



TORAH OHR • PARSHAS CHAYEI SARAH • MAAMAR 4

ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה כו'

“And Isaac went out to converse in the field”



What comes last and lowest was first in G-d's thought: the Bara'isa's reasonless details stand above the Mishnah's reasoned rules, and the bare deed of a mitzvah stands above the delight of the World to Come. Torah descends into darkness and even falsehood in order to clear it away and turn it into light, and that work needs Isaac's awe of G-d.

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

What comes last and lowest was first in G-d's thought: the Baraisa's reasonless details stand above the Mishnah's reasoned rules, and the bare deed of a mitzvah stands above the delight of the World to Come. Torah descends into darkness and even falsehood in order to clear it away and turn it into light, and that work needs Isaac's awe of G-d.

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

The maamar reads Isaac's going out "lasuach in the field toward evening" through the pair Mishnah and Baraisa. The Mishnah states general rules; the Baraisa spells out their details. The Baraisa seems lower, but "the end of the deed is first in thought": like a tube, where what goes in first comes out last, or like man, created last yet the purpose of all creation, the lowest level carries the deepest intent. So "one hour of good deeds in this world" outweighs the World to Come, whose delight is only G-d's "back." The Mishnah's rules often have a reason one can find; the Baraisa's details have none, and what lies beyond reason is higher. In service too, the deed matters more than the heart's delight, which is only its "wings." The Mishnah is a "city," and the Baraisa the "field" that feeds it. Isaac "bends down" into that field to "clear away the evening": Torah is clothed in darkness, in the debates of the Babylonian Talmud and even false claims, so that the darkness, where G-d hides, will become light. That clearing, the "whitening" of the halachah, needs awe of G-d.

OUTLINE

- 1 Mishnah and Baraisa: the last is the highest** ¶1-2
The Baraisa, the detail of the Mishnah, seems lower but is higher, for the end of a deed is first in thought; the tube and man, created last, illustrate it.
- 2 One hour of deeds above the World to Come** ¶3-4
The delight of the World to Come and of understanding is only G-d's "back"; the bare deed reaches His "face," and the Mishnah's general rules are the counterpart of that revealed level.
- 3 Above reason** ¶5
The Baraisa's details have no reason and so reveal what is above intellect; a mitzvah done without grasping its reason is higher, and the deed outranks the heart's fervor.

4 City and field; clearing away the evening

¶6

The Baraisa is the field that feeds the city of the Mishnah; Isaac bends low into the field, for Torah descends into darkness to clear it and find the true law, G-d's will.

5 Isaac's awe

¶7

Clearing the darkness needs awe of G-d, which Isaac embodies; since G-d hides within the darkness, clearing it brings light, the whitening of the halachah.

KEY CONCEPTS

Mishnah and Baraisa משנה ובריייתא

The Mishnah gives the general rules (the klal); a Baraisa, a teaching left outside the Mishnah, gives the particulars (the prat). Here the Mishnah is a "city" and the Baraisa a "field."

The end of the deed is first in thought סוף מעשה

במחשבה תחלה

What is done last is what the planner intended from the start; so the lowest level of a process carries its deepest purpose.

Back and face אחוריים ופנים

G-d's "back" is whatever of Him can be grasped and enjoyed, including the reward of the World to Come; His "face," His inner will, cannot be grasped and is reached through the deed itself.

Above reason למעלה מהטעם

A law or mitzvah with no revealed reason comes from a level higher than any stated reason; even where the Torah gives a reason, a higher one lies behind it.

Clearing away the evening לפנות הערב

Reading lifnos erev ("toward evening") as lefanos, "to clear away": Torah enters darkness and falsehood only in order to clear them away and turn darkness into light.

Whitening of the halachah ליבון הלכתא

Working through the questions and difficulties that obscure a law until its true ruling, the revealed will of G-d, shines clearly.

SECTION 1 • 11-2

Mishnah and Baraisa: the last is the highest

1 ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה^{1,2} כו'. לבאר זה דהנה יש משנה וברייתא. וברייתא פיי המשנה³ כי המשנה הוא הכלל וברייתא היא הפרט של המשנה ואין בכלל אלא מה שבפרט.

“And Isaac went out lasuach in the field,” etc. To explain this: there is Mishnah, and there is Baraisa. The Baraisa is the explanation of the Mishnah, for the Mishnah is the general rule and the Baraisa is the particular detail of the Mishnah, and “the general contains only what is in the particular.”

The maamar opens with the verse about Isaac going out “lasuach” in the field before evening, and approaches it through two layers of the Oral Torah. The Mishnah states the law in compact general rules; a Baraisa is a teaching of the same era left outside the Mishnah, which spells out its details. The Talmudic principle “the general contains only what is in the particular” means that a general rule holds nothing beyond the details that make it up.

ולכאורה הברייתא היא למטה מן המשנה שנשתלשלה יותר למטה אבל האמת הוא שהברייתא גבוה יותר דסוף מעשה במחשבה תחלה. דהנה התורה⁴ נשתלשלה למטה אפיי [אפילו] בדבר שקר כגון זה אומר אני מצאתיה⁵ כו'.

Seemingly, the Baraisa is lower than the Mishnah, for it has descended further down; but the truth is that the Baraisa is higher, for “the end of the deed is first in thought.” For the Torah has descended below, even into a matter of falsehood, such as “This one says, ‘I found it,’” etc.

Since the Baraisa goes into finer, more worldly detail, it looks like a further step down. Yet, as the saying goes, what comes last in the doing was first in the planner’s mind; so the lowest, most detailed level expresses the deepest intent. The proof is how far Torah descends: the Mishnah opens Bava Metzia with two litigants each claiming “I found it,” one of whom must be lying, and the Torah rules even on such a claim.

2 ולפי הנראה היא ירידה למטה מאד ומ”מ היא גבוה כי סוף מעשה כו'. וכמשל השפופרת הנכנס ראשון יוצא אחרון

To all appearances it is a very great descent downward, and nevertheless it is lofty, for “the end of the deed,” etc. It is like the analogy of the tube: what goes in first comes out last.

