



TORAH OHR • PARSHAS TERUMAH • MAAMAR 3

כִּיִּיק אֲדַמּוּיִר נִיעַ

An Explanation of the Subject of the Cherubim



The two cherubim are Z'eir Anpin and Nukva of Atzilus contracted into the Mishkan: in Atzilus, where the Infinite Light is en clothed even in the vessels, they are “large faces”; between the poles of the Ark they are the Gemara’s “small faces.” After the Destruction, when the cherubim were hidden, the pair were drawn instead into the inner dimension of the worlds through the halachos of the Tannaim.

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

The two cherubim are Z'eir Anpin and Nukva of Atzilus contracted into the Mishkan: in Atzilus, where the Infinite Light is en clothed even in the vessels, they are “large faces”; between the poles of the Ark they are the Gemara’s “small faces.” After the Destruction, when the cherubim were hidden, the pair were drawn instead into the inner dimension of the worlds through the halachos of the Tannaim.

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

When Nukva, the Community of Israel, stands face to face with Z'eir Anpin, equal in stature, receiving the mochin of Abba and Imma as he does, with one Keser for both, the two are called brothers; this came about at the Giving of the Torah. In Atzilus, where the Infinite Light is en clothed even in the vessels, they are “the great man” and “large faces”; contracted through the Mishkan and the Temple into the space between the poles of the Ark, they are the Gemara’s “small faces,” the cherubim. Because Asiyah rises to Atzilus three times a day, the cherubim have wings spread upward. Z'eir Anpin is the end point of the Infinite Light’s descent, and Nukva, “the lower Imma,” is the source of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah: these are the cherubim at the two “ends.” The kapores, of one piece with them, is their shared Keser and encompasses the Tablets, Yesod of Abba; rising, the cherubim lift both to Atzilus. After the Destruction the cherubim were hidden, and the pair were drawn only into the inner dimension of the worlds, through the Tannaim’s halachos, the inner dimension of the Supernal Will that the Written Torah did not reveal.

OUTLINE

- 1 Heading** ¶1-2
The piece comes from the Alter Rebbe’s own handwriting and sets out to explain the cherubim.
- 2 Large faces and small faces** ¶3
When Nukva stands face to face with Z'eir Anpin as an equal, receiving from Abba and Imma with one Keser for both, they are called brothers, as at the Giving of the Torah. In Atzilus they are “the great man” and “large faces”; contracted into the Mishkan and the Temple in Asiyah, they are the “small faces,” the cherubim.
- 3 The wings and the two ends** ¶4
The cherubim have wings because Asiyah rises to Atzilus three times a day. One cherub is the end of the Infinite Light in Z'eir Anpin; the other is Nukva, the source of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, in whom the Infinite Light is en clothed through the mochin that only pass through Z'eir Anpin when she is his equal.

4 The kapores, the Tablets and the hidden cherubim

¶5

The kapores is the Keser of both cherubim and encompasses the Tablets, Yesod of Abba; when the cherubim rise, they lift both to Atzilus. After the Destruction the cherubim were hidden, and Z'eir Anpin and Nukva were drawn only into the inner dimension of the worlds, through the Tannaim's study of halachah, as "a woman of valor is the crown of her husband."

KEY CONCEPTS

the cherubim כרובים

The two winged figures made of one piece with the cover of the Ark. The maamar identifies them with Z'eir Anpin and Nukva of Atzilus as contracted into the Mishkan and the Temple.

face to face פנים בפנים

The state in which Nukva is equal in stature to Z'eir Anpin, receives the mochin of Abba and Imma as he does, and shares one Keser with him. The two are then called brothers.

large faces and small faces אנפי רברבי ואנפי זוטרי

The Gemara's terms for the face of a man and the face of a cherub, which is a child's face. In Atzilus, Z'eir Anpin and Nukva are "large faces"; contracted into Asiyah, they are the "small faces," the cherubim.

the lower Imma אימא תתאה

Nukva as the source, within Atzilus, of the worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah. Through her the Infinite Light, whose descent ends in Z'eir Anpin, illuminates the lower worlds.

the kapores כפורת

The cover of the Ark, of one piece with the cherubim. It is the Keser of both cherubim and the encompassing level over the Tablets, which are Yesod of Abba.

the halachos הלכות

The laws studied by the Tannaim, the inner dimension of the Supernal Will, which was not revealed in the higher Chochmah, the Written Torah. Through them Z'eir Anpin and Nukva are drawn into the inner dimension of the worlds after the Destruction.

