



TORAH OHR • THE CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

פרשת כי תשא

Parshas Ki Sisa



The 2 maamarim of Torah Ohr on the parsha.

The Hebrew, a translation, a short explanation of every section, and the sources

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 CHASSIDISHE PARSHA

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שמאלו תחת לראשי וימינו תחבקני

“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand
embraces me”



G-d’s “left hand,” the rejection that a person’s failings arouse above, is itself what lifts him up: from distance comes the boundless love of “with all your might,” and then G-d’s “right hand,” the Torah and mitzvos, embraces him so that he does not fall.

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

Reading “His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me” together with the opening of Ki Sisa, the Alter Rebbe teaches that the “visitation” Israel’s deeds arouse above never rejects completely: it ends by lifting their head. He carries this into divine service through two voices, prayer and Torah. Prayer rises from below: contemplating that G-d is the life of everything, a person comes to love Him, and that love must be constant, not only during prayer. The vision that brings this love is drawn from above, and we ask for it in the blessings before the Shema. How, then, can embodied, distracted Israel be greater than the angels? The angels are only channels for G-dly life, while Israel, nullifying the body, draw a light that transforms the body itself, like light that emerges from darkness. Torah, in contrast, descends from above. Beyond the love “with heart and soul” lies “with all your might,” the love of the soul’s essence for G-d’s essence, reached above all by the baal teshuvah, whose former distance intensifies his yearning. This is the left hand under the head. Then the right hand, Torah, mitzvos and above all charity, embraces him, and “a ransom for his soul” repairs what was lacking.

OUTLINE

1 The left hand that lifts the head

¶1-2

G-d’s rejection, aroused by Israel’s deeds, is never complete; the census verse of Ki Sisa promises that the very “visitation” lifts their head. Two voices, Torah and prayer, bring the theme into divine service.

2 Prayer and the love of G-d

¶13-9

Prayer rises from below and Torah descends from above. Seeing that G-d is the life of all things brings love, which must be constant; the vision itself is drawn from above and requested in the prayers before the Shema.

3 Why Israel surpass the angels

¶10-16

Angels are only channels for the G-dly life-force; Israel, by nullifying the body, draw a light that makes “Holy” meaningful and turns the body itself into a chariot for G-d. This light, though only a “foot,” is “our G-d,” as a son is his father’s foot.

4 Love from above and Torah from above

¶17-18

Love and awe come from above, drawn down by first humbling the body with a broken heart; Torah, drawing G-d’s wisdom into every faculty, is the arousal from above.

5 With all your might: the love of teshuvah

¶19-23

Love with heart and soul responds to G-d’s revealed radiance; “with all your might” is the soul’s essence reaching His essence. The baal teshuvah attains it through his former distance: the left hand under the head.

6 The right hand’s embrace

¶24-26

Torah and mitzvos descend from G-d’s highest attributes into physical life and hold a person after prayer; charity, equal to all the mitzvos, is the “ransom” that repairs and uplifts.

KEY CONCEPTS

The left pushes away, the right draws near שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת

G-d’s severity and kindness work together: even His rejection is never complete, and it becomes the means of a greater closeness.

Sensory sight ראייה חושית

An understanding of G-d as one’s life so vivid that it is like seeing with the eyes; it brings a love strong enough to overpower the evil inclination.

From below upward and from above downward מלמטה למעלה ומלמעלה למטה

Prayer is the person’s arousal rising toward G-d; Torah is G-d’s own wisdom and will descending into the person’s thought, speech and action.

Self-nullification (bittul) ביטול

Having no standing of one’s own before G-d. The angels are wholly batel, and so are mere channels; a Jew who nullifies his body makes even the body a vehicle for G-d’s unity.

With all your might (me’od) בכל מאדך

Love beyond measure: the service of the soul’s essence, its “head,” pouring itself out toward G-d’s essence, above the love that responds to His radiance in creation.

Spark and essence of the soul ניצוץ הנשמה ועיקר הנשמה

Only a spark of the soul is enclothed in the body (the “foot”); its essence remains above as makif (the “head”).

Return (shov) שוב

The “returning” that follows the soul’s “running” (ratzo) upward: Torah and mitzvos, descending from on high into physical life, embrace a person so that he does not fall.

SECTION 1 • 11-2

The left hand that lifts the head

1 שמאלו תחת לראשי^{1,2} וימינו תחבקני. הנה בענין העולמות³ כן דרך השם לבני ישראל עם קרובו⁴ כשמתעורר למעלה בחי' שמאל דוחה⁵ מחמת מעשה התחתונים ויהי להם למושיע⁶ וגורם שאדרכה עיני יהיה להם נשיאות ראש.⁷

“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.” Now, as in the matter of the worlds, so is the way of G-d with “the children of Israel, the people near to Him”: when the level of “the left [hand] that pushes away” is aroused above because of the deeds of the lower beings, “He becomes their Savior,” and brings it about that, on the contrary, through this they will have an uplifting of the head.

The maamar opens with a verse of the Song of Songs: the bride, whom the Sages read as Israel, says of her beloved that his left hand is under her head and his right hand embraces her. In Chassidus the left hand is G-d's attribute of severity, which “pushes away,” and the right hand is His kindness, which draws near. The Alter Rebbe states his theme: when Israel's deeds arouse this “pushing away” above, G-d makes the rejection itself the cause of their salvation and of an “uplifting of the head,” by the pattern through which He conducts the worlds (Or HaTorah's version of the maamar reads “the conduct of the worlds”).

2 וזהו כי תשא את ראש בניי [בני ישראל] לפקודיהם⁸ פיי על ידי איזה פקידה שיפקד עליהם לרעה חיו [חס ושלום] וכלי [וכלשון] רז"ל [רבתינו זכרונם לברכה] אין לך כל פקידה שאין בה מעון העגל.^{9,10,11}

And this is [the meaning of] “When you lift up the head of the children of Israel lifkudeihem (according to their numbering)”: that is, through some visitation (pekidah) that is visited upon them for ill, G-d forbid, as in the expression of our Sages, of blessed memory: “There is no visitation at all that does not contain [something] of the sin of the Calf.”

The Alter Rebbe now reads the opening verse of Parshas Ki Sisa, “When you lift up the head of the children of Israel lifkudeihem,” through another sense of the root pakad: a “visitation,” a reckoning for sin. The Sages said that every such reckoning includes something of the sin of the Golden Calf, so the verse speaks of the head being lifted through a visitation for ill.

הנה עיני אדרבה תשא את ראש בניי [בני ישראל] כי בחיי השמאל דוחה אינה דחי לגמרי חיו [חס ושלום] אלא וימין מקרבת. וזהו וימינו תחבקני^{12,13} אשר כי יפול לא יוטל¹⁴ חיו [חס ושלום].

Now, through this, on the contrary, “you lift up the head of the children of Israel”; for the level of “the left [hand] pushes away” is not a complete pushing away, G-d forbid, but rather “and the right [hand] draws near.” And this is “and his right hand embraces me”: that “though he fall, he shall not be cast down,” G-d forbid.

That very visitation lifts their head, because G-d’s left hand never rejects completely: the left pushes away while the right draws near. This is “his right hand embraces me”: a Jew who falls is not cast down for good, as the psalm says.

ולהבין ענין זה בעבודת ה' כתיב הקל קול יעקב¹⁵ ב' פעמים קול א' בלא וא"ו וא' בוא"ו כי ב' קולות הם א' לתורה וא' לתפלה.

To understand this matter in the service of G-d: it is written, “The voice is the voice of Yaakov,” [the word] “voice” twice, one without a vav and one with a vav; for there are two voices, one for Torah and one for prayer.

To bring the theme into a person’s own service of G-d, the Alter Rebbe cites Yitzchak’s words, “The voice is the voice of Yaakov,” where the first “voice” (הקל) is spelled without a vav and the second (קול) with one. The doubled word points to two voices of Yaakov, Torah and prayer, which the next paragraphs compare.

SECTION 2 • 13-9

Prayer and the love of G-d

3 והנה פעם אמרו דתלמוד תורה כנגד כולן^{16,17} ופעם הפליגו מאד בשבח מעלת התפלה ושהיא כנגד הקרבנות.¹⁸

Now, at one time [the Sages] said that “the study of Torah is equal to them all,” and at another time they went to very great lengths in praise of the virtue of prayer, and [said] that it corresponds to the sacrifices.

Two teachings of the Sages seem to compete. The Mishnah says that the study of Torah “is equal to them all,” outweighing every other mitzvah, while the Talmud praises prayer highly and says that the prayers were instituted to correspond to the daily offerings.

אך שניהם אמת כי הם חלוקים בענינים שהתפלה היא בבחי' מלמטה למעלה והתורה היא בבחי' מלמעלה למטה.

But both are true, for they differ in their nature: prayer is on the level of “from below upward,” and Torah is on the level of “from above downward.”

Both are true because Torah and prayer move in opposite directions. In prayer a person rises from below upward toward G-d; in Torah, G-d's wisdom comes down from above to the person.

ובאור ענין זה כי הנה ענין התפלה היא קיום המצות ק"ש [קריאת שמע] ואהבת וגוי' כמ"ש במ"א ועד"ז תקנו ג"כ כל סדר התפלה קודם ק"ש [קריאת שמע] כדי שיקבל עליו בק"ש [בקריאת שמע] ואהבת באמת וכמשי"ת [וכמו שיתבאר] לקמן.

The explanation of this matter: the substance of prayer is the fulfillment of the mitzvos of the Shema, “And you shall love,” etc., as is explained elsewhere. And along these lines they also instituted the whole order of prayer before the Shema, so that in the Shema one will take upon himself “And you shall love” in truth, as will be explained below.

The heart of prayer is fulfilling the command of the Shema, “And you shall love Havayah your G-d.” The prayers before the Shema were arranged to bring a person to accept that love sincerely when he reaches it, a point the maamar returns to in paragraph 9.

4 והנה הדרך¹⁹ המביאה את האדם לידי אהבה זו היא מ"ש ראה נתתי לפניך היום²⁰ את החיים ואת הטוב ואת המות ואת הרע ובחרת בחיים.²¹ לאהבה את²² ה' אלקיך כי הוא חיך וגוי'.

Now, the way that brings a person to this love is what is written: “See, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil,” “and you shall choose life”; “to love Havayah your G-d, for He is your life,” etc.

The way to love G-d is found in Moshe's charge: G-d has set life and good, death and evil before us, and commands us to choose life, “to love Havayah your G-d... for He is your life.” The Alter Rebbe joins these verses: choosing life means recognizing that G-d is our life, and that recognition brings love.

כי בכל דבר בעוה"ז יש גשמיות ורוחניות והרוחניות והחיות אלהי הוא חיים וטוב והגשמי [והגשמיים] / והגשמיות / והגשמית] הוא מות ורע שהוא כלה ונפסד.

For in everything in this world there is physicality and spirituality. The spirituality and the G-dly life-force (chayus) are “life” and “good,” and the physicality is “death” and “evil,” for it comes to an end and decays.

He explains “life” and “death” in every created thing. Its spiritual side, the G-dly life-force that sustains it, is “life and good”; its physical side is “death and evil,” because it wears out and passes away.

5 ומזה יראה האדם שכשם שהגשמיות כל דבר בטל לגבי הרוחני²³ [הרוחנית] המחיהו וכן באדם עצמו הנה הגוף טפל ובטל לגבי הרוחני²⁴ והחיו²⁵ [והחיות] שבו לכן אוהב את חיי נפשו במאד מאד.

From this a person will see that just as the physicality of every thing is nullified before the spiritual [force] that gives it life—and so too in man himself, the body is secondary and nullified before the spirituality and life-force within it, and therefore he loves the life of his soul very, very greatly—

A person can see for himself that the physical side of everything is batel, subordinate and of no account, before the spiritual force that keeps it alive. The same is true in man: the body is secondary to the soul that animates it, which is why everyone loves his own life so intensely.

כן ויותר מכן יש לאדם לאהוב את ה' כאשר יסתכל בעין שכלו בראי²⁶ [בראיה] חושית כי הוא חייך ממש שהוא מקור וחיי החיים.²³

so, and even more than that, a person ought to love G-d, when he looks with the eye of his intellect, with sensory sight, [and sees] that “He is your life,” truly, for He is the source and the Life of all life.

If a person loves his own life so much, he should love G-d even more, once he sees with his mind, as clearly as with his eyes, that G-d is literally his life, the source and Life of all life. “Sensory sight” here means an understanding so vivid that it is like seeing.

6 וזהו ענין וכל צבא השמים לך משתחווים²⁴ כמארז"ל [כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] שהחמה שוקעת במערב ומשתחוה לקונה²⁵ וכן כל המזלות בעבור שרואים ומשיגים חיותם וקיומם המהוה ומחיי אותם ומקיימם.

And this is the meaning of “And all the host of heaven bow down to You,” as our Sages, of blessed memory, said: the sun sets in the west and bows to its Maker, and so do all the constellations, because they see and apprehend their life-force and existence, which brings them into being, gives them life and sustains them.

The verse “and all the host of heaven bow down to You” is explained by the Sages: the sun sets in the west, where the Shechinah rests, and so bows to its Maker, and so do all the stars and constellations. They bow because they perceive the G-dly force that creates, enlivens and sustains them. In Tanya, chapter 42, the Alter Rebbe brings the same teaching to show how seeing creation’s self-nullification brings a person to awe.

וזהו ראה נתתי לפניך וגו' שזה יראה האדם לעיניו בראי²⁷ [בראיה] חושיי²⁸ [חושיית] שהרי רואה חיותו וקיומו

And this is “See, I have set before you,” etc.: that a person will see this with his eyes, with sensory sight, for he sees his own life-force and existence,

This is the meaning of “See, I have set before you”: a person can actually see it, for he sees his own life and existence.

וכן רואה ההשתחואה של צבא השמים ועי"ז יבא למדרגת ואהבת את²⁶ ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך בשני יצריך²⁷ שאפי' [שאפילו] היצה"ר [היצר הרע] הוא נכנע ובטל נגד אהבת ה'

and likewise sees the bowing of the host of heaven. And through this he will come to the level of “And you shall love Havayah your G-d with all your heart”—“with both your inclinations,” so that even the evil inclination is subdued and nullified before the love of G-d,

Seeing also how the heavenly bodies bow, he can reach “You shall love Havayah your G-d with all your heart,” which the Mishnah explains as “with both your inclinations.” A love born of such clear sight is strong enough to subdue even the evil inclination.

וכמו שארז"ל [שאמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] בטל רצונך מפני רצונו^{28,29} פי' לפי שאהבה זו הבאה מחמת ראי' [ראיה] חושיית כזו אין ערוך אליה ולא נמצא דוגמתה כלל בעינינים גשמים

as our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “Nullify your will before His will.” That is: because this love, which comes from such sensory sight, has nothing comparable to it, nor is its like found at all in physical things,

The Sages’ “Nullify your will before His will” describes this. Nothing physical compares with this love, and nothing like it is found in physical things, so every other desire gives way before it.

וכמאמר מי ידמה לך ומי ישוה לך ומי יערך לך.

as it is said, “Who can be likened to You, who is equal to You, and who can be compared to You?”

The words of the Nishmas prayer of Shabbos morning, “Who can be likened to You, who is equal to You, and who can be compared to You?”, express that nothing can be set beside G-d. So no physical love can rival the love of Him.

7 ובחיי ראי' [ראיה] זו צריך להיות נצחית ותמידית [ותמידית] ומי שאינו מסתכל בזה תמיד עליו נאמר והכסיל בחושך הולך.

This level of sight must be enduring and constant; and of one who does not look at this constantly it is said, “And the fool walks in darkness.”

This “seeing” must not be a passing moment; it must be lasting and constant. Of one who does not keep it constantly before him, Koheles says, “the fool walks in darkness.”

מה שאין כן החכם עיניו בראשו³⁰ שיהיה תמיד לנגד עיניו חיותו וקיומו מאור אין סוף ב"ה וככה תהי' [תהיה] אהבת הוי"ה תקועה בלבו תמיד ותהיה נפשו קשורה באלהי' [באלקים] חיים קשר נפלא וחזק לעד ולעולמי עולמים.

Not so "the wise man, whose eyes are in his head": his life-force and existence from the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, will always be before his eyes. And thus the love of Havayah will be fixed in his heart always, and his soul will be bound to the living G-d with a wondrous and strong bond, forever and to all eternity.

The wise man, "whose eyes are in his head," keeps always in view that his life and existence come from the Infinite Light. Then the love of G-d stays fixed in his heart, and his soul is bound to the living G-d with a lasting bond.

8 וזהו ענין חילא דתיובתא יתיר ותדיר הנזכר בזה"ק [בזהר הקדוש] לתקון פגם הברית³¹ כי ברית הוא ענין התקשרות³² ובקדושה הוא ענין התקשרות נפשו בשרשו וחיותו ובהפך זלע"ז [זה לעומת זה] הוא ההתקשרות בתאוות עוה"ז ותענוגות בני"א [בני אדם]

And this is the meaning of "the greater and constant strength of teshuvah (return)" mentioned in the holy Zohar for repairing the blemish of the covenant (bris). For bris (covenant) means a bond: in holiness, it is the binding of one's soul to its root and its life-force; and in the opposite [realm], "one opposite the other," it is the binding to the desires of this world and the pleasures of human beings.

The Zohar speaks of a "greater and constant" strength of teshuvah needed to repair "the blemish of the covenant" (pegam habris), the tradition's term for sins involving the procreative faculty, on which the covenant of circumcision is sealed; in Iggeres HaTeshuvah, chapter 4, the Alter Rebbe cites the Zohar's statement that teshuvah does not avail for this blemish and the explanation of Reishis Chochmah that only the higher teshuvah repairs it. The Alter Rebbe explains here why: bris means a bond, which in holiness binds the soul to its source and on the opposite side binds a person to worldly desires and pleasures.

ולכן התיקון הוא להפך לכו מהפוך להפוך מן הקצה אל הקצה ממש לדבקה נפשו בשרשו וחיותו הנמשך ממנו ית'

Therefore the repair is to turn his heart over from one opposite to the other, truly from one extreme to the other extreme, to make his soul cleave to its root and its life-force, which is drawn from Him, may He be blessed,

Since the damage was a bond in the wrong direction, the repair is a complete reversal: turning the heart from one extreme to the other. The same capacity for attachment now binds the soul to its root and source in G-d.

שהוא אל חי וקים בחי' ברית המקשר וממשיך החיות מבחי' סוכ"ע להיות ממכ"ע [ממלא כל עלמין]
להחיות נפש כל חי ורוח כל בשר איש³³ שתהיי [שתהיה] דבקות אמתי ותמידי

Who is “the living and enduring G-d,” the level of the covenant (bris) that binds and draws the life-force from the level of the light that encompasses all worlds (sovev kol almin) to become the light that fills all worlds (memalei kol almin), to give life to “the soul of every living thing and the spirit of all human flesh”; so that there will be a true and constant cleaving.

G-d as “the living and enduring G-d” corresponds to the level of bris, the bond that draws life downward: it brings the transcendent light that encompasses all worlds into the light that fills each world, giving life to every living being, in the words of Iyov. The goal is a true and constant cleaving (deveikus) to that source.