However low the Baraisa’s descent looks, it is really lofty, for the end of a deed is what was first in thought. The analogy is a narrow tube: what is put in first comes out last, so what emerges last was there from the beginning.

וכמו האדם שהוא סוף כל הנבראים והוא במעלה על כולם והכל נברא בעבורו ולכן נמצא העולם כולו באדם אחד להורות שהכל נברא בעבורו כי זה כל האדם.⁶

And it is like man, who is the last of all the created beings, yet he is higher in rank than all of them, and everything was created for his sake. Therefore the entire world is found in a single man, to show that everything was created for his sake, for “this is the whole of man.”

Man was created last, on the sixth day, yet he is the purpose of all creation, and everything was made for him. That is why a single human being contains the whole world in miniature; the verse “this is the whole of man” is read as saying that man is the sum of everything.

SECTION 2 • 13-4

One hour of deeds above the World to Come

3 וזהו מארז"ל [מאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] יפה שעה אחת^{7,8} כו'. דהנה בעה"ב [בעולם הבא] צדיקים יושבים⁹ כו' והוא רק בחי' אחוריים

This is [the meaning of] the saying of our Sages, of blessed memory, “Better is one hour,” etc. For in the World to Come “the righteous sit,” etc., and that is only the level of the back (achorayim),

The Mishnah in Avos says: “Better is one hour of teshuvah and good deeds in this world than all the life of the World to Come.” The reward of the World to Come, where “the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and enjoy the radiance of the Shechinah,” is only G-d’s “back”: a reflection of Him, not His inner self.

כמאמר וראית את אחורי¹⁰ כו' התענוג שמשיג האדם בעבודתו הוא בחינת אחוריים ופני אינו באפשרי להשיג כי לא יראני האדם וחי.^{11,12}

as it is said, “And you shall see My back,” etc. The delight that a person grasps in his divine service is the level of the back, whereas “My face” cannot possibly be grasped, “for no man shall see Me and live.”

G-d told Moses, “You shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen,” and “no man shall see Me and live.” The Alter Rebbe reads “back” as the delight and understanding a person can grasp in serving G-d, and “face” as the inner level that no created being can grasp.

4 ועדי"ז גם הגלוי בגי"ע [בגן עדן] הוא רק בחי' זיו והארה לבד ולכן יפה שעה אחת כו' שהוא המעשה עצמה בלי תענוג ובלי שכל מכל חיי העוה"ב [העולם הבא] דסוף מעשה במחשבה תחלה.

In the same way, the revelation in Gan Eden too is only the level of radiance and glow alone. Therefore “better is one hour,” etc., which is the deed itself, without delight and without intellect, “than all the life of the World to Come,” for “the end of the deed is first in thought.”

Gan Eden, the World to Come, reveals only a “radiance” and “glow” of G-d, not His essence. The deed of a mitzvah itself, even when done without delight or understanding, reaches the essence, because it is the final act that was first in G-d’s thought; that is why one hour of deeds here is “better” than all of the World to Come.

וזהו גם כן ענין משנה וברייטא שהמשנה הוא כלל כמו ד' ציצית מעכבות וכן סוכה שהיא גבוהה כו'.

This is also the matter of Mishnah and Baraisa: the Mishnah is a general rule, such as “the four tzitzis are indispensable [to one another],” and likewise “a sukkah that is high,” etc.

The same pattern appears in Mishnah and Baraisa. The Mishnah gives broad rules, such as that the four fringes of tzitzis are one mitzvah and each is indispensable to the others, or that “a sukkah that is higher than twenty cubits is invalid.”

SECTION 3 • 15

Above reason

5 ויש למצוא טעם לזה כענין תכלת דומה לים^{13,14} כו' וגבי סוכה יש טעם למען ידעו דורותיכם¹⁵ עד כ' [כתב] אמה¹⁶ כו'.

And one can find a reason for this, as in the matter of “the techeles [blue] resembles the sea,” etc.; and regarding sukkah there is a reason, “so that your generations may know” — up to twenty cubits, etc.

The Mishnah’s general rules often have a reason one can find. The blue thread of tzitzis recalls the sea, the sea the sky, and the sky the Throne of Glory; and a sukkah may not be higher than twenty cubits because the verse says “so that your generations may know that I made you dwell in sukkos,” and above twenty cubits a person does not notice the roof over him.

אבל הברייטא הוא פרט לבאר המשנה בכל דקדוקים ופרטים כמו סוכת גנב"ך ורקב"ש¹⁷ שאין טעם לדבר ונראה בחוש שהוא למעלה מהשכל והטעם וזהו אין בכלל

But the Baraisa is the particular detail that explains the Mishnah in all its fine points and details, such as the sukkah of "GaNBaCh" and "RaKBaSh," for which there is no reason, and one sees plainly that it is above intellect and reason. And this is [the meaning of] "the general contains nothing

The Baraisa lists fine details with no stated rationale: a sukkah built by gentiles, women, animals or Kusim (GaNBaCh), or by shepherds, fig-dryers, town watchmen or fruit guards (RaKBaSh), is valid. Such details, which follow no reason one can see, show that the law comes from a place above intellect.

אלא מה שבפרט שאין במשנה בכלל יותר מבפרט הברייטא ומה שלא נתגלה טעמה הוא יותר גבוה כי טעמי המצות לא נתגלו¹⁸ ולע"ל [ולעתיד לבוא] "G-d willing" <א"י"ה [אם ירצה השם] יתגלו

but what is in the particular": the Mishnah, as a general rule, contains no more than the particular of the Baraisa. And that whose reason has not been revealed is higher, for the reasons of the mitzvos have not been revealed, and in the time to come, G-d willing, they will be revealed.