SECTION 1 • ¶1-2

Heading

1 כִּיִּיק אֲדַמּוּיִר נִיֵּעַ

[From] the holy handwriting of our master, teacher and Rebbe, whose soul is in Eden.

This heading marks what follows as taken from the Alter Rebbe's own handwriting: the abbreviation stands for "his holy handwriting," and "whose soul is in Eden" reflects that the book was printed after his passing. Kehot's note on the next line reports that the manuscript copy, in a notebook of 5571 in the Tzemach Tzedek's hand, written while the Alter Rebbe was still living, is headed "The holy handwriting of the Rav, may he live."

2 בִּיאֹר לַעֲנִין הַכְּרוּבִים¹

An explanation of the subject of the cherubim.

This is the title of the piece. It explains the cherubim, the two winged figures made of one piece with the cover of the Ark in the Mishkan, as Z'eir Anpin and Nukva of Atzilus.

SECTION 2 • ¶3

Large faces and small faces

3 כִּשְׁהַנּוּקִי הִיא² כְּנִי עֹמֶדֶת פָּנֶיפָּעִם זִיא וְשׁוּיֹן בְּקוֹמָתָן וּמִקְבֵּלֶת גִּיכ הַמוֹחִין דְּאוּיָא וְכֵתֵר אִי לְשִׁנְיָהִם.

When Nukva (the feminine / Malchus), who is the Community of Israel (Knesses Yisrael), stands face to face with Z'eir Anpin (the emotive attributes), with equality in their stature, and she also receives the intellect (mochin) of Abba and Imma (Chochmah and Binah), and [there is] one Keser (the Crown) for both of them,

In Kabbalah, Z'eir Anpin is the configuration of the six emotive Sefiros, and Nukva is Malchus, its feminine counterpart; the Community of Israel, the Jewish people as a whole in its root above, is Nukva. This part describes their highest state: face to face and of equal stature, with Nukva receiving the intellect (mochin) of Abba and Imma (Chochmah and Binah) just as Z'eir Anpin does, and one Keser (crown) above them both.

אזי נקראים אחים וזה היה ע"י קבלת התורה³ (דנפקא מחו"ב) פב"פ. והנה באצ"י נקראים אדם הגדול ואנפי רכרכי להיות אוא"ס מלובש גם בכלים ולזאת איהו וגרמוהי חד.⁴

then they are called brothers. And this was through the receiving of the Torah (which issues from Chochmah and Binah) face to face. Now, in the World of Atzilus (Emanation) they are called "the great man" (Adam HaGadol) and "large faces" (anpei ravrevei), since the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof) is en clothed in the vessels as well; and for this reason "He and His vessels are one" (ihu vegarmohi chad).

Because both now draw from the same source, Abba and Imma, they are called brothers: equals rather than a greater and a lesser. This state came about at the Giving of the Torah, which issues from Chochmah and Binah and was received face to face. In Atzilus, where the Infinite Light is en clothed even in the vessels so that "He and His vessels are one," the pair are called "the great man" and "large faces."

וע"י המשכן ובהמ"ק שצמצם שכינתו מבין בדי ארון בעשיה אזי נק' זו"נ אנפי זוטרי בגמרא והן הן הכרובים.

And through the Mishkan and the Holy Temple (Beis HaMikdash), in which He contracted His Shechinah (Divine Presence) between the poles of the Ark, in the World of Asiyah (Action), Z'eir Anpin and Nukva are then called "small faces" (anpei zutrei) in the Gemara; and they are the very cherubim.

Through the Mishkan and the Holy Temple, G-d contracted His Presence into the space between the poles of the Ark, here in the World of Asiyah. In that contracted state Z'eir Anpin and Nukva are the "small faces" of the Gemara, which says that a cherub has the face of a child and explains the difference between the face of a cherub and the face of a man as "large faces and small faces." These small faces, the Alter Rebbe says, are the cherubim.

SECTION 3 • 14

The wings and the two ends

⁴ ולפי שעולם העשיה עולה לאצ"י ג"פ ככל יום. לכן יש לכרובים כנפים פרושים למעלה לעופף לאצ"י.⁵

And since the World of Asiyah (Action) rises to the World of Atzilus (Emanation) three times every day, therefore the cherubim have wings spread upward, to fly to Atzilus.

The World of Asiyah rises into Atzilus three times every day; Kabbalah connects these ascents with the three daily prayers. The cherubim, Z'eir Anpin and Nukva en clothed in Asiyah, must rise with it, and that is why they were made with wings spread upward: to fly up to Atzilus.

