



TORAH OHR • PARSHAS VA'EIRA • MAAMAR 3

ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן לאמר כו'...

“And G-d said to Moshe and to Aharon”



Kelipah, which boasts “My river is mine,” lives only from a ray of holiness hidden by many contractions. The staff that became a serpent and then a staff again showed this, and the plagues broke Egypt’s kelipos so that the sparks of holiness within them were revealed and returned to G-d.

DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

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



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THE BIG IDEA

Kelipah, which boasts “My river is mine,” lives only from a ray of holiness hidden by many contractions. The staff that became a serpent and then a staff again showed this, and the plagues broke Egypt’s kelipos so that the sparks of holiness within them were revealed and returned to G-d.

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

THE MAAMAR IN BRIEF

Why did Aharon’s staff become a serpent, why did it turn back into a staff, and why was this the first wonder, before all the plagues? The Alter Rebbe begins with the Sages’ teaching that the Jewish people made Egypt “like a deep without fish”: they gathered every spark of holiness that had fallen there in the breaking of the vessels. As a soul in a body no longer sees that the world is nothing before G-d, the sparks are hidden within kelipos, “husks,” which therefore feel independent, as Pharaoh said, “My river is mine.” A husk can be opened only by breaking it. The river that goes out from Eden is one in Atzilus and divides into four in Beriah, and Pishon, the Nile, received more sparks than the others. “Egypt shall know” means “Egypt shall be broken”: the plagues broke the kelipos so that the freed sparks would know G-d, while the Jewish people, believers, needed no wonders. The first wonder showed the principle: the staff, the chain of holy light, becomes a serpent through many contractions, and becomes a staff again, swallowing the others, when G-d reveals Himself.

OUTLINE

- 1 The question and the hidden sparks** ¶1-4
Why the staff became a serpent and turned back, and why it came first. The Jewish people emptied Egypt of every spark that fell there in the breaking of the vessels; like a soul in a body, the sparks are hidden by kelipos that feel independent, and a husk can be opened only by breaking it.
- 2 The river of Eden** ¶5-6
The river is one in Atzilus and divides into four at the head of Beriah. The rivers are not alike: Pishon, the Nile of Egypt, received more sparks of Tohu than fell to Babylon.
- 3 “Egypt shall know”** ¶7
“Know” means “break”: the plagues broke Egypt’s kelipos so that the sparks could be revealed and return to G-d, which also answers the question at the Splitting of the Sea. The Jewish people, believers, needed no wonders.

4 What the wonders showed

¶8-10

The first wonder is the prelude to the plagues. Kelipah lives from holiness at every moment and only seems independent because of the contractions; a light from above them nullifies it. The staff is the whole chain of holy light, from the highest level to the lowest.

5 Staff and serpent

¶11

Through many contractions the staff becomes the serpent, the source of Egypt's kelipos. When the serpent becomes a staff again and Aharon's staff swallows the others, kelipah returns to nullification and the sparks are raised.

KEY CONCEPTS

The breaking of the vessels שבירת הכלים

The “death” of the seven primordial kings of the World of Tohu, which shattered and fell into Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah; their sparks of holiness lie hidden in the kelipos.

Sparks נצוצות

The fragments of holiness from Tohu that fell into the kelipos. More of them fell into Egypt's river than into Babylon, and at the Exodus every one was gathered.

Kelipah (husk) קליפה

A force that covers and hides the holy spark within it, like the shell around a nut, and so feels itself independent. The spark can be freed only by breaking it.

An independent existence יש ודבר בפני עצמו

The sense of being a thing unto oneself, separate from G-d: the illusion of kelipah, voiced in Pharaoh's “My river is mine, and I have made myself.”

Contractions (tzimtzumim) צמצומים

The screens and contractions through which life-force descends to kelipah, hiding its source so thoroughly that kelipah can claim independence. A light from above them nullifies it.

The staff מטה

From the meaning “drawing forth and inclining”: the whole chain of holy light, from the highest level to the lowest. Hidden by many contractions it becomes the serpent; when G-d wills, the serpent turns back into a staff.

The serpent תנין

The source of Egypt's kelipos, “the great serpent that lies in the midst of his rivers,” which lives from the staff and returns to it.

SECTION 1 • 11-4

The question and the hidden sparks

1 ויאמר ה' אל משה ואל אהרן לאמר כו' קח את מטך¹ והשלך לפני פרעה יהי לתנין² כו' עד ויבלע מטה אהרן את מטתם.³

“And G-d said to Moshe and to Aharon, saying,” etc.: “Take your staff and cast it down before Pharaoh; it will become a serpent,” etc., up to “and Aharon’s staff swallowed up their staffs.”

The maamar opens with G-d’s instruction to Moshe and Aharon: when Pharaoh asks them for a wonder, Aharon is to cast his staff before him and it will become a serpent. The Alter Rebbe quotes the passage through to its end, where Aharon’s staff swallows the staffs of Pharaoh’s magicians.

להבין ענין המטה שנהפך לנחש (ואח"כ חזר ונהפך למטה. וגם מה שזה היה המופת הראשון שנתנו לפרעה וקדם לכל העשר מכות) הנה כתיב וינצלו את מצרים⁴ וארז"ל (פסחים קיט.)

To understand the matter of the staff that turned into a snake (and afterward turned back into a staff; and also the fact that this was the first wonder they gave Pharaoh, and that it came before all the Ten Plagues): now, it is written, “And they emptied out Egypt,” and our Sages, of blessed memory, said (Pesachim 119a)

Three things need explaining: what it means that the staff became a snake, why it then turned back into a staff, and why this was the first wonder shown to Pharaoh, before any of the plagues. The answer begins with the verse that at the Exodus the Jewish people “emptied out” Egypt, and with the Sages’ comment on it.

שעשאו' כמצולה שאין בה דגים⁵. פי' שלקטו כל הנצוצין שנפלו בשבירה אליהם ונתרוקנו מצרים מהם עד שנשארו כמצולה כו' ולא השאירו שם אפי' נצוץ⁶ א'.

that they made it like a deep without fish. This means that they gathered all the sparks that had fallen to them in the breaking [of the vessels], and Egypt was emptied of them, until they were left like a deep, etc., and they did not leave there even a single spark.

The Gemara expounds “they emptied” (vayenatzlu) by way of metzulah, “the deep”: Egypt was left like deep water with no fish in it. The Alter Rebbe explains the “fish” as the sparks of holiness that had fallen into Egypt; the Jewish people gathered every one of them and left not a single spark behind.

והנה להבין ענין הנצוצות שנפלו בשב"כ וענין העלאתם. הענין כי הנה ידוע ענין השבירה הוא מיתת ז' מלכין קדמאין דתהו שנשברו ונפלו למטה לבי"ע בבחי' הקליפות וסט"א.