וזהו יתיר ותדיר ולא די בזה שהוא מעורר את האהבה בשעת התפלה וכיו"ב [וכיוצא בזה] ואח"כ חולפת ועוברת

And this is “greater and constant”: it is not enough that he arouses the love at the time of prayer and the like, and afterwards it passes and goes away,

This is what the Zohar means by “greater and constant”: it is not enough to feel love for G-d during prayer and similar times if it then fades. The bond must last.

כדכתיב קרוב ה' לכל קוראיו³⁴ לכל אשר יקראוהו באמת ושפת אמת תכון לעד כתי' [כתיב] משא"כ ועד ארגיעה³⁵ כו':

as it is written, “Havayah is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth”; and it is written, “The lip of truth shall be established forever,” which is not so of “but for a moment,” etc.

The psalm says Havayah is near to those who call upon Him “in truth,” and Proverbs says that “the lip of truth shall be established forever,” whereas the false tongue lasts “but for a moment.” In Likkutei Torah, Behar, the Alter Rebbe explains that a love aroused only at set times, during the Shema and prayer, which then passes, is only the “lip” of truth, its edge, like the hem of a garment, and not truth itself. A love that passes after prayer belongs to the passing moment; the true love endures.

9 והנה בחי' ראיי [ראיה] חושיית³⁶ זו המביא [המביאה] לידי אהבה זו נמשך לישראל מלמע' [מלמעלה] כמ"ש והי עליהם יראה ויצא כברק חצו³⁷

Now, this level of sensory sight, which brings one to this love, is drawn down to Israel from above, as it is written, “And Havayah will be seen over them, and His arrow will go forth like lightning.”

The “sensory sight” that leads to love is not something a person produces alone; it is drawn to Israel from above. The Alter Rebbe finds it in Zechariah’s prophecy that Havayah will appear over Israel and His arrow flash out like lightning: a flash of divine light that comes down upon them.

זה הוא המשכה והארה שמאיר ובא לישראל להיות עליהם יראה לראות באור ה' חיי החיים ית' בראי
[בראיה] חושית ולדבקה בו

This is a drawing-down and illumination that shines and comes to Israel, so that “over them [He] will be seen”: to see, by the light of G-d, the Life of all life, may He be blessed, with sensory sight, and to cleave to Him.

The Alter Rebbe reads yera'eh, “will be seen,” as giving sight: the light that appears over Israel lets them see the Life of all life by G-d's own light, as vividly as with their eyes, and cleave to Him. In the prophecy, G-d is seen over Israel as He fights for them; in the maamar, His appearing makes Israel see.

ועי' זה תקנו לפני ק"ש [קריאת שמע] כל סדר התפלה וברכות השחר ברוך אתה כו' שאנו מבקשי
[מבקשים] שיאיר לנו אור הוי' בהתגלות כדי שיקבל עליו בק"ש [בקריאת שמע] מצות ואהבת באמת וזהו הוי'
אלהינו. כי הנה ארז"ל [אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] גדולים ישראל יותר ממלאכים שממתינים לומי' [לומר]
קדוש עד שישראל³⁸ אומרי' [אומרים] למטה.

And along these lines they instituted before the Shema the whole order of prayer and the morning blessings, “Blessed are You,” etc., in which we ask that the light of Havayah shine for us openly, so that in the Shema one will take upon himself the mitzvah “And you shall love” in truth. And this is “Havayah our G-d.” For our Sages, of blessed memory, said: Israel are greater than the angels, for [the angels] wait to say “Holy” until Israel say it below.

For this reason the Sages placed the morning blessings and the whole order of prayer before the Shema: in them we ask that the light of Havayah shine openly upon us, so that in the Shema we can accept the mitzvah to love Him sincerely; this is “Havayah our G-d,” the light of Havayah becoming “ours.” The Talmud says Israel are greater than the angels, for the angels do not sing above until Israel sing below.

SECTION 3 • 110-16

Why Israel surpass the angels

10 ולכאורה אינו מובן שיהיה יתרון זה לאדם בהיותו בעוה"ז מלובש בגוף גשמי ואין לך אדם שאין נופלים לו מחשבות זרות עכ"פ [על כל פנים] מחשבה שהיא זרה אצלו לפי"ע [לפי ערכו] הגדול לפי גדלו והקטן לפי קטנו

At first glance it is not understood how man could have this advantage while he is in this world, clothed in a physical body. And there is no person to whom alien thoughts do not come—at any rate, a thought that is alien for him relative to his level: the great one according to his greatness, and the small one according to his smallness.

The Alter Rebbe raises a difficulty with the Talmud's statement that Israel are greater than the angels. A human being lives in this world inside a physical body, and no one is free of stray thoughts, at least thoughts that are "alien" by his own standard: a great person by his high standard, a lesser person by his.

והמלאכ"י [והמלאכים] כולם עומדים ברום עולם מופשטים מחומר הגוף הגשמי וכולם עושים באימה וביראה רצון קונם מו"י ימ"ב [ימי בראשית] בלי שום בטול והפסק אפי" [אפילו] רגע אחד:

But the angels all stand in the heights of the world, divested of the matter of a physical body, and all of them do the will of their Maker in dread and awe, from the six days of Creation, without any cessation or interruption, even for a single moment.

The angels, by contrast, have no body and have served their Maker in awe without pause since the six days of Creation. How, then, can man surpass them?

11 אך הנה המלאכים³⁹ אין אומרים קדוש מצד עצמם רק מצד החיות המתפשט ונמשך בהם

However, the angels do not say "Holy" on their own account, but only by virtue of the life-force (chayus) that spreads forth and is drawn into them.

The answer begins: the angels do not say "Holy" on their own. Their praise comes only from the G-dly life-force flowing through them.

רק שהם אינם תופסים⁴⁰ מקום לפני חיות אלהות השורה בתוכם והמשכות והתפשטות החיות שבהם הוא הוא האומר והעושה בהם כרצונו באין מונע.

It is only that they take up no room before the G-dly life-force that rests within them, and the drawing-down and spreading forth of the life-force within them is itself what speaks and acts in them according to its will, without hindrance.

It is only that the angels have no sense of self that "takes up room" before the G-dliness within them. So the divine life-force in them is what actually speaks and acts through them, unhindered.

12 ולכן כתיב בהגר ותקרא שם⁴¹ ה' הדובר אליה והוא המלאך שדיבר עמה⁴² וכן במלאכים שבאו אצל אברהם כתיב ויאמר שוב אשוב אליך⁴³ ובשליחותו של מקום אמר לו כן⁴⁴ כאלו אמר הקב"ה בכבודו ובעצמו⁴⁵

Therefore it is written of Hagar, "And she called the Name of Havayah who spoke to her," and it was the angel who spoke with her. And likewise of the angels who came to Avraham it is written, "And he said, 'I will surely return to you'"; and it was as the emissary of the Omnipresent that he said this to him, as though the Holy One, blessed be He, had said it Himself, in His glory.

Scripture itself shows this. The one who spoke to Hagar was an angel, yet the verse says she named "Havayah who spoke to her"; and the angel who told Avraham "I will surely return to you" spoke, as Rashi explains, as the emissary of the Omnipresent, as though the Holy One Himself had spoken.

והיינו לפי שאין תופסים מקום נגד חיות אלהות המדבר בהם ואינם רק מעבר שעל ידיהם יומשך הדבור והפעולה למטה.⁴⁶

That is, because they take up no room relative to the G-dly life-force that speaks within them, and they are only a passageway through which the speech and the action are drawn down below.

The reason is that the angels have no independent standing before the G-dliness that speaks through them. They are only a channel through which divine speech and action pass to the world below. In Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar, the Alter Rebbe brings the same two verses and explains that the angels are only extensions of the Infinite Light, drawn down through many levels.

והמשכה והשפעה זו היא דרך השתלשלות כמ"ש וקרא זא"ז [זה אל זה / זה את זה] ואמר קדוש ותרגמו ומקבלין דין מן דין⁴⁷ אלא שבלשון מקרא נאמר אל המשפיעים שקורא וממשיך שפע זה לזה ובלשון תרגום נאמר על המקבל בחי נוקבא.⁴⁸

This drawing-down and flow is by way of the chain of descending worlds (hishtalshelus), as it is written, "And one called to another and said, 'Holy,'" and its Targum [reads], "And they receive from one another." But the language of Scripture is said of the givers, for one calls and draws down the flow to the other; and the language of the Targum is said of the recipient, the level of Nukva (the feminine / Malchus).

This flow passes down level by level through the chain of worlds, as Yeshayahu describes the seraphim: "one called to another." The Targum renders it "they receive from one another": the verse speaks of the giver, who calls and passes on the flow, and the Targum of the receiver, which in Kabbalistic terms is Nukva, the feminine, receiving aspect.

13 והנה מצד החיות לא שייך לומר על הקב"ה שהוא קדוש ומובדל דמשמע שיש עוד דבר נפרד ויש זולתו אלא שהוא קדוש ומובדל ממנו.

Now, from the standpoint of the life-force, it is not applicable to say of the Holy One, blessed be He, that He is holy and separate; for that implies that there is another separate thing, something existing besides Him, only that He is holy and separate from it.

From the side of the divine life-force itself, calling G-d "holy," in the sense of separate, makes no sense. Separateness implies that something else exists apart from Him, and from that standpoint nothing does.

ובאמת אומרים איה מקום כבודו כו' כמ"ש במ"א עד שנמשך החיות למטה לישראל המלובשים בגוף הגשמי שהוא דבר נפרד ויש בפ"ע [בפני עצמו] ומכסה ומסתיר קדושת החיות

And indeed they say, "Where is the place of His glory?" etc., as is explained elsewhere—until the life-force is drawn down below to Israel, who are clothed in the physical body, which is a separate thing and an entity in its own right, and which covers and conceals the holiness of the life-force.

Indeed, the angels say, "Where is the place of His glory?" (in the words of the Kedushah). "Holy and separate" first becomes meaningful when the life-force reaches Jews in physical bodies, which experience themselves as separate entities and conceal the holiness within them.

ואז ע"י אתעדל"ת [אתערותא דלתתא] בביטול גוף הגשמי לגבי הרוחניות ומקור החיות שבו בהגלות אור ה' למטה במה שאומרים ברוך אתה וכו'

And then, through an arousal from below (isarusa dilesata), in the nullification of the physical body before the spirituality and the source of the life-force within it, when the light of G-d is revealed below as we say "Blessed are You," etc.,

Then, when a Jew makes "an arousal from below," nullifying his body to the spiritual life-force within it, G-d's light is revealed below, as when we say "Blessed are You" in a blessing.

ומצד הגוף שייך לומר אליו ית' שהוא קדוש ומובדל ולכן גם המלאכים אומרים [אומרים] קדוש וגו'

from the standpoint of the body it is applicable to say of Him, may He be blessed, that He is holy and separate. And therefore the angels too say, "Holy," etc.,

From the body's standpoint it now makes sense to call G-d "holy," separate and beyond it. That is why the angels too say "Holy."

שהארה והמשכה זו שישאל ממשיכים למטה עוברת דרך המלאכים וג' פעמים קדוש כנגד ג' צמצומים שיש דרך כלל עד שיומשך ויתפשט למטה הארה זו להיות נק' בשם ה' צבאות שבכל אלו הצמצומים הוא קדוש ומובדל.

for this illumination and drawing-down that Israel draw below passes through the angels. And “Holy” three times corresponds to the three contractions (tzimtzumim) that there are in general, until this illumination is drawn down and spreads below so as to be called by the Name “Havayah Tzevaos”; for in all these contractions He is holy and separate.

The light that Israel draw down passes through the angels on its way. Their threefold “Holy” corresponds to three general contractions (tzimtzumim) through which the light descends until it is called “Havayah Tzevaos” (“of Hosts”), and through all of them G-d remains holy and separate.

14 והנה הארה והמשכה⁴⁹ שמתפשט למט' [למטה] בישראל לבטל הגוף אליו ית' יש לו יתרון על האור וחיות המתפשט במלאכים כיתרון אור הבא מן החשך⁵⁰ שיש לה תוספת אורה ושמחה שגם הגוף נעשה מרכבה ליחודו ית'.

Now, the illumination and drawing-down that spreads below into Israel, to nullify the body to Him, may He be blessed, has an advantage over the light and life-force that spreads into the angels, like “the advantage of light that comes from darkness”: it has added light and joy, for the body too becomes a chariot (merkavah) for His unity, may He be blessed.

The light Israel draw down into the body, which makes the body itself nullified to G-d, is greater than the light that flows into the angels. Like “the advantage of light that comes from darkness,” light that has overcome darkness shines more and brings added joy. Even the body becomes a “chariot,” a vehicle with no will of its own, wholly given over to G-d’s unity.

15 ולכן אומרים ה' אלהינו שלנו ממש כמו ע"ד משל האדם מתפאר את עצמו בשלו אף בבחי' רגל שבו

Therefore we say “Havayah our G-d”: ours, truly. Just as, by way of analogy, a person prides himself on what is his own, even on the level of the foot that is in him,

This is why we call Havayah “our G-d”: He is truly ours. A person takes pride in what belongs to him, even his foot, the lowest part of his body.

משא"כ בשל אחרים אינו מתפאר אפי' [אפילו] ביד שהיא חשובה יותר כיון שאינו שלו כך הנה הארה והמשכה זו אף שהיא רק זו והארה בעלמא שירדה מטה מטה

whereas in what belongs to others he takes no pride, even in a hand, which is more important, since it is not his—so too, this illumination and drawing-down, although it is only a mere radiance and illumination that has descended very far down,

He takes no pride in what belongs to someone else, even a hand, which is more valuable. Likewise, the light that reaches Israel is only a faint radiance that has descended very low.

והיא בחי' רגל לעיקר האור של מעלה שאינה יכולה להתפשט בתוך הגוף שאותו האור נקי בחי' ראש לגבי זה מ"מ הנה אלהינו זה ממש שלנו כדכתיב בנים אתם לה' ⁵¹ אלהיכם.

and it is the level of a foot relative to the main light above, which cannot spread into the body, that light being called the level of the head relative to this one—nevertheless, behold, this is “our G-d,” truly ours, as it is written, “You are children to Havayah your G-d.”

Compared with the main light above, which cannot enter the body, this radiance is like a “foot” to a “head.” Yet precisely this is “our G-d,” truly ours, as the Torah says, “You are children to Havayah your G-d.”

16 וברא כרעא דאבוה ⁵² שנעשה כמו בחי' רגל לגבי האדם שהוא עצמית אחד ולכן אמרו רז"ל [רבנותינו

זכרונם לברכה] בטל רצונך מפני רצונו ⁵³

And “a son is his father’s foot” (bera kar’a da’avuha), for he becomes like the level of a foot relative to the person, which is one essence [with him]. And therefore our Sages, of blessed memory, said, “Nullify your will before His will”:

The Aramaic saying “a son is his father’s foot” means that a child is an extension of his father, like a foot of the same body, one essence with him. As G-d’s children, Israel are His “foot,” and so the Sages taught, “Nullify your will before His will.” In Torah Ohr, Bereshis, the Alter Rebbe explains on the same words that the Congregation of Israel is called the “foot,” and that the foot has an advantage over the head: it carries the head wherever it wishes to go.

דהיינו להיות בחי' רגל אצל הקב"ה ולהיות בטל אצלו ולעשו' רצונו שכמו שהרג' [שהרגל] בטל לגבי האד' שלכל אשר יחפוץ יטנו ⁵⁴ ואין לה רצון וחפץ אחר כלל.

that is, to be the level of a foot to the Holy One, blessed be He, and to be nullified before Him and to do His will; just as the foot is nullified before the person, “wherever he wishes, he turns it,” and it has no other will or desire at all.

To be a “foot” to G-d means to have no will of one’s own and to do His will, as a foot obeys the person. The words “wherever he wishes, he turns it” come from the verse in Proverbs about a king’s heart in G-d’s hand.

SECTION 4 • ¶17-18

Love from above and Torah from above

17 וזהו שאו' [שאוברים] בתחלת ברכות השחר הנותן לשכוי בינה להבחין בין יום ובין לילה⁵⁵

And this is what we say at the beginning of the morning blessings: “Who gives the rooster (sechvi) understanding (binah) to distinguish between day and night.”

The first morning blessing thanks G-d “Who gives the rooster (sechvi) understanding (binah) to distinguish between day and night.” The Alter Rebbe reads it as describing how love and awe arise in a person, and the word binah as the higher Binah.

כי התעוררות בחי' האהבה והיראה שבא לאדם אינם מצד עצמם כ"א שבא לו מלמעלה ע"י בחי' שכוי רוחניות שיש למעלה שהוא המבחין בין יום ובין לילה דהיינו בין חסדים לגבורות ע"י המשכת בינה עלאה

For the arousal of the level of love and awe that comes to a person does not come of itself; rather, it comes to him from above, through the level of a spiritual “rooster” that exists above, which is what distinguishes between day and night, that is, between the chassadim (kindnesses) and the gevuros (severities), through the drawing-down of the higher Binah (Binah Ila'ah).

Love and awe do not arise in a person by his own power; they come to him from above, through a spiritual “rooster” that distinguishes between “day” and “night”: the chassadim (kindnesses, the source of love) and the gevuros (severities, the source of awe). It tells them apart through the drawing-down of the higher Binah (Binah Ila'ah), the divine understanding from which the kindnesses and severities issue; this is why the blessing speaks of the rooster's binah.

וכן עד"ז כל שאר הברכות וכל סדר התפלה למתבונן בהם ומשכיל על דבר ימצא.⁵⁶

And so too, along these lines, all the rest of the blessings and the whole order of prayer: one who contemplates them “and considers the matter will find.”

All the other blessings and the whole order of prayer can be understood in the same way by one who reflects on them: in the words of Proverbs, “one who considers the matter will find.”

אך כדי להמשיך לו האהבה שיבא לו מלמעלה צריך מתחלה לבטש את הגוף ולהכניעו ולהשפילו במרירות כמ"ש במ"א.

However, in order to draw down to himself the love that will come to him from above, one must first crush the body, subdue it and humble it with bitterness, as is explained elsewhere.

But to draw that love down from above, a person must first break the coarseness of the body, subduing and humbling it through bitterness over his distance from G-d.

כדכתיב קרוב ה' לנשברי לב⁵⁷ ואת דכאי רוח יושיע. וכדכתיב זבחי אלהים רוח נשברה.⁵⁸

As it is written, “Havayah is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those crushed in spirit”; and as it is written, “The sacrifices of Elokim are a broken spirit.”

Two verses support this: Havayah is near to the brokenhearted, and “the sacrifices of Elokim are a broken spirit.”

כי בכדי שיומשך בחי הוי"ה לבחי אלהים שלנו צריך מתחלה לעשות זבחי אלהים שדרך ההוא נמשך בחי הוי"ה.

For in order that the level of Havayah be drawn down into the level of our Elokim, one must first make “the sacrifices of Elokim,” for it is by that path that the level of Havayah is drawn down.

The Names matter here. To draw Havayah, the Name of G-d as He transcends the world and brings it into being, into “our Elokim,” the Name of His concealment within nature, one must first bring “the sacrifices of Elokim,” a broken spirit; by that path Havayah is drawn down.

