

Jewish practice entails fulfilling many laws. Our diet is limited, our days to work are defined, and every aspect of life has governing directives. Is observance of all the laws easy? Is a perfectly righteous life close to our heart and near to our limbs? A righteous life seems to be an impossible goal! However, in the Torah, our great teacher Moshe, Moses, declared that perfect fulfillment of all religious law is very near and easy for each of us. Every word of the Torah rings true in every generation. Lesson one explores how the Tanya resolved these questions. It will shine a light on the infinite strength that is latent in each Jewish soul. When that unending holy desire emerges, observance becomes easy.

Lesson One: The Infinite Strength of the Jewish Soul

The title page of the Tanya states:

A Collection of Teachings

PART ONE

Titled

The Book of the Beinonim

Compiled from sacred books and Heavenly teachers, whose souls are in paradise; based upon the verse, "For this matter is very near to you, it is in your mouth and heart to fulfill it;" and explaining clearly how, in both a long and short way, it is exceedingly near, with the aid of the Holy One, blessed be He.

ספר

לקוטי אמרים

חלק ראשון

הנקרא בשם

ספר של בינונים

מלוקט מפי ספרים ומפי סופרים קדושי עליון נ"ע

מיוסד על פסוק כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפ"ך

ובלבבך לעשותו

לבאר היטב איך הוא קרוב מאד בדרך ארוכה וקצרה

בעזה"י

From the outset of his work therefore Rav Shneur Zalman made plain that the Tanya is a guide for those he called “*beinonim*.” *Beinonim*, derived from the Hebrew *bein*, which means “between,” are individuals who are in the middle, neither paragons of virtue, *tzadikim*, nor sinners, *rishoim*. *Beinonim* are a unique type, deserving of their own book, which is the Tanya. *Tzadikim* have a different book that includes other lessons and counsel.¹

A person with the status of *beinoni* was created with limited abilities. He can’t become a *tzadik*, but this in no way diminishes his value. In fact, he is no less important in Heaven than a *tzadik*, as he fulfills the will of Hashem, and gives as much pleasure to Hashem as a *tzadik*.

Hashem loves human effort and toil, and many individuals who reach the *tzadik* level no longer strain to achieve holy behavior. A *beinoni* must always exert effort. The special struggle of the *beinoni* makes him more treasured than many *tzadikim*, who always are perfect, as it gives the Almighty pleasure to see effort exerted on His behalf. Therefore, if you are a *beinoni*, as all of us can be, realize that you have a special role in the kingdom of Heaven, embrace it, and learn the Tanya to glean insights how to improve your service of God, Avodas Hashem.

Ways to reach Hashem

The title page of the Tanya states that it is based on the verse “*Ki karov elecha hadavar mi’od bificha ubilvavcha la’asoso*,” (*Devarim* 30:14) “For the matter of serving Hashem is very close to you, it is in your mouth and heart to fulfill it,” and on sacred teachings that explain in a “long and short way” how service of Hashem is truly very close to us. One might think that it is very difficult, almost an unattainable feat, to fulfill all the commandments of the Torah. The Tanya

¹ Chassidim teach that the holy work *Noam Elimelech* is the guide book for *tzadikim*.

will show us that this is not the case; it is rather very close to us, and very attainable. Through the Tanya's concepts we will be able to see that complete service of Hashem is very accessible to us.

The Tanya details a long way of arriving at the proper service of Hashem, but also a shorter path as well. Its form is to begin with many questions and then, beginning with the second chapter and then throughout the rest of the book, provide answers. In its first chapter the Tanya reads:

We learnt in a baraisa (a Rabbinic text from the second century that was not included in the Mishna, the corpus of traditional Rabbinic legal writings of that era) at the end of the third chapter of tractate Niddah (the last tractate in the Babylonian Talmud) that when the soul comes into the world it is led to recite an oath to "Be a tzadik, and not a rasha." Then it accepts a second oath, "And even if the whole world tells you that you are tzadik, you are to view yourself as a rasha, an evil doer."

The lesson here is that you must not be at all fazed by the "world." A Jew must have the strength to ignore what society says, and know that sometimes one must stand against the entire world.²

Even if the entire world tells you they consider you to be a *tzadik*, in your eyes feel that you are a *rasha*.

² Our sages teach that Abraham was called Avraham Ha'Ivri because he had the courage of convictions in that he was willing to stand alone against the pagan thinking of the entire world. One of the great works of twentieth century Chassidic thought is *Shem Mishmuel*, an eight volume collection of lessons composed by Rav Shmuel Bornstein, (1855-1926) the great Rebbe of Sochatshov. *Shem Mishmuel* is unique for his masterful combination of intellectual rigor, emotional impact, and Chassidic breadth. With Hashem's help, his insights will appear frequently in these notes throughout this book.

Rav Bornstein teaches that the first step in holy achievement is *Azus Dkdusha*, holy brazenness. Holy achievements begin when one stridently progresses towards Hashem with a sense of confidence bordering on arrogance! He taught that every city in the land of Israel had a special quality to its atmosphere and would encourage a different holy character trait. The city *Shechem*, Nablus, led to a feeling of confidence and holy brazenness. When we first entered Israel we had to first travel to *Shechem* as Avraham did when he first entered Israel, for at the initiation of a Mitzvah campaign, there is nothing better than confidence and strength so as not to be swayed by the naysayers and cynics! (See *Shem Mishmuel*, *parshas Vayishlach* pages 12-13.) In his comments to *Parshas Bamidbar* (page 5) he points out that Jews are counted before a war, for before a battle each Jew must feel *Azus Dkdusha*, for only with great confidence will we be victorious. A warrior cannot hesitate, be fearful, or meek! Yet when the Jews were not about to face a war, a census was forbidden, for when not engaged in struggle too much confidence and self assuredness leads to arrogance and sin.

this must be understood, as it seems to contradict a mishna in Avos chapter two which says, "Do not view yourself as a rasha."

וצריך להבין דהא תנן [אבות פ"ב] ואל תהי רשע בפני עצמך

The Tanya further explains that logic would negate the *baraisa* we just learned from *Niddah* that one should view himself as a *rasha*.

If a person is a rasha in his own eyes, he will be depressed, and unable to serve Hashem with joy.

וגם אם יהיה בעיניו כרשע ירע לבבו ויהיה עצב ולא יוכל לעבוד השם בשמחה ובטוב לבב

It does not seem reasonable that one should always adopt a worldview that will inhibit mitzvah observance.

ואם לא ירע לבבו כלל מזה יכול לבוא לידי
"קלות ח"

And if considering himself a rasha does not bring him down, he might fall into a state of apathy, and make light of service of Hashem, Heaven forbid.

Instead of viewing himself as a *rasha*, an evil doer, one must always find good “points” about himself,³ and serve Hashem with *simcha*, profound joy. So how are we then to understand the *baraisa* in *Niddah* that one should always consider himself as if he is a *rasha*?

There are five levels: tzadik vitov lo, a righteous man who has good, tzadik vira lo, a righteous man who has bad, rasha vitov lo, a sinner who has good, rasha vira lo, a sinner who has bad, and beinoni, the middle one.

The simple meaning of the term “*vitov lo*” is someone who has a good and pleasant life in this world, and “*vira lo*” is someone who has a difficult life in this world. The Tanya will not use the simple explanation; rather he will follow the explanation of the Zohar *Hakadosh*.

The Talmud explains that a tzadik vitov lo is a tzadik gamor, a completely upright person. A tzadik vira lo is a tzadik sheaino gamor, a righteous man with flaws. In the Ra'aya Me'hemna in parshas Mishpatim, it is explained that a tzadik vira lo is a tzadik who has evil, but it is his possession, for it is bent to his goodness.

אך ביאור הענין כי הנה מצינו בגמרא ה' חלוקות. צדיק
וטוב לו צדיק ורע לו רשע וטוב לו רשע ורע לו ובינוני.
ופירשו בגמרא צדיק וטוב לו צדיק גמור צדיק ורע לו צדיק
שאינו גמור וברעיא מהימנא פ' משפטים פ' צדיק ורע לו
שהרע שבו כפוף לטוב וכו

He has a *yetzer hara*, an evil urge,

however his urge for holiness is stronger and more powerful. His evil inclination is overruled by his desires for holiness. In later lessons we will discover that, in truth, these two explanations work together; a *tzadik* who has a *yetzer hara* “has it bad” in this world and vice versa.

³ Rav Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810) was a great *Tzadik* whose Torah thought was presented in poetic and emotionally impacting imagery. See his Likutey Moharan lesson 282. Rav Nachman teaches that one must see the good in others. Through judging others favorably one spiritually elevates them and helps them return to Hashem. One must also see the good in himself, for one must always be in an emotional state of *simcha*, true joy, and through discovering the good in oneself, one elevates oneself, and one can defeat depression and maintain true joy.

The Way to the Tree of Life

ובגמרא ספ"ט דברכות צדיקים יצ"ט שופטן כו' רשעים יצה"ר שופטן בינונים זה וזה שופטן וכו' אמר רבה כגון אנא בינוני

The Talmud in the end of the 9th chapter of Brachos says as follows: Tzadikim are judged, or told what to do, by the yetzer tov; reshaim, evil doers, are judged by the yetzer hara; beinonim are judged by both the yetzer tov and the yetzer hara. Rabba said "I, for example, am a beinoni," The yetzer tov and the yetzer hara express their "opinions" equally within me.

א"ל אביי לא שביק מר חיי לכל בריה וכו'

Abaye (Rabba's student) responded that Rabba "has left no life for any living creature." If

Rabba, such a great and holy man, is a beinoni, then what is everyone else?!

ולהבין כל זה באר היטב

We must understand all of this with a complete explanation.

First of all, the Tanya wonders, how could *Rabba* say that he is a *beinoni*? He seems to be violating the *baraisa* in *Niddah* that says that one must view himself as a *rasha*! The Tanya will ask other questions also.

וגם להבין מה שאמר איוב [ב"ב פ"א] רבש"ע בראת צדיקי' בראת רשעי' כו' והא צדיק ורשע לא קאמר. וגם להבין מהות מדרגת הבינוני שבודאי אינו מחצה זכיות ומחצה עונות שא"כ איך טעה רבה בעצמו לומר שהוא בינוני ונודע דלא פסיק פומיה מגירסא עד שאפי' מלאך המות לא היה יכול לשלוט בו ואיך היה יכול לטעות במחצה עונות ח"ו

We must understand a statement of Iyov (recorded in the Talmud in Bava Basra), "Master of the world, You created tzadikim and You created reshaim," that seems to imply that there is no free

will and rather that Hashem predetermines who will be a tzadik and who will be a rasha. However, we know that the Talmud says just the opposite – that Hashem does not preordain who shall be a tzadik and who a rasha!? We also must understand the essential spiritual level of the beinoni, as it certainly is not one who has half mitzvos, righteous deeds and half aveiros, sins. If such an assumption were true, how could Rabba possibly mistake himself for a beinoni? We know that he never stopped learning Torah, to the extent that the Angel of Death could not take him – so how could he possibly think that he had done as many aveiros as mitzvos, Heaven forbid it!

One cannot suggest that Rabba was being modest. Many people are under the false impression that humility means fooling oneself into believing that “I am no good,” even though, in truth, one is a *tzadik*. This is a mistake. Our Torah is a *Toras Emes*, a truthful guide, and the seal of Hashem is truth. Every aspect of serving Hashem must be with *emes*, truth. The Master of the world created man with a natural attraction to truth because it is a good thing, the right thing. Humility does not demand that we deceive ourselves or others.⁴ Proper humility is completely truthful. So, when Rabba said that he is a *beinoni*, he felt that he truthfully fell into that category. We therefore must realize that the definition of the *beinoni* is something other than a person who has half *mitzvos* and half *aveiros*, for indeed Rabba knew that he had a great majority of *mitzvos*.

ועוד שהרי בשעה שעושה עונות נקרא רשע גמור [ואם אה"כ עשה תשובה נקרא צדיק גמור] ואפילו העובר על איסור קל של דברי סופרים מקרי רשע כדאיתא בפ"ב דיבמות ובפ"ק דנדה ואפילו מי שיש בידו למחות ולא מיחה נק' רשע [בפ"ו דשבועות] וכ"ש וק"ו במבטל איזו מ"ע שאפש' לו לקיימה כמו כל שאפשר לו לעסוק בתורה ואינו עוסק שעליו דרשו רז"ל כי דבר ה' בזה וגו' הכרת תכרת וגו' ופשיטא דמקרי רשע טפי מעובר איסור דרבנן וא"כ ע"כ הבינוני אין בו אפי' עון ביטול תורה ומש"ה טעה רבה בעצמו לומר שהוא בינוני

⁴ In his classes to *Messilas Yesharim*, Path of the Just, the classic work of ethical improvement authored by the eighteenth century sage Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato, our Rebbe explained that while one should recognize his spiritual achievements, he still should feel humble due to the fact that he may not be realizing all his spiritual potential, and that relative to the Almighty, even the most successful person is absolutely infinitesimal and meaningless.

Further one who violates any aveira, even a seemingly “light” Rabbinic prohibition, or refrains from fulfilling any mitzvah which he has the opportunity to fulfill, even one who does not study Torah at a time that he is able, is called a total rasha. And when he does teshuva, repentance, he is called a tzadik gamur, a complete tzadik. If so, certainly a beinoni is one who does no aveiros, he does not even waste a moment of time which he could use to learn Torah. This explains how Rabba could mistakenly believe that he was a beinoni.

Yet our initial question remains: What is a *beinoni*? If one who violates a law is called a *rasha*, an evil doer, and then when he does *teshuva* he is called a *tzadik*, where does the *beinoni* fit in? Also, if he commits no *aveiros*, sins, why is he not a *tzadik*?

והא דאמר' בעלמא דמחצ' על מחצה מקרי בינוני ורוב זכויות מקרי צדיק הוא שם המושאל לענין שכר ועונש לפי שנדון אחר רובו ומקרי צדיק בדינו מאחר שזוכה בדין אבל לענין אמיתת שם התואר והמעלה של מעלת ומדרגות חלוקות צדיקים ובינונים ארז"ל צדיקים יצ"ט שופטן שנא' ולבי חלל בקרבי שאין לו יצה"ר כי הרגו בתענית אבל כל מי שלא הגיע למדרגה זו אף שזכויותיו מרובים על עונותיו אינו במעלת ומדרגת צדיק כלל ולכן ארז"ל במדרש ראה הקב"ה בצדיקים שהם מועטים עמד ושתלן בכל דור ודור וכו' וכמ"ש וצדיק יסוד עולם

The Talmud in Tractate Rosh Hashana, which says that one who has half mitzvos and half aveiros is called a beinoni, and that one who has a majority of mitzvos is called a tzadik, does not contradict this lesson. That Talmudic lesson is using those words as borrowed terms in relation to a person's judgment in the heavenly court, but not as a true description of his spiritual level. The true tzadik is called by our sages a person whose heart has been emptied and he has no evil urge for he has destroyed it. One who has not reached this level is not yet a tzadik. This is why our sages taught in the Midrash, ⁵“The Almighty saw that there were few tzadikim and that is why he implanted a few in each generation... As the verse taught, the tzadik is the pillar of the universe.”

⁵ Midrash refers to the body of literature that contains Rabbinic homiletic and legal expositions on Biblical verse from a century before the common era to the tenth century. Many of the Midrashim contain lessons from the great Sages whose legal lessons appear in the Mishna and Talmud. Virtually all later Biblical exegesis draws on insights found in Midrash.

The *tzadik* has no urge for evil at all. A *tzadik gamur* is someone who completely nullifies the evil within him and changes it to the side of holiness so that it advocates holy behaviors. A *tzadik she'aino gamur* is one who still has a small residue of attraction to evil, although he has transformed his *yetzer hara*, evil inclination, almost completely. Both of these individuals never sin at all. A sinner has another name, a *rasha* (at least until he does *teshuva*). A *tzadik she'aino gamur* is not fully perfect, while he has continued attraction to evil deeds he always succeeds in refraining from performing evil.

The *Beinoni*

Still the question persists: what is a *beinoni*? The Tanya will explain that there are souls that Hashem created who will never alter their *yetzer hara* into good. They do not have the capacity to become angelic mortals. Their purpose instead is to serve Hashem their entire lives by fighting a constant battle with the *yetzer hara*. No matter how much the *beinoni* fights, his *yetzer hara* will not be conquered. In fact, his *yetzer hara* is strengthened from all the physical acts in which the *beinoni* must involve himself, such as eating, drinking, and similar physical activities that if overindulged lead to sin.

Encouragingly though, the Tanya mentions that the routine of consistently battling the *yetzer hara* day after day creates a sort of second nature within the *beinoni* that makes the struggle easier. Nonetheless, the *yetzer hara* remains strong within him for his entire life in this

world.⁶ But as we saw earlier, the *beinoni* gives as much *nachas ruach*, pleasure, to Hashem as a *tzadik*. He fulfills the will of Hashem as completely as a *tzadik*, and he has no reason to be envious of the *tzadik*. (Note that in our everyday parlance and experience, we may call such a person a *tzadik*. To our sages, however, he fits into the separate category of a *beinoni*.)

Elevated consciousness

An interesting phenomenon occurs when the *beinoni* is in a state of *gadlus hamochin*, elevated consciousness, which he may reach for example when enjoying Shabbes, when he prays, or while he is learning Torah. During these moments, a *beinoni* experiences life as a *tzadik*. He might reach then an elevated spiritual state where the evil urge temporarily abandons him. A *beinoni* cannot stay in a state of *gadlus hamochin* for it is not his true level. When he exits this elevated state his *yetzer hara* returns, but not before he gains several invaluable moments of solace without the incessant harassment of lowly urges.

The entire Tanya is devoted to supplying the *beinoni* with *aitzos*, practical advice, on how to constantly battle and defeat the *yetzer hara*. His advice charts a path so that even the *beinoni* will find that he is “*karov me’od*,” very close to conquering the *yetzer hara* and serving Hashem.

The Tanya will answer its earlier questions with these concepts in mind. With respect to the *baraisa* in *Nidda* that we previously learned that taught to be in your eyes as a *rasha*, the Talmud is telling us that even a person who serves Hashem constantly, and is considered by everyone to be a *tzadik*, and in truth does no *aveiros*, must always be wary that his *yetzer hara* is

⁶ Every rule has exceptions, at special times some *beinonim* merit to reach the level of *tzadik*. For example, a *beinoni* can merit receiving a soul of a *tzadik* from previous generations. This soul will enter him as a reward for his toil and lift him to the heights of a *tzadik's* experience. In general, however, throughout his life, a *beinoni* will find himself in a state of constant battle with his animal instincts in order to serve Hashem.

still there, as strong as ever. He must view his *yetzer hara* as the evil inclination of a *rasha*. A person may achieve extended moments of solace when he does not feel his instincts for animal pleasure only because he is constantly learning and praying and thereby pushing the *yetzer hara* away. His *yetzer hara*, nevertheless, may remain, as strong as ever.

Through this we can now also understand the puzzling *Talmud* about Rabba that we learned earlier in which he defined himself as a *beinoni*. Rabba was always involved in learning Torah, as the *Talmud* said, *lo pasak pumei migirsa*, his mouth never stopped reviewing Torah laws. He was in a constant state of *gadlus hamochin*. This, he thought, was why he didn't feel his *yetzer hara*. Yet he believed that his *yetzer hara* remained, and if he were to stop learning for one moment he would experience the *yetzer hara* in its full strength.

Abaye disagreed, because he felt that a man such as Rabba was certainly a *tzadik gamur*, and that even if Rabba were to stop learning and descend from his state of *gadlus hamochin*, he still would not have a *yetzer hara*.

This understanding of the *beinoni* and the *tzadik* also explains what *Iyov* meant when he said to Hashem, "You created *tzadikim* and You created *reshoim*." *Iyov's* claim to Hashem was that He created people who will never be able to become *tzadikim* because they will always have a *yetzer hara* as strong as that of a *rasha*. Hashem had therefore determined an individual's fate and Man should not be held to account for his deeds. After all, Hashem gave some a more difficult nature than others.

But this is obviously not a valid claim. Yes, each of us has different natures and abilities, but each of us can fulfill the unique mission these natures and abilities grant us! Hashem created *beinonim* with a specific purpose in this world, this purpose is no less worthy than the purpose of

the *tzadikim*, and there are specific *eitzos*, suggestions, which the *beinoni* can use to help fulfill his purpose. The Tanya's objective is to supply the *eitzos* to help the *beinoni* elevate himself.

Each of us is willing to die for Hashem!

The general, overall principle for the suggestions the Tanya proposes is the concept of “the hidden love.” The Tanya establishes a fundamental truth: every single Jew has a hidden love for Hashem, a natural attraction that pulls him towards Hashem. This concept is the basis of the dictum “*yisrael af al pi shecha'ta, yisrael hu,*” no matter how much a Jew sins, he is still a Jew. (Sanhedrin 44a)

This law seems to be difficult to understand. If a Jew behaves like a gentile or even worse, why should he still be considered a Jew? When he does *teshuva* and returns to observance, why shouldn't he require complete conversion? The answer is that he does not have complete control over himself. There is a certain part of his being that he has inherited from his forefathers. This element is called Yisrael and he can never lose it.

With this concept we can also understand another difficult topic. When we pray we say “*Elokei Avraham,*” as if to say, “Hashem, listen to our request in the merit of our father Avraham.” If we don't behave at all like Avraham *avinu*, our father, then what type of claim are we making to Hashem? Avraham was a *tzadik*. What does he have to do with this descendent of his, who is not a *tzadik*? But when we say *elokei Avraham* we are not claiming to be a *tzadik* like Avraham. Rather, we are referring to that spark of Avraham that we each have inside ourselves.

On a deeper level, when we speak of our father Avraham we appreciate his impact. Avraham was a fundamental, all encompassing soul, and included in himself a trace of

every Jewish soul that would ever enter the world. Therefore, when Avraham proved his faith in Hashem through the test of the binding of his son Yitzchok every Jewish soul passed that test and showed its complete faith in Hashem. Fundamentally, we all already have proven ourselves as loyal and completely devoted servants of Hashem. The task of all the souls after the patriarchs is simply to reveal our inner core.

Our inner love is not a matter of *mazel*, luck. It is not that we just happen to be lucky to have been born as Jews and the poor, unfortunate gentiles are simply “unlucky” to have not been. That would be a complete contradiction to the concept of free will, upon which Creation is based! The fundamental concept of free will implies that Hashem wants us to earn our rewards and not simply take them in a shameful way. If He had wished otherwise then He would have placed us all into paradise without having to first spiritually thrive in the physical world. The created, physical world is the means through which everything must be earned.

So it is with the hidden love as well. We should not think for a moment that one’s innermost nature is not earned and is instead a Divine gift! Truthfully, we did earn our hidden love. It was a product of choice. The choice of Avraham! For we were in him! We withstood all the tests of Avraham *avinu*, since our *neshamos*, souls, were part of his. The “souls” of those who do not have a hidden love, on the other hand, were a part of some other ancient figure. Perhaps they were in *Nimrod*⁷ or some other personality from those generations.

From this we see that the innermost core of the gentile differs from the innermost core of Yisrael, Jews. The gentiles’ ancient root was a contemporary of Avraham, while only *yisrael*

⁷ Nimrod was a great opponent of Avraham. He was a descendant of the lowliest son of Noah (*Baereishis*, 10:6-10). He fooled people and enslaved his subjects. He reveled in the use of violence and would use others for his own self aggrandizement (see the commentary of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch to the earlier cited verses). When Avraham discovered the truth of Hashem, Nimrod had him thrown into a blazing furnace to try and burn him alive.

were part of him. (The contemporary human core is deeply impacted by the deeds of all the people from those earliest generations because they had tremendous “root souls” that included within them many souls of all the later generations.⁸)

Because of the choice of Avraham, every Jew has a hidden love for Hashem. He has no choice about this inner urge and it can never be fully extinguished. This aspect of his *neshama* has a tremendous thirst and longing to be attached to Hashem. He might not even be aware of this great love that he has for Hashem because it is covered up, but it exists. Deep in a Jew’s heart he has a great thirst, a yearning to connect with Hashem! He loves Hashem just as the fathers of our nation, giants like Avraham, loved Him!

Our sages tell us that every Jew must ask himself, “*masai yagiu ma’asai lima’asei avosai Avraham, Yitzchok, ViYaakov?*” “When will my deeds reach those of my forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?” (*Tanna Dbei Eliyahu Rabba* chapter 25) How can we even consider asking of ourselves such lofty levels of spirituality? Are we like the *avos*, fathers, who are called “the chariot of Hashem” because they completely nullified themselves to His will every moment of their lives?⁹ How can we be like them when we are so far removed from any portion of their loftiness?

⁸ The Torah teaches that individuals those earlier generations lived much longer lives than what we are accustomed to today. For example, most of the pre-flood individuals mentioned in *Bereishis*, lived for almost a thousand years, and Avraham *avinu* lived for 175 years. This is because those individuals had root souls that could have a great impact.

⁹ "Our Sages teach (*Midrash Bereishis Rabba* 47 on the verse *Vayaal Elokim mei'al Avraham*, And God arose from atop Abraham), “*HaAvos hen hen hamercava*” the patriarchs were the chariot. See also the comments of the Maharal in his *Gur Aryeh* on *Lech Lecha* (17:26). Maharal explained, “For through them the Divine presence rested on earth. The *Shechinah* was on them. This is why they were the seat of the Divine presence and its chariot.” There are deep matters here. The little we can grasp is that the patriarchs merited to fully connect their minds, hearts, and existence to God with no barrier at all! Their existence was handed over to Him! They did not leave any independent will to themselves! All their thoughts and actions were displays of service to Hashem! In all their statements and movements, even in seemingly prosaic matters, the holiness of the Divine and His *Shechina* were revealed! It was so pronounced that He linked His name with theirs as we say, “*Elokai Avraham, Elokai Yitzchak, V'Elokei Yaakov*, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob.” (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu* volume 2 page 160).

The answer lies in the fact that each of us has, in the root of his soul, a small part of the souls of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, the three forefathers of the Jewish nation. When a Jew is able to connect with that root in his *neshama*, his hidden love for Hashem is revealed, and he may attain the spiritual level of touching the patriarchs, *yagiu ma'asai lima'asei avosai*.¹⁰

Why Jews In Moments Of Truth Might Bond With Hashem

The Tanya explains that we sometimes find a Jew who is very far from Hashem. He never really thinks about Hashem, and may even transgress most commandments. And yet, when faced with a choice of surrendering his life or worshipping idols, this same Jew will give up his life rather than bow to *avodah zarah*, paganism. We have seen this many times in our history, even during the Holocaust. When people on a very low level of religious observance – they might have only barely been aware of the fact that they were even Jewish – were confronted with the choice of either dying or doing something that was blatantly against Hashem, they chose to give up their lives.

*Rav Shimon Huberband*¹¹ (*Hashem yikom damo, May God avenge his murder*) recorded the following stories¹²:

“Between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in the year 5700 (September 1939) a car filled with German officers approached the shul, synagogue, in Piotrkow, Poland. The officers removed all

¹⁰ *Shem Mishmuel* (see note 1) points out that the language of the mandate is that we must touch the level of our forefathers. We must slightly resemble them. We reach this point whenever we push ourselves beyond the normal limits of service.

¹¹ He was a young prodigy who, despite his martyr's death at Treblinka in 1942, helped Emmanuel Ringelblum (May God avenge his murder) create an archive of historic record during the Holocaust. Rav Huberband was a Torah scholar who was sensitive to the uniquely religious lessons in the stories he recorded. His writings were discovered after the war and published in 1969 under the title, *Kiddush Hashem*, Sanctification of the Name.

¹² Selections are taken from the book *Kiddush Hashem* as quoted in the journal *Oraysa* Volume 21, Pages 109-11

the Torah scrolls, more than thirty, from the synagogue and placed them in the yard in front of the sanctuary. The yard was surrounded with a wooden fence. Two sides of the fence delineated the streets Pilsudski and Yrzulymyske and the other two walls of the yard were homes and buildings that belonged to Jews. Along the fence on the Pilsudski street side there was a small door. The Nazis stationed an armed guard there to ensure that Jews not enter the yard and grab their Torah scrolls back.

“Day after day passed and finally the holiday of Sukkos ¹³arrived. It started to rain, and The Torah scrolls remained exposed to the elements. They were sinking in the mud of the yard and getting ruined from the filth and water. Jews who walked by the yard and saw the desecration of Torah, the terrible Chillul Hashem, desecration of God’s name, felt their hearts pound with rage and their eyes mist with tears. They clenched their fists in their pockets but did nothing.

“This desecration of the sacred deeply affected Avraham Weisshoff. He had served for many years as a member of the town leadership and was one of the pillars of the Bund (a socialist Jewish political organization in Poland which campaigned relentlessly against religious Orthodoxy and Zionism) in Piotrkow. One day Mr. Weisshoff organized friends from the Bund and while the guard stood at the doorway on Pilsudski street they entered the yard through the home of a Jew on the other side. Virtually under the nose of the guard they quickly gathered all the Torah scrolls and escaped the way they entered. When the guard later entered the yard he could not find a single scroll.”

Rav Huberband related the following event as well.