The general rule has nothing beyond its particulars; so the reasonless details are no lesser addition but the very content of the rule. What has no revealed reason is higher, just as the Talmud says that the reasons of the mitzvos were not revealed; they will be revealed only in the time to come.

וזוהו ר"ש [רבי שמעון] דריש טעמי דקראי¹⁹ שדרש שמה שנאמר בפסוק טעם של דבר לא זהו עיקר רק שיש טעם בזה גבוה יותר למעלה מהטעם.

And this is [why] Rabbi Shimon expounds the reason of the verses: he expounded that where a verse states the reason for a matter, that is not the essential thing; rather, there is in it a reason that is higher, above [that] reason.

The Talmud records that the Tanna Rabbi Shimon "expounds the reason of the verse" and rules accordingly. The Alter Rebbe reads this to mean that even when a verse states a reason, that reason is not the essence; behind it lies a higher reason, above any stated reason.

נמצא שבמצוה שאין משיג בה טעם הוא יותר גבוה ומה שמשיג טעם ותענוג הוא רק בחינת אחוריים ולא

It follows that a mitzvah in which one does not grasp a reason is higher, and what one grasps with reason and delight is only the level of the back; and it is not

The conclusion: a mitzvah whose reason one does not grasp is higher, and whatever one does grasp, with understanding and delight, is only the "back" spoken of above.

כמו שסוברים העולם שהעיקר הוא הלב שמשיג תענוג ועובד בהתלהבות ואינו כן האמת רק עיקר הוא המעשה בלי תענוג והלב אינו כ"א סיוע בחינת גדפין.²⁰

as the world supposes, that the main thing is the heart, which grasps delight and serves with fervor. That is not the truth; rather, the main thing is the deed without delight, and the heart is nothing but an aid, the level of wings.

Many think the heart's fervor and delight are the essence of serving G-d. The Alter Rebbe says the essence is the deed itself, even without delight; the feelings of the heart are like "wings" that help lift the deed, not the thing itself.

SECTION 4 • 16

City and field; clearing away the evening

6 והנה משנה נקרא עיר וברייטא בח"י שדה לשון בר חוץ לעיר²¹ ולכאורה העיר הוא עיקר שדירים בה בנ"א [בני אדם]. אך נראה מי הוא מחיה אותם.²²

Now, the Mishnah is called "a city," and the Baraisa is the level of "a field," a term from bar, "outside," outside the city. Seemingly the city is the main thing, for people live in it. But let us see who gives them life:

The Sages call the collected laws of the Torah a "city," and the Baraisa is a "field": the word baraisa comes from bar, "outside," since these teachings stayed outside the Mishnah. A city seems more important than a field because people live there, but the question is what keeps them alive.

השדה שחוץ לעיר שמביאים משם התבואה. כך הוא הברייטא מחיה המשנה ומבארת ההלכה יותר בפרט היאך לעשות כי התנאים מבלי עולם שמורים מתוך המשנה.²³

the field outside the city, from which the grain is brought. So too, the Baraisa gives life to the Mishnah and explains the halachah in greater detail, how to act; for "the Tannaim destroy the world," since they issue rulings from within the Mishnah.

The city lives on the grain grown in the fields outside it. So too the Baraisa, with its details of how to act, gives life to the Mishnah. The Talmud says that Tannaim who issue rulings straight from the Mishnah's general wording, without its explanation, "destroy the world," because they rule wrongly.

וזהו ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה הוא לשון דבור ושיחה ולי' [ולשון] שחייה למטה מלשון ושח רום אנשים²⁴

And this is [the meaning of] “And Isaac went out lasuach in the field”: [lasuach] is a term of speech and conversation, and a term of bending low, from the phrase “and the loftiness of men shall be bowed down (veshach),”

Now the verse is read anew. Lasuach means speech and conversation, meaning Isaac’s speech in Torah, and also bending low, as in Isaiah’s “and the loftiness of men shall be bowed down (veshach).” Isaac bows down to bring Torah into the “field” of detail.

וכן כאשר יפרש²⁵ השוחה לשחות (בישעיה כ"ה) (ועמ"ש בזה ע"פ תבנה ותכונן²⁶ עיר סיחון כו' ע"ש) בשדה הוא בר. ולפנות ערב לפנות הערב והחשך.

and likewise “as the swimmer (hasocheh) spreads out to swim” (in Isaiah 25) (and see what is explained on this on [the verse] “Let the city of Sichon be built and established,” etc.; see there). “In the field” — this is bar. And “lifnos erev” [“toward evening”]: to clear away the evening and the darkness.

Isaiah also uses the related word hasocheh, “the swimmer” who stretches out to swim, which suggests reaching downward. “In the field” refers to the bar, the Baraisa outside the city. And lifnos erev, “toward evening,” is reread as lefanos, “to clear away” the evening and darkness.

דהנה התורה נשתלשלה בחשך כמאמר במחשכים הושיבני זה תלמוד בבלי²⁷ שנשתלשל למטה אפי' [אפילו] בשקר ולמה הוא כך כדי לפנות הערב והחשך ויהי אור

For the Torah has descended into darkness, as the saying goes, “He has set me in dark places” — this is the Babylonian Talmud, which descended below, even into falsehood. And why is it so? In order to clear away the evening and the darkness, “and there was light,”

The Talmud reads “He has set me in dark places” as the Babylonian Talmud, whose long debates and rejected arguments are like darkness. Torah has descended into this, even into false claims; the purpose is to clear the darkness away, so that there will be light.

כמאמר לעת ערב²⁸ יהיה אור כמשל מי שרוצה לפנות איזה דבר צריך הוא לכנוס בתוכי' [בתוכה] כדי לפנותה אבל לא שישאר בתוכה.

as it says, “At evening time there shall be light.” It is like the analogy of one who wishes to clear something out: he must enter into it in order to clear it out, but not remain inside it.

Zechariah’s promise, “at evening time there shall be light,” describes this goal. The analogy: to clean something out you must go inside it, but you do not stay there; so Torah enters darkness only to clear it.