18 והנה כל זה נקרא אתערותא דלתתא מלמטה למעלה והוא ענין התפלה. אבל ענין התורה היא בחי מלמעלה למטה.

Now, all this is called an arousal from below (isarusa dilesata), from below upward, and it is the matter of prayer. But the matter of Torah is the level of “from above downward.”

All the service described so far, prayer included, is an “arousal from below,” rising from below upward. Torah works the other way, from above downward.

והוא בחי ובכל נפשך דהיינו שיומשך ויתפשט בכל כחות הנפש במחשבי⁵⁹ [במחשבה / במחשבת] דבור ומעשה ונקי אתעדל"ע [אתערותא דלעילא] שע"ז מעורר למעלה בחי חכמתו ורצונו חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא⁵⁹

And it is the level of “and with all your soul”: that is, that it be drawn down and spread through all the powers of the soul, in thought, speech and action. And it is called an arousal from above (isarusa dile'eila), for through it one arouses above the level of His wisdom and will, “[He is] wise, but not with a known wisdom.”

Torah corresponds to “with all your soul,” because it draws G-d’s wisdom into all the soul’s powers: thought, speech and action. It is called an “arousal from above” because Torah study arouses G-d’s own wisdom and will, which is “wise, but not with a known wisdom,” beyond any wisdom we can grasp.

שהתורה היא חכמתו ורצונו ית' אלא שמלובשת בענינים גשמיים. וזהו ענין קורא בתורה כמ"ש במ"א:

For the Torah is His wisdom and will, may He be blessed, only that it is clothed in physical matters. And this is the matter of reading (korei) in the Torah, as is explained elsewhere.

The Torah is G-d's wisdom and will itself, though clothed in physical matters. The Hebrew korei means both "reads" and "calls": in Torah Ohr, Mishpatim ("ויראו את אלקי ישראל"), the Alter Rebbe explains that reading (korei) in the Torah is like a person calling his friend to come to him, for through the letters of the Torah one calls the Holy One to be revealed below.

SECTION 5 • ¶19-23

With all your might: the love of teshuvah

19 ובכל מאדך⁶⁰ הוא ענין התשובה כי גדולה תשובה⁶¹ שמקרבת את הגאולה. ומאד הוא לשון רבוי הרבה יותר מכדי מדתו

"And with all your might (me'odecha)" is the matter of teshuvah (return), for "great is teshuvah, for it brings the redemption near." And me'od is a term of abundance, much more than its proper measure.

The third phrase of the Shema's command, "with all your might (me'odecha)," is teshuvah, which the Talmud calls great because it brings the redemption near. Me'od means "very much," beyond the normal measure, and so describes a love without limits.

כי אהבת בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך הוא נמשך מהתפשטות גילוי אלהותו השוכן בתחתונים שאינו אלא זיו והארה בלבד. כמ"ש ויצא כברק חצו⁶² שאינו אלא מחשבה אחת בלבד. כמ"ש היוצר יחד לבם⁶³ וגו'.

For the love "with all your heart and with all your soul" is drawn from the spreading-forth of the revelation of His G-dliness that dwells in the lower beings, which is nothing but a radiance and illumination alone; as it is written, "And His arrow will go forth like lightning," for it is nothing but a single thought; as it is written, "He fashions their hearts together," etc.

Love "with all your heart and soul" comes from the G-dliness revealed within creation, which is only a radiance, like a single flash of lightning. Zechariah's "arrow like lightning" and the psalm's "He fashions their hearts together" show that all creation comes from a single divine "thought."

20 וע"ד משל כשם שמחשבי אחת אינה נחשבת לכלום לגבי מהותו ועצמותו של האדם שיכול לחשוב מחשבות אין קץ ומספר.

By way of analogy: just as a single thought counts for nothing relative to the being and essence of a person, who can think thoughts without end or number,

An analogy: a single thought is nothing compared with the person who thinks it, since he can think endless thoughts.

כך על אחת כמה וכמה שאין המחשבה זו נחשבת לכלום נגד עצמותו ית' כי אתה הוא קודם שנברא העולם ואתה הוא כו'.

so too, and all the more so, this thought counts for nothing compared with His essence, may He be blessed; for "You are He before the world was created, and You are He," etc.

How much more is the single "thought" from which all creation comes as nothing compared with G-d's essence. The prayer says, "You are He before the world was created, and You are He" after it was created: creation changes nothing in Him.

21 ואני הוי"ה לא שניתי⁶⁴ וכל ימות עולם הזה ועולם הבא וג"ע [וגן עדן] התחתון והעליון וימות המשיח ותחיית המתים אינו נחשב אצלו אלא כרגע קטן וכמ"ש במ"א

And "I, Havayah, have not changed." And all the days of this world and of the World to Come, the lower and the higher Gan Eden, the days of Mashiach and the Resurrection of the Dead, are accounted by Him as no more than a brief moment, as is explained elsewhere.

Malachi's "I, Havayah, have not changed" completes the thought. All eras, this world and the World to Come, the lower and the higher Gan Eden, the days of Mashiach and the Resurrection, are no more than a brief moment for Him.

וזו היא עבודת ניצוץ הנשמה⁶⁵ המתפשט ומתלבש בגוף הגשמי כי לא כל הנשמה כולה מתלבש בתוך הגוף רק ניצוץ והארה ממנה בלבד

And this is the service of the spark of the soul that spreads forth and is clothed in the physical body; for not all of the soul, in its entirety, is clothed within the body, but only a spark and illumination from it.

Love with heart and soul is the service of the "spark" of the soul that is en clothed in the body. Not all of the soul enters the body, only a spark and glimmer of it.

ועיקרה ושרשה נשאר למעלה בבחי' מקיף והנצוץ המתפשט למטה נקי' רגל לגבי בחי' עליונה שלמעלה שנקי' בחי' ראש

And its main part and its root remain above, on the level of makif (encompassing). And the spark that spreads below is called a “foot” relative to the higher level above, which is called the level of the “head,”

The soul's essence and root stays above as makif, encompassing the person without entering him. The spark below is called the “foot,” and the essence above the “head.”

משא"כ בחי' בכל מאדך הוא בחי' עבודת עיקר הנשמה בחי' הראש שבה והיינו בטול הנפש במציאות ממש להשתפך אל חיק אביה ממש מצד מהותו ועצמותו

whereas the level of “with all your might” is the level of the service of the main part of the soul, the level of the head within it: that is, the self-nullification (bittul) of the soul in its very existence, to pour itself out into the bosom of its Father, truly, from the standpoint of His being and essence,

The love “with all your might” is the service of the soul's essence, its “head”: a self-nullification so complete that the soul's very existence dissolves, pouring itself into its Father's bosom. It reaches toward G-d as He is in His own being and essence.

שהוא רם ונשא לאין קץ ולא שייך עליו לאמר מצד עצמו לא ממלא כל עלמין ולא סוכ"ע שאינו בגדר עלמין כלל וכמ"ש במ"א:

Who is exalted and uplifted without end; and of Him, from His own standpoint, it is not applicable to say either [that He is] the light that fills all worlds (memalei kol almin) or the light that encompasses all worlds (sovev kol almin), for He is not within the category of worlds at all, as is explained elsewhere.

G-d in His essence is infinitely exalted. In relation to Himself one cannot even call Him “filling all worlds” or “encompassing all worlds,” since both terms describe Him only in relation to worlds.

22 והנה הזוכה לבחי' אהבה רבה ועצומה כזו הוא הבעל תשובה כי להיות שהיה בהפוך והיתה נפשו בארץ ציה ועיף.⁶⁶ ויזעקו אל הוי"ה וגו'.

Now, the one who merits such a great and mighty level of love is the baal teshuvah (one who returns): for since he had been in the opposite [state], and his soul was “in a parched and weary land,” “and they cried out to Havayah,” etc.,

This immense love belongs especially to the baal teshuvah, the one who returns. Having been far from G-d, his soul thirsting “in a parched and weary land,” he cries out to Him.

אזי יתגלה אהבה רבה ועצומה כזו להיות בכללות נפשו ממש. וזהו ופרעה הקריב ואמרו רז"ל [רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] שהקריב את לבם של ישראל⁶⁷ לאביהם שבשמים.⁶⁸

then such a great and mighty love will be revealed, to the point of his soul's very expiring. And this is [the meaning of] "And Pharaoh drew near," of which our Sages, of blessed memory, said that he drew the hearts of Israel near to their Father in Heaven.

From that distance a love bursts forth so strong that the soul all but expires. The Sages read "And Pharaoh drew near," said when Pharaoh pursued Israel to the sea, as Pharaoh drawing Israel's hearts near to their Father in Heaven: the oppressor's threat became the cause of their return.

ולכן נק' בחי' אהבה זו מאד כמארז"ל [כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] והנה טוב זה מלאך החיים.⁶⁹ מאד זה מלאך המות.^{70,71} שע"ז יתרבה ויתגדל תשוקת האהבה ביתר שאת ויתר עז⁷² ויוסף אומץ דבקותו:

Therefore this level of love is called me'od ("very"), as our Sages, of blessed memory, said: "And behold, it was good"—this is the angel of life; 'very'—this is the angel of death." For through this the yearning of the love will increase and grow, "with greater exaltation and greater power," and the strength of his cleaving will increase.

Therefore this love is called me'od. The Midrash on "very good" says that "good" is the angel of life and "very" is the angel of death; the "very" that comes from the side of death, here the penitent's former distance, makes the yearning grow far stronger, and his attachment to G-d firmer. In Torah Ohr, Noach, the Alter Rebbe teaches the same: a love that comes out of the darkness of worldly preoccupation is teshuvah "with greater strength," the love "with all your might," without limit.

23 וזהו שמאלו תחת לראשי שע"ז בחי' שמאל דוחה שהיה בו מתחלה על כן ירום ראש⁷³ ומתנשא בכחי עבודת הראש⁷⁴ של הנשמה כנ"ל. וזהו ענין מעלת הזהב על הכסף הנזכר בלקוטי אמרים.⁷⁵

And this is "His left hand is under my head": through the level of "the left [hand] pushes away" that was in him at first, "therefore [his] head is lifted up," and he is raised up in the level of the service of the "head" of the soul, as mentioned above. And this is the matter of the superiority of gold over silver mentioned in Likkutei Amarim.

Now the opening verse is explained: "His left hand is under my head." The earlier "pushing away" is what raises the person to the service of the soul's "head," the love "with all your might." In Tanya, chapter 50, the Alter Rebbe calls this higher love, which burns like flames of fire from the Gevuros, the "left" side, "gold," surpassing the "silver" of the ordinary love.

SECTION 6 • ¶24-26

The right hand's embrace

24 והבחינה שוב שאחר זה הוא בחי' וימינו תחבקני.⁷⁶ שימינו הם תורה ומצות בחי' חסד ומים שיורדים ממקום גבוה למקום נמוך⁷⁷ והם מחבקין את האדם כדרך שמחבק האדם את חברו מאחוריו ואינו מניחו ליפול.

And the level of “return” (shov) that comes after this is the level of “and his right hand embraces me.” For “his right hand” is Torah and mitzvos, the level of Chesed (kindness) and of water, which descend from a high place to a low place; and they embrace the person, the way a person embraces his fellow from behind and does not let him fall.

After the soul's surge upward comes “return” (shov), the movement back into life: in the language of Chassidus, the soul's “running” (ratzo) is followed by its “returning” (shov), after the living creatures of Yechezkel's vision that “ran and returned.” The return is the right hand's embrace, the Torah and the mitzvos: they are Chesed, kindness, and like water, which flows from high to low, they hold a person from behind, as one holds a friend so that he does not fall.

כך ע"ד משל התורה והמצות הם יורדים לבחי' אחוריים להתלכש בענינים גשמיים להאחז את האדם שלא יפול כשפונה אחר תפלה לעסקיו ויהיה סור מרע ועשה טוב

So too, by way of analogy, the Torah and the mitzvos descend to the level of the back (achorayim), to be clothed in physical matters, to hold on to the person so that he will not fall when he turns after prayer to his affairs, and he will “turn from evil and do good.”

Torah and mitzvos descend to the “back” (achorayim), the outer level, by being clothed in physical matters. They hold a person when he turns from prayer to his daily affairs, so that he will “turn from evil and do good.”

והם יורדים ממקום גבוה ציצית קבלת עול מלכות שמים וארבע פרשיות של תפלין כנגד חכמה ובינה וחסד וגבורה של הקב"ה. פ' ראשונה קדש לי כל בכור⁷⁸ רמז לחכמה.⁷⁹

And they descend from a high place: tzitzis, accepting the yoke (kabbalas ol) of the Kingdom of Heaven, and the four sections of the tefillin, corresponding to the Chochmah (wisdom), Binah (understanding), Chesed and Gevurah (restraint) of the Holy One, blessed be He. The first section, “Sanctify to Me every firstborn,” alludes to Chochmah;

They come from a very high place: tzitzis, the acceptance of G-d's sovereignty, and the four sections of the tefillin, which correspond to G-d's Chochmah, Binah, Chesed and Gevurah. The first section, “Sanctify to Me every firstborn,” alludes to Chochmah, which the Kabbalah calls kodesh, “holy.”

פ' שניה כי ישאלך בנך מה זאת⁸⁰ שהוא ענין התבוננות דקיימא לשאלה. פ' שמע מפורש בה ואהבת. פ' והיה אם שמוע מפורש בה השמרו לכם⁸¹ וגוי.

the second section, “When your son asks you, ‘What is this?’,” is the matter of contemplation, which “stands to be asked” (de kayma lishe’eilah); the section of Shema states explicitly, “And you shall love”; the section “And it will be, if you listen” states explicitly, “Beware for yourselves,” etc.

The second section, “When your son asks you, What is this?,” concerns contemplation, which “stands to be asked” and investigates: Binah. The Shema section commands love, Chesed, and “And it will be, if you listen” warns, “Beware,” Gevurah.

25 ולזה אומרים אשר קדשנו במצותיו כמ”ש במ”א. וזהו והר סיני עשן כולו מפני אשר ירד עליו⁸² ה' באש.

And for this we say, “Who has sanctified us with His commandments,” as is explained elsewhere. And this is [the meaning of] “And Mount Sinai was all in smoke, because Havayah descended upon it in fire.”

Because the mitzvos descend from so high a place, the blessing over them says, “Who has sanctified us with His commandments.” So too at Sinai, “the mountain was all in smoke because Havayah descended upon it in fire”: the giving of the Torah was G-d’s descent.

והר סיני אמרו רז”ל [רבותינו זכרונם לברכה] שירדה שנאה להעכו”ם [להעובדי כוכבים ומזלות]⁸³ שהוא בחי' הרע שעל זה נאמר תכלית שנאה שנאתים⁸⁴ ומואס ברע.

And of Mount Sinai our Sages, of blessed memory, said that hatred (sin’ah) descended [upon it] toward the idolaters, which is the level of evil, of which it is said, “I hate them with utmost hatred,” and “despising evil.”

The Talmud says the mountain is called Sinai because hatred (sin’ah) came down upon it toward the idolaters. The Alter Rebbe identifies this as the level of evil itself, the object of “I hate them with utmost hatred” and of “despising evil.”

נמשך מפני כי ירד ה' עליו שירד והמשיך למטה באש כמ”ש מימינו אש דת למו⁸⁵ והוא לחול על ראש רשעים. כהמס דונג מפני אש⁸⁶ יאבדו וגוי.

This is drawn from “because Havayah descended upon it”: He descended and drew down below “in fire,” as it is written, “From His right hand, a fiery law for them”; and it is to come down upon the head of the wicked: “As wax melts before fire, they shall perish,” etc.

This rejection of evil flows from the fire in which G-d descended: the Torah is “a fiery law” from His right hand. The same fire that is Torah consumes evil, “as wax melts before fire.”

26 וע"ד זה הם כל המצות הן בסור מרע הן בועשה טוב וצדקה כנגד כולם כי צדקה תרומם גוי⁸⁷ להיות בבחי' חבוק שלא יפרד ולא ישוב אחור רק להיות עמו פב"פ [פנים בפנים] כמ"ש יאר הוי"ה פניו אליך⁸⁸ וגוי כמ"ש במ"א.

And in this manner are all the mitzvos, both in "turn from evil" and in "do good." And charity (tzedakah) is equal to all of them, for "charity uplifts a nation," to be in the level of an embrace, so that he will not be parted and will not turn back, but will only be with Him face to face, as it is written, "May Havayah make His face shine to you," etc., as is explained elsewhere.

All the mitzvos, prohibitions and positive commands alike, work in this way, and charity equals them all. "Charity uplifts a nation": it lifts a person into G-d's embrace, so that he does not drift away or turn his back, but stays "face to face" with Him, as in the Priestly Blessing, "May Havayah make His face shine to you."

וזהו ונתנו איש כפר נפשו⁸⁹ בפקוד אותם. כלומר אשר יפקד ויחסר פגם האות שלהם אזי התקון הוא ע"י צדקה שע"י מקשר ומעלה נפשו להוי"ה.

And this is [the meaning of] "And each man shall give a ransom for his soul when you number (bifkod) them." That is to say: when there is something missing and lacking (yipaked veyechsar), a blemish of their sign (os), then the repair is through charity, for through it he binds and raises his soul to Havayah.

This is the meaning of the verse in our parsha, "each man shall give a ransom for his soul when you number (bifkod) them": the ransom given at the census is charity. Bifkod is read as "when something is missing," as in Yehonasan's words to David, "you will be missed, for your seat will be empty (yipaked)": when there is a lack, a blemish of their "sign" (os), charity repairs it, binding the soul and raising it to Havayah. The "sign" recalls the covenant, called a sign (os bris), whose blemish paragraph 8 discussed.

ועמ"ש במ"א ע"פ שאו את ראש כוי לגלגלתם:^{90,91}

And see what is written elsewhere on the verse "Lift up the head," etc., "by their polls."

Kehot notes that this closing reference was added by the Tzemach Tzedek and is missing in Manuscript 1824. In Likkutei Torah, Bamidbar, the Alter Rebbe explains "Lift up the head... by their polls" as raising the lower will, drawn from the mind within body and soul, to the soul's essence, which stands above as makif and does not shine within the body; there too the soul pours itself out into its Father's bosom.

IN ONE'S AVODAH

Keep the awareness that G-d is your very life before your eyes always, so that love of G-d does not fade when prayer ends. Before asking for that love, humble the body with a broken heart. One who has fallen far should know that his distance can become the strongest love of all; and after prayer, the Torah, the mitzvos and especially charity hold a person steady in his daily affairs.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How can G-d's "left hand," the rejection aroused by a person's deeds, become the cause of his being lifted up?
2. Why must the love that comes from "seeing" G-d as one's life be constant, and what does the Alter Rebbe say about a love felt only during prayer?
3. If angels serve G-d without interruption, in what sense are Israel greater than they are?
4. What is the difference between love "with all your heart and soul" and love "with all your might," and why does the baal teshuvah reach the latter?
5. How do Torah and mitzvos, and charity in particular, act as the "right hand" that embraces a person after prayer?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 שמאלו תחת לראשי

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע. המאמר (בשינויים) עם הגהות באוה"ת פי כי תשא עי' איתתנד מתחיל "כי תשא". קיצור והמשך כללות הענין עי' איתתסג. קיצור מהדרוש עי' איתתסד. ביאור עי' איתתסח. אודות מאמר זה ראה בתורת שלום — סי' השיחות עי' 169.

