



TORAH OHR • PARSHAS KI SISA • MAAMAR 2

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.

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

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



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THE BIG IDEA

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.

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

THE MAAMAR IN BRIEF

The maamar 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 G-d" 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 G-d," 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 G-d. By the end, the Alter Rebbe will read each phrase of this verse as a stage in a Jew's love of G-d.

כתיב נודע בשערים בעלה³ שהקב"ה הוא בעל של כל נשמה מישראל שמשפיע לכל או"א. 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 according to how 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' אי"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, G-d is our G-d, G-d 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 ואני ה' לא שניתי⁹ שאין לו שום שינוי That is: to understand in one's mind His unity, may He be blessed, in the seven heavens and in the four directions, and “I, Havayah, have not changed” — that He has no change whatsoever;

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. The verse “I, Havayah, have not changed” teaches that creating the world brought no change in Him at all.

כמו קודם בריאת העולם כן הוא ממש עתה כי כל העולמות בטלים בבטול גמור נגדו כידוע כי שמש ומגן¹⁰ כו'¹¹

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.

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 that the Name Elokim shields the creatures from G-d's light, 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 G-d 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 G-d.” 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;

Job'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 כברק¹⁵ 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 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 וגם העולמות בטלים זה בזה ומה שלמעלה

As is written in the Tanya (ch. 21): "And therefore before Him all is considered as truly nothing." And the worlds, too, are nullified one to another: that which above is

Tanya ch. 21 draws the conclusion: before Him all is considered as nothing. The Alter Rebbe adds that the worlds are also nullified to one another in a chain, each lower world to the one above it.

בחי דבור נקי למטה נגד עולם התחתון בחינת מחשבה ובטל אצלו כמו שהדבור של הרב נעשה בחי מחשבה אצל התלמיד כו'

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.,

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. So too a teacher's spoken words are, for the student, as deep as thought.

כנודע (ועמ"ש ע"פ כאשר דברת לאמר¹⁷ בפי' שלח)¹⁸ וזהו לית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל דהיינו אף עולמות עליונים מאד שהם בחי מחשבה הם בטלים אצלו ית' ולא תפיסא ביה כלל כי הוא למעלה ממחשבה.

as is known (and see what is written on [the verse] "As You have spoken, saying," in Parshas Shelach). 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 phrase "no thought can grasp Him at all." The bracketed note sends the reader to Likkutei Torah, Shelach, on the verse "As You have spoken, saying."

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

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

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. No thought grasps Him.

תפיסא ביה וע"ז נאמר הצווי ואהבת את הוי"ה אלקיך שיתבונן כ"כ באחד ממש שיהיה הוי"ה אלקיך
 בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך¹⁹

can grasp Him. 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 שלא יהיה לו מחדו"מ 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 • 15-6

Giving over thought, speech and action

5 וזהו בכל נפשך מסירת נפש. כי נפש של אדם הוא מחדו"מ 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 להיו' מרכבה לרצון העליון ב"ה בתורה ובמצות דאורייתא מחכמה נפקת²⁰ 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 אחת²¹ כהלכתה²² וכי. ואף שהתורה נתלכשה בדברים גשמיים איסור והיתר וכדומה. וכ"ש 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. 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 והמצות אף שהם דברים גשמיים עכ"ז אוריינתא מחכמה נפקת²³ 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 • ¶7-8

The second love: ahavah rabbah from above

7 ודבר זה חובה על כל אדם²⁴ 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.

ובזה פ"י 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 נק' שקל הקדש כסף לשון נכסף נכספת²⁵ בחי' אהבה רבה הבאה מלמעלה במשקל כל חד לפום שיעורא דיליה בבחי' עשה טוב וסור מרע צריך להיות בתכלית והוא בחי' עובר לסוחר²⁶ לשון סחור סחור²⁷ 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 בחי' ד' מאות עלמין דכסופין²⁸ 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 ובחיי אה"ר 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 דהיינו נשמות הנק' ראש לפקודיהם לשון²⁹

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"; lifkudeihem is from the language of

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," the "head" is the souls, and lifkudeihem, usually "according to their count," is read in the sense of the verb pakad.

וה' פקד את שרה³⁰ וכוי ונתנו איש כפר נפשו³¹ לה'. אך שלא לכל אדם באה לו אהבה רבה הנ"ל.

"And G-d remembered (pakad) Sarah," etc. "And they shall give each man a ransom for his soul to G-d." But the great love mentioned above does not come to every person.