גם מה שנשתלשלה התורה ונתלבשה בחשך טענות שקר הוא כדי לפנות החשך לאהפכא חשוכא לנהורא

So too, the fact that the Torah descended and clothed itself in darkness, in false claims, is in order to clear away the darkness, to turn darkness into light.

The Torah's clothing itself in false arguments has one purpose: to transform darkness itself into light, not only to push it away.

וכן העסק בתורה לדחות החשך והקושיות המסתיר על השכלת הדין האמת לאמתו ולמצא האמת גילוי רצון עליון ב"ה וכמ"ש ע"פ והמשכילים יזהירו²⁹ וגוי ע"ש:

And likewise, occupation in Torah is to push away the darkness and the difficulties that conceal the understanding of the law in its absolute truth, and to find the truth, the revelation of the Supreme Will, blessed be He; as is explained on [the verse] "And the wise shall shine," etc.; see there.

Studying Torah does the same. The difficulties and questions that hide the true ruling are the darkness; by working through them the learner finds the law in its full truth, which is the revealed will of G-d. The Alter Rebbe refers to his explanation of "And the wise shall shine" for more on this.

SECTION 5 • 17

Isaac's awe

7 וזהו ויצא יצחק לשוח. כי כדי לפנות הערב והחשך ולתקנו הוא ע"י יצחק שהוא בחי' פחד ויראת G-d (the Name Havayah) data-n="<" ה' וכמאמר אם אין יראה אין חכמה^{30,31} כו'.

And this is [the meaning of] "And Isaac went out lasuach." For clearing away the evening and the darkness and rectifying it comes about through Isaac, who is the level of Pachad (fear) and the awe of G-d; as the saying goes, "If there is no awe, there is no wisdom," etc.

Why Isaac? Isaac stands for Pachad, fear, and awe of G-d (the Torah calls G-d "the Fear of Isaac"). Clearing the darkness out of Torah needs awe, as the Mishnah says, "If there is no awe, there is no wisdom": Torah study without awe of G-d does not stay wisdom.

(וע' בזוהר בראשית³² ד' כ"א סע"א [סוף עמוד א]).³³ וזהו האומר אין לי אלא תורה³⁴ אפי' [אפילו] תורה אין לו ונשאר בחשך

(And see the Zohar, Bereshis, page 21, end of side a.) And this is [the meaning of] "Whoever says, 'I have nothing but Torah,' does not have even Torah," and he remains in darkness.

The Zohar, quoted in the Kehot note, says that the light that is growing dark "at the turning of evening" is the secret of Isaac's prayer, which rectifies that level, as the verse says "Isaac went out lasuach in the field toward evening." The Talmud's saying about one who has "nothing but Torah" describes study cut off from awe and from deeds: such a person stays in the darkness.

אבל באמת כתיב ישת חשך סתרו³⁵ שאף שהוא חשך מ"מ הוא סתרו וזהו לפנות הערב והחשך ולעת ערב יהי אור

But in truth it is written, "He made darkness His hiding place": although it is darkness, nevertheless it is His hiding place. And this is "to clear away the evening and the darkness," and "at evening time there shall be light."

Yet the darkness is not simply against G-d: King David says, "He made darkness His hiding place," so G-d Himself is hidden inside it. That is why clearing it away brings out light: "at evening time there shall be light."

והיינו ליבון הלכתא וגם זה פי' ברכו בתורה. (ועמ"ש ע"פ קול דודי³⁶ וע"פ ששים המה מלכות):³⁷

That is, the whitening of the halachah; and this too is the meaning of "they blessed over the Torah." (And see what is explained on "The voice of my beloved" and on "There are sixty queens.")

This is "the whitening of halachah": making the true law shine out of its dark garments. It is also what is meant by blessing over the Torah, and the Alter Rebbe refers to his maamarim on "The voice of my beloved" and "There are sixty queens" for more.

IN ONE'S AVODAH

The main thing in serving G-d is the deed itself, even without delight or understanding; the heart's feelings are wings that help, not the essence. Torah study must be joined with awe of G-d, for one who has "nothing but Torah" stays in darkness; with awe, the effort of working through difficulties clears the darkness and brings out the true halachah.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why should the detailed Baraisa, which seems a further descent, be higher than the Mishnah? How do the tube and the creation of man illustrate this?
2. In what sense is the reward of the World to Come only G-d's "back," and why can an hour of deeds in this world reach higher?
3. The maamar says the essence of service is the deed, not the heart's fervor. How does it describe the heart's proper role?
4. Why does Torah descend into darkness and even false claims, and what does the analogy of clearing out a place teach about how to engage with that darkness?
5. Why does the verse name Isaac for this work, and what does "He made darkness His hiding place" add?

FOR CHILDREN • AGES 9-13

For the children at the table

The deed comes first

THE BIG IDEA

What comes last was first in G-d's thought, so the simple deed of a mitzvah is higher than any delight we feel or reason we understand.

The Torah says, "And Yitzchak went out lasuach in the field toward evening." The maamar explains it through two teachings. The Mishnah gives a general rule, and a Baraisa explains it in every detail. The details seem lower, but "the end of the deed is first in thought." In a tube, what goes in first comes out last. Man was created last of all, yet the whole world was made for him. So the lowest step holds the deepest purpose. That is why one hour of good deeds in this world is better than all the life of the World to Come. Many rules of the Mishnah have a reason we can find, but many details of the Baraisa have none, and what is above reason is higher. In the same way, the main thing in a mitzvah is the deed itself; the warm feeling in the heart is only its "wings," a help. Lasuach means to speak and also to bend low. Yitzchak bends down into the field to "clear away the evening": the Torah goes down into darkness and hard questions in order to turn them into light. For that we need Yitzchak's quality, awe of G-d.