2 שמאלו תחת לראשי

The maiden of the Song of Songs, longing for her beloved, pictures him holding her close: his left arm beneath her head, his right arm embracing her. The Alter Rebbe reads the two arms as G-d's attributes toward Israel: the severity that pushes away and the kindness that draws near.

Song of Songs 2:6: שיר השירים ב':

שמאלו תחת לראשי וימינו תחבקני:

Let his left hand be under my head, And his right hand embrace me.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שה"ש ב, ו.

3 בענין העולמות

Or HaTorah's version reads "in the matter of the conduct (hanhagas) of the worlds, so:", making explicit that G-d's way with Israel follows the way He conducts the worlds.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת שם איתתנד: בענין הנהגת העולמות כן: דרך.

4 לבני ישראל עם קרובו

The psalm praises G-d, Who raised the horn of His people, "the children of Israel, the people near to Him." The phrase describes Israel's closeness to G-d even when the left hand is aroused.

Psalms 148:14: תהילים קמ"ח:

ויָרָם קָרוֹ לְעֹמֹד תְּהַלֵּה לְכָל־חֲסִידָיו לְבָנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עִם קָרְבוֹ הַלְלוּ־קָה:

And He hath lifted up a horn for His people, A praise for all His saints, Even for the children of Israel, a people near unto Him. Hallelujah.

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5 שמאל דוחה

The Sages taught: "Let the left hand always push away and the right hand draw near," and never reject with both hands, as Elisha did Geichazi. The Alter Rebbe applies the

counsel to G-d's own way with Israel: His rejection is never with both hands.

סוטה מ"א: ו' 47a:6-Sotah

תנו רבנן: לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת, לא כאלישע שדחפו לגחזי בשתי ידיו, ולא כיהושע בן פרחיה שדחפו לישו הנוצרי מתלמידיו בשתי ידיו. אלישע מאי היא, דכתיב: "ויאמר נעמן הואל קח כפרים", וכתיב: "ויאמר אליו לא לבי הלה כאשר הפך איש מעל מרפבתו לקראתה העת לקחת את הפסף ולקחת בגדים וזיתים וכרמים וצאן וכקר ועבדים ושפחות".

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6 ויהי להם למושיע

"Surely they are My people, children who will not deal falsely; and He became their Savior." The Alter Rebbe borrows the words for how G-d turns the very rejection into their salvation.

ישעיהו ס"ג:ח' 63:8-Isaiah

ויאמר אה"עמי המה בנים לא ישקרו ויהי להם למושיע:

For He said: 'Surely, they are My people, children that will not deal falsely'; so He was their Saviour.

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7 באחד מהכת"י בא המאמר עם כותרת

One manuscript heads the maamar "Chukas, Dubrovna 5561": the week of Parshas Chukas, in Dubrovna, in the year 5561 (1801).

KEHOT'S NOTE

"חוקת דובראוונא תקס"א".

PARAGRAPH 2

8 כי תשא את ראש בני לפקדיהם

G-d tells Moshe how to take the census: when you "lift up the head" of the children of Israel lifkudeihem, "by their numbering," each man is to give a ransom for his soul, so that no plague strike them. The Alter Rebbe reads lifkudeihem as pekidah, a visitation for sin, and "lift up the head" as raising them up.

שמות ל"ב:12 Exodus

כי תשא את־ראש בני־יִשְׂרָאֵל לַפְקֻדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כֶּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ לֵהֱ בִּפְקֹד אֹתָם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה בָהֶם נֶגֶף בִּפְקֹד אֹתָם:

'When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the L-RD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

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9 אין לך כל פקידה שאין בה מעון העגל

The Talmud teaches that no punishment comes to the world without containing a twenty-fourth part of the sin of

the first Calf, on the verse “On the day I make an accounting.”

Sanhedrin 102a:15ו"ט א"ב ק"ב סנהדרין

אמר רבי אשעי' עד ירבעם היו ישראל יונקים מעגל אחד, מכאן ואילך משנים ושלשה עגלים. אמר רבי יצחק: אין לך כל פורענות ופורענות שבאה לעולם שאין בה אחד מעשרים וארבעה בהכרע ליטרא של עגל הראשון, שנאמר: "וביום פקדי ופקדתי עליהם חטאתם".

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KEHOT'S NOTE

רש"י חקת יט, כב. וראה סנהדרין קב, א. ירושלמי תענית פ"ד ה"ה.

10 אין לך כל פקידה שאין בה מעון העגל

Rashi, quoting Rabbi Moshe HaDarshan on the red heifer, says that the sin of the Calf is kept for punishment through the generations: there is no visitation that does not include a visitation for the Calf, as it says, “On the day I make an accounting, I will account their sin upon them.”

Rashi on Numbers 19:22ב"ט י"ט על במדבר

11 אין לך כל פקידה שאין בה מעון העגל

The Jerusalem Talmud says that there is no generation that does not bear an ounce of the sin of the Calf.

Jerusalem Talmud Taanit 4:6ו"ד י"ט תלמוד ירושלמי תענית

משנה: משנכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה: שבת שקל תשעה באב להיות בתוכה אסורין מלספור ומלכבס ובחמישי מותרין מפני כבוד השבת. ערב תשעה באב לא יאכל אדם שני תבשילין לא יאכל בשר ולא ישתה יין. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר ישנה. רבי יהודה מחייב בכפיית המיטה ולא הודו לו חכמים: הלכה: אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי. הלא דאית אמר בבגדיו שלשמחה. אבל אם היה כותלו גוזה סותרו ובונהו. אמר שמואל. בכותל דגניי בקה. רבי בא בר ...

MISHNAH: From the start of Av one restricts happy occasions. The week in which the Ninth of Av falls one is forbidden to barber and to launder, but on Thursday one is permitted for the honor of the Sabbath. In the day before the Ninth of Av a person may not eat two dishes, he may not eat meat nor drink wine. Rabban Simeon ben Gamliel says, he shall alterate. Rabbi Jehudah obligates him to turn up his couch but the Sages did not agree with him. HALAKHAH: Rabbi Joshua ...

The Jerusalem Talmud, edition by Heinrich W. Guggenheimer. Berlin, De Gruyter, 1999-2015 (CC-BY) • The Jerusalem Talmud, translation and commentary by Heinrich W. Guggenheimer. Berlin, De Gruyter, 1999-2015 (CC-BY)

12 Kehot's note points to Song of Songs 8:3 for these words.

Song of Songs 8:3ו"ג ח' שיר השירים

שמאלו תחת ראשי וימינו תחבקני:

His left hand should be under my head, And his right hand should embrace me.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

13 וזהו וימינו תחבקני

The second half of the opening verse: the right hand's em-

brace accompanies the left hand's pushing away.

Song of Songs 2:6ו"ב שיר השירים

שמאלו תחת לראשי וימינו תחבקני:

Let his left hand be under my head, And his right hand embrace me.

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14 כי יפול לא יוטל

David says of the righteous man, “Though he fall, he shall not be cast down, for Havayah supports his hand.” The right hand's embrace means that a fall is never final.

Psalms 37:24ד"ו כ"ד תהילים

כִּי־יִפֹּל לֹא־יִוָּטֵל כִּי־ה' סוּמְךָ יְדוֹ:

Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the L-RD upholdeth his hand.

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15 הקל קול יעקב

Yitzchak, feeling Yaakov's hands, says, “The voice is the voice of Yaakov, but the hands are the hands of Eisav.” The Alter Rebbe notes the two spellings of “voice” and reads them as Torah and prayer.

Genesis 27:22כ"ב כ"ו בראשית

וַיֵּגֶשׁ יַעֲקֹב אֶל־יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיִּמָּשְׁחוּ וַיֹּאמֶר הֵקֵל קוֹל יַעֲקֹב וְהַיָּדִים יָדֵי עֲשׂוֹ:

And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said: ‘The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.’

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית כו, כב.

PARAGRAPH 3

16 דת"ת כנגד כולן

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

פאה פ"א מ"א.

17 דתלמוד תורה כנגד כולן

The Mishnah lists deeds whose fruits a person enjoys in this world while the principal remains for the World to Come, and concludes, “and the study of Torah is equal to them all.”

Mishnah Peah 1:1א"א א' משנה פאה

אלו דברים שאין להם שעור. הפאה, והפכורים, והראיון, וגמילות חסדים, ותלמוד תורה. אלו דברים שאדם אוכל פרותיהן בעולם הזה והקרן מקימת לו לעולם הבא. כבוד אב ואם, וגמילות חסדים, והקצאת שלום בין אדם לחברו, ותלמוד תורה כנגד כלם:

These are the things that have no definite quantity: The corners [of the field]. First-fruits; [The offerings brought] on appearing [at the Temple on the three pilgrimage festivals]. The performance of righteous deeds; And the study of the torah. The following are the things for which a man enjoys

the fruits in this world while the principal remains for him in the world to come: Honoring one's father and mother; The performance of righteous deeds; And the making of peace between a person and his friend; And the study of ...

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18 התפלה . כנגד הקרבנות

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says that the prayers were instituted to correspond to the daily offerings, and a teaching is brought in his support. The Alter Rebbe cites this as the Sages' high praise of prayer.

ברכות כ"ו ב:ה"ו-ה"ה-5-6 Berakhot 26b

תנא כותיה דרבי יוסי ברבי חנינא, ותנא כותיה דרבי יהושע בן לוי. תנא כותיה דרבי יוסי ברבי חנינא: אברהם תקן תפלת שחרית, שנאמר: "וישכם אברהם בבקר אל המקום אשר עמד שם", ואין "עמידה" אלא תפלה, שנאמר: "ויצא אברהם לשוב בשדה לנחת ערב", ואין "שיחה" אלא תפלה, שנאמר "תפלה לעני כי יעטף ולפני ה' ישפך שיחו".

There is a teaching in agreement with both of them. There is a teaching in agreement with R. Jose b. R. Hannina: Abraham instituted the morning Tefillah; as it is said, "And Abraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood" (Gen. xix. 27) — "standing" means prayer; as it is said, "Then stood up Phineas and prayed" (Ps. cvi. 30). Isaac instituted the afternoon Tefillah; as it is said, "And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide" (Gen. xxiv. 63) — ...

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Tractate Berakot by A. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 1921 (Public Domain)

KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות כו, ב.

PARAGRAPH 4

19 והנה הדרך

Kehot notes that part of this maamar, from "Now, the way," is copied in Or HaTorah on Vayikra.

KEHOT'S NOTE

חלק נעתק באוה"ת ויקרא כרך ב ע' תנד.

20 ראה נתתי לפניך היום

Moshe tells Israel that he has set before them life and good, death and evil. The Alter Rebbe reads "See" as a call to perceive that G-d is the life within everything.

Deuteronomy 30:15 דברים ל"ט:י"ו

ראה נתתי לפניך היום ואת־הטוב ואת־המָוֹת ואת־הרָע:

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil,

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים ל, טו.

21 ובחרת בחיים

"I have set before you life and death... and you shall choose life." Choosing life is choosing the G-dly life-force

over the passing physical.

Deuteronomy 30:19 דברים ל"ט:י"ט

העדתי בכם היום את־השָׁמַיִם ואת־הָאָרֶץ הַחַיִּים וְהַמָּוֹת נָתַתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ הַבְּרָכָה וְהַקְלָלָה וּבִחַרְתָּ בַחַיִּים לְמַעַן תֵּחִיָּה אֹתָהּ וְזָרַעַךְ:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed;

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22 לאהבה את ה' אלקיך כי הוא חייך

The verse continues, "to love Havayah your G-d... for He is your life." This is the love the maamar is explaining.

Deuteronomy 30:20 דברים ל"ט:כ'

לֹא־הִבֵּה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשִׁמְעַע בְּקִלּוֹ וּלְדַבְּקָהּ בּוֹ כִּי הוּא חַיֶּיךָ וְאַרְךָ יָמֶיךָ לְשִׁבְתָּ עַל־הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע ה' לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר:

to love the L-RD thy G-d, to hearken to His voice, and to cleave unto Him; for that is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the L-RD swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

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PARAGRAPH 5

23 שו"ה התפלה — כמ"ש במ"א

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

בבזך 1824 ליתא.

PARAGRAPH 6

24 The Levites, praying in the assembly of Ezra's day, say to G-d: "You give life to them all, and the host of heaven bow down to You." The Alter Rebbe cites it for the heavenly bodies' perception of the life their Creator gives them.

Nehemiah 9:6 נחמיה ט':ו

אֶת־הָיְהוָה הוּא ה' לְבַדָּךְ אֹתָהּ עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל־צָבָאם הָאָרֶץ וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ הַיָּמִים וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם וְאֹתָהּ מְחַיֶּה אֶת־כָּלֶם וּצְבֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם לְךָ מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים:

Thou art the L-RD, even Thou alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and Thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth Thee.

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25 כמאז"ל שהחמה שוקעת במערב ומשתחוה לקונה

The Talmud learns that the Shechinah is in the west from the verse "and the host of heaven bow down to You," since

the heavenly bodies move toward the west. The Alter Rebbe describes the setting sun as bowing to its Maker.

Bava Batra 25a:6-7 י"א: א' - כבא בתרא כ"ה

אלא מאי תדירא - תדירא בשכינה. דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: בואו ונחזיק טובה לאבותינו, שהודיעו מקום תפלה - דכתיב: "וצבא השמים לה משתחוים". מתקין לה רב אחא בר יעקב: ודלמא כעבד שנוטל פרוס מרבו, וחוזר לאחוריו ומשתחוה! קשיא.

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

Tanya, Likkutei Amarim 42:17 תניא, חלק ראשון; ליקוטי אמרים
מ"ב: י"ז

הגהה וגם נראה בראיית העין, שהם בטלים לאורו יתברך בהשתחוותם כל יום כלפי מערב בשקיעתם, - כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה על פסוק: "וצבא השמים לה משתחוים" - שהשכינה במערב, ונמצא - הילוכם כל היום כלפי מערב הוא דרך השתחוותה וכיטול. והנה, גם מי שלא ראה את המלך מעולם, ואינו מפירו כלל, ארעלי-פייכן כשנכנס לחצר המלך ורואה שרים רבים ונכבדים משתחוים לאיש אחד - תפול עליו אימה ופחד:

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ב"ב כה, א. תניא פמ"ב בהג"ה.

26

ואהבת את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך

The command of the Shema to love G-d with all one's heart, soul and might; the maamar will explain all three.

Deuteronomy 6:5 דברים ו': ה'5

ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך:

And thou shalt love the L-RD thy G-d with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

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27

בכל לבבך בשני יצריך

The Mishnah expounds "with all your heart" (levavcha, with a double beis) as "with both your inclinations, the good inclination and the evil inclination."

Mishnah Berachot 9:5 ט' ה'5

חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם שהוא מברך על הטובה, שנאמר (דברים ו') ואהבת את ה' אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך. בכל לבבך, בשני יצריך, ביצר טוב וביצר רע. ובכל נפשך, אפלו הוא נוטל את נפשך. ובכל מאדך, בכל ממונה. דבר אחר בכל מאדך, בכל מדה ומדה שהוא מוידך לה הוי מודה לו במאד מאד. לא יקל אדם את ראשו כנגד שער המזרח, שהוא מכון כנגד בית קדשי הקדשים. לא יכנס להר הבית במקלו, ובמעלו, ...

One must bless [G-d] for the evil in the same way as one blesses for the good, as it says, "And you shall love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). "With all your heart," with your two impulses, the evil impulse as well as the good impulse. "With all your soul" even though he takes your soul [life] away from you. "With all your might" with all your money. Another explanation, "With all your might" whatever treatment ...

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28

בטל רצונך מפני רצונו

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

אבות פ"ב מ"ד.

29

בטל רצונך מפני רצונו

Rabban Gamliel, the son of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, taught: "Nullify your will before His will, so that He will nullify the will of others before your will."

Pirkei Avot 2:4 משנה אבות ב': ד'

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 בעצמה עד יום מותה, ואל תדין את חברך עד שתגיע למקומו, ואל תאמר דבר שאי אפשר לשמע, שסופו להשמע. ואל תאמר לבשאיפה 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 7

30

והכסיל בחושך הולך . . החכם עיניו בראשו

Koheles contrasts the wise man, whose eyes are in his head, with the fool who walks in darkness. The Alter Rebbe reads "eyes in his head" as keeping one's source in view at all times.

Ecclesiastes 2:14 קהלת ב': י"ד

החכם עיניו בראשו והכסיל בחושך הולך וידעתי גם־אני שמקרה אחד יקרה את־כלם:

The wise man, his eyes are in his head; But the fool walketh in darkness. And I also perceived that one event happeneth to them all.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

קהלת ב, יד.

PARAGRAPH 8

31

הנוכח בזה"ק לתקון פגם הברית

Iggeres HaTeshuvah chapter 4 takes up the Zohar's startling statement that teshuvah does not avail one who blemishes his covenant, and cites the explanation that the Zohar means that the lower teshuvah does not suffice, only the higher teshuvah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אגה"ת פ"ד והנסמן בליקוט פירושים ומ"מ — חיתריק.

PARAGRAPH 12

41

ותקרא שם ה'

Hagar, fleeing from Sarai into the wilderness, is met by an angel who promises her a son; she then calls the name of Havayah who spoke to her, "You are a G-d of seeing." The Alter Rebbe cites it because the verse calls the angel's words Havayah's own.

בראשית ט"ז:13 ג' Genesis 16:13

ותקרא שם ה' הדבר אליה אתה אל ראי כי אמרה הגם הלא ראיית אחר ראי:

And she called the name of the L-RD that spoke unto her, Thou art a G-d of seeing; for she said: 'Have I even here seen Him that seeth Me?'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית טז, יג. באוה"ת יתרו ע' תשמח יש הגי' (הג'ה, וכו' במד"ר פ' בראשית פ"ך דכ"ג ע"ב והכתיב ותקרא שם ה' הדובר אליה, רבי יהושע בר רבי נחמיה בשם ר' אידי אמר ע"י מלאך, וכו' עוד במד"ר פ' לך ס"פ מ"ה דנ"א ע"א ובפ' וירא ס"פ מ"ח ובפ' תולדות פס"ג דר"ט ע"ד, עכ"ה). בארוכה בלקו"ת במדבר יא, א. אגה"ק סי' כה.

42

והוא המלאך שדיבר עמה

The Midrash asks how "she called the name of Havayah who spoke to her" fits the rule that G-d spoke with no woman but Sarah, and answers that He spoke to Hagar through an angel.