In Genesis 21:1, G-d "remembered" (pakad) Sarah and gave her a son; 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 • 111

The half-shekel every Jew must give

11 ולהיות בבחי' עשרים גרה כוי. אך בחיי אהבה ראשונה חובה על הכל והיינו בחיי 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 הפקודים³² רמ"ח פקודין היינו אף מי שעובר ח"ו על איזה מצוה אעפ"כ חובה היא ליתן מחצית השקל בחי' עשר שלו בבחינת אה"ר 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 G-d.”

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 G-d.”

(ועמ"ש לקמן ע"פ ויקהל בענין אית רצון ואית רצון. ועיין עוד בלק"ת 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"ב³³ גבי מש"ש וע"ז נאמר שמחו צדיקים בהוי"ה ועיין סד"ה זה יתנו כו' מחצית השקל עכ"ל. ויובן משם ג"כ דבחי' העבודה בשמחה שהחיוב על כל ישראל כמ"ש תחת אשר לא עבדת³⁴ כו' בשמחה.

And there, in chapter 2, on what is written there — “and of this it is said, ‘Rejoice, righteous ones, in G-d’; and see the end of the discourse beginning ‘This they shall give,’ etc., ‘the half-shekel’” — end of quote. 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,”

Chapter 2 of that Likkutei Torah discourse links “Rejoice, righteous ones, in G-d” to the end of this maamar on the half-shekel. From it, the note says, one can also understand that serving G-d with joy is required of every Jew, since the Torah rebukes those who did not serve “with joy.”

וכן נאמר עבדו את³⁵ ה' בשמחה זהו בחי' מחצית השקל שהחיוב על כל א' מישראל ליתן. ובחי' שמחו צדיקים בהי³⁶ זהו מחצית השני):

and so it is said, “Serve G-d 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 G-d” — this is the second half.)

The joy required of every Jew, “Serve G-d with joy,” is the half-shekel that all must give. The joy of “Rejoice, righteous ones, in G-d” is the second half that completes the shekel, corresponding to the great love from above.

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' א'תתקכ"ט. ביאור שם ע' א'תתקכ"ח.

2 זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים

The command of the half-shekel given by everyone counted in the census: "half a shekel by the holy shekel, twenty gerah to the shekel, ... an offering to G-d." It is the maamar's opening verse, and its half-shekel and twenty gerah will become the two loves of G-d.

שמות ל"ג:30 Exodus

זה יתנו כל־העֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲשָׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֲצִית 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

From the praise of the woman of valor: "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.

משלי ל"א:23 Proverbs

נֹדֵעַ בַּשְּׁעָרִים בְּעֵלָה בְּשִׁכְתּוֹ 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 ולכל חד לפום שיעורא דיילי

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, בב103 Zohar I,

KEHOT'S NOTE

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

5 שהם די שערים . . כנגד די 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 שאהוי"ר נקרא שערים ע"ש.

PARAGRAPH 2

6 שמע ישראל

The first verse of the Shema, declaring G-d's oneness. 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:4-6 Deuteronomy

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל הָאֱלֹהִינוּ הָאֶחָד: Havayah

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 שנית

"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 ג:6 Malachi

כִּי אֲנִי ה' לֹא שָׁנִיתִי וְאַתֶּם בְּנֵי־יַעֲקֹב לֹא כָלִיתֶם:

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

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10

כי שמש ומגן

“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 84:12ב"ד: תהילים

כי שמש ומגן ה' אֱלֹקִים חֵן וְכִבוֹד יִתֵּן ה' לֹא יִמְנַע־טוֹב לַהֲלָכִים בְּתַמִּים:
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 4:1והאמונה שער היחוד חלק שני; ד"א:

כי הנה כתיב: “כי שמש ומגן ה' אֱלֹקִים”, פירוש, “מגן” – הוא נרתק לשמש, להגן שיוכלו הבריות לסבלו, כמאמר רבותינו זכרונם לברכה: “לעתיד לבא הקדוש-ברוך-הוא מוציא חמה מנרתקה, רשעים נידונין בה כו'”. וכמו שהנרתק מגין בעד השמש, כך שם “אֱלֹקִים” מגין לשם הו"ה 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 והאיך יתיישב שהוא שקר גמור. ועוד אם נאמר שכוונתו שאין שום מציאות כלל, אי"כ מהו שכתב בראשית ברא הלא לא נברא כלל כ"א שנדמה לנו וה"ה כמיותר בתורה ח"ו” — סה"מ תרל"ב ע"י ערה ע"ש בארוכה. סה"מ תרצ"ז ע"י 227.