“Dr. Gonshar was deputy Governor of the Kozhnitz region and a veterinarian. He would speak about Jews with disdain and scorn. The leaders of the community would avoid meeting with this ‘anti-Semite’ for any need and would always seek to meet with the Governor himself. There were rumors though that he was an apostate and that his wife was Jewish. His facial appearance strengthened the suspicions yet no one had the brazenness to determine the truth.

¹³ The festival during the Jewish month of Tishrei that is characterized as *zman simchaseinu*, the time of our joy.

“On the day after Yom Kippur of 5700 (Sunday, September 24, 1939) the Germans arrived in Kozhnitz and began to kidnap Jews for forced labor. Dr. Gonshar was walking down the street when two of them approached him and asked, ‘Are you a Jew?’

“Dr. Gonshar did not hesitate for a moment and responded with pride, ‘I am a Jew!’ The Germans seized him and took him with the ‘other Jews’ to the Gestapo.

“They brought a Torah scroll, put it before Dr. Gonshar, and ordered him, ‘Tear it and burn it!’

“His face turned white as plaster and he said with pride, ‘No! I would never do such a crime!’

“They immediately began to hit him with murderous blows and torture him terribly until it seemed that he was dead from the pain. In fact he survived.

“After that event he told his wife he could not stay anymore in Kozhnitz for he was ashamed. He decided to travel to Zelichov.

“As he was traveling he was stopped by the guard at a bridge and was told he would only be allowed to cross the bridge if he would say ten times: ‘I am a Jew – a pig.’

“He said, ‘I am a Jew, not a pig.’

“They beat him, they made him bleed, and eventually they allowed him to cross. He arrived at Zelichov and he poisoned himself. He lived for a bit after that. They transferred him to the hospital in Kozhnitz. The Jews of the city tried their best to save him from death but they were unsuccessful. He breathed his last in the hospital.

“Before he died he asked that they say Viduy, the confessional prayer, with him and bury him in a Jewish grave. The Jews of Kozhnitz fulfilled his request. He was buried in the cemetery near the tomb of the Maggid of Kozhnitz...”

“It is possible that psychologists and those who study the Jewish character will someday be interested in this historic story. For us it is no longer relevant whether Dr. Gonshar lived his life as a Jew should, for us it is important to record the main thing, the wicked ones tortured Dr. Gonshar and he gave up life and comfort like the holiest of the holy... After his passing, his wife also returned to her nation and roots...”

Recent history also provides many examples of this truth. In 1973, in the midst of the Yom Kippur War, a group of Jewish Israeli soldiers were taken into captivity by the Egyptians. While in jail in Egypt they were tortured terribly. The sadistic Egyptians would beat them into pulps of blood and bone almost constantly. They were interred in solitary confinement and told that any communication with other Jewish prisoners would cause severe punishment. One day while in his cell, Rav Hillel Unsdorfer, Of Blessed Memory, was whispering words of tefilla, prayer, when he heard a scratch on his wall.

“ ‘Hillel do you hear me?’

“He did not want to respond. He still remembered the torture of the morning. He did not want to risk his life.

“After more knocks and further fevered whispers of his name, Hillel took the risk and whispered, ‘Who is it?’

“ ‘Chipopo.’

“Chipopo had been a soldier together with Hillel along the Suez Canal. He was a light-headed individual who always had a joke ready and rarely took anything seriously. Now, Chipipo asked, ‘What are you doing all day?’

“ ‘I am praying.’

“ ‘Praying all day???’

“ ‘Yes.’

“ ‘Hillel, can you pray aloud? That way I will be able to pray with you.’

“ ‘I can’t. The Egyptians will beat us. I can’t take the risk.’

“ ‘Please Hillel, please, I want to pray to Hashem.’

“Hillel started to recite Shma Yisrael aloud, and Chipipo repeated it after him. The guards burst in and started to beat the two of them with metal sticks. They only left once Hillel and Chipipo had collapsed in pools of pain and blood.

“Then again Hillel heard a soft voice.

“ ‘Hillel, it was worth it...’

“ ‘I was hit.’

“ ‘I was also hit but it was worth it...’

“Hillel realized then the nature of the soul of a simple Jew. Prayer gives to the Jewish soul so much joy that even the pain of torture is not equal to the pleasure inherent in the gift of prayer.”¹⁴

How are these realities comprehensible? On the one hand, when many Jews are faced with a much easier test where they must forgo some physical pleasure, such as a piece of non-kosher food, failure is often the outcome. On the other hand, when it is a test where they must give up their lives, a pain that is much greater than that of abstaining from any physical desire, they are willing to do so immediately, with no need for preparation. What is the explanation for this glaring contradiction?

As the Tanya explains, the Jew always wants to be attached to Hashem, even while he is doing terrible *aveiros*. He does not want to sever his connection to Hashem even as he ignores His commands. When a Jew violates a Divine command it is due to a temporary spirit of insanity! The *yetzer hara* fills man with a *ruach shtus*, spirit of insanity, and convinces him that he could do an *aveira* and still remain connected to Hashem.

The Tanya explains that every sin is rooted in *avodah zarah*, paganism, and that a person who sins is serving his *yetzer hara* instead of Hashem, but the *ruach shtus* fools him and blinds the sinner to this reality. When he is faced, however, with a test involving literal *avodah zara*, where he is asked to blatantly defy Hashem and literally tear himself away by bowing to a false god, then there is no way for the *ruach shtus* to fool him! He realizes that he is about to disconnect from Hashem, his inner voice rises up in protest, and he willingly sacrifices himself

¹⁴ This account was taken from page 65 of *Liroi Vliro'it, To shoot and to see*, a collection of testimonies of Israeli soldiers and spies about times they witnessed the hand of the Almighty while standing in harm's way trying to save Jewish lives. It was published by the Chassidim of *Belz* and their organization dedicated to communicating Torah to not yet observant Jewish brethren, *Tzohar*. It was authored by Yosef Sherber.

for the sake of Heaven. Thus a person who banishes the *ruach shtus* will never sin! Such a person would look at every sin as a form of pagan practice, and consequently avoid sin in all its varied forms.

A great treasure of love for Hashem exists deep within our hearts. All that we need do is reveal it! Given these hidden treasures, the Tanya explains, Torah rightfully states “*Ki karov elecha hadavar mi'od.*” “The matter is indeed very close.” The Tanya dedicates itself mostly to providing advice on how to help remove temporary insanity from our lives so as to enable us to reveal the hidden love within each one of us, and thereby help us stay attached to Hashem.

The Two Souls

אך ביאור הענין על פי מ"ש הרח"ו ז"ל בשער הקדושה [ובע"ח שער נ' פ"ב] דלכל איש ישראל אחד צדיק ואחד רשע יש שתי נשמות דכתיב ונשמות אני עשיתי שהן שתי נפשות נפש אחת מצד הקליפה וסטרא אחרא והיא המתלבשת בדם האדם להחיות הגוף וכדכתיב כי נפש הבשר בדם היא

The explanation of the matter is based on what Rav Chaim Vital wrote in Shaar Hakedushah¹⁵ (a work of mussar, inspiring discipline, written by Rav Chaim Vital, Of Blessed Memory,) that each member of the Jewish nation - both the righteous and the wicked - have two souls. As it is written, “And souls I made.” These create two life forces, one life force from the side of the evil husks, the sitra achra, the Other Side, and this piece of the soul clothes itself in the blood of the person to enliven the body, as it is written, “For the soul of the flesh is in the blood.”

The Tanya begins its answer with a citation from *Shaar Hakedusha* in which Rav Vital taught that each Jew was created with two souls: *nefesh bahamis*, an animal spirit, and *nefesh*

¹⁵ See also *Etz Chaim*, gate 50, chapter two

Elokim, a Godly life. One soul advocates a physical, limited, life. The other, calls for a Godly, infinite, life.

Speech And Breath

The physical world and its components were created with Divine speech, for example “*Vayomer Elokim yehi ohr*” “And God **said** let there be light” (*Bereishis* 1:3) and “*Vayomer Elokim naaseh Adam*” “And God **said** let us make man” (*Bereishis* 1:26). There was however one creation that was not commanded to appear, but was rather crafted by Him in a unique manner. This is the soul which appeared when “*Vayipach biapav nishmas chaim*” “Hashem **blew** into man a living soul” (*Bereishis* 2:7). What accounts for this difference? Why was Adam’s soul created with breath?

To answer we must first ask, what is unique about Adam’s soul? Every animal, not just man, has a soul of some kind. In fact, the Kabbalists teach us that even inanimate objects, such as rocks, have a life force. Yet, we only find the language of “*Vayipach biapav nishmas chaim*” about Adam. Why?

Furthermore, why does the Torah continue after saying “*naaseh Adam*,” Let us make Adam, to add the details of “*vayipach biapav nishmas chaim*,” that Hashem blew into him a living soul. What is the Torah adding with this verse?

The answer is as follows: Everything in Creation was created through speech, as the *Mishna* in *Avos* says, “The world was created with ten utterances.” (5:1) (Obviously, when we say that Hashem created the world through speech we must understand that this is only a parable; the “speech” of Hashem is not physical speech like that of man.)

What do we mean by “speech?” The life of a person is his breath. The phrase “*nishmas chaim*,” soul of life, is related to the word *nishima*, which means breath. Our sages teach that when the Torah refers to the death penalty – *misa* – without specifying in which form the sentence is to be executed, it always is referring to *chenek*, strangulation, because strangling is the most direct way of killing, as it takes away the breath. (Other ways of killing are more indirect. Stoning, for example, kills by breaking the body until it cannot hold life. The body becomes a broken vessel and therefore dies. Strangulation, in contrast, is an assault on life itself.)

When a person speaks he expels breath, which hits upon the vocal chords, and the five sections of his mouth divide his breath into letters. Essentially, speech is breath clothed in letters. Through this physical image we are able to draw a comparison and understand creation: Hashem made the world with utterances means that creation is a contraction of His essence. Hashem’s “breath” (G-dly Life), clothed itself in the letters of the ten utterances of creation.

The entire physical world, the realm created by Divine speech, is not unlimited essence of Hashem! Rather it is limited forms of His essence.

Now, we know that we cannot truly speak about the essence of Hashem. Any descriptions that we use regarding Hashem are only referring to the way that Hashem expresses Himself in the world, but His essence is completely beyond any description. For instance, when we say “*Keil Rachum*,” Merciful G-d, we are not describing Hashem’s essence, but rather the way that He interacts with us.

Through all of creation, Hashem never revealed his essence. On the third day, when Hashem said “*Tadshei ha’aretz deshe*” “Let the earth spawn lawns and grass,” (*Bereishis 1:12*)

the grass and all the plant life were created in the physical world. In the higher realms, “*deshe*” “lawns and grass,” had other meanings. According to the Zohar “*deshe*” actually refers to angels, who were created on the third day, along with everything else that is rooted in and manifests the Divine attribute of *Tiferes*, Godly Beauty. However, this is only a revelation of a *middah*, attribute, not “*etzem Elokus*” (Hashem’s essence). Each of the ten statements of creation has many meanings and therefore contained within these ten utterances are all the details of all the worlds, both physical and spiritual.

Man Is Unique

When Hashem said “*na’aseh adam bitzalmeynu kidmuseinu*” “Let us make man in our image and form,” (*Bereishis 1:26*) man was created in the “image of G-d.” On the physical level, that means that man walks with an upright posture, he is very intelligent, and he has the ability to “rule over much of the natural world.” We find these attributes in the gentiles, as well, even though they do not have a G-dly soul.

As noted above, however, Jews have two souls. One of these souls is a G-dly soul. This G-dly soul is not physical and was not created by one of the ten utterances, by which we mean Divine speech, which as explained above is a limitation of His essence. A Jew’s G-dly soul was instead created by pure, Divine breath! The *nefesh Elokis* is unique among all the creations of the world! Relative to other creations, it is like the unlimited relative to the limited! Thus after Hashem says, “Let us make man” - physical man, the Torah tells us - “*Vayipach be’apav nishmas chaim*” “And He **blew** into his nostrils a soul of life.” Hashem blew into man a pure breath, not one limited in letters to endow man with a G-dly soul.

This is because this breath came from “*etzem elokus*” itself. As the Ramban¹⁶ writes, “*mon dinafuch metochyuso umipnimityuso nofach*” “One who blows, exhales from his inside and essence.” Hashem’s essence cannot be limited and clothed in letters, as it says, “No thought can grasp it at all.” The *nishmas chaim*, soul of life, which is a “piece of Hashem’s Essence,” is the G-dly soul of the Jew! (The verse that begins “*vayipach*” refers to the Jew. As our sages tell us, the word “*adam*” refers specifically to Jews.)

When a *neshama* is *davuk* to Hashem (clings to Hashem), this *dveykus*, attachment, is beyond any understanding or explanation because the *neshama* itself is beyond explanation. There is no way to describe this *dveykus* because it is a natural light that shines into the neshama. It is not comparable to any emotion.

One might think that *dveykus*, or *ahavas Hashem*, love of G-d, is comparable to the love and awe that an individual experiences when he comes in contact with a very great person. When this great, noble person expresses his love towards a simple man, that simple man feels a tremendous feeling of love back toward the greater man. (The Tanya, in chapter 46, actually does use a similar parable, but this is merely a tool to help the physical body go along with the *neshama*. The body only understands physical terms and parables, but those words could not describe true *dveykus* of the *neshama* to Hashem.)

Dveykus, however, is not like that. *Dveykus* is not a form of love which is comparable to yet stronger than the love one human being may have for another. No! *Dveykus* is a light that

¹⁶ Rav Moshe Ben Nachman, known as Ramban, was born in 1194 in Spain and left this world in 1270 in the land of Israel. The Ramban was the greatest Torah giant of his generation. He wrote important works of Jewish law and Talmudic commentary. His commentary to the Bible is one of the classics. He was a physician as well as a Torah giant. In 1263 he was forced to defend the Jewish faith against the claims of the heretic Pablo Christiani that the Jews should abandon our faith and accept the Christian way. While the Ramban won the dispute, he was later exiled from Spain because of church complaints against him. The Ramban then traveled to the land of Israel. He restored Jewish life to Jerusalem while in Israel, where he eventually returned his soul to its Maker.

shines into the soul and fills it with an overwhelming drive for “*k’los hanefesh*,” a pining soul filled with an urge for transcendence. A Jew inspired with feelings of attraction to Hashem feels that he is willing to surrender physical life for all he desires is to return to his ultimate source – the Divine essence! The *dveykus* of a *neshama* with Hashem is not expressed through letters, like the rest of creation. It is a *dveykus* of *etzem*, essence. The *etzem* of the soul is *davuk* with the *etzem* of Hashem.

Judaism Is About The Soul And The Transcendent!

The topic of the Jewish soul is strongly connected with the holiday of Chanukah.

We know that Greek philosophers and scholars appreciated the wisdom of the Torah. They recognized the greatness of the Torah and even that of the Jewish nation. So what was it that caused the Greeks such a passionate hatred toward Jews?

Their profound agitation arose from Jewish practices and beliefs that extend beyond the intellect.¹⁷ They were upset that the Jews are a soulful people. They rejected Judaism’s notions of spirituality and its attempt to connect to Hashem with a *dveykus* that is completely above all intellect. The Greeks could not grasp “*nishmas Yisrael*,” the soul of Israel, and they responded with a terrible fury directed toward it. The Greeks attempted to make a secular Torah, and a secular Beis Hamikdash, Temple, one void of holiness.

¹⁷ In the prayer devoted to thanks for the Chanukah salvation, we recall how the Greeks sought *lihaaviram meichukei retzonecha*, to remove them from the *chukim*, statutes, of Your will. There are many *mitzvos*, some are called *mishpatim*, laws of justice, and others *chukim*, laws that transcend human logic. In the prayer of Chanukah, we stress that the Greeks opposed *chukim*. Since *mishpatim* are comprehensible to the human mind, the Greeks did not fight them. However, since the *chukim* transcend human understanding the Greeks fought against their observance. The Jews displayed *messirus nefesh*, sacrifice of self that transcended the normal limits of human rational benefit analysis and as a result overcame the Greeks who sought to make the mind supreme.

Essentially, their claim was that the mind is incredible, and that therefore the intellect is all that man needs, and there is no need for *neshama*. They sought to deny the reality of the soul.

Yet the joy of Chanukah is that the *neshama* of the Torah was revealed! The Kohanim, Temple priests, were “*neshamadik*” people, and they fought to keep the *bais hamikdash* like Israel – as a place of holiness, not mere intellect! The miracle of Chanukah was made by Hashem with intention with the lights of the menorah, which specifically represents the *neshama*! In Proverbs King Solomon taught, “*Ner Hashem, nishmas adam.*” “The lamp of G-d is the soul of man.” (20:27) The soul of Klal Yisrael, the Jewish people, was shining, and its reflection in this world were the shining flames of the menorah in the Temple!

Every year on Chanukah there is a new *chanukas habayis* (dedication of the *bais hamikdash*), and the whole *bais hamikdash* is built upon *dveykus*. Each Chanukah the *ohr haganuz* (the hidden light that Hashem saved for the *tzadikim*) shines through the darkness of Greece, the denial of *neshama*, and illuminates our *neshamos* with a great light.

Our world is filled with great wisdom. Hashem has created a sophisticated world. Each plant, cell, and corner of reality reveal wonders of wisdom and genius. Divine service also requires

great wisdom. Lesson Two explores why wisdom is found throughout the creation and what is the essential difference between holy and secular wisdom.

Lesson Two: The Power of Wisdom

At the conclusion of lesson one we mentioned that the Tanya quotes Rav Vital as saying that all Jews are born with two souls. The full quotation from the Tanya is:

אך ביאור הענין על פי מ"ש הרח"ו ז"ל בשער הקדושה [ובע"ח שער נ' פ"ב] דלכל איש ישראל אחד צדיק ואחד רשע יש שתי נשמות דכתיב ונשמות אני עשיתי שהן שתי נפשות נפש אחת מצד הקליפה וסטרא אחרא והיא המתלבשת בדם האדם להחיות הגוף וכדכתיב כי נפש הבשר בדם היא.

This matter can be explained based on a teaching of HaRav Chaim Vital o.b.m.¹⁸ found in the book Shaar Hakedusha, the Gates of Holiness. He writes that every Jew, no matter if he is a tzadik or a rasha, has two souls (neshamos) as the verse states, "And I created souls." These are the two life-forces (nefashos). One is from the side of the "kelippah", the husks, the "Other side" (the side of evil), and it is clothed in the blood of man to sustain the body, as the verse states, "For the soul (nefesh) of the flesh is in the blood."

Nefesh habehamis, "the animal soul," is man's physical life force. Every animal, including man, has an "animal soul," an animating life force. This animal soul is a non-spiritual soul; it is physical in nature.

¹⁸ When mentioning a righteous person traditionally we invoke a blessing, thus after quoting the Rabbi the addition of the letters o.b.m. represents the sentiment that he is Of Blessed Memory.

To understand the concept of an “animal soul,” we must clarify the term “physical” as opposed to “spiritual.” Generally, anything which cannot be experienced through one of the five senses falls into the category of the spiritual, and anything that can be felt with the five senses falls into the category of the physical. This is not a complete definition, but in a general sense it is true.

וממנה באות כל המדות רעות מארבע יסודות רעים שבה דהיינו כעס וגאווה מיסוד האש שנגבה למעלה. ותאות התענוגים מיסוד המים כי המים מצמיחים כל מיני תענוג. והוללות וליצנות והתפארות ודברים בטלים מיסוד הרוח. ועצלות ועצבות מיסוד העפר.

And from it (the animal soul) stem all the evil attributes, from the four evil foundations that are contained within it. They are: Anger and Haughtiness, from the foundation of Fire, which flares upwards. Desire for physical pleasures, from the foundation of Water, as water nourishes many enjoyable delights. Frivolity, Mockery, Self-Glorification, and speaking words of no purpose are rooted in the foundation of Wind. Finally, Laziness and Depression are from the foundation of Dust.

The Tanya is referring here to the “Four Foundations,” the basic elements that make up the physical world: fire, water, wind and dust. These four foundations represent the four letters in the *shem havaya*, Hashem’s name of being, י-ק-ו-ק, which Hashem used to put His “seal” on creation. This is a display of the great depth and wisdom found in the natural world. In order to understand these four *yesodos*, foundations, of the physical world, we will first explore a number of spiritual concepts found in Torah. As we shall see, the external world reveals Hashem’s great wisdom.

The more we learn and understand the Torah, the better we are able to understand the following words of our Sages that are recorded in the *Zohar*: “*Histakel kudsha brich hu bi'Ooraisa ubara alma*” “Hashem looked in the Torah and created the world.” Everything that we see in the world we find in the Torah, and all of Torah can be found in the world. The wisdom

of creation is incredibly deep. Man's purpose on this earth is to reveal the wisdom and G-dliness evident in each and every aspect of this world. Man's purpose is to realize and proclaim to all, "*Milo kol haaretz kvodo!*" "The entire world is filled with Hashem's splendor!" (*Yeshayahu 6:3*)

Everything that Hashem created, He created with *chochmah*, wisdom. In every minute detail of the universe astounding and deep wisdom can be discovered. Since the main way that Hashem reveals Himself is through the attribute of *Chochmah*, wisdom, it follows that the best way for man to connect with Hashem is through his own human intellect. A person who wants to experience *Elokus*, G-dliness, must contemplate the wisdom of the creator. And how is it possible for a human to contemplate the *Chochmah* of Hashem? Only through the Torah.

The Ramban o.b.m. explains (in his introduction to the *chumash*, the five books of the Torah) that there are forty nine *shaarei binah*, gates of understanding. These are the forty nine different facets of creation that one can study. Such study and deep contemplation of the greatness of creation is one way a person may connect with Hashem.

Another path available to the Jew is to learn and understand the Torah in a deeper way. Through the wisdom of the Torah, a Jew will be able to comprehend the wisdom of creation in detail. The Ramban continues beyond the forty-nine gates and says that there is a fiftieth gate, the *shaar ha'nun*, and it is pure G-dliness.

The holy Zohar has a fascinating translation of the verse "*kulam bichochmah asisa*" You created everything with wisdom. (*Tehillim 104:24*) According to the Zohar it should be rendered slightly differently, as "*kulam bichochmah isbiriru*," everything became purified through *chochmah*, wisdom. To fully understand this part of the Zohar, we must first understand a few introductory concepts.

Presently everything in creation consists of a mixture of good and evil. The “good” part reveals G-dliness in this world while the “bad” part hides this Holiness. Hashem allows this evil to exist so that there should be free will. Through *chochmah* a person is able to separate the good part of creation from the bad, and thereby reveal G-dliness in the world. In other words, the attribute of *chochmah* reveals G-dliness in the world – “*kulam bichocma isbiriru.*” Just as Hashem “purified” everything through *chochmah*, we must also use our *chochmah* to purify and separate the evil part of creation that hides G-dliness. When a person learns the Torah and immerses himself in its wisdom, Hashem reveals the secrets of the Torah to him. As he devotes himself to the Torah more and more, the secrets of the entire world become revealed to him.

For the truth is that we live in an incredible world. It is one in which a man can choose to live in a Gan Eden, basking in the wellsprings of the wisdom of the Torah, or he can choose to live a simple, animalistic life, perhaps even lower than an animal.

Floods Of Wisdom

The wisdom of the Torah reaches very far, and very deep.

The holy Zohar describes the flood of Noach as “the opening of the gates of wisdom.” What does this mean? The Torah speaks of a flood that destroyed the entire world, and the Zohar refers to this event as the opening of the gates of wisdom?! What is this relationship between the Torah (wisdom) and the flood? Is there really a connection between the two? According to our sages, there is.

Our sages tell us that when Hashem was giving the Torah to the Jewish people, the nations of the world, sensing that something extraordinary was happening, went to Bilaam¹⁹ and asked “*Hashem lamabul yashav?*” “Is Hashem bringing another flood to the world?” (*Tehillim 29:10*)

Bilaam answered, “*Hashem oz l’amo yitein,*” “Hashem is giving the Torah to His nation.” (*Tehillim 29:11*) Our sages also note and find that the *mabul* lasted forty days, just as the Torah was transmitted to Moshe over forty days. But wherein lies the connection? The explanation is as follows. *Chochmah* is a tremendously powerful force. When used properly, it is a wondrous tool, an antidote for all ailments. However, if, Heaven forbid, *chochmah* is not used appropriately, it can become the polar opposite. The *Chovos Halevavos*²⁰ calls misused wisdom “a plague which has no cure.” Hashem gives each of us the ability to choose. We can use *chochmah* in the right way and fill the world with good, or we can do the opposite, *chas v’shalom*, heaven forbid.

Herein lies the connection made by the holy Zohar between the *mabul*, flood, and the gates of wisdom. The time of the flood was a time marked for a down-pouring of wisdom into this world. If the world had been worthy this would have been manifested in the simple form of *chochmah*, a tremendous revelation of wisdom. But the world was not ready, and a flood of destruction was released instead, representative of the destruction caused by misused *chochmah*.

Modern Wisdom

¹⁹ The prophet of the nations who tried to harm the Jewish nation while we were in the wilderness.

²⁰ Duties of the Heart, a classic thirteenth century work of Jewish ethics, authored by *Rabbeinu Bachya Ibn Pekuda*.

The Way to the Tree of Life

The holy Zohar tells us that just as the gates of wisdom opened in the year 600 of Noach's life, so too they shall open in the year 600 of each millennium, especially the sixth and final millennium. Thus 5600 (or 1840 according to the secular calendar) was a time for a down-pouring of wisdom.

And, in fact, 1840 marks the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. This was the start of a chain of developments that completely transformed the face of the world. In 1840 the "flood" of technological advances, which we are still experiencing today, was unleashed. Today, the average person's day-to-day life bears little resemblance to the life of a person who lived only one hundred years ago. If a man who lived in the 1800s would walk into a simple home of the 21st century he would feel as if he were dreaming. Can you imagine his astonishment at being able to pick up a small piece of plastic (without any wires) and speak to someone on the other side of the world? What about email? Do you think he would believe it possible to sit in front of a machine, type a few letters, press a few buttons, and viola, a moment later his communication is received by a friend who lives thousands of miles away????! Awesome is the power of *chochmah*!

We are all witnesses to the power of mere secular, superficial wisdom to instantly change the entire world. When we shall merit to experience the revelation *p'nimiyus ha'chochmah*, of *chochmah* in its essence, then we will find Godliness in every detail of creation. We will realize that the world is filled with the wisdom of the Torah, and see how every single aspect of the universe corresponds to its source in the Torah. The explosive advances that the world has seen in the areas of technology and all areas of secular wisdom are like a "peel" that covers and precedes the uncovering of the hidden and internal essence of the "fruit," which is the essential

G-dly *chochmah*. As long as superficial *chochmah* is revealed without this essence it is not in a perfected state. It contains a great mixture of evil along with all of the good.

For example, a car is a wonderful invention. It provides a great convenience to many people. On the other hand, hundreds of people are killed everyday in car accidents. Every advance in technology produces new risks. Only when the essential *chochmah* is revealed shall the superficial *chochmos* be purified, and the deficiencies contained in secular *chochmah* be perfected.

Perhaps the clearest example of this truth is the discovery of nuclear power and weaponry. Had Hitler or Nebuchadnezzar ²¹*yemach shemam*, may their names be blotted out, had such weapons, the world would have been destroyed long ago. Even today the world only exists through constant miracles, for we know that at the push of a button it could be destroyed *chas veshalom*, heaven forbid. This is what the holy Zohar meant when it referred to the flood that destroyed the world as the opening of the gates of *chochmah*. The revelation of wisdom has the power to destroy the world.

In the time of the Ben Ish Chai²² a revolutionary invention was brought to the world: the train. He was asked the following question: “If *Shlomo Hamelech*, King Solomon, was the wisest of all men, why didn’t he invent the train thousands of years ago?!” The Ben Ish Chai answered that, in truth, *Shlomo Hamelech* understood the depths of all the wisdoms of the world and actually could have invented the train in his days. But he didn’t because Hashem did not allow him to do so as a means of protecting the world, for when wisdom is given to the side of

²¹ Nebuchadnezzar was the wicked Babylonian tyrant who destroyed the first Temple in Jerusalem after we had lived in the land of Israel for 850 years.

²² Rav Yosef Chaim (1834-1909), the chief Rabbi of Baghdad during the nineteenth century who authored many important works of Jewish law, Biblical interpretation, and Kabbalistic thought.

Holiness, it comes with specific guidelines that correspond to what the world is able to handle responsibly. Had Shlomo invented the train in his days, it would have started a chain of developments, which by the time of Nebuchadnezzar may have already reached the atom bomb, and that would have meant the destruction of the world.

We know as well that the *mishkan*, the Tabernacle in the desert, was a microcosm of the world. The *Talmud* in tractate *Brachos* (55a) tells us that *Betzalel* (the appointed builder of the *mishkan*) knew how to combine the letters with which heaven and earth were created and that he used those combinations to build the *mishkan*. *Betzalel* needed the wisdom that Hashem used to create the world to know how to build the *mishkan*.

And this is precisely why we find that the verses that describe the building of the *mishkan* repeatedly use the word *chochmah*. Just as “*kulam bichochmah asisa*” (“Hashem, you created all through *chochmah*”), (*Tehillim 104:24*) so too the builders of the *mishkan* and all of its holy vessels needed to possess great *chochmah*. We are told that the *beis hamikdash*, the Temple, was built by King *Shlomo*, “*chacham mikol adam*,” the wisest of all men. The *chochmah* of *Shlomo* encompassed all of the secrets of the world, as they are all contained within *chochmahs haTorah*, the wisdom of Torah.

