונו ית'.

so too a person should make it his will to separate himself from the body and from nature, to cleave to Him, blessed be He, and not in the way of nature. Therefore it is said, "And you shall meditate on it day and night": he should not cease by day from looking to His will, blessed be He.

In the same way, a person should will something beyond his nature: to separate from the body and from nature and cleave to G-d. This is how "you shall meditate on it day and night" is explained: Torah study means never ceasing to look to G-d's will, which the Torah expresses even in laws that are not in practice.

וזהו כבודו של מקום באהבתו אותנו מתלבש ומגביל ומצמצם וממנו יראה האדם וכן יעשה וחי כו':

And this is the glory of the Omnipresent: in His love for us He clothes Himself, and limits and contracts [Himself]; and from Him a person should see, and do likewise, and live, etc.

G-d's "glory" is that out of love for us He clothes, limits and contracts Himself. A person should see this and do likewise, going beyond his own nature for G-d, and so live. The closing words, "do likewise, and live," echo the Torah's words about the mitzvos, "which a person shall do and live by them."

SECTION 5 • 19-10

The strong hand and the Torah in the mouth

9 וזהו למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיך כי ביד חזקה הוצאך כו'. פי' דכ"מ שנאמר יד אינו אלא ימין¹⁹ (מנחות דף י) שהוא רחמים ונאמר ועברתי בארץ מצרים.²⁰

And this is [the meaning of] “So that the Torah of G-d may be in your mouth, for with a strong hand He brought you out,” etc. That is: wherever “hand” is said, it is none other than the right (Menachos 10), which is mercy; and it is said, “And I will pass through the land of Egypt.”

The Alter Rebbe returns to the opening verse. The Gemara (Menachos 10a) teaches that “hand” always means the right hand, and the right, he adds, is mercy; so the “strong hand” that took Israel out of Egypt was the hand of mercy. He sets beside it G-d’s words before the plague of the firstborn, “And I will pass through the land of Egypt.”

פי' שהעביר על מדותיו שעשה דינים במצרים אע"פ שמדותיו לרחם ולהטיב לברואיו והכל מחמת אהבתו לישראל כמשל האב בעבור אהבתו שרוצה לעשות חסד עם בנו כובש חסדו וכועס על אחרים המצעים את בנו.²¹

That is: He passed over His attributes, in that He executed judgments in Egypt, even though His attributes are to have mercy on His creatures and to do them good. And all this was because of His love for Israel, as in the analogy of a father who, because of his love, since he wants to do kindness to his son, suppresses his kindness and is angry with others who cause his son pain.

“I will pass” (ve'avarti) is read as G-d “passing over” His own attributes: His nature is to have mercy on His creatures and do them good, yet He carried out judgments in Egypt. He did so out of love for Israel, as a loving father holds back his natural kindness and is angry with those who are hurting his son.

10 וזהו ביד חזקה שהוא הימין היתה כבושה בכדי להוציאם ממצרים והיה שינוי שלא ע"פ הטבע לכן תהיה תורת²² ה' בפיך לעשות רצונך כרצונו²³ וכיון שהכל הוא מרצונו הפשוט הוצרך לצמצם בכדי שיוכל העולם לקבלו.

And this is [the meaning of] “with a strong hand”: [the hand,] which is the right, was suppressed in order to bring them out of Egypt, and there was a change that was not according to nature. Therefore “the Torah of G-d shall be in your mouth”: to make your will like His will. And since everything is from His simple will, He had to contract [Himself] so that the world would be able to receive it.

The “strong hand” is the right hand, kindness, held in check so that Israel could be brought out of Egypt: G-d acted against His own nature. That is why the Torah is to be “in your mouth”: in return, a person makes his will like G-d’s. And since everything comes from G-d’s simple, undivided will, which no world could hold as it is, He had to contract Himself so that the world could receive it.

ולכן נאמר פעם ויאמר הוי' אל משה ופעם לא נאמר אמירת הוי' אל משה אלא אמירת משה

And therefore it says at one time, “And G-d said to Moshe,” and at another time it does not state G-d’s saying to Moshe, but Moshe’s saying

This contraction explains the pattern noted in paragraph 1. Sometimes Scripture records what G-d said to Moshe, and sometimes only what Moshe said to the people.