בראשית רבה כ"ו:6 Bereshit Rabbah 20:6

... ותקרא שם ה' הדבר אליה. רבי יהושע בר רבי נחמיה בשם רבי אידי אמר: על ידי מלאך, והכתיב (שם יט): ויאמר ה' לה. רבי לוי בשם רבי חמא בר חנינא אמר: ע"י מלאך. רבי אלעזר בשם רבי יוסי בר זימרא אמר: על ידי שם הרבה ארבה עצבונך והרונך. רבי אבא בר כהנא בשם רבי שמואל אומר: כל שהוא הרבה ארבה, כל שהוא במאתים ושנים עשר יום חי. רבי הונא אמר: נוצר לתשעה ונולד לז' אינו חי, לח' אינו חי, נוצר לז' ונולד לשמונה חי, קל וחומר לתשעה. בעון קמיה ...

"To the woman He said: I will increase your suffering and your pregnancy; in pain you shall give birth to children, and your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). "To the woman He said: I will increase your suffering and your pregnancy" - Rabbi Yehuda ben Rabbi Simon and Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Elazar ben Rabbi Simon: The Holy One blessed be He never deigned to speak with a woman except for that righteous woman [Sarah], and that, too, ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ב"ר פ"כ. ראה בסה"מ תרס"ח ע' קעח שכי שלפ"ז מה שהמלאכים נק' אלקים הוא ע"ש אלקים דהיינו בחי' החיות האלקי שבהם שזהו כל מציאותם כו'. ע"ש.

43

ויאמר שוב אשוב אליך

One of the three visitors who came to Avraham in the guise of men tells him, "I will surely return to you at this time

next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son." It is G-d Who will return to Sarah, yet the angel speaks in the first person.

בראשית י"ח:10 Genesis 18:10

ויאמר שוב אשוב אליך כעת תהי והנה יבן לשרה אשתך ושרה שמעת פתח האהל והוא אחריו:

And He said: 'I will certainly return unto thee when the season cometh round; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.' And Sarah heard in the tent door, which was behind him.—

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית יח, י.

44

ובשליחותו של מקום אמר לו כן

Rashi explains that the angel did not announce that he himself would return; he spoke as the emissary of the Omnipresent, as the angel told Hagar "I will greatly multiply," though it was not in his power to multiply.

רש"י על בראשית י"ח:10 Rashi on Genesis 18:10

... לא בשרו המלאך שישב אליו, אלא בשליחותו של מקום אמר לו, כמו ויאמר לה מלאך ה' הרבה ארבה, והוא אין בידו להרבות, אלא בשליחותו של מקום, אף כאן בשליחותו של מקום אמר לו כן (פ"ר). אלישע אמר לשונמית למועד הזה כעת תהי את חבקת בן ותאמר אל אדני איש האלקים אל תכזב בשפחתך, אותן המלאכים שבשרו את שרה אמרו למועד אשוב, אמר לה אלישע אותם המלאכים שהם חיים ונקמים לעולם אמרו למועד אשוב, אכל אני ...

I WILL CERTAINLY RETURN — The angel was not announcing that he would return to him, but he was speaking to him as G-d's agent (meaning that G-d would return). Similar is, (16:10) "And the angel of the L-rd said to her, I will greatly multiply thy seed, but he had no power to multiply, and was speaking only as G-d's agent. So also here, he spoke thus as G-d's agent. Elisha said to the Shunamite (2 Kings 4:16), "At this season when the time cometh round thou ...

Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silberman, 1929-1934 (Public Domain) • Pentateuch with Rashi's commentary by M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silberman, 1929-1934 (Public Domain)

45

כאלו אמר הקב"ה בכבודו ובעצמו

The gloss quotes Rashi on Bereshit 18:10: the angel did not announce that he himself would return, but spoke as the emissary of the Omnipresent, like the angel who told Hagar "I will greatly multiply."

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת יתרו ע' תשמח יש הגי' (כ"כ רש"י שם וז"ל לא בשרו המלאך שישב אליו אלא בשליחותו של מקום אמר לו כן כמו ויאמר לה מלאך ה' הרבה ארבה, בפ' לך י"ז י"ד, והוא אין בידו להרבות אלא בשליחותו של מקום אף כאן בשליחותו של מקום אמר לו כן, מד"ר).

46

חיות אלקות המדבר בהם . . והפעולה למטה

the passage shares nothing with the note

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת יתרו שם יש הגי'. "ולכאורה צ"ע בזה ממ"ש בת"א פ' בראשית בהביאור ע"פ כי כאשר השמים החדשים ושם דף ה' עמוד ד' [=ג, א], גבי

ישעי' ו, ג.

והנה נודע עבודת המלאכים כו' איהו וגרמוהי חד, משא"כ עולמות בי"ע כו' עכ"ל. וממ"ש בפי בא בד"ה בעצם היום הזה ושם ד"ק ע"א [=ס, ב] משא"כ בבי"ע אין הגילוי כלל בהכלים כו', ועיין מענין המלאכים בסידור שער הק"ש בד"ה להבין ההפרש בין ק"ש לתפלה, ולפי"ז הוא ע"ד שאמר משה ונתתי עשב שהקשו ע"ז דהל"ל ונתן ה' אלא היינו משום ששכינה מדברת מתוך גרונו של משה, ועיין מזה בלק"ת פ' ואתחנן סד"ה ואהבת את. קיצור. בת"א פ' תשא פי' מה שהמלאך נקי בשם אלקים זהו מפני גודל ביטולו אליו ית' ואינו תופס מקום נגד חיות אלקות המדבר בהם ואינם רק מעבר שעל ידיהם יומשך הדיבור והפעולה למטה". ע"כ. וראה שם ע' תשסג. בביאור"ז להצ"צ — כרך ב ע' תתקנו מציין וז"ל "וצ"ע בת"א פ' תשא בד"ה שמאלו תחת לראשי דף קמ"ג ע"ב במ"ש בענין המלאכים שאין תופסים מקום נגד חיות האלקות המדבר בהם, וצ"ל בשעה שהמלאך הוא שליח מהקב"ה אז מתעלה ע"ד איהו וגרמוהי חד כמ"ש בת"א פ' בא בפי' הוי' צבאות בד"ה בעצם היום הזה, משא"כ בשעה שאינו שליח, וכן נתי' החילוק באג"ק קרוב לסופו". עכ"ל. והוא בקו"א ד"ה להבין מ"ש בפע"ח (קנט, א). וראה באוה"ת יתרו ע' תשסג. ובפי' תשא ע' איתתעד "ולכאורה קשה דהא דוקא באצ"י איהו וגרמוהי חד דהיינו שגם הכלים הם אלקות ממש משא"כ עולמות בי"ע הוא בבחי' פירוד טורי דפרודא". ע"ש. ובאוה"ת יתרו ע' תשמח "ולכאורה צ"ע בזה ממ"ש בתו"א פ' בראשית בהביאור ע"פ כי כאשר השמים החדשים . . . גבי והנה נודע עבודת המלאכים כו' איהו וגרמוהי חד. משא"כ עולמות בי"ע כו' עכ"ל. וממ"ש בפי' בא בד"ה בעצם היום הזה ושם . . . משא"כ בבי"ע אין הגילוי כלל בהכלים כו', ועיין מענין המלאכים בסידור שער הק"ש בד"ה להבין ההפרש בין ק"ש לתפלה". ע"ש. ראה באוה"ת עקב ע' תקצו. תקצט.

47

ומקבלין דין מן דין

The Aramaic Targum renders "and one called to another" as "and they receive from one another." The Alter Rebbe explains that the Hebrew speaks of the giver and the Targum of the receiver.

Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 6:3: תרגום יונתן על ישעיהו ו:ג: ומקבלין דין מן דין ואמרין קדוש בשמי מרומא עלאה בית שכןתיה קדיש על ארעא עובד גבורתיה קדיש לעלם ולעלמי עלמאי זי צבאות מליא כל ארעא זיו יקריה:

And one cried unto another, and they were saying, Holy in the highest and exalted heavens is the house of His Shekinah, holy upon the earth is the work of His might, holy for ever, world without end, is the L-RD of hosts, the whole earth is full of the brightness of His glory.

Mikraot Gedolot (Public Domain) • London "Chaldee Paraphrase," 1871 (Public Domain)

48

וקרא זה אל זה ואמר קדוש

In Yeshayahu's vision of the heavenly throne, the seraphim call to one another, "Holy, holy, holy is Havayah Tzevaos (of Hosts); the whole earth is full of His glory." The maamar reads both the angels' calling to one another and their threefold "Holy."

ישעיהו ו:ג: ישעיהו

וקרא זה אל זה ואמר קדוש קדוש קדוש הי צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו:

And one called unto another, and said: Holy, holy, holy, is the L-RD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

PARAGRAPH 14

והנה הארה והמשכה . . . כך הנה הארה והמשכה . . . והיא בחי' רגל לעיקר האור של מעלה

KeHOT notes that Or HaTorah on Shemos refers to this passage, from "the illumination and drawing-down" to "the level of a foot relative to the main light above."

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת פ' שמות ע' לו מציין לכאן.

50

כיתרון אור הבא מן החשך

Kohleles says that wisdom excels folly "as light excels darkness." Chassidus reads the verse as the special advantage of light that emerges from darkness.

Ecclesiastes 2:13: קהלת ב:י"ג

וראיתי אני שיש יתרון לחכמה מן הסכלות כיתרון האור מן החשך:

Then I saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness.

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PARAGRAPH 15

51

בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם

Moshe tells Israel, "You are children to Havayah your G-d," and therefore they must not gash themselves for the dead. A child is of his father's own essence, which is why the light that reaches Israel is "ours."

דברים י"ד:14: דברים

בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם לא תתגדדו ולא תשימו קרחה בין עיניכם למות:

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.

PARAGRAPH 16

52

וכרא כרעא דאבוה

There the Congregation of Israel is called the "foot," on the verses "You are children" and "a son is his father's foot." The Alter Rebbe adds that the foot has an advantage over the head: it carries the head where it wishes to go, and the head is healed through the feet, so that in one respect the foot is the "head."

KEHOT'S NOTE

נסמן לעיל א, ב.

53

בטל רצונך מפני רצונו

"Nullify your will before His will." Here it describes the

son who is like his father's foot, with no will apart from his.

משנה אבות ב:ד"ד: Pirkei Avot 2:4

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 העבור, 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, שפא 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 ...

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

54

שלכל אשר יחפץ יטנו

Shlomo says, "The king's heart is like streams of water in the hand of Havayah; wherever He wishes, He turns it": even a king's heart goes where G-d wills. The Alter Rebbe applies the words to a foot that goes wherever the person wills.

משלי כ"א:א: Proverbs 21:1

פלגימים לבמלך בידהי על-כל-אשר יחפץ יטנו:

The king's heart is in the hand of the L-RD, as the water-courses: He turneth it whithersoever He will.

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PARAGRAPH 17

55

הנותן לשכוי בינה להבחין בין יום ובין לילה

The Talmud institutes the morning blessings: on hearing the rooster, one says, "Blessed... Who gave the rooster understanding to distinguish between day and night."

ברכות ס"ב:ה"ה: Berakhot 60b:5

כי שמע קול תרנגולא, לימא: "ברוך ... אשר נתן לשכוי בינה להבחין בין יום ובין לילה". כי פתח עיניה, לימא: "ברוך ... פוקח עורים". כי תריץ ויתבי, לימא: "ברוך ... מתיר אסורים". כי לביש, לימא: "ברוך ... מלביש ערומים". כי זקף, לימא: "ברוך ... זוקף כפופים". כי נחית לארעא, לימא: "ברוך ... רוקע הארץ על המים". כי מסג, לימא: "ברוך ... המכין מצעדי גבר". כי סיים מסאגיה, לימא: "ברוך ... שעשה לי כל צרכי". כי אסר המיניה, לימא: "ברוך ...

When he hears the cry of the cock let him say : "Blessed...Who hast given the cock intelligence to distinguish between day and night. " When he opens his eyes let him say: "Blessed... Who openest the eyes of the blind." When he straightens himself and sits up let him say : "Blessed...Who loosest them that are bound." When he has clothed himself let him say : "Blessed... Who clothe the naked." When he raises himself let him say : "Blessed... Who raisest up them that are bowed down." When ...

William Davidson, Vocalized Aramaic (CC-BY-NC) • Tractate Berakot by A. Cohen, Cambridge University Press, 1921 (Public Domain)

56

ומשכיל על דבר ימצא

"One who considers a matter will find good." Whoever reflects on the blessings will find this meaning in them.

משלי ט"ז:כ"ו: Proverbs 16:20

משכיל על-דבר ימצא טוב ובוטח בה אשירי:

He that giveth heed unto the word shall find good; And whoso trusteth in the L-RD, happy is he.

Miqra according to the Masorah (CC-BY-SA) • JPS 1917 (Public Domain)

57

קרוב ה' לנשברי לב

David says that Havayah is near to the brokenhearted and saves those crushed in spirit: brokenness of heart brings G-d near.

תהילים ל"ד:י"ט: Psalms 34:19

קרוב ה' לנשברי לב ואת דכאירוח יושיע:

The L-RD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, And saveth such as are of a contrite spirit.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים לד, יט.

58

זבחי אלקים רוח נשברה

In his psalm of repentance after Nasan's rebuke, David says, "The sacrifices of Elokim are a broken spirit; a broken and crushed heart, O Elokim, You will not despise." The Alter Rebbe notes the Name Elokim in the verse.

תהילים נ"א:י"ט: Psalms 51:19

זבחי אלקים רוח נשברה לב-נשבר ונדכה אלקים לא תבזה:

The sacrifices of G-d are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O G-d, Thou wilt not despise.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים נא, יט.

PARAGRAPH 18

59

חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא

In Eliyahu's prayer (Patach Eliyahu) in the introduction to the Tikkunei Zohar: "You are wise, but not with a known wisdom; You understand, but not with a known understanding." The Alter Rebbe uses it for the divine wisdom that Torah study arouses, beyond any wisdom we can grasp.

תקוני זוהר י"ז ב:ג:ד'-4:3: Tikkunei Zohar 17b:3-4

אנת חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא. אנת הוא מבין ולא מבינה ידיעא. לית לך אתר ידיעא אלא לאשתמודעא תוקפך וחילך לבני נשא. ולאחזאה לון איך אתנהיג עלמא בדינא וברחמי דאינון צדק ומשפט כפום עובדיהון דבני נשא. דין איהו גבורה. משפט עמודא דאמצעייתא. צדק מלכותא קדישא. מאזני צדק *תרין סמכי קשוט. הין צדק אות ברית. כלא לאחזאה איך אתנהיג עלמא.

Constantinople, 1740 (CC-BY-NC)

שבשמים

The Midrash expounds “And Pharaoh drew near”: he brought the punishment near to himself, and brought Israel near to teshuvah.

מדרש תנחומא, בשלח ח' ב' ג' 8-2: Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 8:2-3: ופרעה הקריב, הקריב את הפרענות לבוא עליו, והקריב את ישראל לתשובה. כיון שראו ששבו ישראל לאחוריהם וחנו לפני פי החירות לפני בעל צפון, אמר פרעה: בעל צפון הסכים על גזרתי לאבדם במים. התחיל לזבח לקטר ולנסח לעבודה זרה. לכן נאמר ופרעה הקריב.

When Pharaoh drew nigh (ibid. 14:10); that is, when he drew nigh to the retribution that was to befall him and (when) he drew Israel nigh to repentance. When they saw that Israel had turned back and had encamped near Baal-Saphon and Pi-Hahiroth, Pharaoh declared: “Baal-Saphon concurs in my decision to destroy them in the water.” Thereupon he began to offer sacrifices, to burn incense, and to pour libations before the idols. Hence it is said: When Pharaoh drew nigh.

Midrash Tanchuma -- Torat Emet (Public Domain) • Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu, trans. Samuel A. Berman (CC-BY)

69

והנה טוב זה מלאך החיים

In its list of commandments, on redeeming one's son, the Zohar says that two appointees stand over a person, one of life and one of death: “And behold, it was good” is the angel of life, “very” is the angel of death.

Bereshit Rabbah 9:9 ט' ט' בראשית רבה ט' ט' 9:9

אמר ר' זעירא: הנה טוב מאד, זו גן עדן. והנה טוב מאד, זו גיהנום. וכי גיהנום טוב מאד? אמתמהא! משל למלך שהיה לו פרס והכניס לתוכו פועלים, ובנה אוצר על פתחו. אמר כל מי שהוא מתכשר במלאכת הפרס יכנס לאוצרו, וכל מי שאינו מתכשר במלאכת הפרס אל יכנס לאוצרו. כך כל מי שהוא מסגל במצות ומעשים טובים הרי גן עדן, וכל מי שאינו מסגל במצות ומעשים טובים הרי גיהנום:

Rabbi Ze'eira said: “Behold it was very good” – this is the Garden of Eden; “and behold it was very good” – this is Gehenna. Is Gehenna, then, very good? This is a rhetorical question. This is analogous to a king who had an orchard. He stationed laborers there and he built a storage house at its entrance. He said: ‘Anyone who performs successfully in the labor of the orchard, he may enter its treasury; anyone who does not perform successfully in the labor of the orchard, he may not ...

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Zohar I, 14a, א"י יד

Zohar II, 68b, ח"ב סה

KEHOT'S NOTE

ב"ר ט, ט. ילקוט שמעוני בראשית רמז טז. זח"א יד, א. זח"ב סה, ב. ועוד. ראה גם לעיל ט, א. סט, ד. לקו"ת בחוקותי מז, ג בשם מדרש. וראה שם נשא כח, ג.

70

והנה טוב זה מלאך החיים. מאד זה מלאך המות

Rabbi Shmuel bar Yitzchak expounds “And behold, it was very good”: “good” is the angel of life, and “very good” is

the angel of death. (Kehot: Bereshit Rabbah 9:9)

Bereshit Rabbah 9:10 י"י ט' בראשית רבה ט' י"י 9:10

אמר רבי שמואל בר יצחק: הנה טוב מאד, זה מלאך חיים. והנה טוב מאד, זה מלאך המות. וכי מלאך המות טוב מאד? אמתמהא! אלא למלך, שעשה סעודה וזימן את האורחים, והכניס לפניו תמחוי מלא כל טוב. אמר: כל שהוא אוכל ומברך את המלך יאכל ויערב לו, וכל מי שהוא אוכל ואינו מברך את המלך יותו ראשו בסיף. כך כל מי שהוא מסגל במצות ומעשים טובים הרי מלאך חיים, וכל מי שאינו מסגל במצות ומעשים טובים הרי מלאך המות:

Rabbi Shmuel bar Yitzhak said: “Behold it was very good” – this is the angel of life; “and behold it was very good” – this is the angel of death. Is the angel of death, then, “very good”? This is a rhetorical question. Rather, it is analogous to a king who prepared a feast, invited the guests and brought before them a serving dish filled with all kinds of delicacies. He said: ‘Anyone who eats and blesses the king, let him eat and enjoy himself, but anyone who eats and ...

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71

והנה טוב זה מלאך החיים. מאד זה מלאך המות

The Yalkut brings the same Midrash on “very good.”

ילקוט שמעוני על התורה ט"א 11:16 Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 16:11

... כה כל מי שמסגל מצות ומעשים טובים יכנס לגן עדן, ואם לאו, הרי גיהנום. והנה טוב, זה מלאך חיים. מאד, זה מלאך המות למלך שעשה סעודה וזמן את האורחים ואמר כל מי שאוכל ומברך את המלך יאכל ויערב לו, ואם לאו יתו ראשו בסיף. והנה טוב, זו מדת טוב, מאד, זו מדת פרענות. וכי מדת הפרענות טובה היא, אלא שוקד על הפרענות היאך להביאה כל המדות בטלו מדה במדה לא בטלה. והנה טוב מאד, הוא אדם, אתנו דדיו קאתנו דדיו. ...