This level of *chochmahs haTorah*, *chochmahs Shlomo*, was almost completely lost with the destruction of the *beis hamikdash*. The Vilna Gaon ²³ o.b.m. says that all of the wisdom of Torah that is known to us is merely a skeleton compared to the *chochmah* of *Shlomo*.

²³ Rabbi Eliyahu son of Rav Shlomo Zalman Kramer of Vilna (1720-1797) was one of the greatest Torah giants over the last five hundred years. He was an exceptional master of all areas of Torah and a source of great Torah achievement and inspiration.

Now, that having been said, we do still have the holy Torah in its current state, and even the levels of Torah that have been lost can be revealed to select individuals. One who immerses himself fully in Torah study and completely devotes himself to the Torah with a desire to bring himself closer to Hashem will merit to experience the light of the Torah. Hashem shall open the Torah before Him, and reveal its secrets.

Serve Hashem With *Chochmah*

We have now learned of the great power of *chochmah* on a global level, but the topic is also very relevant to each person in his individual service to Hashem.

The benefit of serving Hashem by using our intellect can be understood through a parable of two farmers. The first farmer, Farmer A, was raised on a farm. His family had been farming for generations, and naturally he feels a deep connection to the land that he inherited. He works the land in the good old-fashioned way that he learned from his father, who learned from his father. The oxen plowed the fields, and the farmer planted the crops.

The second farmer, Farmer B, spent years studying modern agricultural techniques and learned that production rates could be multiplied one hundred fold by nourishing the land with minerals. He also learned that the amount of human labor needed to produce crops could be drastically reduced by using tractors and other machinery.

One day, Farmer A looked over at Farmer B with all of his new contraptions. “Surely he will not succeed,” Farmer A thought to himself. “After all, he is so lazy. He just sits on his tractor and drives around all day, while I devote my heart and soul to the land. Certainly, I will reap the fruits of my back-breaking labor.”

When harvest season arrived Farmer A was appalled to find that Farmer B's crop was a hundred times larger than his! "Where is the justice?!" He fumed.

But he was wrong. Justice lies in the fact that Farmer B worked with his *chochmah*, his human intellect, while Farmer A worked like an ox.

The same concept can be applied to our service to Hashem. We find people who say, "I am a simple Jew. I serve Hashem with all my heart. I *daven* intensely, with all my strength. Why should I confuse myself with all the deeper levels of Torah? I will serve Hashem with simplicity,²⁴ with all my strength, and certainly Hashem will raise me to greater levels of *dveykus*²⁵ than all these 'mystics!'" We see, however, that they are mistaken!

The ones who study Torah in depth, and delve into the deep Torah of *chassidus* and Kabbalah (assuming that they do so with a pure heart and proper intentions) reach much loftier levels of *dveykus baHashem*! Through *chochmah* one realizes the root of the mitzvah and has a far more powerful spiritual experience. The explanation of this phenomenon is simple. Hashem created man to be a great *chochom*, a creature of wonderful intelligence. One who immerses himself in *chochmah* is called an *adam*, Man in his true form. The verse says about *Shlomo Hamelech*, "*vaHashem aheivo*" ("And Hashem loved him.") (*Shmuel 2 12:24*) We do not find this language anywhere else throughout *Tanach*, the Hebrew Bible. Why? Because Shlomo was the epitome of a true Man - a great *chochom* – and therefore he was loved.

Chochmas HaMalchus - Chochmas Shlomo

²⁴ In truth, there certainly is a time for serving Hashem with simplicity, and one must understand when and how to apply that aspect of service to Hashem. This apparent contradiction requires greater clarification, we will address this issue in other lessons.

²⁵ Connection. Discussed in greater detail in lesson one.

The *holy books* tell us that there are two aspects of *chochmah*: *chochmah ila'a* and *chochmah tata'a*, the higher wisdom and the lower wisdom. The higher *chochmah* is represented in the first letter *yud* in Hashem's name spelled י-ו-ה , and the lower *chochmah* is represented by the last letter of the Hashem's name spelled ו-ה-ו-ה, which is also a *yud*.

What is the meaning of these terms? Lower *chochmah* is the understanding of how Hashem expresses Himself in His world, a wisdom that involves many detailed concepts. Lower *chochmah* pertains to this world and is contained in the laws and concepts of the Torah, which essentially reveal the wisdom of Hashem through worldly actions. This is *chochmah tata'a*. Higher *chochmah*, *chochmah ila'a*, on the other hand, is the “understanding” of *elokus*, G-dliness, itself. *Chochmah ila'a* is about transcendence, connecting to what is above and beyond this world.

But you ask, “Isn't Hashem completely beyond our understanding?” In truth, *chochmah ila'a* is not a wisdom that is understood with human intellect. Rather, this type of connection to *elokus* is only through the G-dly soul of a Jew, which is itself a “part” of Hashem so to speak, as we discussed in lesson one above. *Chochmah ila'a* is the *eitz haChaim*, the tree of life.

The *chochmah* of Shlomo was of the first type, *chochmah tata'a*, or *chochmahs hamalchus*, literally the wisdom of kingship. The difference between *chochmahs hamalchus* and *chochmah ila'a* is comparable to the difference between the wisdom of a great king who successfully manages his country and the wisdom of a great philosopher. The wisdom of the philosopher is generally at a higher and more abstract level, and the wisdom of the king is more involved with the pragmatic details of everyday living. The king expresses and reveals his lower wisdom through his actions in the physical world. The philosopher, on the other hand, must

generally remove himself from the physicality of the world to express and reveal his higher wisdom.

Chochmah ila'a can only be attained through a high level of *dveykus*. *Chochmahs hamalchus* can be revealed through everyday life, as in a simple conversation. With *chochmah tata'a*, for example, one can speak about a mundane object, like a piece of wood, and reveal the deepest secrets of the Torah that are contained in that mundane object. This was the *chochmah* of Shlomo.

Shlomo wanted to reveal Torah to the entire world. He wanted to be *mashiach*, the messiah! (In fact, he fell short of the level of *mashiach* only by a hairsbreadth. The holy Zohar says that Shlomo actually revealed too much and in doing so stepped beyond his boundaries.) Shlomo was involved in the work of *mashiach*. All the greatest and wisest kings of his time came to learn from him, to hear his words of deepest wisdom. Through Shlomo we have been given a glimpse of the *mashiach*, for as the Rambam writes, *mashiach* will be a great *chochom*, greater than *Shlomo Hamelech*. The prophets further tell us that all the islands of the world will yearn to hear the wisdom of *mashiach*. The nations of the world can appreciate *chochmas hamalchus*. When they see how Jewish kings have a deep understanding of each matter of the physical world they become inspired.

The “flood” of secular wisdom that is pouring through the world in our times is quite astounding, and this is a sign that the world is being prepared for *mashiach*. Once people are familiar with superficial wisdom, it will be possible for them to understand the essential wisdom that is the root and source of this secular, external wisdom. Secular wisdom, the wisdom of the physical world, is merely a set of *meshalim*, parables, for the true *chochmah*. This is the meaning

of the verse which says that *Shlomo Hamelech* said “three thousand parables.” Shlomo revealed how everything in the physical world is a parable for the spiritual world.

Shlomo HaMelech And The Menorah

This *chochmah* of Shlomo, *chochmahs hamalchus*, is revealed through the lights of the menorah. The Greeks established seven categories of wisdom. (In fact, the *seforim* tell us that the verse “*kulam bichochmah asisa*” (“You created everything with *chochmah*”), (*Tehillim 104:24*) is a holy source for this concept because creation took place in seven days, with each day corresponding to one of the seven *chochmos*.) The seven branches of the menorah in the *beis hamikdash* represent these seven *chochmos*.

Shlomo Hamelech made ten additional menorahs aside from the menorah that stood always in the *beis hamikdash*. He did this because he wanted to have seventy branches of menorahs (seven branches for each of the additional ten menorahs) to correspond to the seventy nations of the world, each of which receives spiritual nourishment from a specific spark of *chochmah*. Lighting the seventy lights represented making the seventy nations subordinate to the true *chochmah*. When the *kohein gadol* would light the menorah in the *beis hamikdash*, the minds of *klal yisrael*, the entire Jewish people, would also become illuminated with the light of the Torah. (In our times, we are still able to catch a glimpse of this great light through the Chanukah candles. Hashem has given us a bright spark in the middle of the dark winter to illuminate us with the light of the Torah.)

We find yet another connection between *Shlomo Hamelech* and the *menorah*. When the Torah describes the construction of the menorah, the verse says that it was made from one solid

piece of gold, “*ad yireicha, ad pircha,*” from its base to its ornate blossoms. Rashi explains that the base is the largest part of the menorah, and the blossom is the smallest. Similarly, with respect to *Shlomo Hamelech*, the verse (*Melachim I 5:9*) says that he spoke about everything “from the cedar tree of Lebanon to the hyssop branch growing on the wall.” In other words, Shlomo had an all encompassing *chochmah*, which included the loftiest of concepts as well as the smallest and most basic. The Talmud in tractate Sukkah (28a) discusses the greatness of the sage, *Rav Yochanan Ben Zakai*. It teaches that he was an expert in every *davar gadol*, great matter, and *davar kattan*, small matter. The Talmud then teaches that “every great matter” refers to the secrets of Torah, *maaseh merkavah*, the beginning of the book of Ezekiel which teaches about the Heavenly realms, and “*davar kattan*” means the discussions of Jewish law of sages such as *Abaye* and *Rava*. Since in the Torah there are great matters and small matters, in the world there are great matters and small matters. Shlomo knew from the Torah the great and the small and therefore he knew in the world the great and the small. This is apparent in the three books of the Bible attributed to Shlomo: *Koheles*, *Mishlei*, and *Shir Hashirim* Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and the Song of Songs.

The language of *Koheles* is very different from that of any book in the Torah. It sounds almost like philosophy, as if Shlomo was considering whether to follow the path of the Torah or another path, Heaven forbid. This is difficult to understand since the Torah tells us what we must do and must not do; there is no room for wondering whether we are to obey the Torah or not. We believe with complete faith that it is the word of Hashem! So how could Shlomo have been considering an alternative path?

The answer is that in *Koheles* Shlomo is speaking to the cold intellect of man. *Koheles* enters a world void of *emunah*, faith, and shows the truth of the Torah by way of philosophy. The book ends with the words, “*sof davar hakol nishma, es haElokim yirah*” “At the end of all matters all is heard, fear G-d” (*Koheles 12:13*) showing that the Torah is the true path. This is a book for the nations.

The next book, *Mishlei*, speaks in a loftier language, it speaks in the language of the Jews. Here we find *Shlomo Hamelech* addressing a Jew who believes in the Torah and observes the *mitzvos*. The basic purpose of *Mishlei* is to advise the G-d fearing Jew, and to guide him in his path of *avodas Hashem*, service to G-d. This is the second level of the wisdom of Shlomo.

The third, and most exalted, book is *Shir Hashirim*. The Torah of *Shir Hashirim* is the Torah of complete *dveykus* and *ahavas Hashem*, love of G-d. This is the deeper level of Torah that will be revealed *li'asid lavo*, at the end of time. As Rashi comments the beginning of the book on the verse, “*Yishakeini minishikos pihu*,” “He will kiss me with the kisses of His mouth.”(1:2) “*Al shem shenassan lahem Toraso vidibeir imahem panim el panim viosam dodim odam areivim aleihem mikol shashua*, It is because He gave them His Torah and communicated with them face to face, and those affections are still more sweet to them than any delight, *umavtachim mei'eeto lihofia od aleihem livaeir lahem sod taameha umistar tzfunoseha* And they have been assured by Him that He will appear again upon them to explain to them the secrets of Torah's reasons and her hidden treasures *umichalim panav likayem divaro vizehu yishakeini minishikos pihu*, and they are awaiting His face to fulfill His promise and this is the wish of “Let Him kiss me from the kisses of His mouth.” *Shir Hashirim* speaks the language of a world without the *yetzer hara*, a world of unity between *klal yisroel* and Hashem. This is the world of

sodos haTorah (secrets of Torah), of *kulo tov*, complete good, and it is one Hashem promises he will reveal to *klal yisroel* in the future.

Finally, these three levels of Shlomo's *chochmah* are represented in the menorah. The two outer branches correspond to *Koheles*, the middle two to *Mishlei*, and the two innermost branches to *Shir Hashirim*. The middle branch represents *chochmah ila'a*, from which the six branches are illuminated. It represents the inner Torah, this is why it faced the holy ark and the Torah links it to the *aron hakodesh*. An allusion to this connection between Shlomo, his three books and the lights of the Chanukah menorah can be seen in the word "miksha" מקשה (a reference to the menorah being constructed from one solid block of gold, which is an acronym for *Mishlei*, משלי, *Kohelles* קהלת, and *Shir HaShirim* שיר השירים).

Just as with Shlomo, his Torah wisdom was the source for his knowledge of the physical world, the four letters of Hashem's name יהוה are the source for the four foundations of the material world and the human psyche.

Lesson Three reveals some of the depth of the natural world. A deeper understanding of nature shows us marvelous Divine patterns in the foundations of physical life. These patterns appear in items and in personalities. Underneath the patterns stands the innermost, and deepest life, represented by the top of the Yud from Hashem's name. These insights should fill our spirits with excitement once we internalize that at our core we have enormous holiness, holiness that can only be compared to the force that keeps subatomic particles bonded and in motion.

Lesson Three: The Four Elements

Evil Then Good

As described in lesson one, according to the Tanya (citing Rav Chaim Vital), all Jews have two souls, the *nefesh habahamis*, an animal soul, and the *nefesh haElohis*, a G-dly soul. The Tanya first teaches us the makeup of the *nefesh habahamis* and only afterwards the makeup of the G-dly soul, an order that seems counterintuitive, as surely one should begin with that which is holiest first.

The commentators explain that the Tanya chose this order to teach us the way of the world, in which the evil urge always comes first and the urge for good, second. The peel appears first on the tree and only after can we find the fruit inside. Similarly, in the creation narrative in the Torah we were told repeatedly, “*vayehi erev vayehi boker*” “and it was evening and then it was morning.” The darkness of the night, which begins the twenty-four hour day, precedes the light. The Tanya follows this order and thus first explains the *nefesh habahamis* and then turns to the *nefesh haElohis*, the G-dly part of man.²⁶

The Tanya teaches that corresponding to the four foundations of the physical world – fire, water, wind and dust - the *nefesh habahamis* is comprised of four natural foundations, and these foundations spawn evil attributes.

דהיינו כעס וגאווה מיסוד האש שנגבה למעלה ותאות התענוגים מיסוד המים כי המים מצמיחים כל מיני תענוג. והוללות וליצנות והתפארות ודברים בטלים מיסוד הרוח. ועצלות ועצבות מיסוד העפר

Anger and arrogance are from the element of fire, which ascends. The desire for pleasures is from the element of water, which causes all pleasurable things to grow. Empty joy, cynicism,

²⁶ See Tractate *Shabbes* 77b

bombastic pride, and empty words are from the element of wind. And laziness and depression are from the element of earth.

The ancients referred to the four elements making up the foundation of the entire natural world as fire, wind, water, and earth. In the modern world we have our own such classification, and we talk of four types of matter: energy (plasma), gasses, liquids, and solids. These elements manifest themselves in the human psyche. Fire, whose nature is to rise, is the source of arrogance and anger, both of which stem from an elevated sense of self. Water, a source of pleasure, is the root of our desire to experience physical and sensory delights. Wind is empty, and thus gives rise to the empty and frivolous matters in this world in which we engage. Depression and laziness, which are characterized by a lack of movement and vitality, emanate from the element of earth.

וגם מדות טובות שבטבע כל ישראל בתולדותם כמו רחמנות וג"ח באות ממנה כי בישראל נפש זו דקליפה היא מקליפ' נוגה שיש בה ג"כ טוב והיא מסוד עץ הדעת טוב ורע: משא"כ נפשות אומות עובדי גלולים הן משאר קליפות טמאות שאין בהן טוב כלל כמ"ש בע"ה שער מ"ט פ"ג וכל טיבו דעבדין האומות עובדי גלולים לגרמייהו עבדין וכדאיתא 'בגמרא ע"פ וחסד לאומים חטאת שכל צדקה וחסד שאומות עובדי גלולים עושין אינן אלא להתייהר כו

And even the naturally good attributes that Jews have in their natures, such as compassion and a desire to perform acts of kindness, emerge from the animal soul.

Jews are born with certain good attributes. They are naturally merciful and kind, for example. These character traits, albeit positive in nature, also emerge from the Jew's biological, animal soul. The Jew's animal soul is able to emanate these positive characteristics because of its source:

The Jewish nefesh habahamis, animal soul, comes from kellipahs nogah, the nogah husk. This Kellipah, husk or shell, has some good inside of it as its source is the Tree of Knowledge, which is comprised of both good and bad. The nefesh habahamis of the gentiles, however, comes from other impure kellipos, and therefore the good they do is for themselves. They are not motivated to

perform altruistic good. As the Talmud teaches, the gentiles perform acts of kindness to earn a good reputation. Their kind acts are not truly performed for the sake of good.

The Tanya refers to a verse in *Yechezkel*²⁷ to explain the concept of the *Kellipahs nogah*. The verse describes the obstacles *Yechezkel* had to go through to arrive at a vision of Hashem. First, he had to break through four walls: an igniting fire, a stormy wind, a heavy cloud, and a *nogah*, a thin filament, which surrounded the Almighty's chariot. The filament was translucent enough that one could see that there was light on the other side, but it was impossible to see clearly through the barrier.

Exile Has An Advantage

Yechezkel had his vision of holiness outside the land of Israel. He was a refugee from Israel in Babylon and there, on the banks of the *Kevar* river, the heavens opened and he saw amazing sights. Arguably, his vision of holiness surpassed those of all the prophets who preceded him in the land of Israel, as no other prophet described the Divine chariot in as clear detail as *Yechezkel* did. Why did he – and no one else – merit to reveal such treasures? The *Zohar* explains that when the Jews were entering the exile of Babylon, the time of *Yechezkel*'s vision, they were completely despondent and this vision was needed for support and encouragement.

The first exile was a devastating shock to the Jewish national psyche. Since the Jews had left Egypt and become a nation, they had never been exiled. Before this exile, it was completely

²⁷ The prophet *Yechezkel*, Ezekiel, was a prophet of the Jewish nation at the end of the period of our first temple. He began to converse with the Almighty while in the land of Israel, however the bulk of his prophecies occurred once he was already in exile in *Bavel*, Babylonia. *Yechezkel* begins his book with a detailed description of the prophetic experience and the Heavenly realms. This vision, called *Maase Merkava*, the account of the Divine Chariot, contains all the secrets of Jewish mysticism, and the nature of the Heavenly dimensions of reality. In this vision *Yechezkel* described the barriers he had to overcome to see the Divine. Those barriers are called in the mystical literature, *Kellipos*, the husks that hide Divinity.

inconceivable to the Jews, and the rest of humanity, that G-d might destroy His own home. No one had believed in such a possibility. Thus, in predicting the loss of the temple, our prophets said:

לא האמינו מלכי ארץ וכל יושבי תבל כי יבא צר ואויב בשערי ירושלים

All the kings of the world and residents on earth could not believe that an enemy and foe would enter the gates of Jerusalem. (Eicha²⁸ 4:13)

To them, the possibility of losing the Beis Hamikdash, The Temple, was a nightmare, not a realistic fear. You can see this in the book of *Eicha*. When you read *Eicha*, you feel the overwhelming despair of the Jews: their shock at the enormous loss and destruction, the extent of which they had never imagined or thought possible. Their disbelief may be compared to our own thoughts about the coming of *mashiach*, the messiah. While we all believe theoretically in the coming of *mashiach*, to actually picture *mashiach* and imagine our world with the return of such personalities like Moses, *Moshe Rabbeinu*, and the *tzadikim* of earlier generations among us is really beyond most people's imaginations. At best, the image may serve as a dream.

The lesson is: In the face of terrible pain, shock, and despair, the Almighty Himself descends and encourages. It was in the face of terrible pain and despair that Hashem revealed to

²⁸ *Eicha*, Lamentations, is the book of mourning authored by the prophet Jeremiah to grieve over the loss of the first Temple.

Yechezkel the great secrets of the Divine chariot! These secrets encouraged the Jewish nation and showed them that the Divine presence was coming with them into exile.²⁹

At a deeper level, it may also be that such secrets can only be apprehended in exile, in a reduced spiritual state. Exile enabled the Jews to reach levels of understanding that were unattainable in their prior state of redemption.

The Talmud discusses the difference between the book of *Yechezkel* and the book of *Yeshayahu*, Isaiah.³⁰ Both prophets describe the heavenly realm, although in strikingly different fashion. *Yechezkel's* descriptions contain a multitude of details, while *Yeshayahu's* descriptions, in contrast, contain hardly any details.

The sages explain that *Yechezkel* was like a villager coming to the city who sees the king and his palace for the first time, but *Yeshayahu* was like a resident of the capital who regularly sees the king. The villager is very impressed by whatever he sees. He is amazed! He never saw such sights! He is so impressed with the sight of each treasure that he later describes everything that he saw in great detail.

²⁹ Rav Moshe Wolfson teaches in his work, *Emunas Etecha*, that even earlier in our history at moments of great emotional collapse and weakness Hashem Himself descends to provide encouragement and strength to an individual or to the nation. With this idea he explained the words of the Talmud that when Joseph was about to accept the entreaties of the wife of Potifar and sin, the image of his father appeared. Where did it come from? Why did it appear then? Rav Wolfson explained that our sages teach that *Yaakov's* image was etched on the Divine Throne of Glory. Usually the Almighty does not bring His presence down into the lowliest of realms. However, on Chanukah where nights are long, and the forces of evil seem ascendant, Hashem lowers great holiness into the lowly realm to provide encouragement. Yosef was in a very vulnerable and lowly state. Hashem therefore on Chanukah brought His Divine Throne all the way down to earth. Since *Yaakov's* face is etched on the Throne, Yosef saw his father's image, it provided him with the strength and encouragement to overcome the urges for sin. See further *Emunas Etecha parshas Vayeishev page 123-125*.

³⁰ *Yeshayahu* was one of the greatest Jewish prophets. He began to speak prophetic words the year the Judean king, *Uziyahu*, passed away, 757 before the common era. His prophecies warned the Jews about the probable loss of our temple due to our sins and he predicted messages of great consolation as well. *Yeshayahu* described the Heavenly realm, however, his description is far less detailed than *Yechezkel's*.

The resident of the capital, however, is used to seeing the king and his palace. He often comes to the king's house for business. When he is granted entry into the palace, he is not amazed or overwhelmed with its beauty and treasures. He has seen these sights on numerous prior visits. The prophet *Yeshayahu* lived with a *Beis Hamikdash*, at a time of revealed Godliness. Therefore, when he saw G-dly visions, he was not so impressed and moved. As a result, he merely described them briefly.

Yechezkel, on the other hand, was a prophet during the time of exile, when there was no *Beis Hamikdash*. G-dly revelations in his time were not a common occurrence. Accordingly, *Yechezkel* was like the villager who was most impressed with everything that he saw, and therefore described his vision in great detail. It is in this way that the state of exile enabled a greater appreciation of holiness.

There is yet an even deeper level of analysis.

Exile Enables Us To Appreciate The Vessels

Details and adjectives are vessels carrying G-d's light. The lack of details in *Yeshayahu's* prophecies might be therefore due to the fact that because he was prophesying at a time of redemption, he could see the light of Hashem, the soul of the matter directly! As a result, he could not notice the vessels containing that light!

Yechezkel, on the other hand, prophesying at a time of exile, when there was no revealed Godliness due to the absence of the *Bet Hamikdash*, could only see the Divine light through a barrier, through the *Kellipas nogah*, the *nogah* husk. Precisely because *Yechezkel* could not attach

himself directly to the light the vessels were revealed much more clearly. Since he could see the vessels, he described them!

To help us understand this matter better, consider what is told by Lubavitch Chassidim . They teach that when the great Rebbe, *Reb Ber*,³¹would teach, his student *Reb Zeesha* ³²would be so inspired that he would feel his soul leave him. In this state, he could not pay attention to anything other than Godliness. He was unable to attend to the vessels that held the Godliness- the verses and their interpretations, as taught by *Reb Ber*. He would only feel attachment to the light of the *tzadik*.

In contrast, the greatness of *Rav Shneur Zalman*, the author of the Tanya and another student of *Reb Ber*, was that while he appreciated the light of the Rebbe, he was able at the same time to attend to the Rebbe's words - the vessels that held the light. Thus after the lesson, the author of the Tanya was able to recite the thoughts of *Reb Ber*: the verses, their interpretations, and the Rebbe's method of bringing down to this world the religious experience.

Thus, on one level, *Yeshayahu* was at a higher spiritual level than *Yechezkel* in that *Yeshayahu* only saw the light - the soul of the matter - while *Yechezkel* was mired in the details of the vessels. On the other hand, by appreciating and seeing the vessels, *Yechezkel* could reveal their truth so that those who were farther away could also apprehend holiness. For clarity and explanations are needed to bring revelation to those individuals who are less spiritually

³¹ *Rav Dov Ber, The Maggid of Mezrich* (1704-1772). He was the successor to the *Baal Shem Tov*, the founder of the Chassidic movement. During his lifetime Chassidic practice spread from a successful local phenomenon to a movement that encompassed a significant portion of European Jewry.

³² *Rav Meshulam Zeesha* of Anipoli, he was born at the beginning of the eighteenth century and passed away in the year 1800. He was one of the great students of *Rav Bov Ber* and the brother of the great *Rav Elimelech* of Lizhensk, (1717-1787) the author of the classic work, *Noam Elimelech*.

advanced. The light by itself is not always sufficient. Thus, in terms of spreading the G-dly lesson, *Yechezkel* was greater than *Yeshayahu*.

In short, *Yechezkel*, was a villager, a peasant unattached to the king. Yet it was precisely this distance that gave him the ability to appreciate and reveal outward appearances, even though he was also able to see the Divine light.

Maaseh merkavah, the account of the Chariot, is the wisdom of the vessels. Pure *elokus*, Godliness, is a light above comprehension, beyond infinity, beyond explanation or definition. It can only be experienced as *dveykus*, the cleaving of one's soul to something truly sublime beyond all intellect.

Most of us, however, are far from this level. To touch holiness, we require the vessels - expositions about Godliness, lessons that speak of the G-dly attributes and other details, such as *partzufin elyonim*, G-dly Archetypes. Through the revelation of these vessels and other tools of explanation provided by Hashem, a measure of G-dly experience and comprehension can be brought down into this world.

The Four *Kellipos*

In order to preserve free will, Hashem created the world in pairs of even measure. In order for free will to exist, the world must be an even world. What exists in holiness must be found in

corresponding measure in the opposite realm. “*Zeh liumas zeh asah haElokim*” “G-d made one paralleling the other.” (*Koheles 7:14*)

Thus, opposing a Yaakov, Jacob, stands his evil twin, Esav, Esau.³³ Against Moshe Rabbeinu stands a Bilaam.³⁴ Humans are thus always presented with equally appealing alternatives, so that man may freely choose whether to perform a mitzvah.

We see this pairing even in G-d’s name. Hashem created in the realm of *sitra achra*, the Other Side, the side of non-holiness, the four negative *kellipos* we spoke about earlier, and these correspond to the holy four letters in His name of being, ק-ו-ה-י. Yechezkel had to break through these *kellipos*, barriers or husks, in order to reach holiness.

The Zohar explains that the verse, “*El ginaz egotz yaraditi*” “I went down to the walnut garden” (*Shir Hashirim 6:11*) refers to these four *kellipos*. Just as a walnut has four layers of shells to prevent a person from reaching the nut, so it is with all matters. Three of the shells surrounding the walnut are inedible; the fourth is a thin filament that can be subsumed and eaten with the nut. Similarly, there are four layers of skin that are affected in circumcision. Three are cut off, while the fourth is separated and pulled back. This fourth layer of skin corresponds to the fourth shell in the walnut, a thin layer that can be eaten with the fruit.

³³ Jacob was the son of Isaac who was studious and pious. Esau was the son who was a hunter and killer. The Roman ruffians who devastated our temple and persecuted our nation for centuries were descendants of Esau. Jacob is the father of the Jewish nation.

³⁴ *Bilaam* was a spiritual leader in the gentile world during the days of Moses. He was a vicious anti-Semite who according to Jewish tradition advised Pharaoh to try and kill all Jewish babies. He was a sorcerer who tried to curse the Jewish people and cause our demise. He was also a prophet of Hashem with whom the Almighty conversed. Rav Avraham Yitzchok HaKohen Kook wrote that just as the evil deeds of Bismarck, who created the modern Germany with its militarism and cruelty, had intellectual foundations in the heresies of Spinoza, who denied Hashem and created a worldview of materialism which led to the idea of “might makes right.” The *Amalekite* anti-Semites of antiquity tried with actions to wipe out the Jews and their intellectual root was the wicked *Bilaam*.

Yechezkel broke through three opaque barriers. A fourth was *nogah*, a permeable wall, much like the fourth layer of skin of a baby's circumcision, and the fourth shell around a walnut.