Now, to understand the matter of the sparks that fell in the breaking of the vessels, and the matter of their elevation: the explanation is that, as is known, the breaking is the “death” of the seven primordial kings of Tohu, which shattered and fell down into [the worlds of] Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, into the state of the kelipos (husks) and the sitra achra (the other side).

To explain these sparks, the Alter Rebbe recalls the known teaching of the breaking of the vessels. Tohu (“chaos”) is the primordial world whose lights were too intense for their vessels. Its seven primordial “kings” “died”: they shattered and fell down into the lower worlds of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, into the realm of the kelipos and the sitra achra, the forces opposed to holiness.

והיינו כמו על דרך משל בנשמת האדם⁷ שקודם בואה לגוף היתה בטילה בתכלית לגבי אור א"ס ב"ה

That is, it is like the analogy of a person's soul: before it came into the body, it was utterly nullified before the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He

An analogy from the human soul explains what happened to the sparks. Before a soul enters a body, it is completely nullified before G-d's Infinite Light, with no sense of a self apart from Him.

(כמ"ש חי ה' אשר עמדתי לפניו)^{8,9} והיינו משום שאז לא היה דבר המחשיך ומסתיר עליה הגילוי אלקות לכך היתה בטילה למקורה בתכלית.

(as it is written, “As G-d lives, before Whom I stood”). That is because then there was nothing darkening and concealing the revelation of G-dliness from it; therefore it was utterly nullified to its source.

The prophet's oath “before Whom I stood,” in the past tense, is read as the soul speaking of its state before it came down; the Rebbe's note quoted by Kehot shows that the Zohar reads the verse this way. Then nothing hid G-dliness from the soul, so it was utterly nullified to its source.

וכיון שירדה למטה ונתלבשה בגוף החומרי אזי הגוף מסתיר עליה להיות נדמה העולם ומלואו ליש ודבר נפרד בפ"ע ואין רואה בחי' הבטול של כל העולמות לגבי אור א"ס ב"ה המחיה ומהוה אותם תמיד.

But once it has descended below and been clothed in the physical body, the body conceals [G-dliness] from it, so that the world and all that fills it seems to be an independent existence, a thing separate unto itself, and it does not see the nullification of all the worlds before the Infinite Light, blessed be He, which constantly gives them life and brings them into being.

Once the soul is in a physical body, the body hides G-dliness from it: the world seems to exist on its own, and the soul no longer sees that all the worlds are nothing before the Infinite Light that constantly gives them life and being. This is the model for what happened to the sparks.

2 וכך עדי"מ הוא ענין שבה"כ שנפלו הנצוצין דתהו ונתלבשו בקליפות דבי"ע שהקליפות מחשיכות על הנצוצות ומסתירים אותם

So too, by way of analogy, is the matter of the breaking of the vessels, in which the sparks of Tohu fell and were clothed in the kelipos (husks) of Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah, so that the kelipos cast darkness over the sparks and conceal them

The breaking of the vessels works like the soul's descent into a body. The sparks of Tohu fell and were wrapped in the kelipos of the lower worlds, and the kelipos cover them over and darken them.

מכל צד שלא ירגישו גילוי אור א"ס ב"ה עד שיוכלו להיות יש ודבר בפ"ע וכמאמ' פרעה לי יאורי ואני עשיתיני¹⁰ רק דקרו ליה¹¹ אלהא דאלהיא.¹²

on every side, so that they do not sense the revelation of the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, until they can be an independent existence, a thing unto itself, as in Pharaoh's saying, "My river is mine, and I have made myself," except that they call Him "the G-d of gods."

Hidden on every side, the sparks no longer sense the Infinite Light, to the point that they can become a separate "something," an existence of their own. This is Pharaoh's boast, "My river is mine, and I have made myself"; at most such powers grant G-d the title "the G-d of gods," the highest of many, not the only true existence.

3 ואף שקודם השבירה היו הנצוצי' בטלים ומיוחדים בא"ס ב"ה מפני שאז היה מתגלה אוא"ס בהם בגילוי ויחוד גמור

And although before the breaking the sparks were nullified and united with the Infinite One (Ein Sof), blessed be He, because then the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof) was revealed in them openly, in complete union,

Before the breaking, the sparks were openly united with G-d: the Infinite Light shone in them without any concealment, so they were wholly nullified to Him.

אבל לאחר השבירה שירדו הנצוצין ונתלבשו בתוך הקליפות שהם מלבישים אותם ומסתירים הגילוי אלקות כמשל הגוף שמסתיר ומחשיך לגבי הנשמה כנ"ל. לכן אינם יכולים להיות בבחי' בטול כמו שהיו תחלה.

yet after the breaking, when the sparks descended and were clothed within the kelipos (husks), which clothe them and conceal the revelation of G-dliness, as in the analogy of the body, which conceals and darkens [G-dliness] from the soul, as mentioned above, therefore they cannot be in a state of self-nullification (bittul) as they were at first.

After the breaking they are wrapped in kelipos that hide G-dliness from them, as the body hides it from the soul. That is why they can no longer stand in the self-nullification they had before.

4 ולכך נק' בשם קליפות שהם כמשל הקליפה שהיא חופפת ומקפת על הפרי הכנוס בתוכה ומסתרת אותה כמשל קליפת האגוז. ואין תרופה להוציא הפרי כ"א ע"י שבירת הקליפה.

This is why they are called by the name kelipos (husks): they are like a husk that covers and surrounds the fruit enclosed within it and hides it, like the shell of a nut. And there is no remedy for getting the fruit out except by breaking the shell.

The name kelipah, "husk" or "shell," describes what these forces do: like the shell of a nut around its fruit, they surround what is inside and hide it. The only way to reach the fruit is to break the shell.

וכך כדי להוציא נצוצי הקדושה מהקליפות המסתירים עליהם היה צ"ל שבירת הקליפות וזה היה ענין אותות ומופתים ומכות שבמצרים כדלקמן אי"ה:¹³

So too, in order to extract the sparks of holiness from the kelipos that conceal them, there had to be a breaking of the kelipos; and this was the meaning of the signs, the wonders and the plagues in Egypt, as will be explained below, G-d willing.

So too, freeing the holy sparks required breaking the kelipos that hid them. The Alter Rebbe says that this is what the signs, wonders and plagues in Egypt were, and promises to explain it further on.

SECTION 2 • ¶5-6

The river of Eden

5 והנה כתיב ונהר יוצא מעדן¹⁴ כו' ומשם יפרד והיה לדי ראשים. שם האחד פישון¹⁵ כו'.

Now, it is written, "A river goes out from Eden," etc., "and from there it divides and becomes four heads. The name of the first is Pishon," etc.