THE MASHAL

People live in the city, so the city seems to be the main thing, but their food comes from the field outside it. So too, the Baraisa, the "field," gives life to the Mishnah, the "city," by showing exactly how to act. And a person who wants to clear something out must go into it, but not stay there; so the Torah went down into darkness only to clear it away and bring out light.

QUESTIONS FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

1. Why is the simple deed of a mitzvah higher than the good feeling we have while doing it?
2. What does it mean that Yitzchak went out into the field to "clear away the evening"?
3. Which mitzvah will you do this week even when you do not understand its reason or do not feel like it, and how can awe of G-d help you learn Torah well?

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SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה

The Kehot note sends the reader to the Rebbe's source notes printed earlier in the edition for further references on this maamar.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע. בלקו"ת פי' ראה לב, ד מציינ' לד"ה זה בענין עיר ושדה.

2 ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה

Isaac goes out "lasuach" in the field toward evening and sees Rebecca's camels approaching. The maamar reads the verse as a description of bringing Torah down into the "field" of detail.

בראשית כ"ד:ס"ג-ס"ד

וַיֵּצֵא יִצְחָק לְשׁוֹחַ בְּשָׂדֶה לְפָנֹת עָרֶב וַיֵּשֶׂא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה גַמְלִים בָּאִים:

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, there were camels coming.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית כד, סג.

3 וברייטא פי' המשנה

A manuscript variant: it reads "and the Baraisa is the explanation of the Mishnah," a slightly fuller wording with the same meaning.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בכרך 2061: "וברייטא הוא פי' של המשנה". בענין ברייתות ראה בארוכה באוה"ת פי' שמות עי' יב ואילך. לקו"ת שה"ש מד, ב ושם מציינ' לכאן.

4 שהברייטא — דהנה התורה

A manuscript variant: instead of "for the Torah," it reads "and a proof of this: for the Torah," presenting the Torah's descent into false claims as proof that the Baraisa is higher.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בכת"י הנ"ל: ורא"י לזה דהנה התורה.

5 זה אומר אני מצאתי

The Mishnah's opening case: two people hold a garment, and each says, "I found it." Since at most one can be telling the truth, the Alter Rebbe uses it to show that the Torah descends even into dealing with falsehood.

בבא מציעא כ"א:א' Bava Metzia 2a:1

שְׁנַיִם אוֹחֲזִין בְּטִלְתָּא, זֶה אוֹמֵר: "אֲנִי מֵצְאָתִיהָ", וְזֶה אוֹמֵר: "אֲנִי מֵצְאָתִיהָ". זֶה אוֹמֵר: "כּוֹלָהָ שְׁלִי", וְזֶה אוֹמֵר: "כּוֹלָהָ שְׁלִי". זֶה יֵשֶׁבַע שְׂאִין לוֹ כֶּה פָחוֹת מִחֲצִיָּה – וַיִּחְלֻקוּ.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

כ"מ ב, א.

PARAGRAPH 2

6 כי זה כל האדם

Koheles concludes: fear G-d and keep His commandments, "for this is the whole of man." The Alter Rebbe uses the words to show that man is the sum and purpose of all creation.

קהלת י"ב:13 Ecclesiastes 12:13

סוֹף דְּבַר הַכֹּל נִשְׁמָע אֶת־הָאֱלֹקִים יֵרָא וְאֶת־מִצְוֹתָיו שְׁמֹר כִּי־זֶה כָּל־הָאָדָם:

The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear G-d, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man.

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PARAGRAPH 3

7 יפה שעה אחת

A handwritten gloss in the margin of a copy of Torah Ohr, which its writer attributes to "my teacher," sends the reader to section 3 of the maamar "Uvevo'ah Lifnei HaMelech" for more on "better is one hour."

KEHOT'S NOTE

אבות ד, יז. "עי' ד"ה ובכואה לפני המלך ס"ג ע"ש (ממורי נ"ע)" הג"ה בגיליון תו"א.

8 יפה שעה אחת

"Better is one hour of teshuvah and good deeds in this world than all the life of the World to Come." The Alter Rebbe explains why a deed down here outweighs the World to Come.

משנה אבות ד:17 Pirkei Avot 4:17

הוא ה'ה אומר, יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה, מכל חיי העולם הבא. ויפה שעה אחת של קורת רוח בעולם הבא, מכל חיי העולם הזה:

He used to say: more precious is one hour in repentance and good deeds in this world, than all the life of the world to come; And more precious is one hour of the tranquility of the world to come, than all the life of this world.

Torat Emet 357 (Public Domain) • Mishnah Yomit by Dr. Joshua Kulp (CC-BY)

9 צדיקים יושבים

In the World to Come there is no eating or drinking; "the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and enjoy

the radiance of the Shechinah.” The Alter Rebbe calls that radiance only the “back.”

ברכות י"ז א:י"ב17a: Berakhot

מרגל א בפומיה דרב: לא כעולם הנה העולם הבא. העולם הבא אין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה ולא פריה ורביה ולא משא ומתן ולא קנאה ולא שנאה ולא תחרות, אלא צדיקים יושבין ועטרותיהם כראשיהם ונגהים מזיו השכינה, שנאמר: "ויחזו את האלקים ויאכלו וישתו".

It was a favourite saying of Rab : Not like this world is the world to come. In the world to come there is neither eating nor drinking; no procreation of children or business transactions; no envy or hatred or rivalry ; but the righteous sit enthroned, their crowns on their heads, and enjoy the lustre of the Shekinah; as it is said, "And they beheld G-d, and did eat and drink" (Exod. xxiv. II).

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות יז, א.

10

וראית את אחורי

G-d tells Moses, "You shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." Here the "back" is the delight and understanding a person can grasp.

שמות ל"ג כ"ג23: Exodus

והסתרתי את כפי וראית את אחורי ופני לא יראו:

And I will take away My hand, and thou shalt see My back; but My face shall not be seen.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות לג, כג.