Items and deeds prohibited by the Torah (like pork and *shaatnez* ³⁵) are all bad, completely evil. They emerge from the three impure *kellipos*, and must therefore be cut off like the foreskin at the time of circumcision.

Matters that emerge from *nogah*, however, are not completely bad. They are permitted by the Torah, but can make man more materialistic and physical, and thereby alienate him from Godliness. In fact, it is safe to say that a gluttonous person will inevitably become overly materialistic and detach himself from Hashem, *even if* the only food that he eats is strictly kosher. Permitted matters come from the tree of good and evil and like the tree have a mixture of good and bad natures such that a person will be led by them depending on how that person engages with them. If like a *tzadik* you eat to have the strength to serve Hashem in all of your ways, then your eating will be a mitzvah. The glutton's stuffing, in contrast, is a spiritual failure.

However, a person who eats without the right intentions yet uses the energy derived from his food to perform mitzvos may elevate retroactively his earlier act of eating to a mitzvah *as long as* the food that was eaten was permissible in the first place. The eating of forbidden items like pork, for example, cannot be raised to a mitzvah even if the energy derived there from is used for a mitzvah, because the act of eating pork is a sin. The permitted physical world on the

³⁵ The prohibition to wear a garment that has threads of wool and linen mixed together in it. This law is repeated twice in the Torah and it is one of the paradigmatic *chukim*, laws that transcend usual human reason. According to Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch the law is a reminder to man not to mix the plant part of his being, his desires to eat and procreate, with the animal part, his intellect and will. Man must take care that his plant instinct not take over and control his intellectual abilities. Linen is a product of the flax plant, while wool is from a sheep. Thus linen represents the plant element while wool the animal.

other hand is a *Kellipahs nogah*, a slight barrier. Through the *nogah*, you can see Godliness, though not clearly.

Interestingly, *parshas kedoshim* has *nogah pesukim*, 64 verses, for the message of *parshas kedoshim* is to purify *Kellipahs nogah*.³⁶ Along the same lines the Talmud in the beginning of the tractate *Pesachim* teaches that the term *ohr* mentioned there refer to *nagha*. *nagha* is then defined as night, even though in the city where Rav Huna lived *nagha* meant day. This similarity between the words “*nogah*” and “*nagha*,” and the multiplicity of meanings that “*nagha*” has had over the years, teaches us that *nogah* can be light or night, depending on the person. *Nogah* can be translated as light/holy or night/evil. Our actions determine its fate!

We can now also understand the verse, “*Umaltem es arlas levavchem viarpachem lo takshu od*” “And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart and do not continue to harden your neck.” (*Devarim 10:16*) The three impure *kellipos* in your heart must be entirely detached. The *Kellipahs nogah*, however, should remain and be transformed to good. Hence the close of the verse “*viarpachem lo takshu od*” “Do not continue to harden your neck.”

Jew And Gentile

It is natural for parents to pass their own character traits onto their children. In all creatures, offspring usually resemble their parents. The *middos*, ways of behaving, that we naturally inherit from our parents come from the *nefesh habahamis*, the animal soul we discussed earlier. There are families in which every member is generous, others that have great scholars, and yet others

³⁶ According to Ramban, the first commandment in *Kedoshim*, “*kedoshim tihyu*” “Be holy” (*Vayikra 19:2*) is a call for *kadesh atzmecha bimuttar lach*, reach sanctity in all permitted matters through avoiding physical excess.

whose members are all non-materialistic. These are inherited traits! Parents passing to their children pieces of their natural souls.

The *nefesh habahamis* is a physical matter. It is a beast, like an animal. The *nefesh habahamis* of the Jewish nation comes from *kelippas nogah*: from the palaces in heaven that give life to all things Hashem has permitted. Non-Jews get their animal soul life-force or *nefesh habahamis* from the palaces in Heaven that give life to the forces of *tumah*, the prohibited things.

This difference between the source of a Jewish and a non-Jewish soul started with the generation of dispersion.³⁷ The difference is not absolute, however. There can be a gentile who performs completely altruistic acts because in the future one of his progeny will emerge as a *geir*, a convert. That Jewish soul is in him now in a latent state, and as a result he has truly good parts in him. In addition, there is also the concept of *chasidei umos haolam*, the very pious of the nations of the world. The *chasidei umos haolam* are not from the three impure *kellipos*. Their *nefesh Elokis* is like a *Kellipahs nogah* of a Jew. They are *tafel*, affiliates, to Yisrael, the Jewish people, and this can also lead them to do real good.

The Tanya though teaches us that when a gentile does an act of kindness normally it is done simply to feel good. The gentile gives charity so that he can sit and eat his own supper without feeling guilt. The ideal way to give, however, is to ignore one's own pleasure and give because it is the correct thing to do.

The mind tells the non-Jew as well what is good and bad but his *nefesh* does not want to listen. He must then order his *nefesh* to listen to his mind to avoid feelings of guilt. The reason

³⁷ This refers to the generation that lived at the time of the destruction of the First Temple and was exiled to Babylon, also discussed earlier.

for this dynamic is that the *nefesh habahamis* of the goy comes from the three obscure *kellipos*. These *kellipos* are completely *rah*, evil, without any good mixed in.

On the other hand the *nefesh habahamis* of Yisrael emerges from the *Kellipahs nogah*. It thus has some good in it. It is the job of the Jew to transform his entire *Kellipahs nogah* into good.

Cosmic Patterns Of Four

Based on teachings from the Zohar, the Tanya teaches that there are four elements. These four elements make up physical creation, and thus are the source of the *nefesh habahamis* as well. The traits of the animal soul manifest these elements.

Why four? Why not five or ten elements? Because there are four letters to Hashem's name of *havayah*, and *lihavdil zeh liumas zeh*, there is always an opposite of the holy realm. Thus, there are four *kellipos* and four physical, earthly elements!

The four basic elements are earth, water, wind and fire. The Rambam talks about this at length in his work Mishne Torah in the section of "*hilchos yesodei haTorah*" "Laws of the Principles of the Torah." The Rambam explains that the earth element, *yesod haafar*, is every item which is solid; the water element, *yesod hamayim*, is every liquid item; the wind element, *yesod haruach*, are items like gasses; while the fire element, *yesod ha'aish*, is fire or energy. Electricity, for example, is not a liquid, solid or a gas. It is energy. Atoms are also held together with energy. There are many things that are not a solid, gas or a liquid. All of these items

generally are displays of the element of fire. (All matters more spiritual than gas are to be called *aish*.)

As we discussed earlier, there are four *kellipos*, three of which are all evil and the fourth of which is *nogah* - a mixture of physical and soul. So it is with the elements. Three of the elements are very physical. You can touch them with your hand and you can feel them with your body. The fourth, however, is hardly physical, it is rather more spiritual. While you can see the *impact and results* of electricity and energy, you cannot see the energy itself. Energy is not tangible or visible. Thus, we have a similar pattern - *yesod ha'aish* is the *nogah* of the physical realm, a physical matter in which a spiritual root glows.

The Fifth Element

According to some there is a fifth element, and this requires an explanation.

The Rambam called the fifth element *koach hagalgalmim*, the force of the spheres. Simply put, this means that there is a sun and a moon and there is a sphere which makes them move in circles. The Rambam likely took this concept from the Greeks, as we know that he accepted much of the ancient Greeks' scientific understanding. (He probably did not have the tradition of the Kabbalah, as it was a secret during his life.)

But the Rambam is still the Rambam! He was a *baal Ruach Hakodesh*, a possessor of Divine inspiration! He was constantly helped by Hashem! If the Rambam included the force of the spheres in his work, there must be an explanation in Torah for these matters.

Furthermore, the *Kuzari*³⁸ teaches that the Greeks got their wisdom from King Shlomo³ by way of the Persians, who had taken it from the Babylonians, who had taken the wisdom from the Jews, who although they lost their Temple still possessed the traditions from Shlomo. As the wisdom migrated, it was perverted and corrupted, yet the root of the wisdom was still King Shlomo.

Therefore, we believe there is a Torah root to the Greek concept of the force/element of the spheres. The *Chovas Halevavos* also quotes the Greeks as saying there is a fifth element, the *galgalim*, although he disagrees with it.

Why is this concept in such dispute?

According to *Rambam*, the *galgalim* are the source of motion and change. In this world, changes in form are the norm. Solids become liquids, which become gases, which turn into energy. Solids are closest to the element of earth; they fall to the earth because their root is deep inside the earth. When you heat up a solid, you are bringing it closer to *yesod haish*, the highest state of physical items. Flames move up because their root is above in the Heavenly realm. When you heat up a solid, it melts into a liquid, thus rising to a higher form than it was in its original solid state. If you add even more heat, the liquid will move to an even higher state; it will

³⁸ *Kuzari* is the name of a classic work of Jewish philosophy that was authored by the great Torah leader and poet, Rav Yehuda Halevi. Rav Yehuda Halevi was born in either 1070, or 1080 in Toledo, Spain. He was a doctor, poet, and great Torah expert. In 1140 he attempted to move to the land of Israel. According to traditional Jewish accounts he arrived in the holy land and was greatly moved. When he arrived at the gates of Jerusalem, he tore his clothes and started to roll in the dirt, bemoaning the terrible destruction of the Temple. An Arab horseman rode by at that moment and in jealousy of his great attachment to the land trampled him to death. In recognition of the historic privilege we now have to freely visit our holy places in Jerusalem the steps leading to the Western Wall have been named *Ma'alot Rav Yehuda Halevi*, the steps of Rabbi Yehuda Halevi. In *Kuzari* he presents the basic beliefs of Judaism as part of a conversation with a heathen king who is seeking the truth and wishes to follow the true faith.

³⁹ [King Solomon, David's son and the third king of ancient Israel.](#)

evaporate and become a gas. All of this is because of the spheres. (*Hilchos Yesodey HaTorah* 4:5-6)

We need to explore these matters more fully, for they contain lessons from the Torah on how to serve Hashem.

The whole world reflects the light of the Torah. The more passionate your service, the higher the level! Just as fire can raise the level of physical matter, so too can spending time with a passionate Jew raise one from a level of depression and slothful practice to a higher level of service.⁴⁰

But how can there be a fifth element if there are only four letters in the name of *havayah*, ה-ו-ה-י? The answer is that there is a *kutzo shel yud*, the top of the letter *yud*, in the four letter name *Havaya*. This top of the *yud* is the fifth level. That is why this element is disputed. Just as once the letter *yud* is written one no longer sees the *kutzo*, the drop at the top, this fifth element is not really visible and some therefore feel that it does not really exist!

However, support for its existence can also be found in the fact that there are five books of the Torah, not just four! *Shmos*⁴¹ begins the story of the Jewish people, “*veileh shmos bney yisrael habaim mitzaryim*” “And these are the names of the Jewish people coming down to Egypt.” This is the beginning of the books that correspond to the four letters of the name of *havayah*, for the Jewish people represent and are represented by the Almighty’s name, ה-ו-ה-י.

⁴⁰ See *Shem Mishmuel parshas Shemini* who explains that the way to inspire those who are cold in their religious observance is to bring them into the presence of passionate Jews who are filled with burning love for Hashem!

⁴¹ *Exodus, the second of the five books of the Torah.*

The very first book of Torah, *Bereishis*,⁴² is the book of the roots. It talks of creation and the patriarchs, of the foundations of the Jewish people, and it represents the *kutzo shel yud*. It is the root to all the others.

In terms of the *Sefiros*, G-dly attributes, the *kutzo shel yud* in the Almighty's name ק-ו-י is the *Kesser*, the crown. The letter *yud* is *Chochmah*, wisdom; the letter *keih* is *Binah*, understanding; the letter *vav*, which has a *gimatria*, numeric value, of six, represents the six *Sefiros* of *Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferes*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, and *Yesod* (giving, strength, harmony, dominance, empathy, and foundation); and the final letter *keih* is the last attribute, the *middah* of *Malchus*, royalty.

The *kutzo shel yud* also plays a role in, and is found within, the physical world. It is the hidden letter and opposite it stands a physical force higher than energy and scarcely perceptible.

The Element Of Spheres Is The Force Of Attraction

The motion of the planets is due to the dragging force of gravity.

Yet what is the force of gravity? Why does earth attract objects to itself? The *Ohr Hachaim*⁴³ explains the verse “וַיִּכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ”, *Vayechulu hashamayim vihaaretz* “And the

⁴² Genesis, the first book of the five books of the Torah.

⁴³ Rav Chaim Ibn Attar (1698-1743) was the author of the commentary to the Torah called *Ohr Hachaim*. He was born in Morocco, he later moved to the Jerusalem in the land of Israel. In Jerusalem he established two Yeshivos, one for the study of the revealed Torah and the other for the study of the secrets of Torah. The founder of Chassidus, the Baal Shem Tov, is reputed to have told his students that Rav Chaim possessed a part of the soul of Mashiach, the ultimate redeemer. The work *Ohr Hachaim* is a classic of traditional Torah commentary and especially beloved to the Chassidic community.

earth and Heavens were completed” (Genesis 2:1) as teaching us that the force of attraction is what keeps the world alive. The whole world is built on this hidden element - the force of gravity and attraction. The *Ohr Hachaim* explains that *vayechulu* is related to the word *klos*, pining for and pulling towards something. The world is filled with souls pining and longing.⁴⁴

This force of attraction is also what underpins atomic science. Between the tiny particles of atoms there are magnetic bonds, forces that attract one particle to another. Atoms are spheres that rotate like the moon and stars, with the speed of their rotation determining their form in this physical world. Thus, whether at a particular point in time an object manifests itself as a solid or a liquid depends upon the speed at which its spheres are rotating. When the spheres rotate very quickly, it is a liquid; if they move slowly, the item is a solid.

What makes them rotate and move? The force of attraction! Gravity! The *kutzo shel yud* makes them rotate.

⁴⁴ *Shem Mishmuel, Bereishis* page 20, teaches that the power of longing is what keeps the world, and it entered creation on Shabbes. With respect to the verse “*vayechal Elokim bayom hashvii ...*” “And Hashem completed on the seventh day...” Rashi asks, "Is this possible that He performed work on the seventh day for Him to cease on the seventh day?!" In the Midrash, (chapter ten), the sage Gneiva answered, it is to be compared to a king who made a bridal canopy and decorated it. What was missing? The bride! So too what was the world missing? Shabbes! According to the *Shem Mishmuel*, the explanation of this Midrash is that for the six days the created items were expanding outward as the Midrash (chapter five) explains. In tractate Rosh Hashana, it is said, "All the creations were created willingly." Apparently the ability and will to expand, move afar, and become materialistic was given to each creature. A bride is called a *kallah*, which is derived from the phrase “*kalsa nafshi liHashem*” “My soul longs for God!” This refers to the longing from below to Above. This means that on Shabbes the creation receives the force of attraction and longing to return to the Source, the opposite of the will it had during the six days of creation, which was to get far away from its Source and to cause the descent from Above to below. Thus, “*vayechal Elokim bayom hashvii melachto asher asah*” “And God completed on the seventh day the work which he made” means that on the seventh day God brought the *kallah* - the power of attraction from below to Above - to creation. The term *vayechal* means He made it a *kallah*.

We have learnt that the *kutzo shel yud* relates to *Kesser*, the source of will and desire. The force of spheres is really the power of attraction which makes objects rotate and move from one state to the next. G-dly life is united with this force. What gives an item life? Hashem's word.

The kabbalists have long explained that even a stone has life! The word of Hashem gives it life and makes it move. The word of Hashem that gives an object its life is clothed in the most spiritual and elevated physical matter. It is clothed in the force of attraction – the fifth element. Until the *galgalim* matter is physical, but once we arrive at the *galgalim* and all the matters above them, they are filled with G-dly qualities that give them life.

Human Applications Of The Four Elements

As we discussed earlier, man's *nefesh habahamis* is comprised of four elements.

Earth, the *yesod haafar*, is manifest in man when he has very little life and movement. A person under its influence wants to stay in one place; he wants to sleep and do nothing, and generally shows signs of depression.⁴⁵ A person who feels a bit more life seeks pleasures and enjoyments. He looks to enjoy and excite his physical senses. The *nefesh habahamis* of such a person is manifesting the element of water, for water is related to pleasures. A person involved with superficial and frivolous items is manifesting the element of wind, which is empty. A person

⁴⁵ On several occasions, our Rebbe has explained that the crime of negative speech, *lashon hara*, is related to depression. The Talmud links negativity to the serpent who enticed mankind to sin. Hashem punished the snake by declaring *afar lachmo*, dust is his bread. Since dust in the psyche is depression, the serpent seeks that which is depressing, deathly, and sad. With the sin of the tree of knowledge, the serpent became part of man, *zahamas hanachash*. Man struggles with the urge to be negative, for *zahamas hanachash*, the earth part, seeks negative thoughts, negative speech, and depression.

filled with anger is manifesting the fury of fire. Anger is far more life than pleasure seeking, empty talk, and depression. These four elements are the source of all the bad *middos*.

The reason our Jewish nation must experience four exiles is so that we eliminate the negative manifestation of these four elements *from within us!* The exile of *Bavel*, Babylon, was for the cure of arrogance, as the Talmud teaches that *Bavel* took nine of the ten measures of *gaava*, arrogance, that came to the world. *Ruach*, *mayim*, and *aish* are the Persian, Greek, and Roman exiles, respectively. There was also a fifth exile, just as there is fifth element, corresponding to the *kutzo shel yud - galus mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exile. This was the root of all subsequent anti-Jewish hatred.

The *seforim*, holy books, explain that the verse “*vayakatzu mipnei bney yisrael*” “And they were revolted in the presence of Israel” (Exodus 1:12) refers to the Egyptian opposition to the Jewish nation because of the *kutzo shel yud* within each one of us. Our slavery in Egypt was for the purpose of being *mevarrer*, clarifying and bringing to light, this hidden *kutzo shel yud* within each and every Jew. *Kesser* is *ratzon*, will. It is the root of the person. The Egyptians could not stand the Jews because their inner will was the opposite of the Jewish will, *ratzon*. The purpose of the exile in Egypt was to reveal this inner *ratzon* of the Jewish nation.

As of *mattan Torah*, our receipt of the Torah at Mount Sinai, we have the rule that “*yisrael af al pi shechata yisrael hu*” “A Jew remains a Jew even if he sins,” (Tractate Sanhedrin 44a) reflecting the fact, as we discussed earlier, that there is a certain G-dly essence within each Jew that can never be destroyed. As the Tanya teaches, every Jew has a *ratzon hapnimi*, an inner love and will geared towards Hashem that even his sins cannot damage or weaken. It is the

The Way to the Tree of Life

revelation or refinement of that will which we achieved in leaving Egypt. We became *yidden*, *Jews*, when we left Egypt.

The Torah states right before the splitting of the Red Sea that “*Ki’asher raisem es mitzrayim hayom lo tosifu lirosam od ad olam*” “You will never see the Egyptians again” (*Shmos* 14:13) (because the achievement gained by the Jewish nation through the Egyptian exile can never be lost (and thus need not be learnt again)! The inner essence of the Jew left exile! This is why the inner essence of Egypt was opposed to the Jew. The Jew feels that his life is attachment to Hashem, his will is pining for that, while the Egyptian lived for earthly pleasures.

There are things in life that one wants but that do not reach his very essential life. The *kesser* is the *ratzon* for those things that are most meaningful, the matters one feels are literally the reason for life. This is why at Sinai there was a hate that came down, and our Sages interpret the Hebrew word *Sinai* as being related to the Hebrew word for hate, *sinah*. This hatred was the unending hate of the other nations towards the Jewish nation. At Sinai, we acquired our Jewish essence, the will of what to live for, the will to live for those things that give life, the Torah. This distinction between the Jew and Egyptian, the Jew and all other nations, all came down at Sinai.

Accordingly, the Shabbes on which we read *parshas* *Shmos*, the first reading of the book of Exodus, has a special significance, as it speaks of the exile that affected the essential point within each Jew. When you learn this *parsha*, it has a *segula*, an almost miraculous power to shine into your soul lights that will strengthen your inner essence and provide you with the spiritual boosts needed for your inner and innate will to be attached to Hashem. The more Egypt

tried to afflict and enslave, the more the Jews were freed, the more their inner points were revealed. “*Kaasher yaanu oso kein yirbe vichein yifrotz,*” “The more they afflicted the Jews, the more the Jews increased and succeeded.” (*Shmos 1:12*) So too the more we read of the travails Israel suffered at the hands of Egypt, the more we will be able to appreciate the challenges set out against our inner will, enabling our inner will to strengthen and reveal our true inner essence.

The Shabbes on which we read *parsha shmos* has the power to bring the *kutzo shel yud* out of exile and take our *ratzon* out of *galus*, exile. We must prepare for this Shabbes. Get ready for the great days of Adar⁴⁶. Prepare for real joy, the inner joy of the soul. For such a joy, one must prepare! The *atzmiusdike*, deepest essential, happiness of *ohr tzadikim yismachu*, that light of the righteous which makes them rejoice, needs suitable preparation!

The days of *shovavim*, when the first six Torah portions of the book of Exodus are read, is a time to become personally holy and as individuals to leave our subjective states of sin and exile. Thus it is a time to toil in learning, to put in effort to understand the Torah so that you will merit to reach the great lights that come during the great days of the four *parshiyos*, Purim, and Pesach.

Prepare yourself in the days of *shovavim*. Make yourself into a worthy and ready vessel to absorb the great spiritual lights that are coming.

⁴⁶ Adar is the last Hebrew month of the year. It is the time when the great Purim miracle occurred and the Jews were saved from annihilation in Persia. The entire month is a time for joy and spiritual growth.

One of the principles of our faith is that Hashem's mind is unlike our own. We are mere mortals, with limited intellectual capabilities, while He is an infinite, singular, and united Being. We cannot fully grasp His nature or His mind and thought. Lesson Four explores this theme. What is it that makes a human a human? Where in heaven is the source of human intellect? Why can't the human being grasp the thoughts of the Almighty? What is the nature of true leadership and rule? Lesson Four concludes with a call to overcome the body and acknowledge the soul as primary.

Lesson Four: Emulate the Almighty!

ונפש השנית בישראל

And the second Jewish soul

Only Jews have this second soul.

היא חלק אלוה ממעל ממש כמ"ש ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים ואתה נפחת בי וכמ"ש בזוהר מאן דנפח מתוכיה נפח פ"י מתוכיותו ומפנימיותו שתוכיות ופנימיות החיות שבאדם מוציא בנפיתו בכח

Is a piece of the Divine itself, as it is written, "And He blew into his nostrils a breath of life" (Bereishis 2:7) "And You blew it into me." (morning liturgy) And the Zohar teaches, one who blows sends breath from his innermost essence, for the innermost essence of one's life force is emitted when one forcefully exhales.

The world was created with *maamaros*, Divine utterances, for Hashem clothed His life-force in His words. The meaning of this is that while the world was created with G-dly life, this life was not a display of His innermost, essential life. Rather it was life clothed in letters.

When describing the creation of man the Torah does not merely state that G-d commanded that man appear. Rather we are told that “He blew into His nostrils.” This refers to a higher life-force: essential G-dliness. G-dliness that cannot be grasped by mind or clothed and limited within words was sent into man!

כך עד"מ נשמות ישראל
עלו במחשבה כדכתיב בני בכורי ישראל בנים אתם לה' אלהיכם פי' כמו שהבן נמשך ממוח האב כך כביכול נשמת כל
איש ישראל נמשכה ממחשבתו וחכמתו ית' דאיהו חכים ולא בחכמה ידיעא אלא הוא וחכמתו א' וכמ"ש הר"ם שהוא
המדע והוא היודע כו' ודבר זה אין ביכולת האדם להבינו על בוריו כו' כדכתיב החקר אלוה תמצא וכתוב כי לא
'מחשבותי מחשבותיכם וגו'

So too it was taught as a parable, that the souls of Israel rose in His thoughts, as it is written, “My son, my firstborn, Israel” and “You are children of G-d Your Lord.” The meaning of this is just as a son is drawn from the mind of the father, so as it were the soul of each Jewish person was drawn from the thoughts and wisdom of the Blessed One. He is wise but not with wisdom that He knows rather He and His wisdom are one, as the Rambam wrote, “He is the knowledge, and the knower etc.” This is a matter that a human does not have the ability to correctly understand, as it is written, “Can the understanding of G-d be found?” and “My thoughts are not your thoughts etc.”

G-d’s wisdom is higher than our sense of wisdom. His wisdom is a G-dly matter, beyond our comprehension, but there is a parable to it: wisdom here on earth. What we call *chochmah* is a parable to the high, heavenly level of celestial wisdom.

Maimonides taught us a principle about Divinity, that G-d is the knowledge and the knower. A human knows matters that are not united with his essence. He is one being and what he knows is a separate and distinct reality. Hashem though is the knowledge and the knower. Yet this is a level that is beyond our comprehension, our mind cannot truly grasp it. Let us explain why this is so.

What Makes Us Human

Man was created in the image of G-d. “*Bitzelem Elokim bara oso!*” “In the image of G-d He made man!” (*Bereishis* 1:27) What is the meaning of *bitzelem Elokim*? It means that man resembles the Almighty. With all his features man resembles Hashem⁴⁷.

For example we find that our sages say that “*liasid lavo asidin lomar al hatzadikim kadosh - mah hakbah kayam laolam - af tzadikim kayamim laolam,*” “In the future they will say of the righteous, ‘they are holy’ because just as G-d is holy so are the pious holy. Just as the Creator exists forever the righteous will live forever.”

While the Talmud points out other points of resemblance between *tzadikim* and Hashem, the truth is that we learn this from an explicit verse, “*kdoshim tihyu ki kadosh ani Hashem elokeichem*” “Be holy because I, Hashem your God, am holy.” (*Vayikra* 19:2) (The Midrash says, “*yachol kmoni* etc” “Is it possible that one must be like Me?” And it ultimately states, “*kedushasi limalah mikdushachem*” “My holiness is more exalted than your holiness.” Yet this still proves that man’s holiness resembles the holiness of the Divine. Only because man at his core resembles Hashem can it be thought that man might be obligated to be holy like Him!)

Becoming G-dly Is The Definition of Humanity

What is a man? What makes a man? Consider a person with three ears. Is he still human? In the eyes of the law, can he count toward a *minyan*, a quorum of ten men for reciting holy matters? Or is he not a man?

⁴⁷ See *Likutey Oros* page 367

Certainly he would count as a man! He might have a deformed face, but he is human. He might look different, but this is not relevant to the definition of his essential identity.

What about someone who looks like an animal? Would he be considered a person? If he had the body of a cow, but talked and understood as man does, would he be a person?

This is a big question for the *poskim*, the *halachik*, legal, authorities. Maybe we should examine the way he talks? Maybe we should explore if he can choose freely and conquer his urges?

In other words, it is hard to determine what makes a person a human. What is the *etzem* Adam, the essence of man? What parts of a man relate to his essence, and which parts do not relate to his essential identity?

The essence of man is *adamaeh laelyon*, I will resemble the one on high. A person who cannot resemble the One on high is not a human! One who can resemble G-d is a person who at his core *already* resembles the Almighty. All he must do is bring out this that is within him. He must translate the potential to the actual. The person who can pull from the latent within himself and actualize G-dliness - make himself into a G-dly person - is a human being. One who does not have the potential to transform himself into a G-dly being is not a human! Thus a person who in his essential definition resembles Hashem is a human being.

The *Maharal* asks, why did G-d form man from the earth and name him Adam, as this name resembles the word *adamah*, earth? He answered that just as the nature of earth is to draw out of the seed all its potential and make it actual, so is it man's nature to draw out of himself all his potential and make it actual. Man is called Adam, for he was created to **take his hidden abilities from the potential to the actual.**

“*Achor vakedem tzartani*” (*Tehillim 139:5*) “Last and first You formed me” The midrash explains, *Achor limaaseh Bereishis vkedem limaaseh Bereishis*” “Man can be considered the last of the created items and man can be considered the first of the creations.” Man can be the first of the creation or the last. Man is awesomely great! He has great abilities! When he draws them from the potential to the actual he is *kedem limaase breashis*, before the rest of creation. If he does not draw them from the potential to the actual he is *achor limaase Bereishis*, after the rest of creation.⁴⁸

The Limited Contains the Infinite

Hashem is infinite, “*leis machshava tefisa beih klal*” “no thought can grasp Him at all.” We have no words to talk of Hashem. We cannot describe the essence of the Almighty with any description. He is above whatever we say. Yet through *dveykus* we can connect with Him.

Hashem wanted to be revealed. He had a thought *anah emloch*, I will rule. He wanted to display authority and display Himself. He wanted a creation.

What after all is revelation? He wished to come down into the limitations of boundaries. Hashem wanted that the light of *leis machshava tefisa bei klal* should descend and express itself in the limitations of *gevul*, boundaries and limitations, and through limited vessels the infinite would be sensed.

For example, He wanted to put the infinite light in the vessel of *chachoma*, wisdom, so that when a person grasps *chochmah*, he will hold onto the *ohr Ain Sof*, the light of infinity. One

⁴⁸ *Shem Mishmuel* explains that man has a soul, a piece of the Divine, and a body, from the earth. If man makes his soul his primary definition of self he was created before the rest of creation, for the soul preceded the material realm. Yet if man makes his body his primary definition of self, then he is *achor limaase bereishis*, the last of the creation, for his body was created last; even the mosquito was created before him!

can grasp the earthly vessel of wisdom and when one does so a G-dly wisdom (that he would not otherwise be able to comprehend) is hidden within it.