The Alter Rebbe turns to the Torah's description of Eden: a single river goes out from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides into four "heads," the first of which is Pishon. He will use it to explain why so many sparks fell into Egypt.

ופי' נהר היוצא מעדן היא המשכה והארה הנמשכת מח"ע דאצי"ה¹⁶ שבה מלובש אור א"ס ב"ה.

The meaning of "the river that goes out from Eden" is the drawing-forth and illumination that is drawn from the Supernal Chochmah (wisdom) of the World of Atzilus (Emanation), in which the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, is clothed.

The river is the flow of light from the Supernal Chochmah, the divine wisdom of Atzilus, in which the Infinite Light itself is clothed. "Eden," the river's source, thus stands for Chochmah.

ובה ועל ידה נמשך אור א"ס ב"ה בכל האצילות ונמשך עד בחי מלי דאצי הנקי גן.

In it and through it the Infinite Light, blessed be He, is drawn into all of Atzilus, and it is drawn down to the level of Malchus (sovereignty) of Atzilus, which is called "the garden."

Through Chochmah the Infinite Light spreads through all of Atzilus and reaches its last level, Malchus, which is called "the garden."

וזהו להשקות את הגן. ושם באצי איהו וגרמוהי חד בהון.¹⁷ ולכן הנהר אחד שהוא עולם האחדות.

This is [the meaning of] "to water the garden." And there, in Atzilus, "He and His causations are one in them." Therefore the river is one, it being the world of oneness.

This is the verse's "to water the garden." In Atzilus G-d is one with His attributes, as the Tikkunei Zohar says, "He and His causations are one in them," so the river there is still one: Atzilus is the world of oneness.

וכיון שהגיע לראש הבריאה אזי משם יפרד בבחי פירוד והתחלקות לדי נהרות שהוא תחלת ההתחלקות.

But once it reaches the head of the World of Beriah (Creation), then "from there it divides," in a state of separation and division, into four rivers, for that is the beginning of division.

Only when the flow reaches the head of Beriah, the first world of separate existence, does it divide into four rivers. Beriah is where division begins.

6 והנה כמשל הנהרות שאין נהר אי דומה לחבירו לא במהותו שזהו מים מתוקין וצלולין והשני אינו כן.

Now, as in the analogy of rivers, where one river is not like another, neither in its nature, for this one is sweet, clear water and the other is not so,

Rivers in this world differ in their very nature: one carries sweet, clear water, another does not.

ולא בגודלו שזה נמשך מאתים פרסאות והשני נמשך מאה וכה"ג. כך אין דומים הנהרות עליונות זה לזה

nor in its size, for this one extends two hundred parasangs and the other extends a hundred, and the like, so too the supernal rivers are not like one another:

They differ in size too, one running two hundred parasangs and another a hundred. So too the supernal rivers that branch from the one river of Atzilus are not alike.

דהיינו פישון נילוס שר של מצרים נמשכו ונפלו בו נצוצים רבים מעולם התהו יותר ממה שנפלו לכבל כו':¹⁸

that is, Pishon, the Nile, the prince of Egypt: many sparks from the World of Tohu were drawn and fell into it, more than fell into Babylon, etc.

Pishon is the Nile, which the Alter Rebbe calls the “prince” of Egypt, its ruling power. More sparks from the World of Tohu fell into it than fell to Babylon and the rest, which is why Egypt held so many sparks to be gathered at the Exodus.

SECTION 3 • 17

“Egypt shall know”

7 ועתה יובן ענין המופתים שהראה השי"ת למצרים. וכמ"ש וידעו מצרים כי אני¹⁹ ה'. פי' וידעו הוא מלשון שבירה כמ"ש וידעו בם את אנשי סכות.²⁰

Now the wonders that G-d, may He be blessed, showed Egypt will be understood, as it is written, “And Egypt shall know that I am G-d.” The meaning of “shall know” (veyadu) is an expression of breaking, as it is written, “and with them he thrashed (vayoda) the men of Sukkos.”

The verse says the wonders were so that “Egypt shall know that I am G-d.” The Alter Rebbe reads “know” as “break,” citing Gideon, who took thorns and briers “and with them he thrashed (vayoda) the men of Sukkos”: there the verb of knowing plainly means breaking.

והענין כמבואר למעלה שכדי להוציא הנצוץ מן הקליפה המכסה עליה א"א להיות כ"א ע"י שבירת הקליפה וכמשל האגוז כו'.

The explanation is as explained above: in order to extract the spark from the kelipah (husk) that covers it, it cannot be done except by breaking the kelipah, as in the analogy of the nut, etc.

As the analogy of the nut showed, a spark can be freed from the kelipah that covers it only by breaking that kelipah.

והענין שע"י שבירת הקליפה יוכל להיות גילוי אור א"ס ב"ה להנצוץ עד שיוכלל באלקותו ית' וזהו ענין סוס ורוכבו²¹ רמה.

The point is that through breaking the kelipah there can be a revelation of the Infinite Light (Or Ein Sof), blessed be He, to the spark, until it is absorbed into His G-dliness, may He be blessed. And this is the meaning of “the horse and its rider He has hurled.”

Once the kelipah is broken, the Infinite Light is revealed to the spark and the spark is absorbed back into G-dliness. The Song at the Sea expresses this: “the horse and its rider He has hurled.”

פ"י הרוכב הוא הקליפה הרוכב ומכסה על הנצוץ. וזהו ענין מרכבת פרעה²² כו' וע"י שבירתם נתגלו הנצוצות ונכללו בא"ס ב"ה

That is, the rider is the kelipah, which rides upon the spark and covers it. And this is the meaning of "Pharaoh's chariots," etc. And through their breaking the sparks were revealed and were absorbed into the Infinite One (Ein Sof), blessed be He.

The "rider" is the kelipah, sitting on the spark as a rider sits on a horse and covering it, and "Pharaoh's chariots" mean the same. When they were broken at the sea, the sparks were revealed and absorbed into the Infinite One.

(ובזה יתורץ מ"ש בקי"ס וידעו מצרים כי אני ה'. ולכאורה תמוה שהרי להלן כתיב לא נשאר בהם עד אחד.²³)

(With this we can resolve what is written at the Splitting of the Sea, "And Egypt shall know that I am G-d." At first glance this is puzzling, for further on it is written, "Not even one of them remained.")

A question in parentheses: at the Splitting of the Sea the Torah says "Egypt shall know that I am G-d," yet the Egyptians drowned and "not even one of them remained." Who, then, was left to know?

אלא דפ"י וידעו לשון שבירה כו'. ועי"ז היה גילוי אוא"ס להנצוצין והם ידעו ידיעה ממש כי אני ה' ועמ"ש במ"א על קושיא זו).

Rather, the meaning of "shall know" is an expression of breaking, etc. Through this there was a revelation of the Infinite Light to the sparks, and they knew, with actual knowledge, that "I am G-d." And see what is explained elsewhere on this question.)