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72

ביתר שאת ויתר עז

Yaakov blesses Reuven as “first in rank and first in power.” The Alter Rebbe borrows the words for the heightened intensity of the penitent's love.

Genesis 49:3 ט' ג' בראשית מ"ט:3

ראובן בכרי אתה כחי וראשית אוני יתר שאת ויתר עז:

Reuben, thou art my first-born, My might, and the first-fruits of my strength; The excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.

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PARAGRAPH 23

73

על כן ירום ראש

“From a stream on the way he will drink; therefore he will lift up his head.” The Alter Rebbe borrows the words for the soul's “head” being raised.

Psalms 110:7 י"ז תהילים ק"י:7

מנחל בדרך ישתה עליכן ירים ראש:

He will drink of the brook in the way; Therefore will he lift up the head.

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74 שע"י בחי' שמאל דוחה . . ומתנשא בבחי' עבודת הראש

The Tzemach Tzedek writes that the verse can also be explained the other way: through the "raising of the head," contemplating G-d's unity in one's mind and understanding, a person afterwards humbles himself, as in "a person should always incite his good inclination against his evil inclination," and that is "the left pushes away."

KEHOT'S NOTE

באווה"ת פ' בשלח ע' תסג כתב ע"ז וז"ל: "ויש לפרש גם כן להפך שעל ידי הרמת ראש שהוא ענין ההתבוננות במוחו ותבונתו אחדות ה' ע"ז אח"כ יהי משפיל א"ע ע"ד לעולם ירגיז אדם יצ"ט על יצה"ר וזהו השמאל דוחה". עכ"ל, ע"ש.

75 הנזכר בלקו"א

Chapter 50 of the Tanya describes a love that surpasses all others "as gold surpasses silver": a love like flames of fire, from the supernal Gevuros of Binah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

פרק נ.

PARAGRAPH 24**76** וימינו תחבקני

The second half of the opening verse, now explained as the Torah and mitzvos that hold a person after prayer.

Song of Songs 2:6 שיר השירים ב' ו:ה

שְׁמָאלוֹ תַּחַת לְרֹאשִׁי וַיְמִינוּ תַּחֲבֻקֵּנִי:

Let his left hand be under my head, And his right hand embrace me.

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77 מים שיורדים ממקום גבוה למקום נמוך

Rabbi Chanina bar Idi teaches that the words of Torah are likened to water: as water leaves a high place and flows to a low place, so the Torah endures only in one whose mind is humble. The Alter Rebbe uses the image for Torah and mitzvos descending from G-d's highest attributes into physical life.

Taanit 7a:15 ו' א:ט"ו

ואמר רבי חנינא בר אידי: למה נמשלו דברי תורה למים, דכתיב: "הוי כל צמא לכו למים", לומר לה: מה מים מניחין מקום גבוה והולכין למקום נמוך, אף דברי תורה אין מתקיימין אלא במי שדעתו שפלה.

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78 קדש לי כל בכור

"Sanctify to Me every firstborn," the opening of the first section written in the tefillin.

Exodus 13:2 ב' ג:י"ג

קִדְּשִׁי לִי כָל־בְּכוֹר פֶּטֶר כָּל־רֶחֶם בְּכֵנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶדֶם וּבְקֶהֱמָה 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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שמאלו תחת לראשי וימינו תחבקני

79**פ' ראשונה קדש . . רמז לחכמה**

There the Alter Rebbe says that the section "Kadesh" is the level of Chochmah, the mochin of Abba (the seat of memory), which is why it says "and as a remembrance between your eyes," and that only what is encompassing (makif) repels the external forces.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל כו, ב.

80**כי ישאלך בנך מה זאת**

"When your son asks you tomorrow, 'What is this?'" you shall tell him how Havayah brought us out of Egypt: from the second section written in the tefillin. The maamar takes the son's question as Binah, the contemplation that "stands to be asked."

שמות י"ג:14 Exodus 13:14

וְהָיָה כִּי־יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה־זֹּאת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים:

And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying: What is this? that thou shalt say unto him: By strength of hand the L-RD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage;

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81**השמרו לכם**

"Beware for yourselves, lest your heart be seduced," from the section "And it will be, if you listen," the fourth section of the tefillin.

דברים י"א:ט"ז Deuteronomy 11:16

הִשְׁמְרוּ לָכֶם פֶּן יִפְתֶּה לְבַבְכֶּם וְסָרְתֶּם וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם:

Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them;

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PARAGRAPH 25**82** והר סיני עשן כולו מפני אשר ירד עליו ה' באש

At the giving of the Torah, Mount Sinai was all in smoke because Havayah descended upon it in fire.

Exodus 19:18 ט"ח:י"ט

וְהָרַר סִינַי עָשָׁן כָּלֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרַד עָלָיו ה' בְּאֵשׁ וַיַּעַל עָשָׁנוּ כַּעֲשֹׁן הַכִּבְשָׁן וַיִּתְּחַד כָּל־הָהָר מְאֹד:

Now mount Sinai was altogether on smoke, because the L-RD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

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83**והר סיני . . שירדה שנאה להעכו"ם**

The Talmud explains the name Sinai: it is where hatred (sin'ah) for the nations of the world came down, in the list of the wilderness's five names on 89b; the same words close 89a: "What is Mount Sinai? The mountain on which

hatred descended.” The Alter Rebbe reads it as the hatred of evil itself.

Shabbat 89b:1א:ט ב. שבת פ”ט

שָׁפְרוּ וְרָבוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיו; מְדַבֵּר סִינִי — שִׁירְדָה שְׁנֵאָה לְאוֹמוֹת הָעוֹלָם עָלָיו. וְמָה שָׁמוֹ? “חֹרֵב” שָׁמוֹ. וּפְלִיגָא דְרַבִּי אֲבָהוּ, דָּאָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: “הָרַס סִינִי” שָׁמוֹ. וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא “הָרַס חֹרֵב” — שִׁירְדָה חֹרֵבָה לְאוֹמוֹת הָעוֹלָם עָלָיו.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

שבת פט, ב.

84 תכלית שנאה שנאתים

David says of those who rise against G-d, “I hate them with utmost hatred; they have become enemies to me.” The Alter Rebbe applies it to the hatred of evil itself.

Psalms 139:22כ”ב:ט תהילים קל”ט

תְּכַלִּית שְׁנֵאָה שְׁנֵאֲתִים לְאוֹיְבִים הֵיוּ לִי:

I hate them with utmost hatred; I count them mine enemies.

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85 מימינו אש דת למו

In his blessing before his death, Moshe describes the revelation at Sinai: “From His right hand, a fiery law for them.” The Torah given at Sinai is fire, and it comes from the right hand.

Deuteronomy 33:2ג:ב דברים ל”ג:ב

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' מִסִּינִי בָא וְזָרַח מִשְׁעִיר לְמוֹ הוֹפִיעַ מִהֶר פָּאֶרֶן וְאֶתָּה מִרְבֶּכֶת קֹדֶשׁ מִיָּמֵינוּ אֵשׁ דֵּת לְמוֹ:

And he said: The L-RD came from Sinai, And rose from Seir unto them; He shined forth from mount Paran, And He came from the myriads holy, At His right hand was a fiery law unto them.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

דברים לג, ב.

86 כהמס דונג מפני אש

David prays that G-d’s enemies scatter: “As wax melts before fire, so shall the wicked perish before G-d.”

Psalms 68:3ג:ח תהילים ס”ח:ג

כְּהִנְדֹף עָשָׁן תִּנְדֹּף כְּהִמָּס דּוֹנֵג מִפְּנֵי־אֵשׁ יִאֲבְדוּ רָשָׁעִים מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:

As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; As wax melteth before the fire, So let the wicked perish at the presence of G-d.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

תהלים סח, ג.

PARAGRAPH 26

87 צדקה תרומם גוי

Shlomo says that righteousness (tzedakah) exalts a nation. With the Sages, the Alter Rebbe reads tzedakah as charity,

and “uplifts” as raising the giver into G-d’s embrace.

Proverbs 14:34ד:י”ד משלי י”ד:34

צִדְקָה תְּרוֹמֵם־גּוֹי וְחַסֵּד לְאֲמִים חֲטָאת:

Righteousness exalteth a nation; But sin is a reproach to any people.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

משלי יד, לד. נסמן לעיל א, ב.

88 יאר ה' פניו אליך

From the Priestly Blessing: “May Havayah make His face shine to you.” Charity brings a person “face to face” with G-d.

Numbers 6:25ה”כ:ה במדבר ו:25

יָאֵר ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֶּךָ:

The L-RD make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

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KEHOT’S NOTE

במדבר ו, כה.

89 ונתנו איש כפר נפשו

The census verse: each man gives a ransom for his soul when they are numbered. The Alter Rebbe reads the ransom as charity and bifikod as a lack to be repaired.

Exodus 30:12כ”ב:י שמות ל”ב:12

כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָקְדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כֶּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ לָהּ: כִּפְקֹד אֹתָם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה בָהֶם נֶגֶף בְּפָקֹד אֹתָם:

‘When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the L-RD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

שמות ל, יב.

90 ע”פ שאו את ראש כוי לגלגלתם

Kehot notes that this closing reference is an addition by the Tzemach Tzedek and is missing in Manuscript 1824.

KEHOT’S NOTE

זה הוספה מכ”ק הצ”צ, ובבוכ 1824 ליתא. ראה לקו”ת במדבר א, ב.

91 שאו את ראש כוי לגלגלתם

In the wilderness of Sinai, G-d commands Moshe to count Israel: “Lift up the head of all the congregation of the children of Israel... by their polls.”

Numbers 1:2א:ב במדבר א:2

שָׂאוּ אֶת־רֹאשׁ כָּל־עֵדֻת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמוֹת כָּל־זָכָר לְגִלְגֻּלְתָּם:

‘Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names, every male, by their polls;

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זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל...

“This they shall give, everyone who passes over among the counted”



A Jew's love of G-d has two halves: the love born of contemplating G-d's oneness, which is commanded, lies within a person's choice and is required even of one who has sinned (the half-shekel); and the great love that comes from above as a gift, to each soul by its measure, which completes the shekel's twenty gerah.

THE MAAMAR IN BRIEF

The maamar opens with the half-shekel verse and with “Her husband is known in the gates”: G-d gives every soul its love and awe, each according to its measure. If so, what is left to free choice? The answer lies in two readings of “And you shall love.” As a command, it is the love born of contemplation: grasping that creation changed nothing in G-d, that the worlds are nullified before Him as speech is before thought, and that He is beyond even the highest thought. Such love gives over a person's thought, speech and action; and since one cannot be without thought, he binds them to the Supernal Will through the Torah and mitzvos, which come from Chochmah, above thought. This love is every person's duty and in his choice. As a promise, it is ahavah rabbah, a love from above that contemplation cannot reach: the “holy shekel” of silver, read as longing, from the encompassing light. Each love comprises ten powers, together the twenty gerah. Not everyone receives the second, but the first is the half-shekel that every Jew must give, even one who has sinned. A closing note applies this to serving G-d with joy.

OUTLINE

1 Her husband is known in the gates

¶1-2

All love and awe of G-d come from Him, to each soul by its measure, through the four gates of love, awe, Torah and mitzvos. Then what depends on free choice? The Shema and “And you shall love” will answer.

2 The first love: contemplating G-d's oneness

¶3-4

“And you shall love” as a command is the love born of contemplation: G-d is unchanged by creation; the worlds, one divine utterance, are nullified before Him as speech before thought; He is above all thought; so one should love Him with all one's heart, soul and might.

3 Giving over thought, speech and action

¶5-6

“With all your soul” is giving over one's thought, speech and action; since one cannot be without thought, one binds them to the Supernal Will through Torah and mitzvos, which, like hair drawn from the brain, come from Chochmah above thought.

4 The second love: ahavah rabbah from above

¶7-8

The first love is every person's duty and in his choice. “You will love” is ahavah rabbah, which comes from above beyond contemplation: the holy shekel of silver (longing), weighed to each soul, from the light that encompasses all worlds.

5 Twenty gerah and the census of the souls

¶9-10

The four hundred shekels of silver are the four hundred worlds of longing; each of the two loves comprises ten powers, making twenty gerah; the census verse speaks of the souls; but the great love does not come to everyone.

6 The half-shekel every Jew must give

¶11

The first love, giving over one's soul with its ten powers, is the half-shekel required of all, even one who has transgressed. A closing note: serving G-d with joy is the half-shekel; “Rejoice, righteous ones, in Havayah” is the second half.

KEY CONCEPTS

great love (ahavah rabbah) אהבה רבה

A love of G-d that comes to a person from above, beyond what contemplation can produce, given to each soul by its measure. Here it is the “holy shekel” of silver and the second half of the shekel.

contemplation התבוננות

Sustained reflection with the mind on G-d's oneness: that creation changed nothing in Him and that the worlds are nullified before Him. It is the source of the first, commanded love, and lies within a person's choice.

nullification (bittul) ביטול

Being as nothing before what is higher, as speech is before thought. The worlds are nullified before G-d, and the commanded love asks a person to nullify his own thought, speech and action in the One.

self-sacrifice (mesirus nefesh) מסירות נפש

Giving over one's soul, which is expressed in thought, speech and action, entirely to G-d. In practice it means binding all three to the Supernal Will through Torah and mitzvos.

the half-shekel מחצית השקל

In the maamar, the first love with the soul's ten powers, which every Jew must give, even one who has transgressed; the great love from above is the other half that makes the twenty gerah.

the light that encompasses all worlds (sovev kol almin) סובב כל עלמין

Divine light too great to enter the worlds, which affects them from beyond. The maamar finds it in “passing to the merchant” (over lasocher) and makes it the source of the great love from above.

SECTION 1 • ¶1-2

Her husband is known in the gates

1 זה יתנו¹ כל העובר על הפקודים² מחצית השקל בשקל הקודש עשרים גרה השקל מחצית השקל תרומה להוי"ה וגו'.

"This they shall give, everyone who passes over among the counted: half a shekel, by the holy shekel — the shekel is twenty gerah — half a shekel as an offering to Havayah," etc.

The maamar opens with Exodus 30:13: everyone counted in the census is to give half a shekel, measured by the "holy shekel" of twenty gerah, as an offering to Havayah. By the end, the Alter Rebbe will read each phrase of this verse as a stage in a Jew's love of G-d, and "everyone who passes over the pekudim" as even one who has transgressed the commandments.

כתיב נודע בשערים בעלה³ שהקב"ה הוא בעל של כל נשמה מישראל שמשפיע לכל או"א [אחד ואחד]. שכל אהבה או יראה שיש לכל נשמה מישראל הכל הוא מאתו ית' ולכל חד לפום שיעורא דיליה.⁴

It is written, "Her husband is known in the gates": that the Holy One, blessed be He, is the husband of every soul of Israel, Who bestows upon each and every one. For every love or awe that any soul of Israel has, all of it is from Him, may He be blessed, and to each one according to his own measure.

Proverbs 31:23 says of the woman of valor that "her husband is known in the gates." The Alter Rebbe reads the husband as G-d and the wife as each Jewish soul: every love or awe of G-d that a soul has is His gift, given to each in a measure suited to that soul. The phrase "according to his own measure" echoes the Zohar on this verse, which reads she'arim, "gates," as what each person "measures" (meshaer) in his heart.

ולפי מה שנכנס בשערים שהם ד' שערים אהבה ויראה תורה ומצות כנודע כנגד ד' אותיות הוי"ה ב"ה.⁵

And [it is] according to how [far] he enters into the gates — which are four gates: love and awe, Torah and mitzvos, as is known — corresponding to the four letters of Havayah, blessed be He.

The gates through which G-d becomes "known" to the soul are four: love, awe, Torah and mitzvos, corresponding to the four letters of the Name Havayah. How much of G-d a person comes to know depends on how far he enters through these gates.

2 ולהבין זה אם הכל ממנו ית' א"כ מהו הבחירה לאדם. ובודאי יש דבר התלוי בבחירתו של אדם.

Now, to understand this: if everything is from Him, may He be blessed, then what is man's free choice? And there is certainly something that depends on a person's choice.

If every love and awe a person has comes from G-d, what is left for his own free choice? Yet something must certainly depend on a person's choice, and the maamar sets out to show what.

ולבאר זה מה תלוי בבחירתו ומה בא מלמעלה. כתיב שמע ישראל⁶ ה' אלהינו ה' אחד. ואהבת כו'.

To explain this — what depends on his choice and what comes from above: it is written, “Hear, O Israel, Havayah is our G-d, Havayah is One. And you shall love,” etc.

The answer will come from the Shema and the verse that follows it, “And you shall love.” Together they show which love a person must reach by his own effort and which comes to him from above.

SECTION 2 • 13-4

The first love: contemplating G-d's oneness

3 והנה בואהבת יש כ' פירושים. אחד לשון צווי⁷ שתאהוב אותו. וא' לשון עתיד שתבא האהבה ממילא.⁸ וענין אהבה הראשונה היא מההתבוננות.

Now, in “And you shall love” there are two interpretations. One is the language of a command: that you should love Him. And one is the language of the future: that the love will come of itself. And the first love is from contemplation.

The Hebrew ve'ahavta can be read as a command, “You shall love,” or as a promise, “you will love,” a love that comes by itself. The first, commanded love is the one a person reaches through contemplation.

והיינו להבין בדעתו אחדותו ית' בשבעה רקיעים ובארבע רוחות

That is: to understand in one's mind His unity, may He be blessed, in the seven heavens and in the four directions.

This contemplation is to grasp with one's mind that G-d is One throughout the seven heavens and the four directions of the world, that is, throughout all creation. It echoes the halachah that in saying echad (“One”) in the Shema a person should have in mind that G-d rules in the heavens, on the earth and in all four directions.

ואני ה' לא שניתתי⁹ שאין לו שום שינוי כמו קודם בריאת העולם כן הוא ממש עתה כי כל העולמות בטלים בבטול גמור נגדו כידוע כי שמש ומגן¹⁰ כו'¹¹

And “I, Havayah, have not changed,” that He has no change whatsoever: just as before the creation of the world, so is He exactly now. For all the worlds are nullified in complete nullification (bittul) before Him, as is known [from] “For a sun and a shield,” etc.

The verse “I, Havayah, have not changed” teaches that creating the world brought no change in Him at all: He is exactly as He was before the world was created, because all the worlds are utterly nullified before Him. The allusion to “For a sun and a shield is Havayah Elokim” refers to the known explanation in Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VebaEmunah, chapter 4: the Name Elokim shields the creatures from the light of Havayah, the way a sheath screens the sun.

ואף שנראה לנו העולמות ליש הוא שקר גמור.¹² כי בדבר ה' שמים נעשו¹³ וברוח פיו כו'.

And even though the worlds appear to us as something that exists (yesh), this is an utter falsehood. For “By the word of Havayah the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth,” etc.