In other words, the infinite light clothed itself within holy *chochmah*. When you grasp Hashem through a point of wisdom you are holding onto a level that is higher than wisdom. You are holding a bit of the level that *leis machshava tefisa beih klal!* So it is with *binah*, understanding.

All the *Sefiros*, characteristics of the Almighty, in fact are vessels that allow one to have a bit of a *dveykus* and connection to the G-dly concept that no human thought can truly grasp at all. All the Heavenly *middos*, attributes, are vessels so that through them one can have a bit of *dveykus* with the *ohr Ain Sof*.

What is *Dveykus*?

There are no real words to describe *dveykus*, it is a type of experience that is higher than comprehension. The only word we can say is that **it is *dveykus***, a being unites with Hashem!

All creations desire this, it is our reason for living, for *dveykus* is the highest experience possible. This is the greatest perfection one can acquire.⁴⁹

A creature needs a vessel for *dveykus*; only through a vessel can it grasp *dveykus*.

The ideal man will truly resemble the One above. The ultimate destination of each person is this state of resemblance. We will all be *davuk* with Hashem at the time of complete *tikkun*, fixing of the physical, although there will be different levels of attachment according to how a

⁴⁹ See Messilas Yescharim and our Rebbe's **lessons** on the Messilas Yescharim as well as Rav Aryeh Kaplan's lessons about life and its purpose in chapter two of his book *Innerspace*, and in his pamphlets about belief in G-d printed in the Aryeh Kaplan Reader.

person worked on himself. (The real and best *dveykus* is called *dveykus* of the world of *Atzilus*, nobility.)

The Universal Parts of Man

There are four universes, *Atzilus*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirahh*, and *Asiyah*, and these four universes correspond to the four letters of the Divine name *havaya*.

Where do we find these four universes in man? (After all a human being encompasses the entire creation.) Man has four parts. (We are talking here of a man of holiness. In a man of *sitra achra*, the Other Side, there are also four parts, because *Zeh liumas zeh asah haElokim*, G-d made this one opposing this one. (*Koheles 7:14*)) The concept of *dveykus* corresponds to and is at the level of the world of *Atzilus*.

The ability to think and comprehend in man corresponds to the *Olam Haberiah*, Universe of Creation. The soul is the source of all actions and abilities of man. Without a soul one dies. The body has tools that channel particular soul parts. Thought is a piece of the soul brought out by the mind. We are talking here of holy thoughts, thoughts that contain in them a G-dly light, such as thinking of the grandeur of Hashem or other holy matters. When thinking these thoughts you sense that *dveykus* to Hashem lies hidden within them because you are awakening the holy *Olam Haberiah* within you.

If you would enter the world of *Beriah*, you would see thoughts! Just as in this world a table, due to the fact that our five senses access it, exists and is real, if you enter the world of *Beriah*, you would sense an analysis of the *Rambam's* thinking as a real object. In our universe

reality is physical things; in a higher realm, where matters are less material, one can grasp matters that are more spiritual. Human thought is the world of *Beriah* in man.

Beneath cognition stand emotions. The domain of feelings and celestial beings is the world of *Yetzirahh*, the world of feelings and *middos*, character traits.⁵⁰ (Angels for example are related to feelings, as the job of angels is to sing and song is the language that expresses the heart's emotions.) In man the heart manifests the feelings of the soul. This world is strengthened and felt through speech.

Speech seems related to thought for we concretize our thoughts with words. That is due to the mind part in it. However, the essential definition of speech is that words and the mouth draw out emotions from the soul and are the *Olam HaYetzirah* in man.

After this we have the ability of man to do. The *Asiyah* of man - when he chooses to do something, to move a limb, and all the doing of man - is the world of *Asiyah*.

Corresponding to these four worlds are four different parts of the soul. *Nefesh* is from *Asiyah*, *Ruach* is from *Yetzirahh*, and *Neshama* from *Beriah*, while the level of *Atzilus* and *dveykus* is called *Chaya*. And the realm of the *kutzo shel yud*⁵¹ is the fifth level, the level of *Yechidah*.

From all this we see that the soul works with a vessel, such as the power of thought. The soul needs a vessel to emerge from potential to actual and the tool for this can be thought, for thought is where Hashem is clothed.

⁵⁰ The heart is needed for respiration, speech is **limited** breaths. Emotions are based in the heart. Good character traits are described as a good heart. As Rabbi Elazar Ben Aruch taught in *Pirkei Avos* (chapter 2 mishna 9) the most important good *middah* is a good heart. Emotions, good character traits, and speech relate to *Yetzirah*. Good utterances have a unique way of causing improved character, even more **so** than good actions.

⁵¹ Discussed in lesson three.

In the world of *Beriah*, there is much G-dliness revealed through thoughts, but it is not united with its vessel. And so it is with the world of *Yetzirahh*. Just as the soul clothes itself in feelings not one with the soul, in *Yetzirahh* G-dliness is not one with its vessel. And this is certainly so as well in the world of *Asiyah*, in which we see trees and other physical things clothing the *chochmah* that Hashem has made.

In all of these three worlds we see Hashem's G-dliness in a vessel. Therein G-dliness is not revealed in its purest sense. In all of them there is rather a vessel and a light, not pure G-dliness, for Hashem is *achdus pashut*, absolute oneness. So if there are two matters - light and vessel – it is not one and it is not a place of a real and perfect experience of Hashem. The light was not revealed in its right way if it needed a vessel to reveal it!

Only the world of *Atzilus* is different, and truly G-dly! In other words, when we talk of the part of the soul that is not clothed in thoughts (rather the essence of the soul at the level of *chaya*, the *neshama* to *neshama*) we ask how one connects to it? We answer: with the essence of the soul! In the Zohar we read: “*Olam HaAtzilus ihu vigarmohi chad behon*” “In the world of *Atzilus*, He and His light are one therein.” It is a level where the vessel became one with the light. There is still a vessel (for without a vessel there can be no attachment to anything) but the light and the vessel are one. *ihu vigarmohi chad behon!*

I have no words for *dveykus*. If you were to ask me to explain attachment, if you asked, “What is *dveykus*, what is G-dliness?” I would answer, “You are a being who is immersed in thoughts, speech and actions. You are not a perfect being, since you are a being of thoughts you wish to comprehend, for your thought is a vessel, and this vessel can only connect to a light through understanding and comprehension.”

But when you get higher than the vessel of thinking, you reach a point that is higher than understanding, a higher attachment. Understanding is not the only way to connect, it is not the greatest *birrur*, clarification. Above understanding you get to a level of essential attachment. This is the level of *Atzilus*, where there is a *dveykus* to the essential light. In *Atzilus ihu vigarmoyhu chad behon!*

Man is supposed to be *adame laelyon* - to resemble Hashem. Just as Hashem is one, man must become a united and unitary being. Man has to reach a level of *ihu vigarmoyhu chad behon*, he and his vessel have to become one. The soul of man and the body of man have to become one.

The physical body of man has fallen many times since the sin of the tree of knowledge, but the essence of the body is that it is a vessel. The soul is a light and the body is a vessel, and they must become absolutely one, and then man will absolutely resemble the *elyon!* This will occur in the realm of *tikkun*, fixing, when man will have an experience of *ihu vigarmoyhu chad behon!* He will resemble what is above!

When Hashem wanted to reveal Himself in our world, the world of limits, He wanted a man who would resemble the One above, a man who would resemble the highest of levels. A being who would be one with his vessel, just as the highest levels of spirituality is the world of *Atzilus* where He is one with His vessels. This is the level that is needed, the level of the real and correct man, where the light and vessel truly unite and become one.

The *Rambam* stated that we cannot truly comprehend G-dliness, for just as we cannot grasp His essence we cannot grasp His thoughts, as He is the knowledge and the knower.

The explanation of this is that we comprehend concepts with thought. Thought is a vessel from the realm of *Beriah*. In *Beriah* the light and the vessel are two entities. In *Beriah* light is clothed in a vessel not united with the vessel. Thought does not become one with the essence of a matter, rather it understands as much as it can. G-dly wisdom is different in that it is a reality of absolute oneness between the knowledge and the knower.

So the tool of *Beriah* cannot truly connect with Godliness which is a different type of entity! It is through *dveykus*, attachment with Hashem, through utilizing the force of *chayah* and the world of *Atzilus*, that one can connect with G-dliness, for from oneness one can connect with oneness.

And this is what the Rambam means. The revelation of *Olam HaAtzilus* is that He is the knower and the known. The light which is called the knower and what it is clothed in, the known, is all one! And just as the light in its essence cannot be understood without a vessel, so too when the light and the vessel are clothed and united – they cannot be comprehended and understood! You cannot understand the *machshava elyonah*, Heavenly thoughts!

The Rambam writes of G-d's knowing and how it conflicts with G-d's granting of free choice, and the Rambam says that just as we know that thought cannot connect to the essence of Hashem, so too it cannot connect to the thoughts of Hashem, for those thoughts are also essential G-dliness.

When we talk of "He blew into man the breath of life" we are talking of the way the soul should be, we are talking of the level of oneness.

The soul is perfect. It did not come to this world for its own sake. The soul is a reality of oneness with its vessels: in the soul you see all the ten *Sefiros* as united in a oneness of pure G-

dliness. When the soul enters the body it is in vessels that are not one with the soul, and the job of the soul is to work through Torah and mitzvos to transform the body until the entirety of the person will be on the level of *Atzilus*, and then the soul and the body will unite fully and be one.

At this level there is no death! And this true oneness will happen in the future when all of man will be a soul. This is the level of blowing into him a soul of life. Just as the essence of G-d, pure G-dliness, is absolute oneness, so is the soul an absolute oneness. This is the real man. Yet man also has a body, and the body is dirt from the earth, *adamah*. Hence man has to pull out of this dirt its hidden forces and potentialities, to transform the body into soul!

The Struggle Of Man

All souls were once in the soul of *adam harishon*, the first man. All the souls of the Jewish nation were encompassed by *adam harishon*. Know that when we talk of the souls of the Jewish nation we are talking of the G-dly life in all the worlds, for there is no G-dly life in any realm of existence without Jewish souls. All the life in the world - in the plant, living, and other kingdoms - are sparks from the collective soul of Israel.

The difference between a spark and a soul is that a spark is a *perat*, an individual force or a detail, while the soul is a collective force. The soul is a *kumah shleimah*, it has a complete array of forces. Man must raise the sparks, he must elevate the sparks to include them into souls, to make them part of an Adam.

The G-dly life in the universe is the collected life of all Jewish souls. This general and collected life has many names, and at its root it is called the *Shechinah*, Divine presence. When

there is a *giluy*, revelation of, *shechinah*, the holiness that is revealed is the same holiness that encompasses all the Jewish souls.

The *Shechinah* is also called the *middas hamalchus* of Hashem. When Hashem said *Ana Emloch*, when He wanted to be revealed in the realm of limits, the *Ain Sof* (of which no words can be said) wished to reveal itself, that there should be a place in *gvul* that can grasp G-dliness.

Who is a real king? One who reveals himself!

Some would say a king is one who leads a country. The person who cannot be told what to do, can do whatever he wants, is the master of the police and the army... In short, the king. Such a view is superficial and false.

One who rules because he has an army and people are afraid of him is not really the ruler. He rules over actions, but not hearts. People are afraid of him, so their actions conform to what he mandates, but their hearts are not attached to him. They have not accepted him. When they close the shutters of their windows they ignore his commands! They think whatever they wish to think! In the realm of thought he is not the ruler at all. He is only the ruler in the external realm of action.

This is not real rule. This is the rule of *sitra achra*, the Other Side. It derives nourishment from the true concept of rulership but is merely a copy and a model. It takes a stick and intimidates people into following. But one who leads in this way does not rule the innermost realms of his subjects.

(There is a real rulership in *sitra achra*, and that is when a wicked gentile listens to *sitra achra*. Since his essence agrees to the wishes of *sitra achra* he is truly ruled by the forces of evil.)

Now, we are in exile, and non-Jews rule over the Jewish people. This too is a *yenikah*, a drawing of nourishment. Drawing nourishment from the fallen sparks of the concepts of holy rule they are able to enslave the Jewish nation. However, the real essential rule does not exist in the *sitra achra*. Real rule is inner obedience.

Why would a subject annul himself? Think of a student who is *battel*, annulled, to his rebbe, to a great *tzadik*. Why does he annul himself and follow the *tzadik*? This *tzadik* has an elevated, purified soul, and he has the ability to reveal the great achievements that are in his soul, and so his revelations lead others to follow him!

He may reveal himself in different ways. Some *tzadikim* reveal themselves with their words of Torah, others in the way they pray. For still others simply their presence, sitting in a room with them, triggers holy feelings in a person, for they reveal their holy achievements when people are with them.

If the *tzadik* did not have the ability to reveal the strengths he has within himself people would not follow him. But when he reveals himself other souls, rooted in the same source, are drawn to follow him.

All Jewish souls are naturally attracted to holiness, and this *tzadik* might have a great degree of love of Hashem. When other souls are in his presence, they feel this great love of Hashem, are drawn to express a similar love of Hashem, and follow his lead. The *tzadik* is the real ruler. Our Sages declared, *man malkhey rabbanan*, Who are the kings? The Rabbis.

The rabbis, are the true kings. They rule in the inner realm through revealing the great holiness that is within them. Their rule is from the great love and fear of G-d that is in them.

They are not imitators of royalty, but true kings. The other rulers are imitators. The rabbi is a ruler in the inner realm: he rules in the hearts and people are drawn to his rule.

Others might have armies and thousands bowing, but in the inner realm they are not ruling at all. While rabbis externally might have a small following, they are the true rulers, for they rule in the inner realm. **When Hashem said, *Ana Emloch*, it was in this sense.**

Ana Emloch means “I will reveal” or “I will show infinity.” In sum, “I will reveal *ohr Ain Sof*, the light of infinity, to such a degree that people will completely annul themselves when they experience this light!” People of *gvul*, limits and boundaries, will surrender completely! They will annul their existence and with complete obedience will accept Divine authority and wishes. They will be ready to break all walls that might divide us from the Divine and shatter all evil urges. They will succeed in all trials and tests solely to connect to His high light they have now experienced! *Ana emloch* - I am the king because I reveal!

Once He has revealed His *mahus*, inner nature, and *atzmus*, inner essence, all creatures will be attracted and drawn to Him because all creations will know that they receive their life and existence only from *His* life and existence. Therefore all beings will annul themselves to Him and truly accept Him as their king.

This attribute of *ana emloch* is called the *shechinah*. When we say that there is a moment of *giluy shechinah*, we mean that there is a moment of revelation of *ana emloch*. At the moment of *giluy shechinah* in the Beis Hamikdash Jews accepted on themselves *ol malchus shamayim*, the yoke of Divine authority! Why did they accept His yoke then? For the general life of all the worlds, the life of all the Jewish souls, appears when Hashem declares *ana emloch* and such a revelation attracts Jews to accept the yoke of Heaven.

Adam *harishon*, the first man, displayed the collective soul of Israel, the general life of all the universes. Adam was a human being, but he also encompassed all that existed in a concentrated form. The root of all lives was in his body in a small measure. The life for all the universes and the souls of all Jews in all the generations were included in Adam *harishon*.

Had Adam *harishon* not eaten from the tree of knowledge and instead eaten from the tree of life it would have meant that all the souls of history would have acquired perfection in a very short time. Not eating from the tree of knowledge would have been the equivalent of keeping all the *mitzvos lo taaseh*, the Torah's prohibitions. It would have caused an absolute separation from all the forces of evil. Eating from the tree of life would have been the equivalent of the study of Torah, for Torah is also called *eitz chayim*, a tree of life. The study of Torah encompasses all the mitzvos of the Torah, and in this way all souls would have quickly arrived at the state of *tikkun*.

After the sin of the tree of knowledge there was a great confusion and mixture. Just as there is an Adam of holiness, *ana emloch of kedusha*, there is also Adam *bliyaal*, a man of the netherworld, all the forces of evil, with the serpent as the head of these forces. There is evil in all these body parts: the head, legs, eyes and hands, for this is a full Adam of *rah*, evil.

Once Adam ate from the tree of knowledge these evils entered him, and he then had Adam *bliyaal* mixed inside of him. This frightening mixture, Adam of *kedusha* and Adam *bliyaal*, thus became a part of each person. Man has one foot in *kedusha*, accepting the yoke of heaven, and one spiritual leg of impurity, a force of unholiness, and it is a great job - a labor of

six thousand years - to separate the holiness from the unholy, to wrest holiness from the cover of Adam *bilayaal* in every part of one's being.⁵²

Makkos In Egypt As A Lesson For Personal Spiritual Growth

Parshas Vaeira relates the beginning of the Jewish departure from Egypt. This departure is told in two portions, *parshas Vaeira* and *Parshas Bo*. The ten *makkos*, plagues that hit the Egyptians, separated the holy *middos* from the evil forms of the ten statements of creation.

When the Jews left Egypt there was a separation between the evil, the Egyptians, and the holy souls, those who left. *Vaeira* has seven *makkos*. And as we know there is a classical division among the attributes of Hashem. There are seven *middos*, feelings and attributes, and then *gimel rishonos*, three Supernal Intellects, or components of thought: *Chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas*.

The seven *middos*, feelings and attributes, parallel the seven plagues discussed in the *parsha*. They also correspond to the seven days of the week and the seven shepherds.⁵³ We must also realize that there are two worlds: the *alma diisgalya*, revealed world, and the *almah diiskasya*, hidden world, and that these seven *middos* are from the *almah diisgalya*, which is why the *parsha* is called *Vaeira*, "and I appeared."

The three Intellects are from the *alma diiskasya*, the hidden realm. In this *parsha* each *makkah* took the Jews out of one *Kellipahh* and the corresponding attribute ascended. Thus,

⁵² In the *Nishmas* prayer we declare, *ki chol peh licha yodeh*, for every mouth will thank You, *vichol lashon licha tishava*, and every tongue will pledge loyalty to You, *vichol ayin licha titzape*, and each eye will look to You, *vichol berech licha tichra*, and every knee will kneel to You. How can we say this? There are many who do not acknowledge or serve Hashem! The Satmer Rebbe explained that the deeper meaning of *ayin*, *berech*, *peh*, and *lashon* is a channel for the holy *ayin*, *berech*, *peh*, and *lashon* of *adam dikdusha*. One who uses these organs for different purposes has bodily organs but they do not deserve the Hebrew and holy names for they are not connected to holiness.

⁵³ *Avraham, Yitzchok, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, and David.*

blood took us out of the *malchus* of *Kellipahh* and brought us to the *malchus* of holiness. Frogs were the *yesod* of holiness, and so on for all the other *middos* as well until hail, which was a fixing of *chessed*.

In *Parshas Bo* we also have three plagues. *Bo* 82 in *gimatria* is three, and these three plagues corresponded to the three Intellects. (Interestingly, the Hebrew word “*bo*” is made up of two letters: a *beis*, which has a numeric value of two, and an *alef*, which has a value of one.) *Choshech*, darkness, and *arbeh*, locusts, correspond to *Chochmah* and *binah*. The Zohar says that *Chochmah* and *binah* are two friends that never separate, *terei rei'in dlo misparshin*, so, too, both plagues are hinted in the same letter. The *alef* in *Bo* is for *makkas bechoros*, for the *kesser*, crown, of holiness. *Kesser* is the beginning, the *reishis*.

Thus this is a *parsha* of fixing the *middos*. During *shovavim*,⁵⁴ the way to fix *middos* is with *makkos*. The evil urge may not understand lessons from the mind. You have to beat the *yetzer hara* by not spoiling your body. The Midrash says about the body, “A master who treats a slave too generously might find the slave as his ruler.” Break your body now. Learn for hours on end. Do not give your body all of its urges. Stay away from honor, and other things the body would like, and be careful with your words. Even if it is not a sin, teach yourself to conquer your *yetzer hara*. He cannot be spoiled! He needs to learn basic respect, *derech erez*! Then, once the body learns, you will derive much pleasure from him.

In the story of the Jewish exodus we read, *Kaved lev Paroh*, Pharaoh’s heart was hardened. The Hebrew word *Kaved* can mean heavy or it can refer to the liver. Pharaoh’s

⁵⁴ The six weeks of the year when Jewish communities read during the Torah reading the story of the exit from Egypt and our subsequent receipt of the Torah and its laws, are known as the weeks of *Shovavim*. *Shovavim* is the acronym of the names of the Torah portions, *Shmos, Va'eira, Bo, Bishalach, Yisro, Mishpatim*. These six weeks are a time for personal redemption from sins in general and in particular for the sins of excess material pleasure and youthful indiscretion.

thoughts were like the liver: the body might be *kaved*, and so is the opposite of the mind, and will not appreciate the mind. It needs some blows to understand.

This is the job of the days of *shovavim*: the body needs to learn lessons in order to respect the *neshama*. The *neshama* is a great light. How dare you bother it with laziness and *taavos*, instinctual urges? Teach your body by denying it some of its pleasures to display *derech erez* to the *neshama*, and so that the body might listen to it.

The verse declared, *Lihafnos elecha kol rishai erez*, To turn to you all the wicked of the land. People are quick to see everyone else as sinners. The challenge is to direct critique toward oneself. I am the sinner, my body is the sinner and I must conquer it and teach it some lessons. The *Chozeh*⁵⁵ would always teach that *lihafnos elecha kol rishey aretz* means we are to realize that we are the *rishoim*, and so turn all the *rishaei aretz* to ourselves. We are *kirasha*, like a sinner: beat yourself up a bit, oppose your body.

We all want to teach others to respect us. Instead, let's teach our body to have respect for the soul. This is the message of *Vaera*: G-dliness is revealed through giving blows to Pharaoh. And when Pharaoh and evil are beaten up *limaan teidah ki liHashem haaretz*, So that you will know that the earth belongs to G-d, (*Shmos 9:29*) the whole world hears G-d. Everyone sees that Hashem made them, and the light of soul is revealed.

May we merit that the body be dimmed and the heavenly soul light up and guide the world. May Hashem help us to internalize the message of *Vaera* so that we can arrive at *Bo* and then *Beshalach* and *Yisro* and then *Shekalim* and *Pesach*! Let us merit to keep getting higher and higher with only ever increasing levels of spiritual light.

⁵⁵ Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Horowitz (1745-1815), he was called the Chozeh of Lublin, the Seer of Lublin. He was one of the greatest Chassidic Rebbes in Poland.

What is the difference between Jewish and non Jewish spirituality? Judaism believes that the Almighty knows the future and controls all and it also believes that man has been granted freedom of choice. How are we to live with this paradox? In Lesson Five these questions are explored and answered. The realm of the Divine is above the reach of human thought. What to us seems a contradiction can in fact be true if Hashem revealed that it is so. There is a time for viewing the world as the arena of choices and a time to view the world as the domain where the Almighty knows and controls all.

Lesson Five: Divine Knowledge and Free Choice

וכן בכל דור ודור יש ראשי אלפי ישראל שנשמותיהם הם בחי' ראש ומוח לגבי נשמות ההמון וע"ה וכן נפשות לגבי נפשות כי כל נפש כלולה מנפש רוח ונשמה

So too in each generation there are the leaders of multitudes of Jews whose souls are like the head and the mind relative to the souls of the masses and the ignorant ones. The souls of the masses are like feet and heels relative to the leaders. There are mind souls relative to other leg and heel souls. For each soul is comprised of a nefesh, action, part, a ruach, spirit, [translate] part and a neshama, cognitive soul, part.

The Makeup of Jewish Souls

The soul has three parts: *nefesh*, which produces actions; *ruach*, which produces speech and feelings; and the *neshama*, which is the source of thought. The *nefesh* itself also has parts that

model these three parts: *nefesh dnefesh*, *nefesh of nefesh*; *ruach dnefesh*, *ruach of nefesh*; and *neshama dnefesh*, *neshama of nefesh* in the *nefesh*. This pattern continues further and further and appears everywhere. There is *nefesh dnefesh dnefesh*, and *ruach dnefesh dnefesh*, and *neshama dnefesh dnefesh*. Even when we speak of the world or the Jewish people, the entire nation and the universe is like one great soul, and as a soul it has a *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshama* part.

Some souls were the head of this soul, and others were the hands of this soul. Thus generations of great understanding were the head (*neshama*) souls, while those of great accomplishment were rooted in the hands of this great soul (*nefashos*).

There is an important lesson we can derive from the fact that all Jewish souls are part of one great whole: **each soul is needed**. Just as every part in a human body plays an integral role, each Jew has an important task to fulfill. Each soul has its tests, and its way to give pleasure to Hashem. What it can do no one else can do. If it will not fulfill its mission there is a weakness in entire body of Israel! **Therefore, ultimately, every soul must reach its *tikkun*, perfect completion.**

Some will get there easily. Some through diligent labors. However, every soul must ultimately arrive at a state of *tikkun* and holiness. For if a soul does not arrive at a state of *tikkun* one can ask, why was it created?

The *yedia*, knowledge, of Hashem knows the future. He knew that a certain person would sin. Why then did He create that man knowing that he would ultimately fail? Even though there is freedom of choice, we believe that the Almighty also knows the future. (This is borne out

by prophecy and by many verses and logical claims.⁵⁶) If He knows that a man will sin, why create such a man? Why try and fail? The deep answer is that no one will ultimately fail!

Eventually, every soul gets fixed. Each detail accomplishes its mission! **Hashem's knowledge dictates that eventually, every soul fixes all its sins and ultimately reaches a state of tikkun.**

Some will have a *tikkun* through punishments in this world, some through suffering in *gehenom*, the realm of the afterlife where sins are punished. Others arrive at *tikkun* through their children doing *mitzvos* that will be a merit for them. (Although a *tikkun* gained through others is only short term.) Eventually though the soul itself will go through different processes until the *neshama* has a *tikkun*. Every *neshama* must reach a state of *tikkun*.

What is the mission and perfection of a soul? What is needed to reach a *tikkun*? **Every soul must give Hashem nachas, deep pleasure.** Each soul must give Hashem enjoyment in at least some measure. Maybe it will be only a slight move or gesture, but it must in some way give Hashem *nachas ruach*, pleasure of spirit.⁵⁷ If you give Hashem some *nachas* then you will arrive at *tikkun*. Hashem does not necessarily demand a large quantity of pleasure. He looks only for a true point of devotion.

The Mishna teaches that “*kol haose mitzvah achas meitvin lo umaarichin lo yamav*” (*Kiddushin 39b*), “anyone who does even a single mitzvah is granted blessings and a long life.” So if he does even one mitzvah the right way he gets the benefit of eternity. Why so much for so little? The answer is that even a single mitzvah brings the soul to its *tikkun*! He has

⁵⁶ If Heaven forbid the Almighty would not know the future then He would be limited and imperfect, ideas that are heretical!

⁵⁷ See the Rebbe's *kuntres lag baomer*, 5768.

done sins as well, so he needs punishment, but since sins are not the essence of the person (rather just the external *yetzer hara*) punishments wipe them away. The inner soul that was attracted to *mitzvos* arrives at eternity through the few *mitzvos* it performed.

Bilaam's Lesson

The following was taught by Bilaam⁵⁸.

The *Talmud (Bava Basra 15a)* says Moshe wrote both the Torah and the tale of Bilaam. The tale of Bilaam is part of the Torah, why divide the two when discussing them? Isn't the *parsha* of Bilaam in *parshas balak*, Numbers 22-25, and therefore a part of the book written by Moshe? The simple answer is that all the *parshios*, sections, in the Torah are related directly to Moshe for he witnessed them or taught them. But for Bilaam episode Moshe was not there. He did not see it. No Jew saw it. Hashem revealed it to Moshe after the fact and told him to write it. Hence it is Bilaam's *parsha*, not Moshe's.

There is a deep reason why Moshe was not there. The *parsha* of Bilaam revealed the roots of Gentile spirituality, hence Moshe, who is the teacher of the Jewish way of service, was not to be there.

Let us understand. To receive a free gift is anathema to the sacred sensibility. The *middah*, attribute, of holiness is to avoid being a taker. Yisrael always seek to earn Divine gifts

⁵⁸ Bilaam was a prophet of the gentiles. Despite his abilities to communicate with the infinite and know the future, he was an immoral person. He tried to curse the Jews who had left Egypt, yet God did not allow him to do so. Each time Bilaam opened his mouth to curse Israel, God made words of blessings emerge. The story of Bilaam is found in the book of Numbers, chapters 22-25.

through service. This is the deeper concept of *nahama dikisufa*, bread of shame. G-d did not leave us in Heaven but placed us in a physical realm to struggle and serve Him so that we earn our reward and do not have to eat the bread of shame. Hashem is a *mashpia*, He gives. Since we have a piece of Hashem in us, we too seek to be *mashpiim*, givers. The soul deeply desires to be active and giving. Only the body is willing to take and receive. We really want to be givers! Taking is only from the fact that we are also created beings, but from the G-dly part of us we want to be givers! We want to give to Hashem *nachas*, deep pleasure and satisfaction. The greatest gift is to give away one's life, *messirus nefesh*. **The soul in its essence finds that to give everything away for Hashem, *messirus nefesh*, is the greatest pleasure. For such displays of devotion are the times when the person experiences the G-dly part of his being.**

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk (1717-1787) wrote a small letter of instructions how to serve Hashem. In this letter the theme of sacrificing all to Hashem is prominently stressed in three different ways:

1) At every time when you are not engaged in Torah, especially when you are idle in a room by yourself or lying in bed unable to sleep, concentrate on the positive commandment, "And I shall be sanctified amongst the children of Israel." (Vayikra 22:32) It is a mandate to even give our lives for Hashem. Imagine a frightening fire burning before you, reaching to the heart of heaven, and resolve that you are willing to overcome your natural instinct and cast yourself into that fire to sanctify G-d's name. G-d considers a good thought as a deed, and as a result you are not idly sitting or lying, but fulfilling a commandment of the Torah.