The answer is that "know" means breaking. When the Egyptian kelipos were broken, the Infinite Light was revealed to the sparks they had held, and it was the sparks that truly knew "I am G-d"; the Alter Rebbe adds that the question is discussed elsewhere.

ועד"ז היה ענין העשר מכות בכדי לשבר הקליפות להוציא מהם הנצוצין. אבל ישראל עצמן לא היו צריכים למופתים כלל כי הם מאמינים בני מאמינים.²⁴

In the same way, the Ten Plagues were in order to break the kelipos and extract the sparks from them. But the Jewish people themselves did not need wonders at all, for they are believers, the children of believers,

The Ten Plagues served the same purpose: to break the kelipos and release the sparks. The Jewish people, by contrast, needed no wonders in order to believe, for the Sages call them "believers, the children of believers."

וכמ"ש ויאמן העם וישמעו²⁵ כי פקד ה' כו' רק בשביל להוציא הנצוצות המובלעים תוך הקליפות ממש הוצרך להיות עשר מכות הנ"ל שזהו בשביל וידעו מצרים כו':

as it is written, "And the people believed, and they heard that G-d had remembered," etc. Only in order to extract the sparks swallowed up within the kelipos proper did there have to be the Ten Plagues mentioned above, which is for the sake of "And Egypt shall know," etc.

The verse "and the people believed" shows that the Jewish people's faith did not wait for the plagues. The plagues were needed only to free the sparks swallowed up within the kelipos of Egypt, and that is what "Egypt shall know" means.

SECTION 4 • 18-10

What the wonders showed

8 ובוה יובן ענין המופת הראשון שהראה הש"י לפרעה שהוא ענין שנהפך המטה לנחש שזהו הקדמה לכל העשר מכות.

With this we will understand the first wonder that G-d, may He be blessed, showed Pharaoh, namely the staff that turned into a snake, which is the prelude to all the Ten Plagues.

With this background the first wonder can be understood. The staff that turned into a snake came before all the Ten Plagues because it served as their introduction.

כי הנה ענין העשר מכות מבואר שהוא לשבר הקליפות שהם בחי' יש ודבר בפ"ע כמ"ש לי יאורי²⁶ כו' רק דקרו ליה אלהא דאלהיא²⁷ כנ"ל.

For, as has been explained, the Ten Plagues were to break the kelipos (husks), which are in the state of an independent existence, a thing unto itself, as it is written, "My river is mine," etc., except that they call Him "the G-d of gods," as mentioned above.

The plagues were meant to break the kelipos, which feel themselves independent, as in Pharaoh's "My river is mine," granting G-d no more than the title "the G-d of gods." The first wonder, as the following paragraphs explain, showed what lies behind that sense of independence.

9 וענין המופתים הוא להראות להם איך שעם היותם בחיי קליפות וסט"א ממש אעפ"כ הם מקבלים חיות תמיד מקדושה בכל רגע ושכאמת אינם יש ודבר נפרד בפ"ע כדמיונם הכוזב

The purpose of the wonders is to show them how, although they are actual kelipos (husks) and the sitra achra (the other side), they nevertheless receive life-force from holiness constantly, at every moment, and that in truth they are not an independent existence, a thing separate unto itself, as they falsely imagine,

The wonders were meant to show the kelipos that even they, the realm opposed to holiness, receive their life from holiness at every moment. Their sense of being independent beings is a false imagining.

אלא שהם בטלים בתכלית לגבי אלקותו ית' רק שהחיות נמשך להם ע"י מסכים והשתלשלות מדרגות רבים ועצומים וגברו כ"כ הצמצומים וההסתרים עד שיוכלו לומר לי יאורי²⁸ כו'.

but rather they are utterly nullified before His G-dliness, may He be blessed. It is only that the life-force is drawn to them through screens and a chain of descent (hishtalshelus) of many and immense levels, and the contractions (tzimtzumim) and concealments became so strong that they can say, "My river is mine," etc.

In truth they are utterly nullified before G-d. It is only because their life-force reaches them through screens and a long chain of descending levels, with the contractions and concealments grown so strong, that they can claim, "My river is mine."

10 ולכן בהגלות הארה רבה שלמעלה מן הצמצומים הם בטלים ומבוטלים וזה היה ענין המופתים כו'.

Therefore, when a great illumination that is above the contractions (tzimtzumim) is revealed, they are nullified and rendered void; and this was the meaning of the wonders, etc.

Since the independence of the kelipos rests only on the contractions, a revelation of light from above the contractions makes them nothing. That is what the wonders did.

וע"ז היה מורה המופת הראשון בענין המטה שנהפך לנחש. פ"י מטה הוא לשון המשכה והטייה.

And this is what the first wonder indicated, in the staff that turned into a snake. The meaning of "staff" (mateh) is an expression of drawing forth and inclining.

The first wonder pointed to all this. The Alter Rebbe explains the word mateh, "staff," as meaning drawing forth and inclining, something stretched downward.

וכן שבט ג"כ לשון המשכה כמו כוכבא דשביט.²⁹ דהיינו כל המשכת סדר ההשתלשלות דקדושה מריש כל דרגין עד סוף כל דרגין נקי מטה.

Likewise “rod” (shevet) is also an expression of drawing forth, as in kochva deshavit, a comet. That is, the entire drawing-forth of the order of the chain of descending worlds (hishtalshelus) of holiness, from the head of all levels to the end of all levels, is called “staff.”

The synonym shevet, “rod,” likewise means drawing forth, as in the Talmud’s term for a comet, kochva deshavit, a star drawn out in a long trail. So the “staff” stands for the whole chain of holy light drawn down from the highest level to the lowest.

SECTION 5 • ¶11

Staff and serpent

11 ותנין היא מקור הקליפות דמצרים כמ"ש התנים הגדול³⁰ הרובץ בתוך יאוריו. והראו לו משה ואהרן איך שהמטה נהפך לנחש

And the serpent is the source of the kelipos (husks) of Egypt, as it is written, “the great serpent that lies in the midst of his rivers.” And Moshe and Aharon showed him how the staff turned into a snake,

The serpent is the source of Egypt’s kelipos, which Ezekiel calls “the great serpent that lies in the midst of his rivers,” Pharaoh with his Nile. Moshe and Aharon showed Pharaoh the staff turning into a snake.

דהיינו שמבחי' אור והמשכה דקדושה הנקי מטה נמשך החיות והקיום להתנין מקור הקליפות. וכמ"ש רגליה יורדות כו'.³¹

that is, from the level of the light and drawing-forth of holiness that is called “staff,” the life-force and existence are drawn to the serpent, the source of the kelipos. As it is written, “Her feet go down,” etc.