11

וכמשל השפופרת . . האדם וחי

An earlier version of this passage with variations.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בבזך אדח"ז יבל אבי יושב ה, ב הקטע בשינויים: "כמו שפופרת של קנה מה שמניחים בתוכו ראשון יוצא אחרון וכמו האדם שהוא סוף לכל הנבראים שהוא נברא בששת ימי בראשית ומ"מ הוא במעלה על כולם וכל הנבראים כולם הם לצורך האדם שמאכלו ומלבושים ושאר הדברים הכל הוא מחמת הטעם יתיר במעלה הנ"ל, וזהו ג"כ מה שכתוב בגמרא יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומע"ט בעוה"ז מכל חיי עוה"ב כי עוה"ב הוא מחמת הצדיקים יושבין ועטרותיהן בראשיתן ונגהין מזיו השכינה והוא רק בחי אחוריים כמ"ש וראית את אחורי כוי כי מה שמשגיגים אלקות ויש לו תענוג בזה הוא בחי אחוריים אבל (כוי הוא המעשה) בחי פנים דהיינו מה שהוא לפני אחוריים לא יראו שא"א להשיג וכמ"ש כי לא יראני האדם וחי". עכ"ל שם.

12

כי לא יראני האדם וחי

"You cannot see My face, for no man shall see Me and live." The Alter Rebbe uses it to say that the inner "face" is beyond anyone's grasp.

שמות ל"ג כ"ו20: Exodus

ויאמר לא תוכל לראת את פני כי לא יראני האדם וחי:

And He said: 'Thou canst not see My face, for man shall not see Me and live.'

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PARAGRAPH 5

13

תכלת דומה לים

Rabbi Meir: techeles is special because it resembles the sea, the sea resembles the sky, and the sky the Throne of Glory. The Alter Rebbe brings it as a mitzvah detail with a reason one can find.

מנחות מ"ג ב:י"ג-י"ד13-43b: Menachot

תניא היה ר' מאיר אומר מה נשתנה תכלת מכל מיני צבעונין מפני שהתכלת דומה לים וים דומה לרקיע ורקיע לכסא הכבוד שנאמר (שמות כד, י) ותחת רגליו כמעשה לבנת הספיר וכעצם השמים לטהר וכתוב (יהזקאל א, כו) כמראה אבן ספיר דמות כסא תניא היה רבי מאיר אומר גדול עונשו של לכן יותר מעונשו של תכלת משל למה הדבר דומה למלך בשר ודם שאמר לשני עבדיו לאחד אמר הבא לי חותם של טיט ולאחד אמר הבא לי חותם של זהב ופשעו שניהם ולא הביאו איזה מהן עונשו מרובה הוי אומר זה ...

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Zohar I, 121a, זח"א קכא,

KEHOT'S NOTE

מנחות מג, ב. זח"א קכא, א. בכת"י הנ"ל נוסף "וים לרקיע ורקיע לכה"כ".

14

תכלת דומה לים

The Kehot note points to the Zohar as a further source for the likeness of the techeles to the sea.

Sofar הזהר, וירא ליה: תק"ו-ל"ו: תקי"ג36:506-35: Zohar, Vayera

15

למען ידעו דורותיכם

"So that your generations may know that I made the Children of Israel dwell in sukkos." The Talmud derives the twenty-cubit limit from this reason.

ויקרא כ"ג מ"ג23:43: Leviticus

למען ידעו דרתיכם כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל בהוציא אותם מארץ מצרים אני ה' אלקיכם:

that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the L-RD your G-d.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ויקרא כג, מג.

16

עד כ' אמה

A sukkah higher than twenty cubits is invalid; Rabbah explains that up to twenty cubits a person knows he is dwelling in a sukkah, but above it his eye does not notice the roof. An example of a general rule with a reason.

סוכה ב' א:ח"א2a:8: Sukkah

אמר רבה, דאמר קרא: "למען ידעו דורותיכם כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל", עד עשרים אמה, אדם ידע שהוא דר בסוכה, למעלה מעשרים אמה — אין אדם ידע שדר בסוכה, משום דלא שלטא בה עינא.

Rabbah answered: Scripture says, "That your generations will know that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in sukkot" (Leviticus 23:43). Up to twenty cubits [high] one

knows that he is dwelling in a sukkah, but with one higher than twenty cubits he does not 'know' that he is dwelling in a sukkah, since his eye does not catch sight of it.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

סוכה ב, א.

17

סוכת גנב"ך ורקב"ש

A Baraisa: sukkos built by gentiles, women, animals or Kusim, and those of shepherds, fig-dryers, town watchmen and fruit guards, are valid. The Alter Rebbe cites them as details with no stated reason.

Sukkah 8b:8-10 ח' ב:ח"י סוכה

"מכל מקום" לאתווי מאי? לאתווי: סוכת גנב"ך. האי תנא דגנב"ך, אלימא לקה גנב"ך משום דקביעי, וקא תנא "מכל מקום" לאתווי רקב"ש, דלא קביעי. והאי תנא דרקב"ש, אלימא לקה רקב"ש, דבני חייבא גינהו, ותנא "מכל מקום" לאתווי גנב"ך, דלאו בני חייבא גינהו.

What does 'any sukkah whatsoever' include? It includes the sukkot [whose mnemonic] is ganbak. The tanna of ganbak regards these sukkot as possessing greater validity because they are permanent, and therefore he used the expression, "any sukkah whatsoever" to include rakkash which are not permanent. While the tanna of rakkash regards the rakkash sukkot possessing greater validity since they belong to those who are bound [by the commandment of sukkah] and therefore he used the expression, "any sukkah whatsoever" to include the ganbak sukkot which belong to those who are ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

סוכה ח, ב.

18

טעמי המצות לא נתגלו

The Talmud explains why the reasons of the Torah were not revealed: when reasons were given, King Solomon relied on them and stumbled. The Alter Rebbe adds that they will be revealed in the time to come.