ונודע שהז"א הוא תכלית ירידת אוא"ס⁶ מלמעלה למטה בכדי להאיר אח"כ לבי"ע ע"י הנוק"י⁷ שהיא אימא תתאה שהוא מקור בי"ע שבאצי".

Now it is known that Z'eir Anpin (the emotive attributes) is the utmost end of the descent of the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof) from above to below, in order afterwards to illuminate Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah through Nukva (the feminine / Malchus), who is "the lower Imma" (Imma tata'ah), which is the source of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah that is in Atzilus.

This is a known principle: the Infinite Light descends through the levels of Atzilus and reaches its furthest point in Z'eir Anpin. From there it is meant to illuminate the lower worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, but only through Nukva, called "the lower Imma" (the lower mother) because she is the source, within Atzilus, from which those worlds come forth.

לכן כתיב כרוב אחד מקצה מזה⁸ הוא קצה אוא"ס שבז"א⁹ וכרוב א' מקצה מזה הוא מקור בי"ע ושרשם שבאצי"¹⁰ שמתלבש בהם ג"כ אוא"ס¹¹

Therefore it is written, "One cherub at the end on this side": this is the end of the Infinite Light that is in Z'eir Anpin; "and one cherub at the end on that side": this is the source of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, and their root, that is in Atzilus, in which the Infinite Light is also enclothed

The Alter Rebbe reads the verse's word "end" (katzeh) as the end of the Infinite Light's descent. One cherub is that "end": Z'eir Anpin, where the descent reaches its limit. The other is Nukva, the source and root of the lower worlds within Atzilus, and in her too the Infinite Light is enclothed, as the next part explains.

ע"י המוחין דאוי"א הנותנים בראש הנוק"י ע"י ז"א בעלה דרך מעבר לבד ולא בדרך התלבשות ממש כמו שהוא בזמן שאינו שוה בקומתה עמו רק מהחזה ולמטה כנודע.¹²

through the intellect (mochin) of Abba and Imma (Chochmah and Binah), which are given into the head of Nukva through Z'eir Anpin, her husband, only by way of passage and not by way of actual enclothement, as it is at a time when she is not equal in her stature with him but [stands] only from the chest downward, as is known.

The Infinite Light reaches Nukva through the intellect (mochin) of Abba and Imma that is placed in her "head." When she stands equal with Z'eir Anpin, her husband, these mochin only pass through him on their way to her, without being enclothed in him; this is unlike the time when she is smaller and stands only from his chest downward, when they reach her by being actually enclothed in him.

SECTION 4 • 15

The kapores, the Tablets and the hidden cherubim

5 והכרובים נעשים מקשה אחת מהכפורת שהוא בחי' כתר¹³ לשניה' וגם בחי' מקיף על הלוחות שבארון שהן בחי' יסוד אבא שנתלבשו בעשיה בזמן המשכן והמקדש ובזמן עליית הכרובים הם מעלים גם הכפורת והלוחות לאצי'

And the cherubim are made as one hammered piece from the kapores (the Ark cover), which is the level of Keser (the Crown) for both of them, and also the level of what encompasses (makif) the Tablets that are in the Ark, which are the level of Yesod (foundation) of Abba, which were enclothed in the World of Asiyah (Action) at the time of the Mishkan and the Temple; and at the time of the cherubim's ascent, they raise the kapores and the Tablets to the World of Atzilus (Emanation) as well;

The cherubim were hammered out of one piece with the kapores, the cover of the Ark. The kapores is the one Keser (crown) of the two cherubim, Z'eir Anpin and Nukva, and also an encompassing level over the Tablets inside the Ark; the Tablets are Yesod of Abba, the channel of Chochmah, and were enclothed in Asiyah while the Mishkan and the Temple stood. When the cherubim ascend to Atzilus, they carry the kapores and the Tablets up with them.

לכן כתיב סוככים בכנפיהם על הכפורת שהכפורת עולה עמהם¹⁴ ואחר החורבן נסתלקו זו"נ שבאצילוי למקומם ולא חזרו להתלבש עוד בעשיה גשמיות אף בבית שני כי נגנזו הכרובים.

therefore it is written, "sheltering with their wings over the kapores": that is, the kapores rises with them. And after the Destruction, Z'eir Anpin (the emotive attributes) and Nukva (the feminine / Malchus) of Atzilus withdrew to their place and did not again become enclothed in physical Asiyah, even in the Second Temple, for the cherubim were hidden away.