This meant that the light of holiness drawn downward, the “staff,” is what gives life and existence to the serpent, the source of the kelipos. The verse “Her feet go down” is brought for the same point: holiness extends its lowest reach even to the realm opposed to it.

ומלכותו בכל³² משלה^{33,34} אלא שזהו ע"י השתלשלות וצמצומים רבים כנ"ל עד שיוכל להיות נהפך ממטה לנחש (ועיין בתקוני זהר תקון כ"ב בענין פי' מטה)

And "His kingship rules over all." Only, this is through the chain of descending worlds (hishtal-shelus) and many contractions (tzimtzumim), as mentioned above, until it can be turned from a staff into a snake (and see Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 22, on the meaning of "staff"),

G-d's "kingship rules over all," the kelipos included, but only through a long chain of descent and many contractions; through them the staff can become a snake. The Alter Rebbe refers the reader to the Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 22, on the meaning of "staff."

שע"י צמצומים רבים אלו מסתתר³⁵ השפע מבחי' המטה כ"כ עד שיוכל להיות התהוות בחינת התנים הגדול הרובץ בתוך יאוריו ואומר לי יאורי כו' כנ"ל.

for through these many contractions the flow from the level of the staff is concealed so greatly that there can come into being "the great serpent that lies in the midst of his rivers," which says, "My river is mine," etc., as mentioned above.

The contractions hide the flow that comes from the staff so completely that a "great serpent" can come into being and declare, "My river is mine."

ואח"כ הראו לו איך שהנחש נהפך למטה וגם ויבלע מטה אהרן את מטתם.³⁶

Afterward they showed him how the snake turned into a staff, and also "Aharon's staff swallowed up their staffs."

Then the wonder was reversed: the snake became a staff, and Aharon's staff swallowed the staffs of Pharaoh's magicians.

היינו שחזר בחי' התנין להתבטל לגבי הקדושה האלקית כבראשונה (וזהו ענין העלאת הנצוצות הנ"ל) בזה הראו לפרעה ולמצרים אשר אינם יש ודבר בפ"ע.

That is, the level of the serpent returned to being nullified before G-dly holiness, as at first (and this is the elevation of the sparks mentioned above). By this they showed Pharaoh and Egypt that they are not an independent existence, a thing unto itself,

This showed the serpent returning to nullification before holiness, as it had been at first; the Alter Rebbe notes that this is the elevation of the sparks spoken of at the start. It showed Pharaoh and Egypt that they have no independent existence.

כ"א בכל רגע נמשך להם החיות מאלקות אלא שהוא ית' אל מסתתר (וברצותו נהפך הנחש למטה והיו כלא היו הקליפות) ועד"ז היו כל המופתים להיות וידעו מצרים כי אני³⁷ ה' כנ"ל:

but rather at every moment life-force is drawn to them from G-dliness, only that He, may He be blessed, is "a G-d Who hides Himself" (and when He wills, the snake turns into a staff, and the kelipos "are as though they had never been"). In this way were all the wonders, so that "Egypt shall know that I am G-d," as mentioned above.

Their life comes from G-dliness at every moment; only, G-d is "a G-d Who hides Himself," and when He wills, the snake becomes a staff and the kelipos are as though they had never been. All the wonders served this end, that "Egypt shall know that I am G-d."

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The Alter Rebbe compares the sparks in the kelipos to a soul in a body. What does the body hide from the soul, and what do the kelipos hide from the sparks?
2. How does reading "Egypt shall know" as "Egypt shall be broken" answer the question that "not even one of them remained"?
3. If the Jewish people needed no wonders in order to believe, for whom were the plagues?
4. What do the staff becoming a serpent, and the serpent becoming a staff again, each show about kelipah?
5. According to the image of the four rivers, why did Egypt hold so many sparks, and what does that say about the Exodus?

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Notes

PARAGRAPH 1

1 ויאמר . . קח את מטך

The note says that another transcript (hanachah) of this maamar is printed there.

KEHOT'S NOTE

הנחה אחרת בסה"מ תקס"ה ע' קפח. ראה לעיל בציונים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע. המאמר עם הגהות וקיצורים באוה"ת כרך ז ע' ב'תרנ.

2 G-d tells Moshe and Aharon that when Pharaoh demands a wonder, Aharon should cast his staff before Pharaoh and it will become a serpent. This is the maamar's opening verse, whose inner meaning it sets out to explain.

שמות ז:ט"ז Exodus 7:9

כי ידבר אלכם פרעה לאמר תנו לכם מופת ואמרתי אל-אהרן קח את-מטה והשליך לפני-פרעה יהי לתנין:

'When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying: Show a wonder for you; then thou shalt say unto Aaron: Take thy rod, and cast it down before Pharaoh, that it become a serpent.'

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3 ויבלע מטה אהרן את מטתם

Pharaoh's magicians cast down their staffs, which also became serpents, and Aharon's staff swallowed them. The Alter Rebbe quotes the episode to its end; he explains the swallowing in the last paragraph of the maamar.

שמות ז:כ"ב Exodus 7:22

וישליכו איש מטהו ויהיו לתנינם ויבלע מטה-אהרן את-מטתם:

For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

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4 וינצלו את מצרים

G-d gave the people favor in the Egyptians' eyes, "and they emptied out Egypt." The Alter Rebbe reads it, with the Gemara, as the gathering of every spark of holiness from Egypt.

שמות י"ב:ל"ו Exodus 12:36

וה' נתן את-חן העם בעיני מצרים וינצלו את-מצרים:

And the L-RD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות יב, לו.

5 Expounding "and they emptied out Egypt," Rabbi Shimon says the Jewish people made Egypt "like a deep without

fish." The Alter Rebbe takes the fish to be the fallen sparks, all of which were gathered.

פסחים קי"ט א:7119a Pesachim 119a

וכשעלו ישראל ממצרים העלוהו עמהו, שנאמר: "וינצלו את מצרים", רב אסי אמר: עשאונה כמצודה זו שאין בה דגון. רבי שמעון אמר: כמצולה שאין בה דגים.

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

6 ולא השאירו שם אפי' נצוץ א'

At this point the other transcript of the maamar explains the 210 years of the Egyptian exile.

KEHOT'S NOTE

בסה"מ תקס"ה ע' קפח מבאר כאן בענין רדיו שנה.

7 על דרך משל בנשמת האדם

The other transcript reads the analogy in a different order: it starts with the soul clothed in the physical body, which darkens it so that the world seems a separate thing and it does not sense (rather than "see") the nullification of all the worlds before Ein Sof, and only then continues "and although before its coming..."

KEHOT'S NOTE

בסה"מ תקס"ה ע' קפח "המלוכשי בגוף החומרי המחשיך עלי' להיות נדמה העולם ליש ודבר נפרד בפ"ע ואין מרגשת בחי' הביטול של כל העולמות לגבי א"ס ב"ה ואף שקודם בואה. . ."