2) *When reciting the first verse of the Sh'ma and the first blessing of the Amidah, have the same thought in mind. Also have in mind that if all the members of the nations of the world were to torture you in every possible way, skinning you alive in an attempt to force you to deny G-d's unity, you would withstand all suffering and not give in, heaven forbid. Imagine that they were actually doing this to you, and you will then fulfill the obligation of Sh'ma and Amidah according to the law.*

3) *When you are eating, also keep the above in mind. Whenever you begin to feel any physical pleasure picture the above imagination. With your mind and lips declare that you would have more joy and delight from observing the commandment of "I shall be sanctified" as described above, than from the physical pleasure, which is from zahamas hanachash, (the filth man has as part of his nature from the serpent that induced sin while man was in the garden of Eden).*

Say to yourself, "Fulfilling the commandment of 'I shall be sanctified' in the above manner is a greater delight and pleasure than this. *Proof of the fact is that if murderers were to grab me in the middle of the meal etc. and torture me, I would have more joy from sanctifying G-d's name than from this physical pleasure.⁵⁹*

The Deeper Meaning To Prayer

We pray and ask for things from the Almighty. From the body's perspective we can understand why we should pray. It is to appreciate that everything comes from Hashem. But from the soul's perspective prayer's purpose is not to ask for things we need. The soul does not want any favors

⁵⁹ Translated By Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan in his book *Chasidic Masters* page 63.

or gifts! Rather since it gives Hashem pleasure to give to us, and we want to give Him that enjoyment, we ask for things in prayer. Our motivation is to give him the pleasure He will feel in granting our needs. Holiness is giving.

The Ari ⁶⁰teaches that the reward of the world to come is to raise earthly matters to Hashem through our devotion to him! Gan Eden is not a place to sit and enjoy the light of Hashem. Such an image is a mere parable to the truth that in Eden there will be deep pleasure. But the real pleasure of the soul is to be *mosser nefesh* for Hashem, to give to Hashem! In the world to come we are *maaleh man*, we lift up to Him *man*, מן which stands for *messirus nefesh!*

Imagine that we are jumping into a fire for Hashem's sake and enjoying it, to conceive of the Ari's image of the world to come! The point is not enjoyment – though dedication to G-d is enjoyable. The world to come is tasted when the nature of the soul expresses itself! The soul's nature is to give to the Almighty.⁶¹

To better imagine the joy of giving think of *baalei chessed*, masters of kindness, in this world. These are individuals who love to give. They enjoy helping out and benefiting others. Such is also the nature of the soul: it is a *baal chessed*, a master of kindness.

The nations and the *sitra achra*, the other side, forces of evil and impurity, are takers. This is why our sages say *gehenom says hav hav*, “Give me and give me.”

⁶⁰ Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572) was one of the greatest mystics of Jewish history. He lived in Israel in Safed. His lessons were the inspiration for the Chassidic movement. His insights in Jewish thought, prayer, and observance have transformed the Jewish nation.

⁶¹ See the Rebbe's Torah about charity, *Agra Dikallah* letter 21, and see also *Michtav Me'elياهو, kuntres hachessed, Strive for Truth, Treatise on Lovingkindness*.

There are several verses that demonstrate this. Consider for example *Proverbs 30:7* וְשֹׂאֵל וְעֹצֵר רָחֵם אֶרֶץ לֹא שֹׁבְעָה מִיָּם וְאֵשׁ לֹא אֲמָרָה הוֹן , the *gehenom* is a swallower and is never filled.

The core of the *sitra achra* is a deep void, a sense of lack, a feeling that something is missing, and a constant desire to take. The paragon of the holder of such a worldview was Bilaam, and he was himself the root of the *sitra achra*.

There are sections of the Torah that seemingly contain trivial information. One such section is in the book of Genesis in chapter 36 verses 31-40. There at the end of *parshas Vayishlach*, the *Vayishlach* Torah reading, we are told about the Edomite kings who ruled before a king ruled in Israel. Why do we need to know these seemingly irrelevant facts of the ancient past? The *Ari* writes that the story of the seven kings of Edom at the end of *parshas Vayishlach* contains the secret of the shattering of the vessels. In future lessons we will further explain the meaning of the vessels and their implosion, but for now it is sufficient to note that the shattering of the vessels was the root of all evil, from the collapse of the vessels the *sitra achra* was formed. The first of these kings was *Bela ben Beor* (the *Ari* teaches that this king shared the same soul as *Bilaam*, hence the similar name) who was a *bolea*, a swallower. The first king of evil wants to swallow all! He wishes to take in and absorb. He always wants to get, never to give. A *baal taava*, a hedonist, similarly wants to get. The very nature of one consumed by the materialistic and the physical is to be a taker and a receiver, not a giver and a *mashpia*.

Why Choice Is Meaningful

The Way to the Tree of Life

In our realm Klal Yisrael, the Jewish people, works to give Hashem *nachas ruach*. This is because Hashem made us into sources.

Just as Hashem is the source, He is the first: He does not receive existence from *chas vishalom*, *Heaven forbid*, something higher. He exists for He is *mechuyav hametzius*, He has to exist. He starts everything.

The gift of choice – given to humanity, a piece of His own essence - grants us the chance to be first, and so is Hashem's way of giving us the ability to also be a source.

Who did this mitzvah? There was no earlier cause that forced me to do good or bad, I did it from my choice! Through *bechira*, freedom of choice, I am the source, I am the first stage.

Besides man everything else in the world is a taker and recipient. Even high angels get life from a higher angel. Only a *baal bechira* is a *reishis*, a true beginner! Man is *mechadesh tov*, initiates a new good, or *mechadesh rah*, starts a new evil.

Now, why is there this new good in the world? Because the *tzadik* has made this good. *Ani rishon viani acharon* (*Yeshaya* 44:6), I am first and I am last. The *tzadik* reveals the *ani acharon*. Just as from above to below there is a first, so there is chain from below to above, and the *tzadik* is *ani acharon*: the source to be *mevarrer*, clearly exhibit, the G-dliness from below. This is because he is a *chelek elokah mimaal mamash*, literally a piece of the Divine! Man's divine nature is the basis of the power of *bechira*.

Divine Knowledge And Free Human Choice

Free choice is not a contradiction to *Yedia*, Hashem's knowledge of the future. Both are true.

Rambam asks, how can man have free choice if Hashem already knows what man will choose, for He knows the future? He answers that the resolution of this question is beyond us. We have limited minds. Our limited minds cannot grasp the resolution. Yet there is a resolution. Through many sources the Torah clearly indicates that there is *yedia* and there is *bechira*.

Yedia is a holy concept, a concept from which sparks fell into the *sitra achra*, and these fallen sparks are the source of life for the religiosity of the nations. To explain, the concept of *yedia* seems to imply that one who becomes a *tzadik* does not do so on his own, but this fate was rather determined for him, since Hashem always knew it was to come to pass. *Yedia* in this sense fated him to be a *tzadik*. He was a *mekabel*, a recipient, of a gift determined by another Being.

(The nations of the world are primarily *mekablim*, takers that derive nourishment from the concept of Divine knowledge.) *Yedia* implies that even the *tzadik* is in essence a taker. ⁶²

This requires further explanation.

⁶² Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch pointed out that many Jewish symbolic acts stress our ability to choose, while gentile religious acts stress man's inability to choose. The Rebbe's insight is the reason for these divergent religious traditions. As soulful individuals Jews want to be givers. The root of the nations is the passive deterministic view, hence their spirituality stresses man's inability and his need to rely exclusively on Divine favor.

For instance, many Christian rituals take place at night. Night is a time when man is not active, rather he is passive and asleep. In Judaism circumcision and other practices must occur by day, this is to stress that our religion is one of freedom and action, we can choose, and we do in actuality freely serve Hashem!

"So-called religions which stem from man's feelings of dependence direct man towards the night. Man is called to find God at the point where he loses himself...In this perspective man is helplessly bound to his physical fate unless redeemed by the saving grace of religion. Typically, they erect their temples over the graves of the dead. They celebrate their most sacred mysteries at night, and their most fervent prayers are cries pleading for deliverance from the power of the evil one in the world. Such is the passivity, the dark aspect of human existence, which these "religions" employ to bind man to the Divine.

Judaism is not a "religion." Judaism summons man into the full, bright light of day and shows him that he is master over the world outside himself as well as over the world within him. It makes him aware of his free-willed Godly power with which he can subdue both the world around him and the world within his own heart. It shows him the One, unique, true, free, almighty God Who, in His omnipotence, has created the world around and within man...Judaism reveals to man the clear, free spirit that dwells within his own heart, and it shows him the One unique, true God from Whom he has derived that clear, free spirit. It shows him the One Who has imparted to him this light and this freedom as a spark of His own free, almighty Essence. With this spark God has raised man above all else that lies bound by blind necessity and that must operate and behave according to mindless coercion, and has placed man in His immediate proximity...

Judaism builds its sanctuaries upon the shining heights of life. Death and decay are kept far from the halls of its temple...

The "night gods" of so called religions are אֱלִילִים, "powers that negate," עֲצָבִים, powers that make themselves felt in the "pain of renunciation." The God of Judaism is ה', He who "grants ever new, vigorous existence," אֱלֹהֵי חַיִּים וּמֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם, "the God of life and the King of the Universe."

His religion is called "Law" and "the Teaching of Life." The Collected Writings of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Volume 3, Jewish Symbolism, pages 88-90
See Introduction to Horeb by Rabbi Grunfeld pages 116-120.

The Jewish people are the children of Hashem. We are primarily givers. We therefore derive most of our inspiration from the concept of *bechira*, free choice.

Bilaam was a **gentile** prophet sent by G-d to reveal the secret of Divine knowledge. When you appreciate this mystery in the right way it is a great *hassaga*, spiritual understanding, and it can help Divine service a great deal. Bilaam revealed the secret of G-d's knowledge, and deterministic fate.

The Midrash says that a verse in Proverbs is an apt description of Bilaam's blessings. The verse states, "*Hamevarech es reieihu bikol gadol baboker hashkeim kilala teichashev lo,*" "One who blesses his friend with a loud voice in the morning it is considered a curse for him." (*Mishley 27:14*) Apparently Bilaam's words were like a curse for the Jewish nation.

The simple meaning of the Midrash is that to publicly broadcast the strengths of another is in a sense to harm that person by giving him a misplaced sense of confidence. Bilaam spoke of the greatness of Klal Yisrael, he spoke of our strengths, but these praises became curses because the Jewish people believed them! (We can see this clearly in the Jews' sins with gentile women and idol worship following the "blessings" of Bilaam.) They were too confident in their goodness and they did not summon the reservoirs of strength needed for the battle with the evil urge, so they fell prey to him and sinned with the daughters of Midian and their G-d, *baal paor*.

But there is a deeper depth here. Bilaam's revelations were a curse and weakened the Jewish fighting spirit for they led the Jews to focus on *yedia*, creating a sense of fate and predetermination and thereby sapping the fighting spirit of the Jewish nation.

Bilaam's revelation was that every Jew, according to the understanding of fate derived from the Divine *yedia*, is a *tzadik*. Even if the Jew is now acting like a Bilaam he is a *tzadik* for he will eventually be a *tzadik*! Bilaam was the *yodeah daas elyon*, knower of the knowledge of the One above, he spoke of the *daas*, knowledge; he said that *lo ish eil viyachzey*, there is nothing wasted from G-d, nothing can exist and not reach its purpose. *Halo amar vlo yaase*, would He say and not fulfill?

Hashem said *naase adam*, let us make man, (*Bereishis 1:26*) a statement about His great aspirations for humanity. Adam reminds us of man's calling in the phrase *adame laelyon*, I will resemble the One above. If Hashem said He would make an Adam, He will certainly make a successful spiritual giant! It certainly must work out this way! The Jew will reach his *tikkun*!

About the final redemption Bilaam said, "*Arenu vlo ata, ashurenu vlo karov*," "I see it even though it is not now," I can see him though he is not close. He said it is not close for there is still much work to be done and many *tikkunim* yet to accomplish, but it certainly will eventually occur. Bilaam revealed that Jewish destiny must happen.

To do this, Bilaam drew from *daas*.

Moshe was the *daas* of holiness and Bilaam was *achorayim*, the behind, of *daas*. Bilaam was *daas* of *sitra achra* and Moshe was *daas* of *kedusha*. "*Vlo kam navi od biyisrael kiMoshe asher yedao Hashem panim el panim*," (*Devarim 34:10*) "No prophet arose in Israel like Moshe whom G-d had **known** face to face." Our tradition teaches, *biyisrael lo kam aval baumos kam*, among the Jews there was no one like Moshe, but among the nations there was one who resembled him.

Our sages say Bilaam was the one like Moshe. He too had a connection to *yedao*, to the *daas* of *Hashem*, to *yedia*. He knew things from *yedia* and he revealed things from *yedia*, things that Moshe could not reveal he revealed.

Moshe was the world of *tikkun*, hence he would not reveal matters that might harm *avodas Hashem*. But these matters were revealed by Bilaam. This is why *Hashem* left Moshe out of the story, and it is instead the *parsha* of Bilaam.

The Benefits Of Divine Knowledge

If these ideas are dangerous, in fact they contributed to the failure with *baal paor*, why did *Hashem* send Bilaam to reveal these secrets? **There is also a great benefit to the secret of Divine knowledge. When you use it in a way that it does not conflict with choice it can be extremely beneficial and useful. Do not think of yedia before you do something, for then it conflicts with bechira. You cannot introduce yedia into the realm where there is choice. Rather think of yedia once a thing is done and it is no longer possible to exercise bechira. Now look at the world with the lenses of yedia!**

If the act is done already, you may feel, “Who says I will have a *tikkun*? And even if I get a *tikkun*, *Hashem* did not want a *tikkun* in this way, *Hashem* wanted me to be a *tzadik* from the beginning and I did not behave so! Maybe I messed up and I am *bidieved*, second choice-like. I am not a *lichatchilah*, first choice, person. My life is from now on in a state of *bidieved*. I can do *teshuva* and fix the broken vessels but I will never be a *lichatchila* person.”

A person does not even realize how much such thoughts weaken the soul! It is debilitating for the soul to believe that it is *bedieved* and second rate! To feel that you are a *bidieved* will enfeeble you when you face the evil urge.

If you talk to *baaley teshuvah*, individuals who came to observance later in life, you will see their pain because of this conundrum. **Here is the blessing in the revelations of Bilaam.**

Hashem knew it would be this way, so you are not a bedieved. From the perspective of yedia this is the way He wanted it, He knew it would happen and from yedia's perspective it had to be this way! If I committed a sin, with the lens of yedia I am to say, "Hashem knew I would do the sin and there is no other way He wanted it." Once the sin is performed arouse the world of knowledge and say to yourself, "G-d knew that the sin would happen and therefore it was a *lichatchila* that this act of sin should be performed by me. I am therefore a *lichatchila* person." From this perspective emerges that principle "*livilti yidach mimenu nidach*," (*Shmuel 2*, 14:14) "No soul will fail." Every soul will ultimately arrive at *tikkun*. No soul is *bidieved*, as *yedia* knows how it will arrive at *tikkun*.

Now, this is a very dangerous concept one can use to justify a life of sin, which would then contradict the world of choice and its responsibilities. This is the meaning of the Midrash that Bilaam's revelation was a curse. You must stay within the rules, and only use the perspective of *yedia* after a matter is done.

Yet since *parshas* Bilaam is a *parsha* of Torah, there is a place for *yedia*. After an event is done, when there is no longer an interaction with the world of choice, then *yedia* should be

deployed. G-d knew all and wanted what happened to happen. Therefore we are still on a level of a *lichatchila*.

Why did G-d reveal the concept of *Yedia*, that He knows all? Why did the Rambam write it down in *hilchos teshuva*? (See chapters five and six.) The Raavad ⁶³criticized the Rambam for doing so. He said, "If you do not have a comprehensible answer as to how Divine knowledge and human free will coexist, do not mention the concept of Divine knowledge!" Yet the Rambam did write about this issue even though he wrote also that full resolution of the paradox between human freedom and Divine knowledge is beyond mortal comprehension. Rambam wrote about this truth, because it is necessary for the penitent to feel, "I am first rate. I may have sinned but my sins were fated to happen. I am still the ideal."

Chassidim relate that the Rebbe of Sadigura, in the early mornings, would sweep the streets in front of his home in the Israeli city of Tel Aviv. Someone once saw him and asked him about his strange practice. He explained with a story.

"During the 1930's I lived in Vienna, Austria. When Hitler annexed Austria and Nazi beasts marched into Vienna, I, together with the other Viennese Jews, saw my freedom and dignity disappear. The Nazis decreed that Jews had to clean the streets of Vienna. They forced us Jews to our hands and knees, gave us rags and buckets of water, and decreed, "Dirty Jews, you have made beautiful Vienna filthy, now clean its cobblestones!" I felt terribly humiliated at the time. I

⁶³ Rabbi Avraham Ben David, 1125-1198, of Posquieres, France. He wrote classic critical notes to Maimonides' magnum opus of Jewish Law, Mishne Torah. Rabbi Avraham was known by the acronym of his name, Raavad. He was one of the leaders of European Jewry. Despite many difficulties, for instance he was imprisoned by a French lord who wished to steal his wealth, he always maintained great fealty to tradition and great levels of Torah learning and scholarship.

started to feel depressed and sad. Then I caught myself. I realized I cannot do anything about my situation. Were I to resist the Nazis would kill me. It was no longer the time to think of choice, it was time to view the world the lenses of yedia, G-d's knowledge and determined fate for mankind. I said to myself, "Who is this Nazi? If G-d would not want him to speak, would he be able to say anything? Certainly Not!" So it is not the Nazi talking, it is Hashem telling me, "Clean the streets of Vienna!" Then I realized another step, "Who owns Vienna? Does Hitler own Vienna? No! The whole world belongs to the Almighty! Vienna is also His city!" Then I felt great joy, the Almighty was telling me, "Clean my city." Suddenly I was not a slave to Nazis and anti semites, I was serving Hashem by cleaning His streets! I felt a great joy. Then I turned to the Almighty with a prayer, "The Land of Israel is the place where it is easy to realize that the streets belong to You. Of the Land of Israel, You said, "The eyes of Hashem are on it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year." (Devarim 11:12) If you bring me to the Land of Israel, to remember Your kindness, there I will gladly clean Your streets! That is why here in Tel Aviv I clean the streets."

The Sadigerer Rebbe was displaying how the revelation of Yedia, in the right setting, can be a source of great religious inspiration and encouragement.

Another recent story, where thinking of yediah, that Hashem knows all and directs all, created an awesome sanctification of the name of Hashem and engendered great displays of love between Jews occurred in the year 2009, during Israel's war with Gaza terrorists who had been trying to kill Jews, called Operation Cast Lead.

On the tenth of Teves 5769, when he was twenty six years old, Captain Yonatan Netanel fell in battle. He was the victim of a terrible mistake. An Israeli tank had fired at the wrong target, and Yonatan fell from that fire. During the shiva, seven day mourning period, his father, Rav Amos Netanel had the religious strength and faith to write the following letter on behalf of himself, Yonatan's mother, his wife and daughter and Yonatan's siblings:

“To crew ...from company...brigade...

You who are turning your nights into days with heroism and sacrifice of self for the sake of the nation and the land:

It is known to us that our son Yoni, may Hashem avenge his blood, fell as a part of a great battle from the fire of our forces and we felt a deep inner need to tell you with all the living forces in us that we love you and hug you tightly!

To be wounded from the fire of our forces is a basic part of all Israel's wars and it is part of our ability to overcome our enemies on the field of battle and knowing this Yoni went out to this war and we as his parents sent him to these battles.

You did not harm Yoni!

Yoni died sanctifying the name of Hashem at the time that it was decided in Heaven that he had completed his mission in this world and you were the pure angels to bring this about.

It is comforting to us that your pure hands touched him and not the impure hand of the enemy who is the most wicked on earth; for no impure hand would ever defeat Yoni.

It is important for us to tell you that we love you with all the warmth of our hearts. You are like our children and like many other children who in these moments find themselves in the midst of battles.

We beg of you, please continue Yoni's spirit. Continue his spirit of faith, heroism, strength, and love and in this way we will know that Yoni continues to live in you...

Our final request,

Please come to our home when the battles end so we will hug you tightly and tell you how much we love you.

We are praying for your safety with all our might,

Amos, Malki, Tziona and Maayan, and Yitzchok, Sheri, and David”

Rav Amos Netanel had the superhuman strength, to utilize the lenses of Yediah. He wrote to the soldiers that all that happened was the will of Hashem. Therefore the soldiers who were toiling to save Jewish lives should continue in their efforts and not despair from the terrible losses. Rav Amos's letter had a huge impact, people throughout the land heard of it and were brought closer to each other and to Hashem because of it.

Moshe Rabbeinu and Yedia

Moshe Rabbeinu glowed from this concept. He was the opposite of Bilaam, yet he also was connected to *daas*: Moshe asked for “*viedaacha*” “let me know You.” But he insisted “*limaan emtza chein bieinecha*” “so that I find favor in Your eyes” (*Shmos* 33:13) along with the desire for knowledge. It was as if he said to Hashem, “I do not want to have the knowledge of *yediah* in

a way that will lead me to not find favor in Your eyes. I want to know this in a way that will not lead me to sin. I would like to know the secret of *yedia* to improve my *avodah*, Divine service.”

“*Ureeh ki amcha hagoy hazeh*” (Shmos 33;13) “See that this nation is your people!”

Here, Moshe aroused a bit of *yedia*, as if saying, “They are Your nation so they must have a *tikkun*. Show how they are guaranteed success!” *Hashem* granted this request.

Our Sages teach that in response to this request the Almighty revealed to Moshe the thirteen attributes of mercy: revelations of how G-d brings about a world of *yedia* and a guarantee of *tikkun* in a way that does not conflict with the force of *bechira*. This is why Hashem revealed the thirteen attributes when He gave the second set of *luchos*, tablets, with the Ten Commandments.

Yedia was the key to the second set of tablets. One can ask, what is gained with the second set of tablets? Maybe these tablets would be broken with another sin, as the first set had been? The answer is that the second *luchos* came with the revelation of the thirteen measures of mercy. The *teshuvah* of Klal Yisrael was so strong during the *yemei ratzon*, days of favor, in *Ellul*, that they caused G-d to run the world in a new way and a *hanhaggah*, Divine mode of directing the world, of thirteen measures of mercy appeared.

Moshe had asked for a revelation of holiness that had not been in the world before, (“*hareeini nah es kvodecha*,” (Shmos 33:18) “please show me now Your honor”) and this revelation is a *hanhagga* that works with *bechira* and is a light from *yedia*. The Jews caused this through their *teshuva*: a guarantee that G-d will not let their sins reach such a point that the second set of tablets must also be destroyed.

A similar dynamic appeared earlier in history. Consider the flood during the days of Noah. After the flood Hashem guaranteed there would never be another flood. This is a revelation of the *yedia* of Hashem. Due to the *service* of Noah and the *yissurim*, suffering, the world went through Hashem swore that there would not be another flood, using a rainbow as a symbol of His promise. But of what worth was the rainbow and Hashem's promise in light of man's ability to choose? Maybe people will sin and the world will be flooded and annihilated again? The answer is that a revelation of *yedia* appeared, a level of Hashem knowing and man not having the choice, man cannot sin so much to destroy the world again! The Almighty won't let man do so!

The Thirteen Attributes: Hashem's Pride

The Zohar calls the thirteen attributes, *Geius Hashem*, the pride of the Almighty (*Tehillim 93:1*). *Yud gimell michilin dirachamim di'inun geius Hashem*, thirteen measures of mercy which are the pride of the Almighty. What is the meaning of this phrase? What makes these attributes a display of pride?

Nothing is hard for the Almighty. He can do everything. With a little letter that is easily expressed He created all universes. Only the wickedness of the *rasha* gives Him a hard time with, as a Midrash says.

The world of *bechira* is one in which G-d has removed Himself and given a place where you are the master, where man is the boss. In a place where He has limited His abilities, we cannot say it is easy for Him, for it is easy for Him with His strength, but His strength is not

here! But even though He does not do what He can, and it seems that man is in charge, in truth He is in charge and He is the boss! The thirteen attributes display that He is really in charge!

This is why these attributes are called *geius, pride*! This is a *geius* to seemingly surrender power but really not to give up any of the strength. Man is the boss yet ultimately G-d is the boss, and this is *geius*! He shows that He does as He wills, even where you think man and not G-d is doing, really He is the one determining the goal.

“Hashem *malach geius laveish*,” (*Tehillim* 93:1) “G-d ruled, He wore pride.” Hashem *malach*, but maybe people will be wicked and not accept the *malchus shamayim*, the rule of Heaven, and this is why we answer *geius laveish*! He has *geius*, meaning that ultimately He is in charge.

Maybe this is why we say this particular *pasuk* at the end of *kabbalas Shabbes*, the prayer welcoming the Shabbes, for the end of the week parallels the end of time. It closes a period of *service*, at the close of a period of labors for the Almighty we sense that everything will have a *tikkun*. We may think, “How can this be? What about choice? Maybe some will choose the wrong path?” And then we hear: *geius laveish*, He wears *geius*! He is the real authoritarian, He will ensure that all will arrive at a *tikkun*! All *neshamos* before the *yom shekulo* Shabbes, the Messianic era of an extended Shabbes, will have a *tikkun*! At the very least they will all be corrected enough that it will be clear that eventually they will merit *yom shekulo shabbes*, day of an extended Sabbath, the *emmes, true, tikkun*. This is the meaning of *Hashem malach geius laveish*: it is a model for the *yom shekulo shabbes* and therefore we say it on the eve of Shabbes as we enter into Shabbes.

The Parts Of Man

All *neshamos* are one *komah*, structure, in *adam harishon*, the first man, and therefore,

וכן נפשות לגבי נפשות

So too nefashos to other nefashos

כי כל נפש כלולה מנפש רוח ונשמה

for each nefesh is made up of a nefesh, ruach, and neshama part

מכל מקום

Nevertheless

שרש כל הנפש רוח ונשמה

The root of every nefesh, ruach and neshama

כולם מראש כל המדרגות עד סוף כל דרגין

From the highest level to the lowest stage

המלוכש בגוף עמי הארץ וקל שבקלים

That is clothed in the bodies of the willfully ignorant and the light-headed of the cynics

נמשך ממוח העליון שהיא חכמה עילאה כביכול

As it were, is drawn from the Highest mind, which is Chochmah ilaah, the Wisdom from Above.

כמשל הבן הנמשך ממוח האב שאפי' צפרני רגליו נתהוו מטפה זו ממש ע"י שהייתה תשעה חדשים בבטן האם וירדה ממדרגה למדרגה להשתנות ולהתהוו' ממנה צפרנים

As a parable consider a child. He is fully drawn from his father's mind (which produced the seed that created him), even the nails of his feet came literally from this drop of seed through its gestation over nine months in the mother's womb, where it descended from level to level to change and even produce nails.

In other words even the nails, hair, and body parts with very little life in them, *eivarim pechusim*,

were once in the single drop from the *moach haav* that included all. So too all *neshamos* were

once *nichlal*, included in incipient form, in *Chochmah ilaa*, the Wisdom from Above.

The Way to the Tree of Life

ועם כל זה עודנה קשורה ומיוחדת ביחוד נפלא ועצום במהותה ועצמותה הראשון שהיתה טפת מוח האב

Despite all the changes, the body parts are still now deeply connected to their original essence, aspects of the drop from the mind of the father,

וגם עכשיו בכך יניקת הצפרנים וחיותם נמשכת מהמוח שבראש

And even in the child they are presently drawing life from the mind in his head

כדאיתא בגמ' [נדה שם] לובן שממנו גידים ועצמות וצפרנים

As the Talmud (Nidda 30) teaches: the father contributes the white bile out of which emerges the sinews, bones, and nails

[וכמ"ש בע"ח שער החשמל בסוד לבושים של אדם הראשון בגן עדן שהיו צפרנים מבחי' מוח תבונה]

And as is explained in Etz Chaim, Shaar Chashmal, about the secret of the garments of Adam harishon in Gan Eden, whose nails were from the concept of moach tevunah, the mind of understanding, an intellect of binah

The Ari explains in the section quoted by the Tanya, that there is a constant need for a *levush*, a garment, so that the *chitzonim*, superficial external beings, not be *yoneik*, suck life, from the *adam dikdusha*, the Holy Adam. There are three parts to a man's outer vessels, *keilim chitzonim*: muscle, sinews and bones, *bassar, gidin, atzamos*. Man also has *keilim pnimiym*, inner organs, with three parts: liver, *kaved*, heart, *lev*, and mind, *moach*.