So the worlds' appearance of independent existence is “an utter falsehood”: they exist only through G-d's word, as the verse says the heavens were made “by the word of Havayah.” The next paragraph explains this through the analogy of thought and speech.

4 ומבשרי אחזה¹⁴ כו'. כמו באדם בתחלה כשחושב אזי מחשבתו באחדות גמור אתו בלי שום התחלקות כלל

“And from my flesh I behold,” etc.: as with a person — at first, when he thinks, his thought is in complete unity with him, without any division at all;

Iyov's words “from my flesh I behold G-d” are the basis for learning about G-d from the human soul. In a person, a thought, while it is still only thought, is wholly one with the thinker, with no division at all.

ואח”כ כשיוצא מפיו הוא נפרד מאתו. כן כל העולמות קודם הבריאה היו באחדות גמור אתו ית'.

and afterwards, when it comes out of his mouth, it is separate from him. So [too], all the worlds, before the creation, were in complete unity with Him, may He be blessed.

Once the words are spoken, they become separate from the speaker. In the same way, before creation all the worlds were wholly one with G-d.

וכמו שבטל הדבור אצל המחשבה בבוטל גמור כי ברגע א' יכול לחשוב דברים עד אין קץ.

And just as speech is nullified before thought in complete nullification — for in a single moment one can think of things without end —

Speech is as nothing next to thought: in a single moment the mind can think without end, while speech brings out only a few words at a time. This is the measure of speech's nullification before thought.

כן כל העולמות שהם רק דבור א' והוא נמשך מחכמתו ית' כדכתיב ויצא ככר¹⁵ כו'. ובטובו מחדש בכל יום כו'.

so [too] all the worlds, which are only a single utterance; and it is drawn from His Chochmah (wisdom), may He be blessed, as it is written, “And it shall go forth like lightning,” etc. And “In His goodness He renews every day,” etc.

All the worlds together are only a single divine “utterance,” drawn from G-d's Chochmah, which the maamar likens to lightning with a verse from Zechariah. This utterance is renewed every day, as the morning prayer says, “In His goodness He renews every day [the work of creation].”

וגם אחר הבראם הרי אצל הקב"ה אין דבורו מובדל ממנו ית' ח"ו [חס ושלום] כי אין לך דבר שחוץ ממנו כו'.

And even after they were created, with the Holy One, blessed be He, His speech is not separate from Him, may He be blessed, G-d forbid; for there is nothing that is outside Him, etc.

Unlike human speech, G-d's speech never becomes separate from Him, even after the worlds are created, because nothing exists outside Him.

וכמ"ש בתניא (פכ"א) ולכן קמיה כולא חשיב ממש¹⁶

As is written in the Tanya (ch. 21): "And therefore before Him all is considered as truly nothing."

Tanya, chapter 21, draws the conclusion from this analogy: since G-d's speech never leaves Him, "before Him all is considered as truly nothing."

וגם העולמות בטלים זה בזה ומה שלמעלה בחי' דבור נקי למטה נגד עולם התחתון בחינת מחשבה ובטל אצלו כמו שהדבור של הרב נעשה בחי' מחשבה אצל התלמיד כו' כנודע (ועמ"ש ע"פ כאשר דברת לאמר¹⁷ בפ' שלח)¹⁸

And the worlds, too, are nullified one to another: that which above is the level of speech is called, below, relative to the lower world, the level of thought, and [the lower world] is nullified before it — just as the teacher's speech becomes the level of thought for the student, etc., as is known (and see what is written on [the verse] "As You have spoken, saying," in Parshas Shelach).

The worlds are also nullified to one another in a chain: what counts as "speech" in a higher world is, for the world below it, as lofty and hidden as "thought," and the lower world is nullified before it, just as a teacher's spoken words are, for the student, as deep as thought. In Likkutei Torah, Shelach, on "As You have spoken, saying," the Alter Rebbe applies this to the Torah: what is "speech" above becomes a hidden "saying" (amirah) for the lower levels.

וזהו לית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל¹⁹ דהיינו אף עולמות עליונים מאד שהם בחי' מחשבה הם בטלים אצלו ית' ולא תפיסא ביה כלל כי הוא למעלה ממחשבה.

And this is [the meaning of] "No thought can grasp Him at all": that is, even very high worlds, which are the level of thought, are nullified before Him, may He be blessed, and do not grasp Him at all, for He is above thought.

Even the highest worlds, which stand at the level of "thought," are nullified before G-d and cannot grasp Him; this is the meaning of the words of Eliyahu's prayer in the Tikkunei Zohar, "no thought can grasp Him at all": He is above thought itself.

וזהו סתימא דכל סתימין טמירא וכו' אף מעולמות הנק' סתימא וטמירא הוא סתים וטמיר ולית מחשבה תפיסא ביה

And this is [the meaning of] “the Hidden of all hidden ones, concealed,” etc.: even from the worlds that are called “hidden” and “concealed,” He is hidden and concealed, and no thought can grasp Him.

Likewise G-d is called “the Hidden of all hidden ones”: even worlds that are themselves called hidden and concealed are revealed compared to Him, and no thought grasps Him. Likkutei Torah, Ki Savo, explains the phrase the same way: there are worlds called “hidden,” higher than the World to Come, and He is hidden from them.

ועי' נאמר הצווי ואהבת את הוי"ה אלקיך שיתבונן כ"כ [כל כך] באחד ממש שיהיה הוי"ה אלקיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך²⁰

And of this the command was said, “And you shall love Havayah your G-d”: that he should contemplate the true One so deeply that Havayah be “your G-d” (Elokecha), “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” —

Here the Alter Rebbe returns to the command “And you shall love Havayah your G-d.” A person is to contemplate G-d's true oneness so deeply that Havayah, Who transcends all, becomes “your G-d,” one's own, with all one's heart, soul and might.

דהיינו מחדו"מ [מחשבה דבור ומעשה] שלא יהיה לו מחדו"מ [מחשבה דבור ומעשה] כלל רק בטלים בא' שהוא למעלה מן המחשבה ולית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כי האדם אינו יכול לחשוב רק דבר גשמי וזהו שקר גמור כו'.

that is, thought, speech and action: that he should have no thought, speech and action at all, but only [that they be] nullified in the One, Who is above thought, and “no thought can grasp Him.” For a person can think only of a physical thing, and this is an utter falsehood, etc.

The text explains this as a person's thought, speech and action: none of them should remain his own, but all should be nullified in the One, Who is above thought. Human thought can grasp only physical things, and their seeming reality is “an utter falsehood.”

SECTION 3 • 115-6

Giving over thought, speech and action

5 וזהו בכל נפשך מסירת נפש. כי נפש של אדם הוא מחדו"מ [מחשבה דבור ומעשה] והכל למסור ולהיות בטל באחד ממש.

And this is “with all your soul”: self-sacrifice (mesirus nefesh). For a person’s soul is thought, speech and action, and all of it is to be given over and to be nullified in the One, truly.

The words “with all your soul” mean giving over the soul entirely to G-d. Since the text identifies a person’s soul with his thought, speech and action, all three are to be given over and nullified in the true One.

אבל להיות שזה בלתי אפשר שיהיה בלי מחשבה כלל לכן צריך לקשר מחשבתו ודבורו ומעשיו להיות [להיות] מרכבה לרצון העליון ב"ה בתורה ובמצות דאורייתא מחכמה נפקת²¹ שהוא למעלה מן המחשבה.

But since it is impossible for there to be no thought at all, therefore one must bind his thought, his speech and his action to be a chariot (merkavah) for the Supernal Will, blessed be He, in the Torah and in the mitzvos; for “the Torah comes forth from Chochmah (wisdom),” which is above thought.

Yet a person cannot simply be without thought. So he is to bind his thought, speech and action to G-d’s will through the Torah and mitzvos, becoming a “chariot” for it, a vehicle with no will of its own; and since the Torah comes from Chochmah, which is above thought, through it he is joined to what thought cannot grasp.

6 וזהו כל העושה מצוה אחת²² כהלכתה²³ וכי. ואף שהתורה נתלכשה בדברים גשמיים איסור והיתר וכדומה. וכ"ש [וכל שכן] מעשה המצות שהם בדברים גשמיים ממש כמו צדקה בממון וכיוצא.

And this is [the meaning of] “Whoever performs one mitzvah according to its halachah,” etc. And even though the Torah has been clothed in physical matters — the forbidden and the permitted, and the like — and all the more so the performance of the mitzvos, which are in truly physical things, such as charity with money, and the like,

The saying about one who performs a single mitzvah shows the worth of even one mitzvah done as the law requires, for through it a person is bound to G-d’s will; Kehot suggests, with a “perhaps,” that it is the Talmud’s “Whoever performs one mitzvah in this world, it goes before him in the World to Come” (Sotah 3b). Yet the Torah deals with physical matters, such as what is forbidden and what is permitted, and the mitzvos are done with physical things, such as giving money to charity.

הוא כמשל השערות הנמשכות מהמוח שאין במוח בחי' שערות כלל כן הוא התורה והמצוות אף שהם דברים גשמיים עכ"ז [עם כל זה] אורייתא מחכמה נפקת²⁴ כו'.

it is like the analogy of the hairs drawn from the brain, though in the brain there is no aspect of hair at all. So it is with the Torah and the mitzvos: even though they are physical things, nevertheless "the Torah comes forth from Chochmah," etc.

Hair grows from the head and draws its life from the brain, yet nothing like hair exists in the brain itself. So the Torah and mitzvos are clothed in physical things, yet their source is G-d's Chochmah, which is above thought.

SECTION 4 • 17-8

The second love: ahavah rabbah from above

7 ודבר זה חובה על כל אדם²⁵ להתבונן בזה היטב. וזה תלוי בבחירתו. ופי' הבי' של ואהבת את הוי"ה לשון עתיד הבא ממילא הוא בחי' אהבה רבה הבאה מלמעלה מאתו ית'.

And this matter is an obligation upon every person: to contemplate it well. And this depends on his choice. And the second interpretation of "And you shall love Havayah," the language of the future — [a love] that comes of itself — is the level of great love (ahavah rabbah) that comes from above, from Him, may He be blessed.

Contemplating G-d's oneness as described is every person's duty and lies within his free choice; this is what depends on him. The second reading of "And you shall love," as a promise, is ahavah rabbah, a great love that comes as a gift from above and not through a person's own effort. In Iggeres HaKodesh 18 the Alter Rebbe draws the same line, between the love hidden in every Jew's heart, which he brings out by contemplation, and the "love in delights" that falls to a person from above and that not everyone merits.

ובזה פי' שמע לשון שמיעה שאינו יכול להיות בו שום התבוננות כלל שהוא למעלה מההתבוננות.

And accordingly, "Hear" (shema) is interpreted in the sense of hearing: something in which there can be no contemplation at all, for it is above contemplation.

The word "Hear" (shema) here means receiving what one cannot reach by reasoning: it is heard, as it were, from above. Ahavah rabbah is above contemplation and cannot be produced by it.

8 וזה נקי שקל הקדש כסף לשון נכסף נכספת²⁶ בחיי אהבה רבה הבאה מלמעלה במשקל כל חד לפום שיעורא דיליה בבחי עשה טוב וסור מרע צריך להיות בתכלית והוא בחיי עובר לסוחר²⁷ לשון סחור סחור²⁸ סוכ"ע.

And this is called “the holy shekel,” silver (kesef), from the language of “you longed greatly” (nichsof nichsafta): the level of great love that comes from above, by weight, each one according to his own measure in the level of “do good and turn from evil,” [which] must be to the utmost. And it is the level of “passing to the merchant” (over lasocher), from the language of “around, around” (s’chor s’chor): the light that encompasses all worlds (sovev kol almin).

The “holy shekel” is the great love that comes from above: kesef, silver, is read as kisufin, longing, as in Lavan’s words “you longed greatly” (nichsof nichsafta), and a shekel is a weight, for this love is given to each soul by its own measure. Each receives it in the measure of his “do good and turn from evil,” his doing the mitzvos and keeping from sin, which the text says must be to the utmost. The verse’s “passing to the merchant” (over lasocher) is read through s’chor s’chor, “around, around,” as pointing to the light that encompasses all worlds (sovev kol almin), the transcendent source of this love.

SECTION 5 • 19-10

Twenty gerah and the census of the souls

9 וזהו ארבע מאות שקל כסף בחיי ד' מאות עלמין דכסופין^{29,30} לעלמא דאתי. וזהו עשרים גרה השקל.

And this is “four hundred shekels of silver”: the level of the four hundred worlds of longing (kisufin) in the World to Come. And this is “the shekel is twenty gerah.”

Avraham paid Efron “four hundred shekels of silver,” and the maamar reads them as the four hundred “worlds of longing” in the World to Come, of which the Zohar speaks. The longing love is then tied to the half-shekel verse’s “twenty gerah.”

כי כל אי משני בחיי אהבה הנ"ל כלולה מעשר שכל ומדות כנודע ובחי אה"ר [אהבה רבה] הבאה מלמעלה ג"כ כלולה מעשר.

For each one of the two levels of love mentioned above comprises ten, intellect and the emotive attributes (middos), as is known; and the level of great love that comes from above also comprises ten.

Each of the two loves comprises ten powers, the soul’s intellect and emotions. The first love has ten, and the great love from above has ten more; together they make the twenty gerah of the full shekel.

10 וזהו עשרים גרה השקל. וזהו כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקודיהם והיינו נשמות הנק' ראש

And this is “the shekel is twenty gerah.” And this is “When you lift up the head of the children of Israel lifkudeihem (according to their count)”: that is, the souls, which are called “head.”

The words “the shekel is twenty gerah” stand for the full measure of both loves. In the census verse, “when you lift up the head of the children of Israel lifkudeihem,” the “head” is the souls.

לפקודיהם לשון³¹ וה' פקד את שרה³² וכו' ונתנו איש כפר נפשו³³ לה'. אך שלא לכל אדם באה לו אהבה רבה הנ"ל.

Lifkudeihem is from the language of “And Havayah remembered (pakad) Sarah,” etc. “And each man shall give a ransom for his soul to Havayah.” But the great love mentioned above does not come to every person.

Lifkudeihem, usually “according to their count,” is read in the sense of Genesis 21:1, where Havayah “remembered” (pakad) Sarah and gave her a son; Or HaTorah’s version reads lifkudeihem as the “worlds of longing” of the previous paragraph. The census verse continues that each man gives “a ransom for his soul.” Yet the great love from above does not come to every person.

SECTION 6 • ¶11

The half-shekel every Jew must give

11 ולהיות בבחי' עשרים גרה כו'. אך בחי' אהבה ראשונה חובה על הכל והיינו בחי' מחצית השקל למסור נפשו הכלולה מעשר.

Nor [does every person come] to be at the level of “twenty gerah,” etc. But the level of the first love is an obligation upon all; and this is the level of the half-shekel: to give over one’s soul, which comprises ten.

Not everyone reaches the full “twenty gerah,” which includes the great love from above. But the first love, from contemplation, is required of all: it is the half-shekel, giving over one’s soul with all ten of its powers.

וזהו זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים³⁴ רמ"ח פקודין היינו אף מי שעובר ח"ו [חס ושלום] על איזה מצוה אעפ"כ [אף על פי כן] חובה היא ליתן מחצית השקל בחי' עשר שלו בבחינת אה"ר [אהבה רבה] ראשונה הנ"ל ומחצית השקל היא תרומה לה'.

And this is [the meaning of] "This they shall give, everyone who passes over the pekudim" — the 248 commandments (pekudin): that is, even one who transgresses (over), G-d forbid, some mitzvah, nevertheless it is an obligation to give the half-shekel, the level of his ten [powers], in the manner of the first love mentioned above. And the half-shekel is "an offering to Havayah."

The Alter Rebbe reads the verse's "everyone who passes over the pekudim" as "everyone who transgresses the 248 commandments (pekudin)." Even one who has sinned must still give his half-shekel: his ten powers, given to G-d through the first love, which is "an offering to Havayah."

(ועמ"ש לקמן ע"פ ויקהל בענין אית רצון ואית רצון. ועיין עוד בלק"ת [בלקוטי תורה (להאריז"ל)] פ' כי תבוא בד"ה תחת אשר לא עבדת.

(And see what is written below, on [the verse] "Vayakhel," on the subject of "there is will and there is will." And see further in Likkutei Torah, Parshas Ki Savo, in the discourse beginning "Because you did not serve."

This bracketed note sends the reader to the discourse on Vayakhel later in Torah Ohr, on the teaching that "there is will and there is will," and to the discourse "Because you did not serve" in Likkutei Torah, Ki Savo.

ושם פ"ב [פרק ב']³⁵ גבי מש"ש [מה שכתוב שם] וע"ז נאמר שמחו צדיקים בהוי"ה ועיין סד"ה זה יתנו כו' מחצית השקל עכ"ל [עד כאן לשונו].

And there, in chapter 2, on what is written there: "and of this it is said, 'Rejoice, righteous ones, in Havayah'; and see the end of the discourse beginning 'This they shall give,' etc., 'the half-shekel'" — end of quote.

Chapter 2 of that Likkutei Torah discourse links "Rejoice, righteous ones, in Havayah" to the end of this maamar on the half-shekel. There the Alter Rebbe sets the love hidden in every Jew's heart, which "And you shall love" commands, against a higher love of the elevated few, of which he writes, "of this it is said, 'Rejoice, righteous ones, in Havayah.'"

ויוכן משם ג"כ דבחי העבודה בשמחה שהחיוב על כל ישראל כמ"ש תחת אשר לא עבדת³⁶ כו' בשמחה. וכן נאמר עבדו את³⁷ ה' בשמחה זהו בחי מחצית השקל שהחיוב על כל א' מישראל ליתן. ובחי שמחו צדיקים בה³⁸ זהו מחצית השני):

And from there it will also be understood that the level of serving with joy, which is an obligation on all Israel, as it is written, "Because you did not serve," etc., "with joy," and as it is also said, "Serve Havayah with joy" — this is the level of the half-shekel, which every one of Israel is obligated to give. And the level of "Rejoice, righteous ones, in Havayah" — this is the second half.)

From this, the note concludes, one can understand that serving G-d with joy is required of every Jew, since the Torah rebukes those who did not serve "with joy": this joy, "Serve Havayah with joy," is the half-shekel that all must give. The joy of "Rejoice, righteous ones, in Havayah" is the second half that completes the shekel, the great love from above; Likkutei Torah, Ki Savo, adds that the joy of every Jew is hidden within his service, while the joy of the righteous is the love in delights, which not everyone merits.

IN ONE'S AVODAH

Every person must contemplate G-d's oneness well, until he gives over his thought, speech and action to Him, binding them to G-d's will through the Torah and mitzvos. This half-shekel is in his own hands and is required of him even if he has transgressed; the great love from above is a gift, given to each by his measure. The closing note adds that serving G-d with joy is likewise every Jew's obligation.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. If every love and awe a person has comes from G-d, how does the maamar still leave room for free choice?
2. How does the analogy of thought and speech show that the worlds, though they appear to exist, are nullified before G-d?
3. Why, according to paragraph 5, must the giving over of thought, speech and action take the form of Torah and mitzvos?
4. Why is the half-shekel, rather than the whole shekel, the obligation of every Jew, even one who has sinned?
5. How does the closing note connect serving G-d with joy to the two halves of the shekel?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 זה יתנו

Kehot refers the reader to the Rebbe's source notes on this maamar, given earlier in the notes, without repeating them here.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע. המאמר עם הגהות באוה"ת ע' איתקיש. ביאור שם ע' איתקיש.