8 חי ה' אשר עמדתי לפניו

Elisha's oath, "As G-d lives, before Whom I stood," as he refuses Naaman's gift. The Alter Rebbe applies the words to the soul before it came into the body, standing before G-d in complete nullification.

מלכים ב ה:ט"ז II Kings 5:16

ויאמר ח"ה אֲשֶׁר־עַמַּדְתִּי לִפְנֵי אֱ־מֶ־לֶ־אֱקָח ויִפְצְרֶ־בּוּ לְקַחַת ויִמָּאֵן:

But he said: 'As the L-RD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none.' And he urged him to take it; but he refused.

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זוהר III, 68b

KEHOT'S NOTE

מלכים-ב ה, טז. וכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע בספר המאמרים ת"ש ע' 13 מציין ע"ז "מדבר בנשמתו קודם שירדה למטה שלכן אומר אשר עמדתי ולא אשר אני עומד (זו"ג סח, ב. וראה ג"כ שם ח"א רלג, ב)."

9 חי ה' אשר עמדתי לפניו

The Zohar teaches that when a soul is about to come down into the world, it stands before the Holy One, blessed be He, in the very form it will have in this world, and it proves from this verse that souls stand before Him. The Kehot note gives it alongside Zohar 3:68b.

ספר זוהר, ויחי מ"ח:תצ"ה נ"א:תק"ה 51:505-48:495 Zohar, Vayechi

In this case we may interpret the words "He shall bless the house of Israel" to mean that G-d gives extra blessings to a

man who is married, in order that his wife may be blessed through him, and so he receives two portions, one for himself and one for his wife.' R. Hizkiah discoursed on the verse: "Thine eyes did see mine imperfect substance, and in thy book they were all written, etc." (Ps. 139, 16). 'This verse', he said, 'has been frequently expounded. All the souls which came ...

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

PARAGRAPH 2

10 לי יאורי ואני עשיתיני

Ezekiel's prophecy against Pharaoh, "the great serpent that lies in the midst of his rivers, who has said, 'My river is mine, and I have made myself.'" The Alter Rebbe hears in it the voice of kelipah, which feels self-made and independent.

Ezekiel 29:3:ג"כ: יחזקאל

דבר ואמרתי כה־אמר אֲדֹנִי ה' הִנְנִי עֲלֶיךָ פֶּרַעַה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרַיִם הַתֵּנִים הַגְּדוֹל הַרְבֵּץ בְּתוֹךְ יַאֲרֵיו אֲשֶׁר אָמַר לִי יַאֲרִי וְאֲנִי עֲשִׂיתִנִּי:

speak, and say: Thus saith the L-rd GOD: Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh King of Egypt, The great dragon that lieth In the midst of his rivers, That hath said: My river is mine own, And I have made it for myself.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

יחזקאל כט, ג. ראה בלקוי"ש חכ"א ע' 40 הערה 32. בסה"מ תקס"ה ע' קפט מביא כאן משל מהנשמה המלוכשת בגוף, ע"ש.

11 דקרו לי אלקא דאלקיא

The Gemara says that the nations call G-d "the G-d of gods." The Alter Rebbe uses it for the kelipos, which acknowledge G-d only as the highest power while still feeling themselves independent.

Menachot ק"י א:ה-ר"ב-110a:5

איתיביה רב שימי בר חיאי לרב (מלאכי א, יא) ממזרח שמש ועד מבוא גדול שמי בגוים ובכל מקום מוקטר מוגש לשמי ומנחה טהורה אמר ליה שימי את דקרו ליה אלהא דאלהא בכל מקום מוקטר מוגש לשמי בכל מקום סלקא דעתך אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר ר' יונתן אלו תלמידי חכמים העוסקים בתורה בכל מקום מעלה אני עליהן כאילו מקטירין ומגישין לשמי

Wikisource Talmud Bavli (CC-BY-SA)

KEHOT'S NOTE

מנחות קי, א.

12 וכמאמר פרעה

There Likkutei Torah contrasts two "garments of kingship": in holiness, accepting the yoke of Heaven in self-nullification; in the sitra achra, taking existence for oneself with no nullification before G-d.

KEHOT'S NOTE

וכ"ה בלקו"ת שה"ש כ רע"א. ועוד. וראה בלקוי"ש חכ"א ע' 40 הערה 33.

PARAGRAPH 4

13 Kehot's note points to Jeremiah 32:20 for these words.

Jeremiah 32:20:כ"ב: ירמיהו

אֲשֶׁר־שָׂמַת אֹתוֹת וּמִפְתֵּי־בְּאֵרֵי־מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה וּבְיִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְאֲדָם וַתַּעֲשֶׂה־לִּי שְׁם כְּיוֹם הַזֶּה:

who didst set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, even unto this day, and in Israel and among other men; and madest Thee a name, as at this day;

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PARAGRAPH 5

14 ונהר יוצא מעדן

"A river goes out from Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four heads." The Alter Rebbe reads the one river as the flow of light in Atzilus and its division as the beginning of separation in Beriah.

Genesis 2:10:י"ב: בראשית

וְנָהָר יֵצֵא מֵעֵדֶן לְהַשְׁקוֹת אֶת־הַגֶּן וּמִשָּׁם יִפְרָד וְהָיָה לְאַרְבַּעָה רִאשִׁים:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became four heads.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

בראשית ב, י. ראה בסה"מ תקס"ה ע' קפט שדי ראשים המה הדי נהרות הם ארבע גליות ע"ש.

15 שם האחד פישון

"The name of the first is Pishon." In the next paragraph the Alter Rebbe identifies Pishon with the Nile, the river of Egypt.

Genesis 2:11:י"א: בראשית

שֵׁם הָאֶחָד פִּישוֹן הוּא הַסֹּבֵב אֶת כָּל־אֶרֶץ הַחַיִּילָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם הָהָב:

The name of the first is Pishon; that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;

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16 ונהר יוצא מעדן . . היא המשכה והארה הנמשכת מח"ע דאצי

Or HaTorah refers to this passage of Torah Ohr: the river that goes out from Eden, from Atzilus, divides in Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah into four heads, which are Egypt, Babylon and the rest.

KEHOT'S NOTE

באוה"ת נ"ך כרך א ע' שצא מציין לכאן "ועיין בתו"א פ' וארא בד"ה . . בענין נהר היוצא מעדן מאצי" איך שבכ"ע נפרד לדי ראשים שהם מצרים ובבל כו', וזה ע"ד דפי' בת"ו בהקדמה דף ז' סע"א מט"ט בדיוקנא דצדיק יסוד עלמא כו' והאי איהו על נהר כבר מאי כבר דא מט"ט דאיהו רכב לעמודא דאמצעי'א כו'."