13

בדבר ה' שמים נעשו

“By the word of G-d 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 33:6ו"ג: תהילים

בְּדִבְרֵי ה' שָׁמַיִם נַעֲשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ פִּי כָל־צִבְּאָם:

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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...זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל

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 י"ט:כ"ו Job 19:26

ואחר עורי נקפוצאת ומבשרי אֶחְזָה אֵלֹהִים:

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

“And G-d 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"ד:14 Zechariah 9:14

והי עליהם יראה ויצא כברק חצו ואדני ה' בשופר יתקע 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 כלא 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.”

Tanya, Likkutei Amarim 21:9מריס ליקוטי אמריס חלק ראשון; כ"א:ט

ולכן קמיה – כולא כלא 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.

במדבר י"ד:17 Numbers 14:17

ועתה יגדל־נָא כַח אֲדֹנָי כַּאֲשֶׁר 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 בפ' 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

כל לבכך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך

“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 ויהי' דברים

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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PARAGRAPH 5

20

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"ב קכא,

KEHOT'S NOTE

זח"ב קכא, א.

PARAGRAPH 6

21

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: סוטה

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן: כל העושה מצוה אחת בעולם הזה — מקדמתו והולכת לפניו לעולם הבא, שנאמר: “והלה לפניה דדקדק”. וכל העושה עבירה אחת בעולם הזה — מלפפתו והולכת לפניו ליום הדין, שנאמר: “ילפתו ארחות דרסן יעלו בתהו ויאבדו”.

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

22

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”.

23

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.

Zohar, Mishpatim 20:500-502 ב"ת-ק"ב-תק"כ

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:

...זה יתנו כל העובר על הפקודים מחצית השקל

“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

24

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 סי' יח (קכו, ב) והשנית היא. נזכר בלקו"ת שה"ש יט, א.

PARAGRAPH 8

25

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.

Genesis 31:30 ל"א: בראשית

ועתה הלה הלכת כיינספת נכספתה לבית אביך למה גנבת את-אלקי:

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

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26

עובר לסוחר

Avraham weighed out to Efron “four hundred shekels of silver, passing to the merchant (over lasocher)” for the Cave of Machpelah. The maamar reads the phrase as an allusion to the encompassing light.

Genesis 23:16 כ"ג: בראשית

וישמע אברהם אל-עפרון וישקל אברהם לעפרון את-הכסף אשר דבר באזני בני-חית ארבע מאות שקל כסף עבר לסוחר:

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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27

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.

Avodah Zarah 17a:6 ו"ז א: עבודה זרה

KEHOT'S NOTE

ע"ז יז, א.

שמות ל, יב.

PARAGRAPH 9

28 ארבע מאות שקל כסף בחי' 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 מֵהַיְהוּא וְאַתָּה מֵתָךְ קָבֵר:

'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.

PARAGRAPH 10

29 לפקדיהם 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: לפקדיהם בחי' עלמין (צ"ל עלמין דכסופין) לשון וה' פקד את שרה.

30 וה' פקד את שרה

"And G-d remembered Sarah as He had said," and she bore Yitzchak. The maamar reads lifkudeihem in the sense of this pakad.

בראשית כ"א:1:Genesis 21:1

וְה' פָקַד אֶת־שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר 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.

31 ונתנו איש כפר נפשו

"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 G-d." The maamar reads "the head" as the souls.

שמות ל"ב:2:Exodus 30:2

כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת־רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֹדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כֶּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ לַה' 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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KEHOT'S NOTE

PARAGRAPH 11

32 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"ג:13:Exodus 30:13

זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָל־הָעֹבֵר עַל־הַפְּקֻדִים מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲשָׂרִים גֶּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מִחֲצִית 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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33 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.

34 תחת אשר לא עבדת

"Because you did not serve G-d your G-d with joy and with gladness of heart, out of the abundance of everything." From the rebuke in Ki Savo; the note learns from it that serving G-d with joy is required of all.

דברים כ"ח:47:Deuteronomy 28:47

תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עַבַדְתָּ אֶת־ה' 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.

35 עבדו את ה' בשמחה

"Serve G-d with joy; come before Him with song." The note identifies this joy, required of every Jew, with the half-shekel.

תהילים ק:2:Psalms 100:2

עֲבֹדוּ אֶת־ה' בְּשִׂמְחָה בָּאוּ לִפְנֵי בְּרִנָּה:

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

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהילים ק, ב.

36

שמחו צדיקים בה'

"Rejoice, righteous ones, in G-d, and give thanks to His holy Name." The note identifies this joy of the righteous with the second half of the shekel.

Psalms 97:12 תהילים צ"ז:י"ב

שמחו צדיקים בה' Havayah והודו לזכר קדשו:

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

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KEHOT'S NOTE

תהלים צז, 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