In the inner vessels the innermost is the mind, and the middle is the heart, and the liver is the most external. The Ari did not only mean the mind in the head. There is a mind part in each limb. The brain sends messages through nerves to impact all the limbs. This is a mind-part in limbs. The heart sends *ruach*, oxygen, which comes from breathing, to the heart and blood and through it to all the limbs. The liver gives *mazon*, nutrition, to the blood that then goes to all limbs. Thus each limb has a bit of mind, (*neshama*) heart (*ruach*) and liver (*nefesh*). These are *eivarim pnimiym* that impact the inner realm and correspond to *nefesh, ruach, and neshama*.

In the *eivarim chitzonim* we have *bassar*, muscle matter; *gidin*, sinews; and *atzamos*, bones. *Atzamos* are the *pnimius*, innermost realm, of the *eivarim chitzonim*, the *gidin* are the middle, and the *bassar* are the *chitzonim*. Above this we have the *levush*, a garment. The skin of man is a *levush* over these matters.

Again we see here a pattern of four. There are four elements (earth, water, air, and energy), four types of creations (*domeim*, *tzomeiach*, *chai*, *midaber*, inanimate, plant, animal, and speaking kingdoms) four worlds (*Atzilus*, *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*), and here too we have four, skin corresponding to *malchus*, and then muscles, sinews, and bones.

Olam habinah is above the realm of man.

Originally the Almighty sent down a skin from this realm to cloak Adam so that *chitzonim* would not be *yoneik* from him. This is the deeper meaning of the Midrash that before eating from the tree of knowledge all of Adam's body was covered with a hard clear shell, like a nail.

The Tanya is teaching that after his sin this elevated garment remained in the *tzipornayim*, nails, of the first man.

וככה ממש כביכול בשרש כל הנפש רוח ונשמה של כללות ישראל למעלה בירידתו ממדרגה למדרגה על ידי השתלשלות העולמות אבי"ע מחכמתו ית' כדכתיב כולם בחכמה עשית

So it is with the root of the nefesh, ruach, neshama of the entire nation. It came down from level to level from His wisdom, as it is written, "All were made with wisdom."

נתהוו ממנו נפש רוח ונשמה של עמי הארץ ופחותי הערך ועם כל זה עודינה קשורות ומיוחדות ביחוד נפלא ועצום במהותן ועצמותן הראשון שהיא המשכת חכמה עילאה

The Way to the Tree of Life

Out of this wisdom came the souls of the willfully ignorant, and those of low worth, and they are still connected and united with an awesome union to their initial essence, which is an extension of the Supernal Wisdom!

כי יניקת וחייו' נפש רוח ונשמה של עמי הארץ הוא מנפש רוח ונשמה של הצדיקים והחכמים ראשי בני ישראל שבדורם:

For nourishment and the life of the nefesh, ruach, neshama of the willfully ignorant is from the nefesh, ruach, neshama of the tzadikim and wise ones who are the heads of the Jewish nation in their generation.

The Tanya teaches here that the Jewish nation is like a human body. All Jews must connect to the *tzadik* just as every body part must connect to the mind. What is the depth of this lesson? How is a *tzadik* like the mind and others like limbs?

When we speak of a full *komah, structure*, of a man, the lowly people, the *amei haaretz* would be called nails or heels, for they have limited life. They are still part of the earth from which they sprung. They too derive their life though from from the *neshama* in the mind. Each person gets *chius, life and vitality*, to all his body parts, even his legs, from the *neshama shebimoach*, soul in the mind. The nerves are in all parts of the body and bring life to each part of the body. The nerves link all limbs together, they are the force of feeling in the person and this *hergesh, sensitivity and feeling*, comes from the *chius* in the matter, from the life in the person. The *chius* is *what enables feelings!* As long as a person has *chius* he feels and responds, the *chius hapnimi, inner life*, in the *neshama* clothes itself in the ability to feel and sense. Doctors know this, too: a person feels pain becomes the nerves tell the mind and the mind sends back the feeling of pain.

The *roshei hador*, the heads of the generation, the *tzadikei hador*, are the mind of the generation, and they give *chius* to the rest of the body. All individuals get *chius* from the *mind*.

“*M’pi elyon lo teietzei haraos,*” (Eicha 3:38) “Nothing bad comes from Him.” Hashem sends a *hashpaa*, a stream of blessing, which is *aidel*, delicate and holy, to the *tzadik*. With this *hashpaa* one can serve Hashem the right way. Sometimes Hashem will send a *hashpaa* of *ashirus*, wealth. The wealth from the *heichalos hakedusha*, the Divine palaces of holiness, will first go to the *tzadik*, to the *oveid* Hashem, who will utilize this *hashpaa* in the right way, and then it will be easier for the others, who are *mekabel hashapaos* from the *tzadik*, to use this *hashpaa* in the right way also. (Since this *hashpaa* was with the *tzadik* it will come to the world in a way that helps *avodas* Hashem.)

Let us define: a *tzadik* is a great *oveid* Hashem. The point though is that he is ready for *messirus nefesh*, to sacrifice his life for G-d. Not only does he fulfill mitzvos constantly, there is nothing that will hold him back from *ratzon Hashem*, the will of G-d, as his *will* is completely *annulled* to *ratzon Hashem*. If there is something that the *tzadik* cannot do, a point where he cannot break his *taava, desires*, and do *ratzon Hashem*, then he is not a *tzadik*. A *bechinas tzadik, relatively tzadik like*, maybe, but not a full *tzadik*!

Why? A *tzadik* is a person completely subservient to Hashem’s will, *a person who is completely mosser nefesh, sacrificing his life*, for Hashem, and there is nothing he would not do for Hashem. Every moment he is ready to do His will. (He would even take all the travails of Iyov, Job, if that is the *ratzon Hashem*!) *Battel ritzoncha mipney ritzon*, annul Your will to His, is the definition of the *tzadik*. Therefore the *tzadik* impacts this *hashpaa*, *and* that makes it a gift with which it is easy to fulfill *ratzon Hashem*.

In the book Megillas Setarim of the Komarna Rebbe, the fact that one reaches a tzadik level through willingness for complete sacrifice of self is mentioned in several contexts. He related there about his experience of Rosh Hashana 5607(1837):

“On the first night, I had a long dream. In it I saw that there were many judgement against me. Then I saw myself walking amidst the hairs on my head, and I realized that these hairs are certainly a sign of judgements. In the morning I gave away my life. I prayed with tremendous joy. When they lifted the Torah scroll I saw the verse, “And you will see it and pass away to your nation” (Bamidbar 27:13) I payed no attention to this verse at all. I prayed the mussaf prayer with a feeling of clear light. On the second night I had another dream. Now the crown from above appeared with its enormous mercy and all the judgements were sweetened.”(Entry 39)

Despite the ominous messages of the dream of the first night, and the verse he saw during the prayers, Rav Safrin as a great tzadik was moser nefesh, he gave away his sense of self. He rejoiced with the Almighty on the birthday of the world, that caused the difficulties to be sweetened.

After being impacted by the *tzadik*, this *hashpaa* comes to Klal Yisrael. *Ameich kulam tzadikim*, your entire nation are righteous individuals. Each Jew is a *tzadik* with a deep will to fulfill ratzon Hashem. Most of us have yet to be *motzi* it from the *koach el hapoel*, to express our potential. Hence when a Jew receives the *hashpaah* with the *tzadik* quality it arouses his inner *tzadik* and he will easily use the gift for Hashem’s will.

For example, imagine a person whose successful business starts to fail. Customers stop arriving, his revenue falls, and he cannot pay his debts. When things were going well he learned at a *shiur*, a permanent Torah study session, every night in the *beis midrash*, Torah study hall, for two hours. Now that business is not going well, he decides, “I need more time at the office,” and he stops his regular learning.

If his business now succeeds nature will be giving him the *parnassa*, livelihood, not service to Hashem! *Hishtadlus*, human effort, will give him the livelihood, not “*viavadetem es Hashem elokeichem ubeirech es lachmecha umeimecha* etc.,” “and you shall serve G-d your lord and He will bless your bread and water.” (*Shmos* 2:25) Such *parnassa*, that comes without *emunah* and *bitachon*, faith and trust, is not going to come from the *tzadik*! He might become an *osher*, a wealthy man, but it will be *osher shamur libaalav liraaso*, wealth waiting to harm its possessor to his detriment! Such funds will attract him to material and physical matters and not to holiness! They may have judged him in heaven that he was “worthy” of getting *hashpaos* from the *sitra achra*! Someone else might have *merits* and therefore such neglect of Torah will not make his business succeed and it is therefore really a *blessing* that he is being saved from being dependent on the *sitra achra*!

On the other hand, someone else, who is not even a great *tzadik*, when he sees that business is not going well, might say, “I must have sins, and that must be why my business is failing. I need to fix things! From now on I will say more *pirkei tehillim*, chapters of Psalms, or I will say *tehillim* with more *kavanah*, feeling.” This is a *hishtadlus*, effort, that is more related to the *tzadik*. He is not a *tzadik*, he is not ready to be killed for Hashem every moment, but he broke

something here, he broke *teva*, his nature and connected in a deeper way to the Almighty. This attitude connects him strongly to the *tzadik* and he receives a *hashpaa* from the *tzadik*.

True Connection To A Tzadik

People think that if they go to the *tzadik* and give him a *kvittel*, a note asking for a blessing, they are attached to the *tzadik* and now will have all good things and can do whatever they want. They can conduct their business with *gneiva* and *gezeila*, burglary and theft, diminish their learning, can do what they want, and the *tzadik* is a magician: if they are connected to him, it will all work.

While there is a positive that people who behave this way do believe in something, their behavior is a contradiction. The *tzadik* gets the *hashpaa* from the side of *holiness* and they act in ways that are the opposite of sanctity, so how can they receive any such *hashpaa*!!! Their actions annul their bond with the *tzadik*! A *keshet*, connection, to the *tzadik* is not derived mostly from physical proximity to him. A *keshet* means to be spiritually connected, for me to be a small *tzadik* as he is a big *tzadik*. Only then can I get from him *madreigos* and *mochin*, spiritual heights and religious thoughts, because only then am I truly attached to him.

This mistake I just described is widespread. Many people think that because they are around a *tzadik* and taking care of the needs of the community he leads they are therefore connected. This is wrong. It is superficial. The young married man who sits in the corner and rarely talks to the *tzadik* but is *oveid Hashem* like the *tzadik* is *oveid Hashem*, and who receives

hissorerus, inspiration, from the *tzadik*, is *mekabel hashapaos* from the *tzadik*. He is the real *chasid*! The attendant has politics, not flow of blessings from the holy person!

Remember that every matter has a *Kellipah*, a *chitzonius*, even *his'karvus tzadikim*, closeness to *tzadikim*, has a *Kellipah*. In every holy matter there is a *chitzonius* that does not allow us to get close to the *Kedusha* ; a *lahat hacherev hamis'hapeches*, a revolving sharp blade, in front of the *etz hachaim*, the tree of life. In each *davar shebikdusha* there is a *chitzonius* that does not make it easy to come to the *kedusha*.

Sometimes there are *kashas*, *questions*, on the *tzadik*. Sometimes the *tzadik* himself does questionable things to arouse *kashas* and discourage people from coming too close. Sometimes there are *gabbaim*, attendants, around a *tzadik* that make it hard to get to the *tzadik*. The *tzadik* might even know about this and feel he can't do anything about it. For if it would not be this it would be something else: there must always be a barrier. Around the prophet Elisha⁶⁴ there was a wicked student, Geichazi. ⁶⁵. In the Garden of Eden, after man ate from the tree of knowledge, the Almighty put an angel with a revolving blade to guard the path to the tree of life. Each *tzadik* is a tree of life. Around each *tzadik* there is an emissary of the Almighty with a revolving blade in his hand to keep all from approaching the *tzadik*. Geichazi was the *lahat hacherev*

⁶⁴ In the book of *Melachim* there are several chapters devoted to the prophet Elisha. He was the primary student of the great prophet Elijah. He performed feats and miracles that were double the level of Elijah.

⁶⁵ *Geichazi* is featured in several of the stories about Elisha. See chapters 4-8 in the second book of *Melachim*. According to our tradition Geichazi was a sinful person. He was not modest, he was greedy, and he was dishonest. Ultimately, he betrayed Elisha. The Syrian general Naaman was stricken with a skin disease. Elisha cured him in a miraculous manner. Naaman offered Elisha wealth, Elisha refused to accept any gifts and instead encouraged Naaman to give thanks to Hashem. Geichazi dishonestly approached Naaman and claimed Elisha had changed his mind and desired silver and clothing. Naaman gave the requested items to Geichazi. Elisha cursed Geichazi for the betrayal, the skin disease of Naaman afflicted Geichazi, and the Talmud teaches that Geichazi lost his portion in the world to come.

hamishapeches around the *tzadik* Elisha. He was Elisha's *gabbai*, attendant. Without his permission you could not get close to Elisha. Elisha was *pi shnayim biruchacha*, double the spirit of prophecy than Elijah, he was a great miracle worker. In Tanach there is almost no one who performed as many wonders as Elisha. Yet when a person would approach Elisha they would meet up with Geichazi.

The king of Yisrael asked *sapru nah hagdolos asher asah Elisha*, please relate the wonders Elisha performed, and Geichazi could tell many stories. Naaman came to be healed and Elisha did not want to take the *pidyon*, the monetary redemption,⁶⁶ for he felt it was a *chillul Hashem*, disgrace to G-d. So Geichazi took the *pidyon shlo al pi reshus rabbo*, without the permission of his teacher, Elisha felt he made a *chillul Hashem*, and distanced himself from him.

After he sent him away our sages teach that many, many students came to Elisha, for Geichazi had been keeping them away. Apparently when Geichazi was Elisha's *gabbai* there were many who did not want to come close to Elisha, for they had questions that stopped them. They probably said, "What is going on here? How can Elisha have such a *gabbai*?" And as a result they did not want to be close to Elisha. For there was a *lahat hacherev hamis'hapeches* around him. (See further *Melachim 2*, chapter five.)

Reb Shamshon Ostroplier once wrote about this, "I cannot discuss this at length because of *sakkanas nefashos*, danger to my life." His meaning was that there were many more *talmiddim*, students, after Geichazi left than there had been before when he was still Elisha's attendant. The *navi*, prophet, (*Melachim 2* chapter six) describes how there was not enough space

⁶⁶ When *tzadikim* are given a *kvittel* to read, it is customary to leave some money called a *pidyon*, as a gift to the righteous man.

for all the *talmidim*, so they asked Elisha if they could go down to the Jordan river to cut down wood to make benches. Elisha said yes. They asked him to accompany them and he did. When one student was cutting the wood the metal blade fell off the axe and into the river, and the student called out, "Oy this is a borrowed axe!" Elisha threw in the wood to the water and the metal miraculously rose.

Reb Shimshon Ostroplier explained this episode by writing that the *tumah*, impurity, of *osso ish*, the founder of the Christian faith, wanted to get close to Elisha. *Ossos ish* was a type of *neshama* and he was a *talmid* of Reb Yehoshua ben Perachya. When Elisha threw the wood into the water, he was *mechavein* the *kavvanos*, concentrated on the thoughts, to push this *tumah* away. This was necessary for now there was no Geichazi, who had pushed so many away. (This included *osso haish*, since *osso haish* was never sincere in his spiritual pursuit and was looking only for *kavod* from Elisha; only the most sincere came close to Elisha then.) But once Geichazi was gone this *tuma* came close to Elisha and he had to be *meyached yichudim*, to keep this *tumah* away.

Here is another lesson: the *concept* of *his'karvu tzadikim*, getting close to *Tzadikim*. The *key* is to seek the *pnim*, *inner reality*. In other words, the Tanya is teaching here that if you work *lishem shamayim*, for the sake of heaven, you can get close to *tzadikim*. He says that the *yenikah*, *nourishment* and *chius*, *life of amei haaretz*, ignorant people, are from the *tzadikim* of the generation. This is when people act in a way that they are truly connected to the *tzadik*!

ובזה יובן מאמר רז"ל על פסוק ולדבקה בו שכל הדבק בת"ח מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו נדבק בשכינה ממש כי ע"י דביקה בתלמידי חכמים קשורות נפש רוח ונשמה של עמי הארץ ומיוחדות במהותן הראשון ושרשם שבחכמה עילאה שהוא ית' והכמתו א' והוא המדע כו' [והפושעים ומורדים בתלמידי חכמים יניקת נפש רוח ונשמה שלהם מבחי' אחריים של נפש רוח ונשמת ת"ח]

This explains the comment of our sages on the verse, “And to cleave unto Him”— “He who cleaves unto a scholar [of the Torah] is deemed by the Torah as if he had become attached to the very shechinah, Divine presence.” For, through attachment to the scholars, the nefesh, ruach and neshamah of the ignorant are bound up and united with their original essence and their root in the Supernal Wisdom, He and His wisdom being one, and “He is the Knowledge...” (As for them who willfully sin and rebel against the sages, the nurture of their nefesh, ruach and neshamah comes from behind the back, as it were, of the nefesh, ruach and neshamah of the scholars.)

The truth is everyone is *yoneik* from the *tzadik*, even the *rasha*. But the *rasha* is like *sitra achra*: they are *yoneik* from the concept of *achorayim*, the non desired back.

ומ"ש בזהר ובזהר חדש שהעיקר תלוי שיקדש עצמו בשעת תשמיש דווקא משא"כ בני הארץ כו' היינו משום שאין לך נפש רוח ונשמה שאין לה לבוש מנפש דעצמות אביו ואמו וכל המצות שעושה הכל ע"י אותו הלבוש כו' ואפי' השפע שנותנים לו מן השמים הכל ע"י לבוש זה ואם יקדש את עצמו ימשיך לבוש קדוש לנשמת בנו ואפילו היא נשמה גדולה צריכה לקידוש אביו כו' אבל הנשמה עצמה הנה לפעמים נשמת אדם גבוה לאין קץ בא להיות בנו של אדם נבזה ושפל כו' כמ"ש האר"י ז"ל כל זה בליקוטי תורה פ' וירא ובטעמי מצות פ' בראשית

As for what is written in the Zohar to the effect that the essential factor is to conduct oneself in a holy manner during marital union, which is not the case with the children of the ignorant, and so on, it is to be understood as meaning that since there is not a nefesh, ruach and neshamah which has not a garment of the nefesh of its father's and mother's essence, and all the commandments that it fulfills are all influenced by that garment - and even the benevolence that flows to one from heaven is all given through that garment - hence, through self-sanctification, one will cause to descend for the neshamah of one's child a holy garment, and however great a soul it may be, it still needs the father's sanctification... But as for the soul itself, it sometimes happens that the soul of an infinitely lofty person comes to be the son of a despised and lowly man... All this has been explained by Rabbi Isaac Luria, of blessed memory, in Likutei Torah, on parshas Vayera, and in Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot on parshas Bereshit.

This *inyan* we will have to speak about in the next lesson for it is a wonderful *inyan*: the matter of the *levush* of the *neshamah*.

Hashem Brings Us Close

Parshas Bo is a wonderful *parsha*.⁶⁷ The *Chozeh* of Lublin⁶⁸ would say that he would literally feel a glow from Pesach during *Parshas Bo*. *Tzadikim* would say about the Talmud's declaration, "*mitzvah bo yoseir mibishlucho*," "better for the mitzvah to be performed by him (Bo) than by the representative," also means that the light one can feel during *Parshas Bo* is even more than what one feels in *parshas Beshalach*.⁶⁹ For *Parshas Bo* is like the first night of Pesach, the beginning of *yetzias mitzarayim*, the Exodus from Egypt, while *parshas beshalach* is like *shvii shel pesach*, the seventh night of Pesach! On the first night of Pesach all the *mochin, intellectual inspirations*, come through *isorrerusa dileila, an arousal from above*, in a speedy way. The spiritual gifts of Pesach arrive in an unusual pattern. In a transmission above normal order. This illumination, *haara*, touches each of us on this Shabbes, and with this Shabbes we can merit the taste of *yetzias mitzrayim derech dilug, in a way of skipping over usual preparations*, and *kefitza, jumping beyond the usual requirements*.

Hashem said *bo*, come to me. He was approaching us to bring about *geula*, redemption. Chassidim used to answer the question why Hashem said *bo* and not *lech el parah*, Go to Paroh, by saying that with *lech* we would not be able to have the acronym *shavavim*.⁷⁰ The Gerrerer

⁶⁷ The Rebbe delivered this lesson during the week in which *Parshas Bo* was read.

⁶⁸ Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Halevi Horowitz (1745-1815) was one of the great Chassidic Rebbes. He helped establish Chassidus in Poland. He was known as the *Chozeh*, the Seer, due to his miraculous abilities of perception. He could see what was not apparent to the normal naked human eye.

⁶⁹ In *Bo* the last of the ten plagues, the slaying of the first born, is imposed on the Egyptians, and the Jewish people leave Egypt. In *Beshalach* the Jewish people are pursued to the Red Sea, which Hashem splits to allow them to cross and then closes on top of the pursuing Egyptians, destroying them.

⁷⁰ *Shovavim* refers to the first six weeks of Torah readings when reading the book of *Shmos*. It is the acronym of the names of those six Torah readings. It is a time of repentance, especially to repent for the sins of the flesh and to achieve an attitude that will focus on spiritual matters and serving the Almighty and not physical pursuits.

The Way to the Tree of Life

Rebbe explained, “Bo means come, it is warm and encouraging terminology, while *lech* means go, it is more remote and distant.”

To succeed in *shovavim* we need *bo*, we need to feel that Hashem is bringing us close! This is a week of *bo el parah, lashon his'karvus*, terminology of endearment. Attach yourselves to this *haara* of Pesach that comes down this Shabbes. With it you can accomplish great spiritual heights!

Some bodies are delicate and only advocate minor sins. Others are coarse and advocate terrible misdeeds. The urges of the body are manifestations of the unique garment of the soul that each person possesses. Lesson Six explores this garment that serves as the bridge linking body and soul. Where does this garment come from? What is its nature? Which mitzvos strengthen the garment? What prayer thanks G-d for the garment of the soul? Lesson Six will reveal secrets about the garment of the soul and the character of man.

Lesson Six: The Garment of the Soul

At the end of chapter two the Tanya spoke of the *levush*, garment, of the soul. The Tanya had previously pointed out that the greatness of the soul is not dependent on the level of the father and the mother who gave birth to this soul. The soul is a piece of Hashem itself, it comes from *atzmius Elokis*, the essence of the infinite, it emerges from *Chochmah i'laa*, transcendent wisdom, it has no real connection to the level of the parents.

But the Tanya also mentioned that there is a garment for the soul that is determined by the parents. The garment the parents draw down is similar to the spiritual level the parents have reached.

Let us explain.

The soul is a piece of Divinity and therefore it is the opposite of the body. It cannot have a connection to the body. It cannot clothe itself in the body, for the two are extremely distant from each other. Hence the need for an intermediary. *Levush haneshama*, the garment of the soul, is a delicate garment. It is not as spiritual as the soul nor is it as physical as the body, but is somewhere in the middle. The soul can relate and connect to this *levush*, and once it is clothed in the *levush* the *levush* can be clothed in the body. This is how the person has life.

Since the sin of *Adam harishon*, the *levush* is not pure Divinity, but is from *Kellipas nogah*, the *nogah* shell, that only has sparks of G-dliness. *Nogah* is *tov* and *rah*, good and bad, it is not complete and pure *elokus*. The bad part of the *levush* is the *yetzer harah*, evil urge, of a person. The *yetzer tov*, drive for holiness, is the good part of the *levush*.

Man's mission on earth is to work on the *levush* that has clothed the soul. The *tzadik* can turn the *yetzer harah* into *tov*. The *beinoni*, though he cannot transform the *yetzer harah* into *tov*, can constantly refuse to follow the *yetzer harah* and instead fulfill the dictates of the *yetzer tov*.

Parents bring down the *levush* for the *neshama* to fill. Once a garment has been created a soul can come into the world for it has a garment to fill. A great *tzadik* certainly draws down a special *levush*. There are people who are simply not attracted to very low levels, they are not attracted to truly horrific sins, they are more sensitive, and delicate people. Sometimes it is clear that this emerges from their very nature: they were born with delicate sensitivities. Delicate sensitivities come from the *levush* received from the parents. Such individuals have a delicate *yetzer harah*, not a gross and lowly *yetzer harah*. This is what they were born with.

On the other hand, some children, who have yet to be educated, are already attracted to anger or greatly material matters. They have a lowly *levush*.

We see both in the Torah and in the world that sometimes great souls come from great parents! A tremendous *tzadik* will in fact bring great souls into the world. Consider the Belzer Rav,⁷¹ or the Satmer Rav,⁷² who had more sensitive bodies, yet even more so had great *neshamos*. When they would learn they would open the wellsprings of wisdom and reveal insights of Torah that were thousands of times more special than what regular people could

⁷¹ Rav Aharon Rokeach (1880-1957) was the fourth Belzer Rebbe. Even before World War two his fame was world wide. He was known as the "wonder" Rabbi for the many miracles that would occur in his presence. When the evil Germans invaded Poland, they posted posters with pictures of the Rebbe, seeking him in order to harm him. Despite their plans the Almighty saved the Rebbe. With many miracles and exceptional devotion of his chassidim, the Rebbe was smuggled during the war from Poland to Hungary to the Land of Israel. The Rebbe lost his entire family during the war, (he and his wife had five sons and four daughters). He also lost thousands of cherishaid disciples. After the war he would not recite kaddish on the yahrtzeit or ever talk about those he lost. His behavior was explained to a historian by his principal assistant in the following way, "because those who had been killed by the Nazis for being Jews were of transcendent holiness; they were beyond our comprehension. Any words about them that we might utter were irrelevant and perhaps even a desecration of their memory."

The Rebbe was an exceptional man. He had a great love for fellow Jews. He would not allow a negative word to be said about another Jew in his presence and he demanded of himself great levels of devotion to the Almighty and personal piety.

⁷² Rav Yoel Teitelbaum (1887-1979) was one of the great giants of the twentieth century. He had served as a Rabbi and Yeshiva head prior to world war two and was widely respected throughout the Chassidic world as one of the greatest Torah geniuses of his generation. After miraculously surviving the Nazis, he was even able to keep his beard while in the concentration camp of Bergen Belsen, he eventually came to the United States and greatly strengthened observance of Judaism in America. Some of his many Torah insights are found in his books *Divrey Yoel*.

accomplish in that amount of time with a similar degree of effort and intellectual ability. When they prayed they would reach levels far above what others can dream about. Such spiritual achievements were a result of the great souls that they possessed.

Was it merely by chance that such a great soul came to a family of such *tzadikim*? No, it was related to the parents. The Almighty is The Great Matchmaker. When a delicate, holy *levush* is brought down by the parents the Almighty will match it with a very special soul. Since the parents of the Belzer Rav and the Satmer Rav drew down a sensitive *levush*, Hashem paired it with a great *neshama*.

Rav Yitzchok Eizik Yehuda Yechiel Safrin, (1806-1874) the great Rebbe of Komarna chassidim, wrote a fascinating work about himself, called Megillas Setarim. In it he writes about his soul and how it entered this world:

“When my father, the tzadik, was at our teacher and master, the holy and Godly of Israel, from Lublin (the Chozeh of Lublin), he entreated him to ask Hashem to grant him a male child (he already had two daughters). The Chozeh answered, “If I decree that you have a son, you will have one, however, you will not be able to live long after the birth for you and he are not to live together in this world.” My father accepted this on himself. The Chozeh then taught him an awesome meditation of unification, a Godly name to put together at the moment of conception, in order to bring down my soul. He then told him that, “You will have a son who will be a great light...”

“On the third day after my circumcision, in my birthplace Samvor, one of the students of the Baal Shem Tov came to visit. Many of the townspeople came to him as did many of the women with their children. His way was as is the norm with the holy men of our generation, to

bless each Jew, small one and great one, with soulful love of Israel, the holy nation. Among those who came was my mother with me so that the tzadik would bless me. When he put his hand on my head, he shouted loudly in Yiddish “Lo! This young child has a singularly great mind and an awesome soul!” My mother was shaken from the shout. He assured her by saying, “Do not fear, this child will be a great light.”

“From when I was two to the age of five I was blessed with awesome sights. I reached Ruach Hakodesh, divine inspiration, and I said prophetic things. I could literally see from one end of the world to the other. My teacher and uncle, the holy and awesome man of God, Rav Tzvi of Ziditchov would give me two reinish each week so that I would tell him matters and answer his questions. I spoke clearly and answered all that he asked of me and I distributed all the money I was given to charity.”

“The primary root of my soul is from the root of the holy Ari...my holy uncle was from the root of Rav Chaim Vital (the primary student of the Ari) and now it was reversed and I learned from him. This is the reason there was such a great soulful love between the two of us.”

“Had I not been in this lowly generation, and I therefore must fix many souls through a broken and submissive heart, I would have merited reaching several of the levels of the holy Ari, but I rejected many spiritual achievements. For my only goal is to give pleasure to the Creator, truthfully, and with a full heart.” (Megillas Setarim entries 4-15)

In these entries it becomes apparent that Rav Safrin had a great soul. Only a great soul would merit to know its root, prior lives, and be able to reach divine inspiration at a young age. Yet this soul was drawn down by his parents. Through the meditation his father engaged in when

conceiving him, a holy levush was drawn and Hashem paired an elevated levush with an elevated soul.