2 זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים

G-d tells Moshe the census offering: "This they shall give, everyone who passes among the counted: half a shekel by the holy shekel, twenty gerah to the shekel, ... an offering to Havayah." Plainly, "who passes among the counted" is one who joins the counted men; in paragraph 11 the maamar reads it as one who "transgresses" (over) the commandments (pekudin). Its half-shekel and twenty gerah become the two loves of G-d.

שמות ל:13ג Exodus 30:

זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָּל־הָעֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מִחֻצֵּי הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֶשְׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֻצֵּי הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה לַה'

This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary—the shekel is twenty gerahs—half a shekel for an offering to the L-RD.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות ל, יג.

3 נודע בשערים בעלה

In the praise of the woman of valor that closes Proverbs: "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land." The maamar reads the husband as G-d, Who gives every soul its love and awe, and the gates (she'arim) as the measure (shi'ur) of each soul.

משלי ל"א:23ג Proverbs 31:

נֹדֵעַ בַּשְּׁעָרִים בְּעֵלָה בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ עִם־זְקֵנֵי־אֶרֶץ:

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.

4 לכלל חד לפום שיעורא דילי

The Zohar explains "her husband is known in the gates" to mean that the Holy One, blessed be He, is known to each person "according to what he measures in his heart," as far as each can cleave to Him. The compiler's foreword to

the Tanya cites this passage, as Kehot notes, for the phrase "each one according to his measure."

זח"א קג, בב Zohar I, 103b:

KEHOT'S NOTE

בתניא בהקדמה מציין זח"א קג, ב. ראה שם קכט, ב. וראה לקו"ת מסעי פה, ב.

5 שהם ד' שערים . . כנגד ד' אותיות הוי"ה ב"ה

According to the note, Or HaTorah brings this idea with the words "through which and by means of which the Holy One, blessed be He, is known to Israel," and explains there why love and awe are called "gates."

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא באוה"ת פ' שופטים ע' תתכח "שבהן ועל ידן נודע קוב"ה לישראל", ושם מבאר מה שאהו"ר נקרא שערים ע"ש.

PARAGRAPH 2

6 שמע ישראל

Moshe's call to Israel, the first verse of the Shema: "Hear, O Israel, Havayah is our G-d, Havayah is One." From it and from the next verse, "And you shall love," the maamar will draw both what lies in a person's choice and what comes from above.

דברים ו:4ד Deuteronomy 6:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד:

HEAR, O ISRAEL: THE L-RD OUR GOD, THE L-RD IS ONE.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

דברים ו, ד.

PARAGRAPH 3

7 אחד לשון צווי

Here the Tzemach Tzedek adds that the first meaning, the command, is the love that comes "according to what one measures in his heart," while the second, the future tense, "the love will come of itself," is ahavah rabbah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת פ' שופטים ע' תתכח מוסיף כ"ק אדמו"ר הצ"צ וז"ל "והיינו האהבה הבאה ע"י נש"ב לפום מה דמשער בליבוי, והבי' לשון עתיד שתבא האהבה ממילא הוא אה"ר. . .".

8 שתבא האהבה ממילא

Kehot refers to Or HaTorah, Va'eschanan, on the love that comes of itself.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה באוה"ת פ' ואתחנן ע' שצג. ובספר הערכים-חב"ד ערך אהבת ה' בהערה 489 שמציין מאוה"ת ויחי כרך ב שסו, א שהאהבה שבכאן היא אה"ר המסותרת ע"ש.

9

ואני ה' לא שניתי

"For I, Havayah, have not changed; and you, children of Yaakov, have not ceased to be." The maamar uses it for the contemplation that creation brought no change in G-d.

מלאכי 3:6 ג': "לא שניתי"

כי אני ה' לא שניתי ואתם בני יעקב לא כליתם:

For I the L-RD change not; and ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

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10

כי שמש ומגן

The psalmist, longing for G-d's courts, says, "For a sun and a shield is Havayah Elokim." As explained in Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehoEmunah ch. 4, to which Kehot refers, the Name Elokim is a sheath that shields the creatures from the "sun" of Havayah, so that they can exist.

Psalms 84:12 ב"ד: "היה לי שמש ומגן"

כי שמש ומגן ה' אלקים הן וכבוד יתן ה' לא ימנע טוב להלכים בתמים:

For the L-RD G-d is a sun and a shield; the L-RD giveth grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.

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11

כידוע כי שמש ומגן כו'

There the Alter Rebbe explains "For a sun and a shield is Havayah Elokim": as a sheath shields the sun so that creatures can bear it, the Name Elokim shields the Name Havayah, which brings all things into being from nothing at every moment.

Tanya, Sha'ar HaYichud והאמונה 4: "היה לי שמש ומגן" - הוא נרמז כי:

כי הנה כתיב: "כי שמש ומגן ה' אלקים", פירוש, "מגן" - הוא נרמז לשמש, להגן שיוכלו הבריות לסבלו, כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה: "לעתיד לבא הקדוש ברוך הוא מוציא חמה מנרתקה, ורשעים נידונים בה כו'". וכמו שהנרמז מגין בעד השמש, כך שם "אלקים" מגין לשם הויה ברוך הוא.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה תניא ח"ב פ"ד.

12

ואף שנראה לנו העולמות ליש הוא שקר גמור

The Rebbe Maharash asks there how the world's existence can be called "an utter falsehood" when it plainly appears real and separate; and if it does not exist at all, why the Torah says "In the beginning G-d created," which would then be superfluous.

KEHOT'S NOTE

"אך ע"פ השכל קשה ליישבו שהרי נראה מציאות העולם יש ונפרד והאריך יתיישב שהוא שקר גמור. ועוד אם נאמר שכוונתו שאין שום מציאות כלל, א"כ מהו שכתב בראשית ברא הלא לא נברא כלל כ"א שנדמה לנו והיה כמיותר בתורה ח"ו" — סה"מ תרל"ב ע' ערה ע"ש בארוכה. סה"מ תרצ"ז ע' 227.

13

בדבר ה' שמים נעשו

The psalmist praises the Creator: "By the word of Havayah the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host." Since the worlds exist only through G-d's word, their seeming independence is false.

Psalms 33:6 ג': "בדבר ה' שמים נעשו"

בדבר ה' שמים נעשו וברוח פיו כל צבאם:

By the word of the L-RD were the heavens made; And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים לג, ו.

PARAGRAPH 4

14

ומבשרי אחזה

"And from my flesh I behold G-d." The Alter Rebbe uses it to learn about G-d from the workings of the human soul, here the relation of thought to speech.

איוב 19:26 ב"ט: "ומבשרי אחזה"

ואחר עורי נקפוזאת ומבשרי אחזה אלוה:

And when after my skin this is destroyed, Then without my flesh shall I see G-d;

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KEHOT'S NOTE

איוב יט, כו.

15

ויצא כברק

Zechariah foretells: "And Havayah will appear over them, and His arrow will go forth like lightning." The maamar applies the image of lightning to G-d's Chochmah, from which the single utterance of the worlds is drawn.

זכריה ט:14 ב"ד: "ויצא כברק"

וה' עליהם יראה ויצא כברק חצו ואדני ה' בשופר תקע והלה בסערות תימן:

And the L-RD shall be seen over them, And His arrow shall go forth as the lightning; And the L-rd GOD will blow the horn, And will go with whirlwinds of the south.

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16

ולכן קמיה כולא חשיב ממש

Tanya ch. 21 explains that G-d's speech, unlike a person's, is never separate from Him, for nothing is outside Him, and that the creatures only seem separate because of the contractions that hide His light. It concludes: "And therefore before Him all is considered as truly nothing."

תניא, חלק ראשון; ליקוטי אמרים 21:9 "ולכן קמיה כולא חשיב ממש":

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17

כאשר דברת לאמר

From Moshe's plea after the sin of the spies, asking G-d to show His great forbearance "as You have spoken, saying."

The bracketed note sends the reader to the Likkutei Torah discourse on this verse in Parshas Shelach.

Numbers 14:17:י"ז:י"ד במדבר

וְעַתָּה יִגְדַּל־נָא כַחַד־נִי כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ לֵאמֹר:

And now, I pray Thee, let the power of the L-rd be great, according as Thou hast spoken, saying:

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- 18** ועמ"ש ע"פ כאשר דברת לאמר בפי שלח
- There the Alter Rebbe explains "as You have spoken, saying": from the Torah's level of "speech" comes amirah, a hidden "saying," in the lower levels, which becomes the source of what the souls receive in Gan Eden.

KEHOT'S NOTE

לקו"ת שלח לט, ג ואילך.

- 19** לית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל
- In Eliyahu's prayer (Patach Eliyahu) in the introduction to the Tikkunei Zohar, G-d is addressed as "higher than all the high, hidden from all the hidden; no thought can grasp You at all." The maamar reads it as G-d's being above even the worlds that are "thought."

Tikkunei Zohar 17a:10-12:י"ז א"י-י"ב

אנת הוא עלאה על כל עלאין סתימא על כל סתימין. לית מחשבה תפיסא בך כלל. אנת הוא דאפיקת עשר תקונין. וקרינן לון עשר ספירן. לאנהגא בהון עלמין סתימין דלא אתגליין. ועלמין דאתגליין. ובהון אתכסיות (נ"א אתכסיא) מבני נשא. ואנת הוא דקשר לון ומיחד לון. ובגין דאנת מלגא. כל מאן דאפריש חד מן חבריה מאלין עשר. אתחשיב ליה כאלו אפריש בך.

Constantinople, 1740 (CC-BY-NC)

- 20** בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאודך
- "And you shall love Havayah your G-d with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might." The maamar reads this as the first, commanded love, in which a person's thought, speech and action are all given over to G-d.

Deuteronomy 6:5:ה'ד:ו

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדְךָ:

And thou shalt love the L-RD thy G-d with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

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PARAGRAPH 5

- 21** דאורייתא מחכמה נפקת
- The Zohar says that "the Torah comes forth from Chochmah," from the place called "holy." The maamar uses it to show that the Torah, though grasped by thought, comes from a level above thought.

Zohar II, 121a:א קכא, זח"ב

KEHOT'S NOTE

זח"ב קכא, א.

PARAGRAPH 6

- 22** כל העושה מצוה אחת
- Kehot suggests, with a "perhaps," that the reference is to Sotah 3b: "Whoever performs one mitzvah in this world, it goes before him in the World to Come." The maamar's wording adds "according to its halachah."

Sotah 3b:13:ג' ב"י:י"ג

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן: קל העושה מצוה אחת בעולם הזה — מקדמתו והולכת לפניו לעולם הבא, שנאמר: "והולך לפניך צדקך". וכל העובר עבירה אחת בעולם הזה — מלפפתו והולכת לפניו ליום הדין, שנאמר: "ילפפו ארחות דרכם יעלו ביה ויאבדו".

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

- 23** וזהו כל העושה מצוה אחת כהלכתה
- Kehot's marei makom for these words (its note is below).

KEHOT'S NOTE

אולי הכוונה לסוטה ג, ב "כל העושה מצוה אחת בעוה"ז, מקדמתו והולכת לפניו בעולם הבא".

- 24** אורייתא מחכמה נפקת
- "The Torah comes forth from Chochmah." The maamar repeats it here to show that however physical the Torah's subjects and the mitzvos are, their source is above them.

ספר הזהר, משפטים כ"ת:ק-תק"ב 20:500-502

For the Torah itself emanates from Wisdom, from the realm called "holiness", and Wisdom itself emanates from the region called "holy (lit. holiness) of holies". Said R. Isaac: "The Jubilee is also designated "holiness", as it is written: "For it is the jubilee; it shall be holiness (kodesh) unto you" (Lev. 14, 12). The Israelites who are destined to be "men of holiness" have a share in both (the Torah and the Jubilee).

The Zohar; London, Soncino Press, 1933 (Public Domain)

PARAGRAPH 7

- 25** ודבר זה חובה על כל אדם
- The letter distinguishes two loves: "love in delights," of which "Rejoice, righteous ones, in G-d" is said, which not everyone merits and which falls to a person from above; and "the second," a love and longing to cleave to G-d hidden in the heart of every Jew, which he reveals by contemplating G-d with his mind.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אגה"ק ס"י יח (קכו, ב) והשניית היא. נזכר בלקו"ת שה"ש יט, א.

PARAGRAPH 8

- 26** נכסף נכספת
- Lavan to Yaakov: "You have gone because you longed greatly (nichsof nichsafta) for your father's house." The maamar reads kesef, silver, through this word for longing.

בראשית ל"א:ל"ג

וְעַתָּה הִלַּךְ הַלְכָתָּ בְּיַנְכָסְךָ נִכְסְפָתָהּ לְבֵית אָבִיךָ לָמָּה גִּנְבָתָהּ אֶת־אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

And now that thou art surely gone, because thou sore longed after thy father's house, wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?"

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27

עובר לסוחר

Avraham weighed out to Efron for the Cave of Machpelah "four hundred shekels of silver, passing to the merchant (over lasocher)": silver in current use among merchants. The maamar reads the phrase through s'chor, "around," as an allusion to the encompassing light.

בראשית כ"ג:ט"ז: Genesis 23:16

וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָהָם אֶל-עֲפְרוֹן וַיִּשְׁקַל אַבְרָהָם לְעֲפְרוֹן אֶת-הַכֶּסֶף אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּאָזְנוֹ בְּנִיחָת אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל כֶּסֶף עֵבֶר לְסוֹחֵר:

And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the hearing of the children of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant.

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28

לשון סחור סחור

The Talmud quotes the warning to a nazirite: "Go around, go around (s'chor s'chor); do not come near the vineyard." The maamar takes s'chor, "around," as the sense of socher, "merchant," to point to the light that surrounds the worlds.

עבודה זרה י"ז א:6: Avodah Zarah 17a

KEHOT'S NOTE

ע"ז יז, א.

PARAGRAPH 9

29

ארבע מאות שקל כסף בחיי ד' מאות עלמין דכסופין

Efron to Avraham: "A land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you?" The maamar reads the silver (kesef) as longing and the four hundred as worlds of longing.

בראשית כ"ג:ט"ו: Genesis 23:15

אֲדֹנָי שְׁמַעֲנִי אֶרֶץ אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שֶׁקֶל-כֶּסֶף בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ מֵהָיָה וְאֵת־מִתְדָּקָר:

'My lord, hearken unto me: a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית כג, טו. זח"א (תוספתא) קכג, ב.

30

ד' מאות עלמין דכסופין

The Tosefta printed in the Zohar on Chayei Sarah reads Avraham's payment to Efron: the silver (kesef) is the great longing (kisufa), "four hundred shekels of silver" are four hundred worlds, delights and longings, and "passing to the merchant" is the soul's passing through all the gates of

...זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל

heaven. The maamar uses it to read the silver of the holy shekel as longing. (Kehot: Zohar 1:123b, Tosefta)

Zohar, Chayei Sara 15:98 חיי שרה ט"ו:צ"ח

PARAGRAPH 10

31

לפקודיהם לשון וה' פקד את שרה

There Or HaTorah reads: "lifkudeihem — the level of worlds" (Kehot: read "worlds of longing"), "in the sense of 'And G-d remembered Sarah.'" This ties the word to the four hundred worlds of longing of the previous paragraph.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת ע' איתתקכו: לפקודיהם בחי' עלמין (צ"ל עלמין דכסופין) לשון וה' פקד את שרה.

32

וה' פקד את שרה

"And Havayah remembered (pakad) Sarah as He had said," and she bore Yitzchak: here pakad is G-d attending to what Sarah lacked, a child, after her long barrenness. The maamar reads lifkudeihem in the sense of this pakad. (context: Steinsaltz Tanakh)

בראשית כ"א:1: Genesis 21:1

וְה' פָקַד אֶת־שָׂרָה כְּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר:

And the L-RD remembered Sarah as He had said, and the L-RD did unto Sarah as He had spoken.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית כא, א.

33

ונתנו איש כפר נפשו

G-d tells Moshe: "When you lift up the head of the children of Israel according to their count, each man shall give a ransom for his soul to Havayah." The maamar reads "the head" as the souls.

שמות ל"ב:12: Exodus 30:12

כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָקְדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כֶּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ לַיהוָה בְּפָקְדָתָם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה כָהֶם נֶגֶף בְּפָקְדָתָם:

'When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, according to their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the L-RD, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות ל, יב.

PARAGRAPH 11

34

זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים

"This they shall give, everyone who passes among those counted: half a shekel." The maamar now reads "passes

over” as transgressing and the pekudim as the commandments, so that even a transgressor must give.

שמות ל:יג Exodus 30:13

זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָּל־הָעֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקוּדִים מִחֻצֵּי הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲשָׂרִים גֶּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֻצֵּי הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה לַיהוָה

This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary—the shekel is twenty gerahs—half a shekel for an offering to the L-RD.

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35

ושם פ"ב

In chapter 2 of “Because you did not serve” (Likkutei Torah, Ki Savo, 43a), the Alter Rebbe sets the love hidden in every Jew’s heart, which “And you shall love” commands, against a higher love that belongs to the elevated few; of that higher love he writes, “of this it is said, ‘Rejoice, righteous ones, in G-d,’” and refers to the end of this maamar on the half-shekel.

KEHOT’S NOTE

בלקו"ת שם מג, א.

36

תחת אשר לא עבדת

From Moshe’s rebuke in Ki Savo: the curses come “because you did not serve Havayah your G-d with joy and with gladness of heart, out of the abundance of everything.” The note learns from it that serving G-d with joy is required of all.

דברים כ"ח:מ"ז Deuteronomy 28:47

תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עַבַדְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוֹב לֵב מְרַב כָּל־

because thou didst not serve the L-RD thy G-d with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, by reason of the abundance of all things;

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KEHOT’S NOTE

דברים כח, מז.

37

עבדו את ה' בשמחה

The psalm calls all the earth to thank G-d: “Serve Havayah with joy; come before Him with song.” The note identifies this joy, required of every Jew, with the half-shekel.

תהילים ק':ב Psalms 100:2

עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה בָּאוּ לִפְנֵי בְּרִנָּה:

Serve the L-RD with gladness; come before His presence with singing.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

תהלים ק, ב.

38

שמחו צדיקים בה'

The psalm of G-d’s reign ends: “Rejoice, righteous ones, in Havayah, and give thanks to His holy Name.” The note

...זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל

identifies this joy of the righteous with the second half of the shekel.

תהילים צ"ו:יב Psalms 97:12

שִׂמְחוּ צְדִיקִים בַּיהוָה וְהוֹדוּ לִזְכוֹר קֹדֶשׁ:

Be glad in the L-RD, ye righteous; And give thanks to His holy name.

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KEHOT’S NOTE

תהלים צו, יב.



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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