17 איהו וגרמוהי חד בהון

The Tikkunei Zohar says that in the ten Sefiros of Atzilus the King is within them, "He and His causations are one in them," which is not so in the ten Sefiros of Beriah. The

Alter Rebbe uses it to explain why the river is still one in Atzilus and divides only in Beriah.

תקוני זוהר ג' ב:ט"ו-9:3b Tikkunei Zohar

דעשר ספירות דאצילות מלכא בהון, איהו וגרמיה חד בהון, איהו וחייו
חד בהון, מה דלאו הכי בעשר ספירות דבריאה, דלאו אינון וחייון חד,
לאו אינון וגרמיהון חד. ועלת על כלא הוא נהיר (נ"א נחית) בעשר
ספירות דאצילות, ובעשר ספירות דבריאה, ונהיר בעשר כחות
דמלכא, ובעשר גלגלי דרקיעא, ולא אשתני בכל אחר.

Tikkunei Zohar - Vocalized (Public Domain)

PARAGRAPH 6

18 כו' אין דומים הנהרות . . פישון נילוס . . יותר ממה שנפלו לבבל

Or HaTorah's text continues: the other rivers too are unlike one another, and the length of each exile is measured by the number of sparks.

KEHOT'S NOTE

"וכעד"ז שאר הנהרות אינם דומים ול"ז וכפי מספר הניצוצי כך נמדד זמן
הגלות, ולכך במצרים הי' צ"ל רדיו שנה כדלעיל בענין וינצלו כו' שבמשר
זמן זה ליקטו וביררו כל הניצוצים שנפלו בהם" — אוה"ת כרך ז ע' ב'תרו.

PARAGRAPH 7

19 וידעו מצרים כי אני ה'

"And Egypt shall know that I am G-d, when I stretch out My hand over Egypt." The Alter Rebbe reads "know" as "break": the plagues broke Egypt's kelipos so that the sparks inside would know G-d.

שמות ז':ה' Exodus 7:5

וידעו מצרים כי אני ה' בנטתי את ידִי על־מצרים והוצאתי את־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵתוֹכָם:

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the L-RD, when I stretch forth My hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.'

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות ז', ה.

20 וידעו בם את אנשי סוכות

Gideon took thorns and briers of the wilderness "and with them he thrashed the men of Sukkos," with the verb of knowing (vayoda). The Alter Rebbe cites it to show that this word can mean breaking.

שופטים ח':ט"ו Judges 8:16

וַיִּקַּח אֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר וְאֶת־קוֹצֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וְאֶת־הַבְּרֻקִּים וַיַּדַּע בָּהֶם אֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי סוּכוֹת:

And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שופטים ח, טו.

21

סוס ורכבו

From the Song at the Sea: "the horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea." The Alter Rebbe reads the rider as the kelipah that rides on the spark and covers it.

שמות ט"ו:א' Exodus 15:1

אָז יִשְׁרַם־מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לְהַבְּרָאָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ
לְאֹמֶר אֲשִׁירָה לְהַבְּרָאָה הַזֹּאת סוּס וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בָּיָם:

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the L-RD, and spoke, saying: I will sing unto the L-RD, for He is highly exalted; The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות טו, א.

22

מרכבת פרעה

"Pharaoh's chariots and his army He cast into the sea." Read the same way: the chariots that carry and cover the sparks were broken, and the sparks were revealed.

שמות ט"ו:ד' Exodus 15:4

מִרְכַּבֶּת פַּרְעֹה וַחֲבִילוֹ יָרָה בַּיָּם וּמִכָּחַר שְׁלֹשִׁי טַבָּעוֹ בָּיָם־סוּף:

Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea, And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.

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23

לא נשאר בהם עד אחד

When the waters returned over Pharaoh's army, "not even one of them remained." This raises the question the Alter Rebbe answers: who was left in Egypt to "know"?

שמות י"ד:כ"ח Exodus 14:28

וַיָּשְׁבוּ הַמַּיִם וַיִּכְסּוּ אֶת־הָרֶכֶב וְאֶת־הַפָּרָשִׁים לְכָל חֵיל פַּרְעֹה הַבָּאִים
אֲחֵרֵיהֶם בָּיָם לֹא־נִשְׁאַר בָּהֶם עַד־אֶחָד:

And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, even all the host of Pharaoh that went in after them into the sea; there remained not so much as one of them.

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24

מאמינים בני מאמינים

The Gemara says that G-d told Moshe the Jewish people are "believers, the children of believers," and proves "believers" from "and the people believed." The Alter Rebbe cites both to show that they did not need wonders.

שבת צ"א א'-ד' 97a:4-5 Shabbat

אָמַר רִישׁ לְקִישׁ: הַחֹשֶׁד בְּכֻשָּׁרִים — לֹקָה בְּגוּפוֹ, דְּקִתִּיב: "וְהָן לֹא
יֵאֱמִינוּ לִי וְגו'", וְגַלְיָא קָמִי קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיהּ הוּא דְּמַהֲיֵמְנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמַר
לוֹ: הָן מֵאֱמִינִים בְּנֵי מֵאֱמִינִים, וְאַתָּה אֵין סוּפָה לְהֵאֱמִין. הָן מֵאֱמִינִים,
דְּקִתִּיב: "וַיֵּאֱמֶן הָעָם." בְּנֵי מֵאֱמִינִים — "וְהֵאֱמִין בִּי". אָתָּה אֵין סוּפָה
לְהֵאֱמִין, שְׁנֵאֲמַר: "וַיַּעַן לֹא הֵאֱמַנְתֶּם בִּי וְגו'". מִמָּאִי דְּלָקָה, דְּקִתִּיב:
"וַיֹּאמֶר ה' לֹא עוֹד הֵבֵא נָא יָדְךָ בְּחִיקְךָ וְגו'".

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

25

ויאמן העם וישמעו

When Moshe and Aharon first brought G-d's message, "the people believed, and they heard that G-d had remembered the children of Israel." Their faith came before any of the plagues.

Exodus 4:31א"ל: שמות ד'

ויאמן העם וישמעו כפי פקדו ה' את בני ישראל וכי ראה את עננים ויקדו וישתחוו:

And the people believed; and when they heard that the L-RD had remembered the children of Israel, and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

שמות ד, לא.

PARAGRAPH 8

26

לי יאור

Pharaoh's boast in Ezekiel's prophecy, "My river is mine, and I have made myself," recalled here as the stance of the kelipos that the plagues came to break.

Ezekiel 29:3א"ל: יחזקאל

דבר ואמרתי כה אמר אדני ה' הנני עליך פרעה מלך מצרים התנני הגדול הרבץ בתוך יארי אשר אמר לי יארי ואני עשיתני:

speak, and say: Thus saith the L-rd GOD: Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh King of Egypt, The great dragon that lieth In the midst of his rivers, That hath said: My river is mine own, And I have made it for myself.