Sanhedrin 21b:16 ט"ז ב:ט"ז סנהדרין

ואמר רבי יצחק: מפני מה לא נתגלו טעמי תורה? שהרי שתי מקראות נתגלו טעמן, ונכשל בהן גדול העולם. כתיב: "לא ירבה לו נשים". אמר שלמה: "אני ארבה ולא אסור". וכתיב: "ויהי לעת זקנת שלמה נשיו הטו את לבבו".

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה סנהדרין כא, ב.

19

ר"ש דריש טעמי דקראי

The Talmud notes that Rabbi Shimon expounds the reason of the verse and rules according to it. The Alter Rebbe reads this as pointing to a reason above the stated one.

Yoma 42b:12-13 י"ב ב:י"ב יומא

"והוציא אותה" — שלא יוציא אחרת עמה. כדתנן: לא היתה פרה רוצה לצאת — אין מוציאין עמה שחורה, שלא יאמרו שחורה שחטו. ואין מוציאין עמה אדומה, שלא יאמרו שתים שחטו. רבי אומר: לא מן השם הוא זה, אלא משום שנאמר: "אותה", לכה. ותנא קמא: הא כתיב

ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה כו'

"אותה"? מאן תנא קמא — רבי שמעון היא, דדריש טעמיה דקרא. מאי בינייהו? איכא בינייהו,

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יבמות כ"ג א:י"ג-י"ד Yevamot 23a:13-14

האי בשבעה גוים כתיב? "כי יסיר" — לרבות כל המסירים. הניחא לרבי שמעון, דדריש טעמא דקרא, אלא לרבנן מנא להו? מאן תנא דפליג עליה דרבי יוסי יהודה — רבי שמעון היא.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

יומא מב, ב. יבמות כג, א.

20

בכתי" ליתא הפסוק. ושם

A manuscript variant: the verse is missing, and instead it reads "and likewise in sukkah, above twenty, etc., because it resembles the clouds of glory," giving a different reason for the twenty-cubit limit.

KEHOT'S NOTE

"וכן בסוכה למעלה מעשרים כו' לפי שהוא דומה לענני הכבוד".

PARAGRAPH 6

21

וברייתא בחי' שדה לשון בר חזי לעיר

Under the entry bar it states that bar ("outside") is Yesod when it is in exile, "outside its place," and that Malchus is then called "Baraisa." This gives the Kabbalistic background for reading Baraisa as what is outside.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה מא"א ב, נג בר הוא היסוד כשהוא בגלות לבר מאתרי' והמלי נקי אז ברייתא. וראה באוה"ת שמות ע' כ.

22

משנה נקי' עיר ובריייתא בחי' שדה

On Shemos it gives the source for calling the laws a "city": the Talmud in Temurah 16a on "Kiryat Sefer" in Joshua 15, meaning the laws of the Torah (see Rashi there).

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה"ת פ' שמות ע' טו: "כמארו"ל בתמורה דט"ז ע"פ קרי' ספר ביהושע סי' טו דהיינו הלכות התורה ע"ש בפרש"י בד"ה וילכדה כו". עי' אוה"ת תולדות קמג, א ואילך.

23

כי התנאים מבלי עולם שמורים מתוך המשנה

The Talmud says the Tannaim "destroy the world" because they issue rulings from their Mishnah without knowing its reasoning. The Alter Rebbe uses this to show that the Mishnah needs its detailed explanation to give life.

Sotah 22a:7 א:ז:7 סוטה

תנא: התנאים — מבלי עולם. מבלי עולם סלקא דעתך? אמר רבינא: שמורין הלכה מתוך משנתן. תנא נמי הכי, אמר רבי יהושע: וכי מבלי עולם הן? והלא מיישבי עולם הן, שנאמר: "הליכות עולם לו!" אלא, שמורין הלכה מתוך משנתן.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

סוטה כב, א. בבזך אדה"ז יבל אבי יושב הנ"ל ובבזך 2217: כי התנאים שעוסקים במשנה מבלי עולם הן שמורים הלכה מתוך משנתן.

24

ושח רום אנשים

"The haughty eyes of man shall be humbled, and the loftiness of men shall be bowed down (veshach)." The Alter Rebbe reads lasuach as related, meaning bending low.

ישעיהו ב' י"א:11

עֲנִי גְבוּהַת אָדָם שָׁפֵל וְשַׁח רֹם אַנְשִׁים וְנִשְׁגַּב ה' לְבָדּוֹ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא:

The lofty looks of man shall be brought low, And the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, And the L-RD alone shall be exalted in that day.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שע"י ב, יא.

25

"As the swimmer spreads out his hands to swim." The word is brought as another meaning of lasuach.

ישעיהו כ"ה: י"א:11

וּפָרֵשׁ יָדָיו בְּקֶרְבּוֹ כְּאִשֶּׁר יִפְרֹשׁ הַשָּׁחָה לְשַׁחַת וְהַשְׁפִּיל גְּאוֹנוֹ עַם אֲרָבוֹת יָדָיו:

And when he shall spread forth his hands in the midst thereof, As he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim, His pride shall be brought down together with the cunning of his hands.

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26

ע"פ תבנה ותכונן

This is the maamar on "Let the city of Sichon be built and established" that the text itself refers to for more on lasuach; it refers back to this maamar in turn.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לקו"ת חקת טו, א [בלקו"ת שם מצייני לכאן]. ובאוה"ת חקת ע' תתפז ואילך.

27

במחשכים הושיבני זה תלמוד בבלי

"He has set me in dark places, like those long dead." The verse the Sages apply to the Babylonian Talmud.

Lamentations 3:6 י"ג:6

בְּמַחְשָׁכִים הוֹשִׁיבֵנִי כְּמֵתֵי עוֹלָם:

He hath made me to dwell in dark places, As those that have been long dead. .