אל העם כפי כח ויכולת העם שיוכלו לקבל כך צמצם את עצמו והכל גלוי וידוע לפניו באיזה אופן יוכל לצמצם בכדי שיוכל העולם לסובלו:

to the people: according to the strength and capacity of the people, what they would be able to receive, so did He contract Himself. And everything is revealed and known before Him: in what manner He could contract [Himself] so that the world would be able to bear it.

Moshe’s words to the people are G-d’s word contracted to the measure the people could receive. G-d knows exactly how far to contract Himself so that the world can bear His word.

IN ONE’S AVODAH

Take to heart how G-d, out of love, set aside His exaltedness to be clothed in the limits of the Torah, and held back His mercy to bring us out of Egypt. Let this awaken a very great love that sets aside your own will before G-d’s, so that your only will is to serve the Creator and your intellect follows it. Then study Torah day and night, never ceasing to look to His will: as He goes beyond His nature for us, go beyond yours for Him.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does the awareness that G-d loves us as a father differ from the awareness that He desired a dwelling below, and why does each awaken a different kind of love?
2. Why does G-d’s being exalted make it possible for Him to be clothed in what is most limited?
3. What does the Gemara’s story of the judge who found himself arguing for the litigant teach about the relation between will and intellect, and how does the maamar apply it to serving G-d?
4. How does reading the “strong hand” as the right hand held in check answer the question of why the verse ties the Torah to the Exodus?
5. What does it mean to study Torah day and night by “looking to G-d’s will,” even in laws that are not in practice?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 למען תהיי

The note refers the reader to the Rebbe's own source notes on this maamar, printed earlier in the Kehot edition.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע.

2 למען תהיי תורת ה' בפיך

The Exodus is to be "a sign on your hand and a remembrance between your eyes, so that the Torah of G-d may be in your mouth, for with a strong hand G-d brought you out of Egypt." This is the verse the maamar sets out to explain; its answer comes in paragraphs 9 and 10.

שמות י"ג:ט"ז Exodus 13:9

וְהָיָה לָךְ לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת ה' בְּפִיךָ כִּי בְּיָד חֲזָקָה הוֹצֵאָה ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of the L-RD may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath the L-RD brought thee out of Egypt.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות יג, ט.

3 וידבר . . קדש לי כל בכור

G-d tells Moshe to sanctify every firstborn of Israel, of man and of beast. The Alter Rebbe sets these words of G-d to Moshe beside what Moshe then says to the people.

שמות י"ג:ב' Exodus 13:2

קִדְּשִׁי לִי כָל־בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר כָּל־רֶחֶם בְּכֵנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאָדָם וּבַבְּהֵמָה לִי הוּא:

'Sanctify unto Me all the first-born, whatsoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is Mine.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות יג, ב.

4 ויאמר משה אל העם

Moshe tells the people to remember the day they went out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. The maamar explains in its last paragraph why Scripture records Moshe's saying to the people as well as G-d's saying to Moshe.

שמות י"ג:ג' Exodus 13:3

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם זָכוֹר אֶת־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יָצָאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים כִּי בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיא ה' אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה וְלֹא יֵאָכֵל חֶמֶץ:

And Moses said unto the people: 'Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the L-RD brought you out from this place; there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

5 והגית בו יומם ולילה

G-d charges Yehoshua: "This book of the Torah shall not depart from your mouth, and you shall meditate on it day and night." The maamar asks how this applies to laws not in practice, and returns to the verse in paragraph 8.

יהושע א':ח Joshua 1:8

לֹא־יָמוּשׁ סֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה מִפִּיךָ וְהָגִיתָ בוּ יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמֹר לְעֲשׂוֹת כְּכָל־הַכְּתוּב בוּ כִּי־אָז תִּצְלִיחַ אֶת־דְּרָכְךָ וְאָז תִּשְׁכִּיל:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

יהושע א, ח. וראה באוה"ת נ"ך כרך ב ע' תשלז בפ"י והגית.

PARAGRAPH 2

6 מים רבים . . רשפי רשפי אש

"Many waters cannot quench the love, nor can rivers drown it." The Alter Rebbe brings the verse for the love that is likened to water.

שיר השירים ח':ז Song of Songs 8:7

מִים רַבִּים לֹא יוֹכְלוּ לִכְבּוֹת אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה וְנָהָרוֹת לֹא יִשְׁטְפוּהָ אִם־יִתֵּן אִשׁ אֶת־כָּל־הוֹן בֵּיתוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה בּוֹ יִבּוֹז לוֹ:

Many waters cannot quench love, Neither can the floods drown it; If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, He would utterly be contemned.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש ח, ז. ח.