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27

דקרו ליה אלהא דאלהיא

The nations call G-d "the G-d of gods." Recalled here: the kelipos grant G-d supremacy but still feel independent.

Menachot 110a:5-6א"ל: מנחות ק"י א'ה'

איתיביה רב שימי בר חייה לרב (מלאכי א, יא) ממזרח שמש ועד מבוא גדול שמי בגוים ובכל מקום מוקטר מוגש לשמי ומנחה טהורה אמר ליה שימי את דקרו ליה אלהא דאלהא בכל מקום מוקטר מוגש לשמי בכל מקום סלקא דעתך אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר ר' יונתן אלו תלמידי חכמים העוסקים בתורה בכל מקום מעלה אני עליהן כאילו מקטירין ומגישין לשמי

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PARAGRAPH 9

28

לי יאור

Pharaoh's boast, "My river is mine, and I have made myself," from Ezekiel's prophecy. Here it is the claim that the contractions make possible, though in truth kelipah has no existence of its own.

Ezekiel 29:3א"ל: יחזקאל

דבר ואמרתי כה אמר אדני ה' הנני עליך פרעה מלך מצרים התנני הגדול הרבץ בתוך יארי אשר אמר לי יארי ואני עשיתני:

speak, and say: Thus saith the L-rd GOD: Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh King of Egypt, The great dragon that lieth In the midst of his rivers, That hath said: My river is mine own, And I have made it for myself.

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PARAGRAPH 10

29

כוכבא דשביט

Shmuel explains zikin, over which a blessing is said, as kochva deshavit, a comet. The Alter Rebbe takes the word shavit to show that shevet, "rod," means something drawn out.

Berachot 58b:11א"ל: ברכות נ"ח ב'

על הזיקין: מאי זיקין? אמר שמואל: כוכבא דשביט. ואמר שמואל: נהירין לי שביט דשמיא כשביט דנהרדעא, לבר מכוכבא דשביט דלא ידענא מאי ניהו. וגמירי דלא עבר כסלא, ואי עבר כסלא — הרב עלמא. והא קא חזינו דעבר! — זיויה הוא דעבר, ומתחזי כדעבר איהו. רב הונא בריה דרב יהושע אמר: וילון הוא דמקער, דמגלגל ומחזי נהורא דרקיע. רב אשי אמר: כוכבא הוא דעקר מהאי גיסא דכסלא וחזי לקה חבריה מהר גיסא, ומיבצית, ומחזי ...

For shooting stars [Zikin]. What means Zikin? Samuel said: Kokeba di-Shebit. Samuel also said: The paths of heaven are as familiar to me as the streets of Nehardea, with the exception of the Kokeba di-Shebit, for I know not what that is. There is a tradition that it never passes through the constellation of Orion, for if it did the world would be destroyed. But we see that it does pass through! It is its brightness that passes through, and so it seems as though it ...

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KEHOT'S NOTE

ברכות נח, ב.

PARAGRAPH 11

30

התנני הגדול

Ezekiel addresses Pharaoh as "the great serpent that lies in the midst of his rivers, who has said, 'My river is mine.'" The Alter Rebbe identifies this serpent as the source of Egypt's kelipos, and the serpent of the first wonder with it.

Ezekiel 29:3א"ל: יחזקאל

דבר ואמרתי כה אמר אדני ה' הנני עליך פרעה מלך מצרים התנני הגדול הרבץ בתוך יארי אשר אמר לי יארי ואני עשיתני:

speak, and say: Thus saith the L-rd GOD: Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh King of Egypt, The great dragon that lieth In the midst of his rivers, That hath said: My river is mine own, And I have made it for myself.

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KEHOT'S NOTE

יחזקאל כט, ג.

31 רגלי יורדות כו'

"Her feet go down to death." The Alter Rebbe applies it to holiness, whose lowest extension goes down to give life even to the source of the kelipos.

משלי ה':ה"ה: Proverbs 5:5

רגליה ירדות מות שאול צעדיה יתמכו:

Her feet go down to death; Her steps take hold on the nether-world;

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KEHOT'S NOTE

משלי ה, ה.

32 והיו כלא היו

Obadiah's prophecy ends, "and they shall be as though they had never been." The Alter Rebbe borrows the phrase for the kelipos, which vanish when G-d wills.

עובדיה א':ט"ז: Obadiah 1:16

כי כאשר שתיתם על-הר קדשי ישותו כלהגוים תמיד ושתו ולעו והיו כלוא היו:

For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, So shall all the nations drink continually, Yea, they shall drink, and swallow down, And shall be as though they had not been.

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33 ומלכותו בכל משלה

Kehot's note points to Psalms 104:19 for these words.

תהילים ק"ד:י"ט: Psalms 104:19

KEHOT'S NOTE

תהילים קד, יט.

34 ומלכותו בכל משלה

"G-d established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all": G-d's rule, and so His life-force, reaches everything, the kelipos included. The Kehot note prints Psalms 104:19, but the words are in Psalms 103:19.

תהילים ק"ג:י"ט: Psalms 103:19

ה' בשמים הכין כסאו ומלכותו בכל משלה:

The L-RD hath established His throne in the heavens; And His kingdom ruleth over all.

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35 אל מסתתר

"Truly You are a G-d Who hides Himself, the G-d of Israel, the Savior." The Alter Rebbe uses the phrase for G-d hidden within the life-force that sustains the kelipos.

ישעיהו מ"ה:ט"ו: Isaiah 45:15

אכן אתה אל מסתתר אלקי ישראל מושיע:

Verily Thou art a G-d that hidest Thyself, O G-d of Israel, the Saviour.

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36 ויבלע מטה אהרן את מטתם

Aharon's staff swallowed the staffs of Pharaoh's magicians. The Alter Rebbe reads it as the serpent returning to

nullification before holiness, the elevation of the sparks.

שמות ז':י"ב: Exodus 7:12

וישליכו איש מטהו ויהיו לתנינם ויבלע מטה-אהרן את-מטתם:

For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents; but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

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37 וידעו מצרים כי אני ה'

"And Egypt shall know that I am G-d." The maamar closes where its explanation of the plagues began: the wonders broke Egypt's kelipos so that the sparks would know G-d.

שמות ז':ה"ה: Exodus 7:5

וידעו מצרים כי-אני ה' בנטתי את-ידי על-מצרים והוצאתי את-בני ישראל מתוכם:

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the L-RD, when I stretch forth My hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.'

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

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DEDICATED IN HONOR OF

מוקדש לכבוד הגאון המקובל רבי לוי יצחק שניאורסאהן זצ"ל

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