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Sanhedrin 24a:18-19 י"ח-י"ט:18-19

מאי בבל? אמר רבי יוחנן: בלולה במקרא, בלולה במשנה, בלולה בתלמוד. "במחשכים הושיבני כמתי עולם" - אמר רבי ירמיה: זה תלמודה של בבל. מתני' אמר לו: "נאמן עלי אבא", "נאמן עלי אביה", "נאמנים עלי שלשה רועי בקרי". רבי מאיר אומר: יכול לחזור בו, ונקמים אומרים: אינו יכול לחזור בו.

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC)

KEHOT'S NOTE

איכה ג, ו. סנהדרין כד, א. ראה לקו"ת ויקרא ה, ד. וראה באוה"ת ואתחנן ע' עה שמצייני לשליה שהקשה הלא התורה היא ענינו ואין נ קי מחשכים, ע"ש. ראה גם לקו"ת שה"ש מב, ד. מאמרי אדה"ז — ענינים ע' ע. סה"מ תרל"ב ח"ב ע' תס. סה"מ מלוקט ח"ג ע' מה-ו. וש"נ.

28

לעת ערב יהי אור

The prophet foretells a day on which "at evening time there shall be light." Here it is the purpose of Torah's descent: to turn the evening into light.

Zechariah 14:7 ז'י"ד:14

וְהָיָה יוֹם־אֶחָד הוּא יָנוּדַע לֵה' לֹא־יִיּוֹם וְלֹא־לַיְלָה וְהָיָה לְעֵת־עֶרֶב יְהִי־אֹר:

And there shall be one day Which shall be known as the L-RD'S, Not day, and not night; But it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

זכרי' יד, ז.

29

ע"פ והמשכילים יזהירו

This is the explanation on "And the wise shall shine" that the text refers to.

KEHOT'S NOTE

אגה"ק ס"י כו.

PARAGRAPH 7

30

אם אין יראה אין חכמה

Kehot's marei makom for these words (its note is below).

KEHOT'S NOTE

אבות ג, יז.

31

אם אין יראה אין חכמה

"If there is no wisdom, there is no awe; if there is no awe, there is no wisdom." The Alter Rebbe brings it to show that Torah study needs the awe that Isaac represents.

Pirkei Avot 3:17 י"ז:3

רבי אלעזר בן עזריה אומר, אם אין תורה, אין דרך ארץ. אם אין דרך ארץ, אין תורה. אם אין חכמה, אין יראה. אם אין יראה, אין חכמה. אם אין בינה, אין דעת. אם אין דעת, אין בינה. אם אין קמח, אין תורה. אם אין תורה, אין קמח. הוא היה אומר, כל שחקמיתו מרבה ממעשיו, למה הוא דומה, לאילו שענפיו מרבין ושרשיה מעטין, והרוח באה ועוקרתו והופכתו על פניו, שנאמר (ירמיה יז) והיה כערער בערבה ולא יראה כי יבוא טוב ושכן חררים במדבר ארץ ...

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said: Where there is no Torah, there is no right conduct; where there is no right conduct, there is no Torah. Where there is no wisdom, there is no fear of G-d; where there is no fear of G-d, there is no wisdom. Where there is no understanding, there is no knowledge; where there is no knowledge, there is no understanding. Where there is no bread, there is no Torah; where there is no Torah, there is no bread. He used to say: one whose wisdom ...

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32

ועי בזהר בראשית דכ"א סע"א

Kehot's marei makom for these words (its note is below).

KEHOT'S NOTE

"תנינא נהירו דאזיל לאתחשכא לעת פנות ערב רזא דצלותא דיצחק לאתקנא האי דרגא דכתיב ויצא יצחק לשוב בשדה פנות ערב אסתכלותא דערב חשוכן כלהו לגביה בהאי פנות ערב." ע"כ.

33 ויע' בזהר בראשית ד' כ"א סע"א

As quoted in the Kehot note: the light that goes dark "at the turning of evening" is the secret of Isaac's prayer, which rectifies that level, as it says "Isaac went out lasuach in the field toward evening." The Alter Rebbe cites it himself.

ספר הזהר, בראשית י"א:קכ"ט-11:129-12:142 ז"ל
י"ב:קמ"ב

34 האומר אין לי אלא תורה

"Whoever says, 'I have nothing but Torah,' does not have even Torah." Here it describes study without awe, which stays in darkness.

יבמות ק"ט ב' ד' ה' 109b:4-5

ערבי שלציון — דעבדי שלוף דוץ. תוקע עצמו לדבר הלכה — דתניא, רבי יוסי אומר: כל האומר אין לו תורה — אין לו תורה. פשיטא! אלא: כל האומר אין לו אלא תורה — אין לו אלא תורה. הא נמי פשיטא! אלא דאפילו תורה אין לו. מאי טעמא? אמר רב פפא, אמר קרא: "ולמדתם ועשיתם" — כל שישנו בעשיה ישנו בלמידה, כל שאינו בעשיה אינו בלמידה.

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC)
KEHOT'S NOTE

יבמות קט, ב. נסמן לעיל ז, א.

35 ישתחשך סתרו

"He made darkness His hiding place." The Alter Rebbe infers that G-d is hidden within the darkness itself, which is why clearing it reveals light.

Psalms 18:12 תהילים י"ח:י"ב

יְשַׁתְּחַשֵּׁךְ סִתְרוֹ סְבִיבוֹתָיו סָכְתוֹ הַשְׁכַּת־מִים עָבִי שְׁחָקִים:

He made darkness His hiding-place, His pavilion round about Him; darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים יח, יב.

36 ע"פ קול דודי

Sefaria does not know this ref

KEHOT'S NOTE

לקמן נא, ג.

37 וע"פ ששים המה מלכות

This is the second maamar the text refers to.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לקו"ת שה"ש מא, ב. ושם מציין לכאן.



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THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

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This edition contains the Hebrew text, the English translation, our explanations, and the notes.

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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/](https://www.likuteitorah.com/about/the-chassidishe-parsha/)

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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