7 רשפיה רשפי אש

The verse says of love that it is "strong as death" and that "its flashes are flashes of fire." The Alter Rebbe brings it for the love that is likened to fire. Kehot's note prints the place as 8:7 and 8 (ח, ז. ט), but these words are in 8:6.

שיר השירים ח':ו Song of Songs 8:6

שִׁמְנִי כַחוֹתָם עַל־לִבִּי כַחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעִי כִּי־עֲזָה כְּמוֹת אַהֲבָה קִשָּׁה כְּשֹׂאֵל קִנְאָה רִשְׁפֵּיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ שְׁלֵה־כֶּתֶתָהּ:

Set me as a seal upon thy heart, As a seal upon thine arm; For love is strong as death, Jealousy is cruel as the grave; The flashes thereof are flashes of fire, A very flame of the L-RD.

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8

רצוא ושוב

In Ezekiel's vision of the chariot, the chayos (holy creatures) "ran and returned like the appearance of lightning." The Alter Rebbe uses the phrase for the fiery love that constantly surges and returns.

Ezekiel 1:14: יחזקאל א'

והחיות רצוא ושוב כמראה הבהק:

And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

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PARAGRAPH 3

9

בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם

"You are children to G-d your G-d." The Alter Rebbe draws from the verse the first awareness: G-d loves us as a father loves his son.

Deuteronomy 14:1: דברים י"ד א'

בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם לא תתגדדו ולא תשמימו קרחה בין עיניכם למת:

Ye are the children of the L-RD your G-d: ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים יד, א.

10

כמים הפנים

"As in water face answers to face, so is the heart of man to man": love awakens a matching love. Here, knowing that G-d loves us like a father awakens our love for Him.

Proverbs 27:19: משלי כ"ז י"ט

כמים הפנים לפנים כן לבה האדם לאדם:

As in water face answereth to face, So the heart of man to man.

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PARAGRAPH 4

11

להיות לו דירה בתחתונים

The Midrash teaches that when He created the world, the Holy One, blessed be He, desired to have a dwelling place among the lower realms, as He has among the higher ones. The Alter Rebbe identifies this dwelling with the Torah, G-d's infinite intellect contracted into physical matters.

Midrash Tanchuma, Nasso 16:1: נשא ט"ז א'

... באתי לגני אחותי כלה (שה"ש ה, א). אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן, בשעה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את העולם, נתאנה שיהא לו דירה בתחתונים כמו שיש בעליונים. ברא את האדם וצוה אותו ואמר לו: מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל, ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו (בראשית ב, טז-יז). ועבר על צויו. אמר לקה הקדוש ברוך הוא, כך

הייתי מתאנה שיהא לי דירה בתחתונים כמו שיש לי בעליונים, ודבר אחד צויתי אותך ולא שמרת אותו. מיד סלק הקדוש ...

(Numb. 7:1), "So it came to pass on the day that Moses had finished." Rav says, "Every place where it is stated, 'So it came to pass (wayehi),' [is referring to] something new"; but R. Simeon says, "Every place where it says, 'So it came to pass (wayehi)' [is referring to] something which existed, has ceased [to exist] for a long time, and has returned to be as it was. 5:7. This text is related (to Cant. 5:1), 'When I come to my garden, my sister bride.'" R. Samuel bar ...

Midrash Tanchuma -- Torat Emet (Public Domain) • Townsend 1989 translation of Midrash Tanhuma, S. Buber Recension, edited and supplemented by R. Francis Nataf (CC-BY)

PARAGRAPH 5

12

אהבה מקלקלת את השורה

Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai says that "love upsets the proper order": Avraham had servants, yet in his love he rose early and saddled his donkey himself. The Alter Rebbe applies it to G-d, Whose love for us leads Him beyond the order of nature into limits.