This is why the verse says the cherubim are "sheltering with their wings over the kapores": as they fly up, the kapores rises with them. After the destruction of the First Temple, Z'eir Anpin and Nukva of Atzilus withdrew to their own place and were never again enclothed in physical Asiyah, not even in the Second Temple, for the cherubim had been hidden away.

אלא רק בבחי' פנימית העולמות ע"י עסק התורה של התנאים שבימי בית שני ואחריו בהלכות שהן פנימית רצה"ע שלא נתגלה בח"ע הוא תורה שבכתב. וכנודע ממ"ש אשת חיל עטרת בעלה:¹⁵

Rather, [they were enclothed] only in the level of the inner dimension (pnimiyus) of the worlds, through the Torah study of the Tannaim in the days of the Second Temple and after it, in the laws (halachos), which are the inner dimension of the Supernal Will that was not revealed in the higher Chochmah (Chochmah Ila'ah), which is the Written Torah. And [this is] as is known from what is written, "A woman of valor is the crown of her husband."

Instead they were drawn only into the inner dimension of the worlds, through the Torah study of the Tannaim, the Sages of the Mishnah, during and after the Second Temple era, in the halachos (laws). These laws are the inner dimension of G-d's Supernal Will, which was not revealed in the higher Chochmah, the Written Torah. The closing verse, cited "as is known," is read in this light: the Oral Torah's halachos are the "woman of valor" who is a crown to her "husband," the Written Torah.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why are Z'eir Anpin and Nukva called "brothers" only when they stand face to face, and to what event does the maamar connect this state?
2. What is the difference between the "large faces" of Atzilus and the "small faces" of the cherubim, and what brings about the change from one to the other?
3. How does the maamar read the word "end" in "one cherub at the end on this side," and what does each of the two cherubim represent?
4. How do the mochin of Abba and Imma reach Nukva when she is equal with Z'eir Anpin, and how is this different when she stands only from his chest downward?
5. Once the cherubim were hidden, where were Z'eir Anpin and Nukva drawn, and what do the halachos reveal that the Written Torah did not?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 2

1 ביאור לענין הכרובים

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר ז"ע. המאמר הוא משנת תקע"א. נמצא בכרך כתי" משנה הנ"ל בגוכתי"ק הצ"צ. בכותרת: "כ"ק הרב שי ביאור לענין הכרובים". הגהות באוה"ת פ' תרומה ע' א'תנג.

PARAGRAPH 3

2 כשהנוק' היא כנס"י

The note refers the reader there for the opening point of this paragraph, Nukva as the Community of Israel standing face to face with Z'eir Anpin.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה אוה"ת ויקרא כרך ב ע' תסה. ד"ה ויחי יעקב תרנ"ב ע' כו.

3 וזה הי' ע"י קבלת התורה

The note says this passage is quoted in Or HaTorah on Chanukah.

KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא באוה"ת חנוכה שיט, א. ובפ' בא ע' רנח מוסיף: "נמצא בשבועות במ"ת הוא בחי אחותי ע"י שנשמות ישראל מקבלים ג"כ מחו"ב שקדמה אלפיים שנה". ע"ש.

4 והנה באצ"י . וגרמוהי חד

The Tzemach Tzedek's explanations of the Zohar; the note refers the reader there on Z'eir Anpin and Nukva in Atzilus, called "the great man" and "large faces" because the Infinite Light is enclothed even in the vessels, so that "He and His vessels are one."

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה ביאוה"ז לכ"ק אדמו"ר הצ"צ יתרו ע' רמ.

PARAGRAPH 4

5 פרושים למעלה לעופף לאצ"י

The Tzemach Tzedek refers there to this passage: "We have thus learned that through wings they can fly to Atzilus."

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת בראשית מב, א מציין לזה: הרי למדנו שע"י כנפים יוכלו לעופף לאצילות.

6 שהז"א הוא תכלית ירידת אוה"ס

The note refers the reader there on Z'eir Anpin as the end point of the Infinite Light's descent from above to below.

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה המשך בשעה שהקדימו תער"ב סי' שעג. ד"ה פדה בשלום תרע"ה.

7

להאיר אח"כ לבי"ע ע"י הנוק'

The note refers the reader there on the illumination of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah through Nukva, and says the passage there is taken from Likkutei Torah L'Gimmel Parshiyos.

בראשית כ"ט:1' Genesis

וישא יעקב רגליו וילך ארצה בני-קדם:

Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the children of the east.

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

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה באוה"ת בראשית כרך ג תקנב, א (מלקו"ת לג' פרשיות בראשית כט, א).