Beresheet Rabbah 55:8: ר"ה ח' 55:8

וישכם אברהם בבוקר ויחבוש את חמורו - אמר ר' שמעון בן יוחאי: אהבה מקלקלת את השורה ושנאה מקלקלת את השורה. אהבה מקלקלת את השורה, דכתיב: וישכם אברהם בבוקר וגו', ולא היה לו כמה עבדים! אלא, אהבה מקלקלת את השורה. ושנאה מקלקלת את השורה, שנא' (במדבר כב): ויקם בלעם בבוקר ויחבוש את אתונו, ולא היה לו כמה עבדים! אלא, שנאה מקלקלת את השורה. אהבה מקלקלת את השורה, שנאמר (בראשית מו): ויאסור יוסף מרכבתו ויעל לקראת ישראל אביו, וכי לא היה ליוסף כמה עבדים! אלא, אהבה מקלקלת את השורה. שנאה מקלקלת את ...

"Abraham awoke early in the morning and saddled his donkey; he took his two young men with him, and Isaac his son; he chopped wood for the burnt offering, arose, and went to the place that G-d told him" (Genesis 22:3). "Abraham awoke early in the morning and saddled his donkey" - Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: Love upsets one's usual practice and hatred upsets one's usual practice. Love upsets one's usual practice, as it is written: "Abraham awoke early in the morning [and saddled his donkey]..." Did he not ...

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PARAGRAPH 6

13

נודע בשערים בעלה . . בשבתו עם זקני ארץ

In the "Woman of Valor": "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits with the elders of the earth." The Alter Rebbe reads the husband as the Holy One, blessed be He, known through His descent into the wisdom on earth.

משלי ל"א: כ"ג 31:23

נודע בשערים בעלה בשבתו עם זקני ארץ:

Her husband is known in the gates, When he sitteth among the elders of the land.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי לא, כג.

14 דוקן היינו זה שקנה חכמה

Rabbi Yosei HaGelili teaches that an “elder” (zaken) is only one who has acquired wisdom, reading zaken as zeh kanah, “this one has acquired.” The Alter Rebbe uses it to read “the elders of the earth” as the wisdom on earth.

Kiddushin 32b:8 ל"ב ב:ח"8:32 Kiddushin

תנו רבנן: “מפני שיבה תקום” – יכול אפילו מפני זקן אשמאי? תלמוד לומר: “זקן”, ואין זקן אלא חכם, שנאמר: “אספה לי שבועים איש מזקני ישראל”. רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: אין זקן אלא מי שקנה חכמה, שנאמר: “ה' קנני ראשית דרכו”.

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PARAGRAPH 7

15 יבטל רצונו מפני רצון שמים

The Mishnah teaches, “Nullify your will before His will.” The Alter Rebbe echoes it for the person who sets aside his own will before the will of Heaven.

Pirkei Avot 2:4 ב"ד:2:4 Pirkei Avot

הוא היה אומר, עשה רצונו כרצונה, כדי שיעשה רצונה כרצונו. בטל רצונה מפני רצונו, כדי שיבטל רצון אחרים מפני רצונה. הלל אומר, אל תפרש מן הצבור, ואל תאמין בעצמך עד יום מותך, ואל תדין את חברך עד שתגיע למקומו, ואל תאמר דבר שאי אפשר לשמע. שסופו להשמע. ואל תאמר לך שאפנה אשנה, שמא לא תפנה:

He used to say: do His will as though it were your will, so that He will do your will as though it were His. Set aside your will in the face of His will, so that he may set aside the will of others for the sake of your will. Hillel said: do not separate yourself from the community, Do not trust in yourself until the day of your death, Do not judge your fellow man until you have reached his place. Do not say something that cannot be ...

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PARAGRAPH 8

16 שמצינו בגמרא גבי שוחד

Sages who would not accept what a litigant brought them, though it was due to them, disqualified themselves from his case; yet as it was heard, each caught himself thinking, “If he wants, he can argue this way,” and exclaimed how much more those who take bribes are affected. The Alter Rebbe brings it to show that the intellect follows where the will leans.

Ketubot 105b:1-2 ב"ב:1-2:105b Ketubot

אפילו צדיק גמור ולוקח שוחד — אינו נפטר מן העולם בלא טירוף דעת. כי אתא רב דימי אמר: דרש רב נחמן בר כהן, מאי דכתיב “מלך במשפט יעמיד ארץ ואיש תרומות יהרסנה” — אם דומה דין למלך,

למען תהי תורת ה' בפיו כי ביד חזקה

שאינו צריך לכלום — “יעמיד ארץ”. ואם דומה לכהן שמחזר על הגרנות — “יהרסנה”.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

כתובות קה, ב.

17 והגית בו יומם ולילה

The verse commands Torah study “day and night.” The Alter Rebbe explains it as never ceasing to look to G-d's will.

יהושע א:ח"8:1 Joshua

לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיה והגית בו יומם ולילה למען תשמר לעשות ככל-הכתוב בו כִּי־אֶזְעַלְיֶיךָ אֶת־דְּרֹכְךָ וְאֶזְעַלְיֶיךָ:

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

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PARAGRAPH 9

18 למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיו כי ביד חזקה הוצאך

The maamar's opening verse. Here the Alter Rebbe begins to answer why it ties the Torah to the Exodus.

שמות י"ג:ט"9:13 Exodus

והיה לך לאות עלי־ידך ולזכרון בין עיניך למען תהיה תורת ה' בפיה כי כִּדְּחֵי־הַיָּד הֹצֵאתָ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם:

And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of the L-RD may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath the L-RD brought thee out of Egypt.

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19 Rabbi Shimon teaches that wherever the Torah says “hand,” it means only the right hand. The Alter Rebbe cites it in parentheses to show that the “strong hand” of the Exodus is the right, the side of mercy.

מנחות י"א:ח"10a:18 Menachot

ומי בעי רבי שמעון תרתי והתניא ר"ש אומר כל מקום שנאמר יד אינה אלא ימין אצבע אינה אלא ימין אצבע לא בעיא כהונה כהו"ב בעי אצבע

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20 ועברתי בארץ מצרים

G-d announces, “And I will pass through the land of Egypt on this night, and I will strike every firstborn,” and “against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments.” The Alter Rebbe reads “I will pass” as G-d passing over His attributes of mercy to carry out judgment, out of love for Israel.

שמות י"ב:12ב"12:12 Exodus

ועברתי בארץ מצרים בלילה הזה והייתי כל־בכור בארץ מצרים מאדם ועד־בהמה ובכל־אלהי מצרים אעשה שפטים אני ה'

For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the L-RD.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות יב, יב.

21 ועברתי . . המצרים את בנו

The note records that this passage, from “And I will pass through” to “who cause his son pain,” is quoted in Yahel Or, the Tzemach Tzedek’s commentary on Tehillim.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא ביהל אור ע' תקיד.

PARAGRAPH 10

22 תהיה תורת ה' בפיה

The opening verse again. The Torah in one’s mouth is the response to the Exodus: making one’s own will like G-d’s.

שמות י"ג:ט"ז Exodus 13:9

וְהָיָה לָּךְ לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וּלְזִכְרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת ה' בְּפִיךָ כִּי בְּיָד חֲזָקָה הוֹצֵאתָ אֶת מִצְרָיִם:

And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thy hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the law of the L-RD may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath the L-RD brought thee out of Egypt.

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23 לעשות רצונך כרצוני

The Mishnah says, “Make His will like your will, so that He will make your will like His will.” The Alter Rebbe uses its words for a person’s making his own will like G-d’s, in answer to G-d’s going beyond His nature at the Exodus.

משנה אבות ב'ד:4 Pirkei Avot 2:4

הוא ה' אומר, עשה רצוני כרצונך, כדי שיעשה רצונך כרצוני. בטל רצונך מפני רצוני, כדי שיבטל רצון אחרים מפני רצונך. הלל אומר, אל תפרש מן הצבור, ואל תאמין בעצמך עד יום מותך, ואל תדין את חברך עד שתגיע למקומו, ואל תאמר דבר שאי אפשר לשמוע, שסופו להשמע. ואל תאמר לכשאפנה אשנה, שמא לא תפנה:

He used to say: do His will as though it were your will, so that He will do your will as though it were His. Set aside your will in the face of His will, so that he may set aside the will of others for the sake of your will. Hillel said: do not separate yourself from the community, Do not trust in yourself until the day of your death, Do not judge your fellow man until you have reached his place. Do not say something that cannot be ...

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THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

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The Rebbe asked that the maamarim of the week's parsha, the "Chassidishe Parsha," be learned during that week, spread over its seven days (Sichah of Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel 5725 · Toras Menachem vol. 42, pp. 306-309). Why learn it, and the Rebbe's brachos: likuteitorah.com/about/the-chassidishe-parsha/

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מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

Dedicated in honor of the Rebbe's father, Reb Levi Yitzchok