8

ונודע . . מקצה מזה

The note says this passage, from "Now it is known" to "at the end on this side," appears there as a fragment.

KEHOT'S NOTE

קטע בסה"מ תקס"ה ח"א ע' תקה. אוה"ת שה"ש כרך ב ע' תשב. בראשית כרך ג תקנב, א. כרך ז תתנא, א. תרומה ע' א'תנג. ד"ה חייב אדם לברך — תרלי"ח פרק ה.

9

כרוב אחד מקצה מזה הוא קצה אוה"ס שבז"א

Likkutei Torah on Vayikra cites this explanation of "one cherub at the end on this side" as the end of the Infinite Light in Z'eir Anpin, and adds that it is as the Ramaz wrote: the level of Atik is the end of the world of the Infinite; there it is the inner dimension of Z'eir Anpin, the level of Atik within it.

במדבר ט"א:1' Numbers

וידבר ה' אל-משה במדבר-סיני בשנה השנית לצאתם מארץ מצרים בחדש הראשון לאמר:

And the L-RD spoke unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying:

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KEHOT'S NOTE

מובא בלקו"ת ויקרא ג, ב: והיינו כמ"ש הרמ"ז שם כידוע שבחי עתיק הוא סוף עולם הא"ס. בלקו"ת קדושים ל, ד. במדבר ט, א. שה"ש מז, ב. מט, ג. סה"מ תרל"ג ע' רנו — מצויין לכאן.

10

הוא מקור ב"ע ושרשם שבאצ"י

That maamar explains what is meant here: "the second cherub is that through it there will be the ascent of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah into Atzilus, which is through the souls, and it is from the level of the Community of Israel, the inner dimension of Malchus."

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה בד"ה ועשית חג שבועות תרע"ו (בסה"מ תער"ב-ע"ו) ע' צט שהכוונה כאן "דכרוב השני הוא שע"י יחי עליית ב"ע באצ"י שזהו ע"י הנשמות והוא מבחי כנס"י פנימיות המל"י". ע"ש.

11 שמתלבש בהם ג"כ אוא"ס

The note says it is explained there that the Infinite Light is en clothed in the source and root of the lower worlds as well.

KEHOT'S NOTE

נתבאר בד"ה מצה זו תרע"ג. וראה סה"מ ת"ש ע' 60.

12 רק מהחזה ולמטה כנודע

There the Tzemach Tzedek writes that from the chest of Z'eir Anpin downward is called "time."

KEHOT'S NOTE

ראה בלקו"ת מהאר"י פ' בראשית בטעמי המצות גבי מ"ע שהזמ"ג. ובאוה"ת דרושים לשבועות בד"ה והי' אמונת עתך ע' פה כי מהחזה דו"א ולמטה נק' זמן ע"ש.

PARAGRAPH 5

13 והכרובים נעשים מקשה אחת . . בחי' כתר לשניהם

The Tzemach Tzedek writes there that the cherubim are Z'eir Anpin and Nukva and the kapores is from the level of Binah, and leaves a question for further study: in the Gemara (Bava Basra 99a), the cherubim that Moshe made in the Mishkan stand with their feet on the kapores; if so, how is the kapores a Keser for them, which is a crown and a head?

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת תרומה ע' א'תנ: ור"ל שהכרובים הם זו"ג והכפורת מבחי' בינה, וצ"ע בגמרא פ"ו דב"ב דצ"ט ע"א שהכרובים שעשה משה במשכן הם עומדים רגליהם על הכפורת, א"כ איך הכפורת כתר להם שהוא עטרה וראש. עכ"ל. וראה ד"ה יונת תר"מ ע' ד. וראה ד"ה ויחי יעקב תרנ"ב ע' כט.

14 ובזמן עליית . . עולה עמהם

The note says Or HaTorah explains there how, when the cherubim ascend, the kapores rises with them.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת תרומה ע' א'תנט ביאור ע"ז.

15 אשת חיל עטרת בעלה

"A woman of valor is the crown of her husband." The maa-mar closes with it, "as is known," after calling the halachos the inner dimension of the Supernal Will that the Written Torah did not reveal; read in this light, the Oral Torah is the woman of valor who is a crown to her husband, the Written Torah.

משלי י"ב:ד: Proverbs 12:4

אִשְׁת־חַיִּל עֲטֶרֶת בַּעֲלָהּ וְכָרֶקֶב בַּעֲצָמוֹתָיו מִבִּישָׁה:

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband; But she that doeth shamefully is as rottenness in his bones.

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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