Why People Differ

The *levush* is also connected to the root of the soul. A soul rooted in the realms of heavenly *chesed* will have a *levush* that is also related to that root, to the concept of *chesed*. That is why *kehunah*, priesthood, is an inherited position. Kohen parents draw down a garment of soul from the Kohen root. Because the *levush* is a *levush* of *kehunah* this person gets a soul of *kehunah* and then he is a Kohen. So it is with kings. Since the father was a king, and the external abilities of a king are from the *levush*, he draws to his son a *levush* from the root of royalty, and G-d then clothes a soul of a king in this *levush*.

The length of a person's life depends on the amount of sparks contained within his *levush*. Our sages taught, "*yitzro shel adam mischadesh alav bichol yom*," "The evil urge is renewed each day." Why is the *yetzer harah* renewed every day? Because in each day there is another part of the *levush* that has to be purified. That is why every day has a new *yetzer harah* and a new *yetzer tov*, each day we access a new part of the soul. Each new part has its own evil urge, hence the lesson that on each day we contend with a "new" evil urge. Each day we must defeat the *yetzer harah* of that day.

That is why each morning we recite the blessing of "*elokai neshama shenasata bi tihorah hi*," "My G-d the soul you have placed in me is pure." Each day there is a new part of the soul that is revealed. The *levush* is renewed every day, which is why we recite the blessings of *hamalbish arumim*, He clothes the naked, and *hanosein layaef ko'ach*, He gives to the exhausted strength, for in the morning there is a "new" *levush* that the soul has to work with. When a

person wakes up in the morning he feels fresh because he receives a new *levush* and new soul in the new morning.

If you ask, why if one does not sleep does he not feel the freshness of a new day, since, after all, the new day should reveal a new part of the garment? The answer is that there is a natural order to how the soul is renewed, and part of it is that man must sleep. Sleep is not only something physical. Sleep creates *tikkunim*, spiritual corrections. These *tikkunim* are necessary to enable the renewal of the *levush* and soul for the next day.

The quantity of *nitzotzos*, G-dly sparks, that the *levush* contains determines how long one's life will be, as well as its quality. *Arichus yamim*, length of days, also refers to quality. Years during which one can accomplish much are defined as times of *arichus yamim*, and this is all dependent on the *levush*.

The Torah demands that we honor our father and mother. The honor is both because of the soul - as their souls are connected with your soul – and in gratitude for giving you a *levush* to help in the service of G-d. You have to thank them for getting you a *levush* that enables you to give Hashem pleasure in this world.

On a deeper level, *kavod*, honor, means that a branch must give honor to its root, each branch must honor its source, and this is why honoring parents is like honoring Hashem (*Kiddushin* 30b). My *levush* is an extension of my parents' who drew down this *levush*. I am a branch to my parents' root. If I give honor to my root, and my parents to their root, then we would ultimately reach Adam *harishon*, whose father was G-d. He was created by the Almighty. He would continue the chain and give honor to his root, to the Almighty. Through honor one is attached to his father and then since his father has given honor to his father he becomes

connected to his grandfather and this continues till one gets to honoring Hashem. For this reason our sages teach about honoring parents, “*hukshu kvodam likvod Hamakom,*” “Their honor was compared to the Honor of the Almighty.”

The Evil urge and The Holy Urge

Esav also honored his father. Why? Esav represented the *yetzer harah* and he was honoring the root of his *yetzer harah* - his father who gave him both a *yetzer harah* and a *yetzer tov*. Yaakov also honored his root - he honored the *levush yetzer tov* that he received from his father. There is *kibbud av*, honoring the father, of Yaakov and *kibbud av* of Esav. An honor that emerged from the *yetzer harah*, and an honoring that emerged from the *yetzer tov*. There is a good *kibbud av* and a bad *kibbud av*.

We learn *kibbud av* from the gentiles. For example in tractate *Kiddushin* (31a) the Talmud relates the story of Dama Ben Nesina. He would not wake his father when the sages wished to purchase a precious stone from him and the key to the box holding the stone was under the pillow on which his sleeping father was resting his head. We learn the levels of honor and the rewards of honoring one's father from this behavior of Dama ben Nesina. The Talmud interprets the verse “*yoducha Hashem kol afsei aretz ki shamu imrei picha,*” “All the edges of the world will acknowledge You O G-d, when they will hear the commands of Your mouth.” to mean that when Hashem commanded the mitzvah of *kibbud av* all the nations of the world accepted Him.

Before this command, they had claimed “*kavod atzmo hu doresh,*” “He is demanding honor for Himself.” Once they heard that He commanded the mitzvah of honoring parents they accepted the Divine nature of His laws and directives. Why is this? Because the nations are

performing the *kibbud av* of Esav. They are acknowledging and connecting with their root. Their ultimate root is the *nachash hakadmoni*, the serpent of Eden, the root of the Other Side.

The reward for *kibbud av* is *limaan yarichun yamecha*, so that you will have length of days. Because you honor your root, you can get more strength from it and you merit *arichus yamim*, which is a further feeling of the *levush*.

The present exile was started by the Romans, the descendents of Esav. This exile has been the longest of all the exiles, this is the *arichus yamim* of Esav. Do not despair though. Yaakov is equal to Esav! Rivkah, the mother of both Yaakov and Esav, said, “*lamah eshkol shneichem yom echad*,” “Why should I lose both of you in one day?” (*Bereishis 27:45*) This sentence is also interpreted to mean that Esav and Yaakov are a single day. Esav is the *yetzer harah hamis’chadesh alav bichol yom*, while Yaakov is the *yetzer tov hamis’chadesh alav kol yom*. Both occur during the same day. They are one day. Esav is the darkness, “*Vayehi erev vayehi boker*.” “There was evening and then there was morning.” (*Bereishis 1:5*) First there is night and then there is day. As the *Talmud* says in tractate *Shabbes (77b)*, “Why do the goats go before the sheep? *Kibriyaso shel olam*, like the creation of the world, *chashocha vihadar nehora*, first darkness and then light. As it is written, *Vayehi erev vayehi boker!*” Esav’s lengthy rule during the exile is a hopeful sign for the lengthy world of the Messianic age, which will be the day to Esav’s night.

Furthermore, we must transform the night into day. Each day should be a bit of the future when *Layla kayom yair*, night will be as illuminated as day. (*Tehillim 139:12*) We have to transform the *yetzer harah* to *yetzer tov* to make it into *yom echad*, a single day. *Vayehi erev vayehi boker yom echad*, first comes the evil urge, *vayehi erev*, then the good urge, *vayehi boker*.

Transform the night into one long day, make it into a single unit of wholesome goodness, *yom echad*.

The prophet Zecharia predicted the future with the words, “*vhaya yom echad, hu yivada laHashem lo yom vlo layla, vhaya lieis erev yihyeh ohr,*” (Zecharia 14:7) “There is a single day, known for G-d's salvation, not day and then night, rather as the time of dusk approaches there will be light!” This is our job to turn the evil urge into a source of light, to unite the body and soul and transform body into soul! Yaakov took the *bechorah*, the role of first born and the blessings, from Esav for it is the job of the side of good to completely take all the sparks from the side of evil and transform the person into a unified being of complete G-dliness! When Yaakov purchased these rights he said “*michra kayom es bchorascha li,*” “Sell your firstbornhood to me like the day.” What he meant to express was that you are night, sell your strength to me and let there be only day! He was trying to acquire the eternal sunshine, the age of the *yom shekulo arokh*, that very long day.

When one kills someone he takes away his *levush*. A person who is alive has a *levush* with many *nitzotzin*, and thus he has a long time to live to uplift these many sparks. If someone is killed he can no longer find his *nitzotzos* in the world for his *levush* was taken away and separated from the soul. The Torah (Genesis 25:29-30) says that Esav returned from the field in a state of being *ayef*, tired, and Rashi comments that Esav had committed murder that day for *ayef* refers to death, “*ki ayfah nafshi lihorgah,*” “My soul was exhausted due to murder.” What does Rashi mean? A person who is tired is by definition a murderer? Does the blessing of *hanosen layaef koach* mean that we were murderers because we were *ayef*? We have already learnt that this blessing is a thanks for the renewal for the *levush*.

Each day the *levush* was active, *nitzotzos* were raised or lowered. When all the sparks for that day are uplifted or lowered, a person becomes tired and exhausted. In the morning he gets a new piece of garment to work with so he is renewed with strength and energy. The punishment for a person who takes away someone else's *levush* is that G-d does not give him a new *levush*. He does not die immediately, because the *sitra achra* gives him a new *levush*. (All gifts of life can come from the Other Side as well.) Yet from the side of holiness he is exhausted for his holy garment is not renewed.

The Torah defined Esav as a constantly tired one, an *ayef* person: *Vhu ayef*, not "He was tired," for which it would have said *vhu haya ayef*. After Esav killed he became an exhausted one: he was forevermore tired for the holy soul was no longer ever renewed. He was a murderer whose life was coming from the Other Side. Yaakov realized that Esav was a murderer without any *levushim* from holiness, so he asked that Esav sell to him the holy *bechorah kayom* - so that there would only be daylight, a *levush* of holiness.

The Garments of Each Land

We are all outside of the Land of Israel, and here each *levush* is earthy and lowly. Outside Israel each *levush* must have a connection to the nation among whom we live. Each gentile nation has its angel in Heaven and its unique *yetzer harah*. The angel of the nation is the source of all the evil urges of that nation. For example the English are very arrogant: they take pride in only doing things that are proper and fitting. We live in the United States and we should study its evil urge to better understand this culture and its challenges.

In America one of the foundations is freedom. Whatever you do is ok, everyone is fine, there is no respect for authority, everyone can do whatever he wants, all are free, everyone has a right to do their will. Lust for money is also a big part of this nation's *yetzer harah*. Those of us who were born in this land were born under a particular Heavenly angel, and we have a *yetzer harah* in our *levush* that relates to this land. Our *nitzotzos* are to be found in that domain and we have a unique mission to raise these *nitzotzos* and use them to serve G-d.

This is why each country has a different way of serving Hashem and a different way of studying Torah. The Ashkenazim have one way of learning, the Sefardim a different approach, the Polish Jews a third way. It is highly likely that this is related to the unique garments of the soul that enter each country and determine the unique nature of its residents. A country filled with brilliant intellectuals has Jews who serve Hashem with deep levels of learning Torah. Because the *yetzer harah* has a unique *levush* in that country the *yetzer tov* must counterweigh it with a similar form of good. Different communities of Jews lift sparks up from their garments in different ways.

Raising sparks in a country relates to using its items in the right way, for all the gifts of a country contain the *nitzotzos* of that country. To access those items one needs money. The coinage of a country enables one to purchase all the items in that country. It is the key to the *hashpaos*, the gifts, of that land. Thus all the sparks of the country are rooted in the currency of the country. On the coins the nations make a *levush*, they etch a form, usually a picture of a man. For it is in the *levush* that the *nitzotzos* are found! This picture is the idol, it is the *tzelem*, the image, of the country.

The *tzelem* is a superficial picture of the ideal, a *chitzonius*, an imitation, a form of how things should be. Just as an idol represents an external image of a person, the nations enjoy idols, for their ideals would only create an externally ideal world. The Jewish people on the other hand have soulful ideals. A life of fulfilling mitzvos such as eating kosher and keeping Shabbes truly creates a wonderful life. The nations also have laws, they have national holidays, and ideals, but these have no inner life, they are just superficial forms of an ideal man. Hence the statues and etchings of people on their currency.

Consider the United States. A minted coin in the US has a picture on it of one of the great leaders of the country. George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and others are on the coins for they established the culture and laws of this country, and the society is reminded by them to try to live up to what they represented.

When the Jewish nation is involved in the material life of the country, such as business and trade, they must deal with the nations. In this country one would have to talk English and deal with the non Jews to engage in commerce here. In this way Jews are *mivarer*, they clarify the holiness, they raise *nitzotzos*. Raising sparks is the *parnassah*, the livelihood of the country. Jews get *parnassah* in a physical way, and they give in a spiritual way *parnassah* to that country. To bring out *nitzotzos* is what gives holy life to holy souls.

Now this requires that one earn money in the right way! A person must be honest in business, set time for Torah study, and trust that all comes from the Almighty. Then through his business successes he is raising *nitzotzos*.

There is a *nitzotz tov* in the concept of freedom and that has to be utilized for good and must be elevated. Through going into the nation and dealing with them we are lifting up the

The Way to the Tree of Life

sparks of that nation, and this is why after a period of time the Jewish people leave one place and go to another in exile, or they leave one profession and enter another, for once all the sparks in this part of the country have been elevated, Jews must enter into another part of the economy to elevate the sparks that are there.

The *Talmud* says that Rabbi Menachem Bar Simai was *bnan shel kedoshim*, the son of the holy ones, and he did not gaze at the form on the coins. (*Pesachim 104a*) What is the connection between being the son of holy ones and not looking at coins? Should it not have said instead that the men of great trust in G-d never looked at coins? Now we understand it. *Bnan shel kedoshim* means that the father brought a very holy *levush* and that is why he did not want to look at the *levushim* of the nations! He did not want to look at the idols that are on the coins. He need not enter into the tough business world to raise sparks. He is the son of the holy ones. He is more delicate and will raise sparks through Torah and mitzvos, not through being involved in business, the culture of that country, and utilizing coins!

With these lessons we understand the Tanya's disclaimer that while the level of soul one has is a direct gift from Hashem, and even sinners can have a son who has a transcendent soul, parents do impact their child. The holiness with which the parents act when they conceive the child is what determines how holy a *levush*, is drawn down for this child. As Jews born in America we also have an American *levush*, let us endeavor to raise the sparks that we should from this culture and land.

Chapter three in the Tanya reads:

והנה כל בחי' ומדרגה משלש אלו נפש רוח ונשמה כלולה מעשר בחי' כנגד עשר ספירות עליונות שנשתלשלו מהן הנחלקות לשתיים שהן שלש אמות ושבע כפולות

And behold each aspect and level of these three, Nefesh, Ruach, and Neshama, is composed of ten components that parallel the ten Elevated Sefiros, for they devolved from them, and they are divided into two, the three sources and the seven doubles.

The Tanya is speaking here about each soul-level – *nefesh, ruach, and neshama* – and each part is filled with concepts from the ten *Sefiros*, G-dly emanations. Adam is *adameh laelyon*, man is in the image of G-d, he has within him a *chelek elokah mimaal mamash*, a literal piece of Divinity. So just as G-d emanated ten *Sefiros*, each part of man's soul has ten aspects in the image of the ten *Sefiros*! The ten *Sefiros* are divided into two parts: the three sources and the seven derivative attributes.

פי' חכמה בינה ודעת ושבעת ימי הבנין חסד גבורה תפארת כו

Meaning Chochmah, Binah, and Daas, and the seven days of building, kindness, strength, and harmony etc.

The first three Divine emanations, the *gimmel rishonos*, are sometimes called *Chochmah, Binah, Daas*, and sometimes they are called *Kesser, Chochmah, Binah*. The seven lower attributes are called seven days of building for they are the deeper meaning of the seven days of creation. Hashem made everything on the building blocks of the seven lower *Sefiros*, the seven *middos*.

The first three *Sefiros* are called the *almah di 'iskasyah*, the hidden universe. They were not well revealed in our world. In our world the seven days of creation were revealed.

The Difference Between *Chassidus* and Kabbalah

The entire wisdom of *chassidus* and Kabbalah is built on the concepts of the ten *Sefiros*. We must dwell on them for without understanding these principles you cannot grasp any Chassidic work.

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Just as you cannot make a tune without knowing the seven notes of music, one can have no comprehension in serving Hashem without knowing the ten roots of serving Hashem. Serving Hashem is all about putting together the *Sefiros*. This is not Kabbalah; this is *chassidus*.

There is a big difference between *chassidus* and Kabbalah. To understand how the *Sefiros* function in the Heavenly realms is Kabbalah, but to understand the person, to know oneself in the Torah way or to see these concepts in the Torah and how our sages utilized them, is *chassidus*. It is Torah study that is accessible to all and each of us should engage in it.

Ten Not Eleven

First, let us address a problem. Aren't there four roots? There is *kesser*, *Chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas*. After that there are seven *middos*. There seems therefore to be a total of eleven *Sefiros*.

Why then did the Tanya talk of ten?

The answer is that eleven is a number of the forces of evil. The *sitra achra* has eleven forces, while holiness has ten. We see this in *ketores*, the special incense offered in the Temple. It had eleven spices. The *samech mem*, the angel of evil and death, gave the secret of *ketores* to Moshe Rabbeinu to stop plagues. The meaning of this is that the life of evil is the eleven spices of *ketores*. Everything needs some holiness to give it life: the holiness of the *ketores* is the sparks that animate it. The *samech mem* revealed to Moshe how to raise this life from the forces of evil and thus stop the plague.

When there is a plague, what is happening? There are destructive agents that carry out the decree. What must be done? They have to be killed. How do you kill them? By pulling away their life with the *ketores*. *Ketores* means to *likasher*, it ties the life back to its root, it pulls all the

holy life from the destructive agents and then they die. The mission of the Jewish nation when we traveled through the desert during the Exodus from Egypt was akin to an offering of *ketores*. The desert was a place of *kellipos*, an arena of death. Through the good deeds the Jews performed as they traveled they connected the sparks back to their holy source and broke the powers of death and destruction. Hence the verse in the Song of Songs, “*mi zos olah min hamidbar kitimros ashan, mekuterer mor ulevonah mikol avkas rocheil,*” (3:6) “Who is this one who arises from the desert like a pillar of smoke, with an incense of *myrrh* and *levonah*, better than all the perfumes of the master cosmetician.” Since the journey through the desert was a *ketores*-like experience, the length of the trip was an eleven day journey to correspond to the eleven spices. “*Achad assar yom meichoreiv derech har saieer,*” “Eleven days from Horeb was the path through Mount Seier [to Israel.]” (Devarim 1:2)

This is why there were eleven *alufei* Esav, princes of Esav. In the tabernacle in the desert the cover called *mishkan* had ten *yerios*, tapestries, and on top of the *mishkan* another cover to correspond to the realm of *Kellipah*, external shell, and it was made up of eleven *yerios izzim*, goat-hair tapestries. *Izzim* is a sign of the Other Side. Just as the *Talmud* says that Esav was *ish sair*, a hairy man, *sair* is to recall also the *sair liazazel*, the goat sent to the wilderness. Esav is symbolized by the goats in the Talmudic passage that teaches, “Why do the goats go ahead of the sheep? Because so it was in the creation of the world, first darkness and then light.” (Tractate Shabbes 77b)

Even the word *aiz* אֵז teaches this lesson: through *gematria* it has a numeric value of eleven times seven, the seven days of creation impacted by the eleven of impurity. *Yud alef* יא in its *miluy gematria* form, spelling out the name of each letter, יוּד אֵלֶף equals סָמַח samech mem

alef lamed (131) the name of the angel of evil. We could adduce many other proofs that eleven is related to the life of the Other Side.

The reason for all this is holiness has ten, while in the opposite of holiness there are eleven, **for in holiness *kesser* and *daas* are united, while in *sitra achra* they are divided into two separate concepts.**

Now we will just explain in a very general way. There are *mochin*, parts of the mind, and *middos*, emotions. Let us first explain *Kesser*, *Chochmah*, and *Binah* then we will see how *Kesser* is related to *Daas* and they are two sides of one essential quality.

The Core of the Soul

Kesser means *ratzon*, will. Every *nefesh*, every *neshama*, has a particular *ratzon*, and everything that happens with the soul is related to this will. The soul wants something. The soul itself does not know or understand this *ratzon*. For knowing and understanding is possible with the abilities of *Chochmah*, *Binah*, and *Daas*, but *Kesser* is higher than *Chochmah*, *Binah* and *Daas*! It is a will that cannot be comprehended. One cannot comprehend the root of the *ratzon* in a person. It is hidden. Hashem gave us 613 mitzvos and they are *ratzon haelyon*, the Highest Will, rooted in His *ratzon*. They are the revelation of what Hashem wants, what gives Him pleasure. Since there are also seven mitzvos *dirabbanan*, Rabbinic commandments, there are in total 620 mitzvos that Hashem wants!

The *seforim* call them the 620 lights, תרך אורות. There are 620 letters in the Ten Commandments to correspond to these 620 mitzvos, for these are the 620 extensions of the *ratzon haelyon*. Of these actions Chazal, our sages, say “*Nisaveh hakba”h lihyos lo dira*

batachtonim,” “Hashem desired to have a residence in the lowly realms.” (*Midrash Tanchuma Naso siman 16*) The sages do not say He deliberated and then decided or thought it would be a good idea to have a residence down on earth. Rather they say *nisaveh*, He wanted. He has a *taava*, a desire. In other words, He possesses a *ratzon*.

The Almighty wants the mitzvos, and wanting is higher than understanding. It is rooted in the root of essential G-dliness, *atzmius Elokis!* *Atzimus Elokis* states, “I want a residence on earth” and each mitzvah of the 620 reveals this will for each mitzvah makes a residence for Him in the earthly realm. If Hashem wants something it must take place and be fulfilled. The holy realm is all true. The Highest Will is accessed when any of the 620 mitzvos are fulfilled.

Each soul has this *ratzon* for the soul is a mirror of G-dliness. Each soul has a hidden desire and will to make for Hashem a residence down here in the lowly realms. Each soul has a deep desire to fulfill mitzvos, to bring His presence into this earthly realm.

This will is so exalted that it is hidden in the person. It is above *Chochmah* and *binah*, it transcends understanding, hence the statement *ain taam laratzon*, there is no reason for will. Reasoning is a display of *Chochmah* and *binah*. Will cannot be grasped by vessels that are lower than it, and no one can explain why and how each particular act of mitzvah draws the Divine into this world. The deep truth is that will is a display of the essence of a person, the *atzmius* and *mahus nefesh*, intrinsic essence of soul.

This should give us great pleasure when we perform mitzvos. When we shake a *lulav* on Sukkos, or express heartfelt words of *tefilla*, prayer, the essence of our soul rejoices, the pleasure we feel is born of the discovery of delight when the core life of our souls touches us.

“*Zeh liumas zeh asah Elokim,*” “G-d made one opposite the other.” (*Koheles 7:14*) The body also has hidden wills, and it desires, in a hidden way, pleasures. The body enjoys honor and eating because these relate to the very *mahus* of the *nefesh habahamis*. There are many times when a person is not even aware that his actions are influenced by deeper desires. There is a part of the mind which man himself is unaware of. The scientists call it the subconscious, but the Kabbalists knew of it long before them, and they called the subconscious *sharashei hamachashavos*, the roots of thoughts.

When a person fulfills a mitzvah he reworks his *ratzon*. He purifies his will through the actions of mitzvah. The hidden *ratzon* of the body is the opposite of the *ratzon* of the soul. When a person breaks the *ratzon* of the body and fulfills the will of Hashem, in a hidden way he refines his will, he draws holiness to the root of *ratzon* in himself. The *etzem* of himself gets filled with G-dliness, he gets to see the desires of the body fall away and he becomes a *merkavah*, seat, to the *ratzon haelyon*. The inner will of holiness is a *kesser*, crown.

A crown is a symbol of the hidden abilities of the king, strengths that are above his wisdom and understanding. A holy king is appointed by Hashem because he has a high degree of hidden intangible holiness that emerges from the levels above mere wisdom and understanding. Every person accesses these abilities when he connects to his inner will, hence the name for will is crown.

Song and the Hidden Abilities

This week is Shabbes *shira*, when we read the song we sang after the splitting of the sea. This Shabbes is the completion of *yetzias mitzrayim*, the Exodus. It occurs this year on the eleventh

day of the eleventh month. This is related to transforming the *sitra achra*, to take the forces of eleven and bring them to the holiness of ten.

We find that the Jews left Egypt and thought that Pharaoh, who had tried to rush them out, would never again try to harm them. But then they arrived at the Red Sea and discovered that he was pursuing them. What was left? Why did Pharaoh still chase them? The Torah stresses that all the idols of Egypt were decimated during the final plague except for one idol - *baal tzfon*, which was left standing. This was why Pharaoh pursued the Jews one final time. There remained a need to smash his false ideology. Hashem wanted to defeat this last false faith, so he had Pharaoh come to the sea.

Chazal say that one of the names of the evil urge is *tzfoni*. *Tzafun* means hidden, and *baal tzfon* represents a hidden urge for idolatry. The evil urge in each of us has a hidden manifestation called *tzfoni*. Pharaoh may not even have been aware that he had this *yetzer harah*. It had to be revealed.

When a person discovers within himself forces that he never knew he had, he feels that he is standing in front of a new world, and then he must sing a song. When the *kochos hanefesh*, the abilities of the soul, suddenly emerge there is a great pleasure, the heart feels that only song can give such delight a suitable expression. Hence the song when we crossed through the sea.

Yam, a sea, is called the *alma diiskasya*, the hidden world. When the sea split, the Jews went into the *alma diiskasya* and they merited to find their own hidden realm revealed, and then they sang. How were they revealed? Through subduing *baal tzfon*! *Zeh liumas zeh*! One parallels the other! (*Koheles 7:14*) Pharaoh had a hidden hatred of Jews. When the Jews arrived at *baal tzfon* this hidden hatred bubbled up and was renewed, and then our hidden abilities were

revealed. “*Mah rav tuvcha asher tzafanta liyireiacha*,” “there is a great deal of good that you have hidden away for those who fear you!” (*Tehillim 31:20*)

The personality who represents the hidden strengths of the Jewish nation is Yosef Hatzadik. Yosef is also called *tzafnas pe’anai’ach*, literally, the deciphering of the hidden. Our sages teach, *Mah raah vayanos*, What did he [the sea] see to flee? *Raah arono shel Yosef*, it saw the coffin of Josef. (*Midrash Tanchuma parshas Naso siman 30*) Once it saw *tzafnas pe’anai’ach*, the hidden strengths, it then split. It saw the *kesser*, it saw the *mah rav tuvcha asher tzafanta liyireiacha*, the great goodness that is recessed in the soul.

Tzafnas צפנת through gematria has the same numeric value as *kesser* כתר (620) and *פענה* *pe’anai’ach* (208) equals *אור* *ohr* (207) with the *kollel* (another one). The sea saw the *ohr kesser*, the light of *kesser*, and the miracle ensued. We sang for the hidden abilities of the soul appeared and this gave us great pleasure, for this was the completion of leaving Egypt. This Shabbes is all song and *kochos hanefesh*! It is all pleasures.

May Hashem help us to truly appreciate this Shabbes!

Lesson Seven reveals that the core of man is not intellect, rather it is will. The deepest point within the person is will that transcends reason. Will that extends the essence of the soul and discovers what is truly pleasurable. Study of Lesson Seven will reveal why some matters impact us and what gives the soul the pleasure of feeling its essence.

Lesson Seven: The Three Intellects

The third chapter of the Tanya begins:

והנה כל בחי' ומדרגה משלש אלו נפש רוח ונשמה כלולה מעשר בחי' כנגד עשר ספירות עליונות שנשתלשלו מהן הנחלקות לשתים שהן שלש אמות ושבע כפולות פי' חכמה בינה ודעת ושבעת ימי הבנין חסד גבורה תפארת כו' וכך בנפש האדם שנחלקת לשתים שכל ומדות. השכל כולל חכמה בינה ודעת. והמדות הן אהבת ה' ופחדו ויראתו ולפארו כו' וחב"ד נקראו אמות ומקור למדות כי המדות הן תולדות חב"ד

Now, each distinction and grade of the three - nefesh, ruach and neshamah - consists of ten concepts, corresponding to the Supernal Ten Sefiros from which they have descended. The ten concepts are further subdivided into two. The three "mothers" and the seven "multiples:" Chochmah, binah and daas; and the "seven days of creation:" chesed (loving), gevurah (restraint), tiferet (beauty), etc.

The ten *Sefiros* are divided into two sets: *gimmel rishonos*, the first three, also known as *shalosh imos*, three mothers; and *sheva kefulos*, seven doubles, or *shivas yemei habinyan*, seven days of creation. So too the person has an intellectual side that corresponds to the *gimmel rishonos* and an emotional part that corresponds to the *shivas yemei habinyan*, seven days of building.

The seven days of creation are at their root seven *middos*, attributes. The Creator revealed seven *middos* and this is creation. A day, defined in an inner way, means a revelation of a *midde*. During the seven days of creation Hashem revealed seven *middos*. All that exists in the world since the seven days of creation emerges from and is rooted in the seven *middos* of Hashem: *chesed*, loving; *gevurah*, restraint; *tiferes*, beauty; *netzach*, dominance; *hod*, glory; *yesod*, foundation; and *malchus*, royalty.

There are many sevens in our world. Seven days of the week, seven weeks of *sefiras haomer*, the counting of the *omer*,⁷³ seven years in a *shemitah* cycle,⁷⁴ and seven *shmittos* in a

⁷³On the second day of Passover, when we had a Temple in Jerusalem, we were obliged to offer to the Almighty a special sacrifice, a portion of newly cut barley that was burned on the altar. This offering was the *minchas haomer*. We then were to count the next forty nine days, so that we would count seven full weeks. This count is the *sefiras haomer*. After the weeks were completed, on the fiftieth day, we would celebrate the holiday of *Shavuos*, in which we recalled the receipt of the Torah at Sinai. Even though today we no longer offer the *minchas haomer* since our Temple has not been rebuilt, we still count the *sefiras haomer* from the second day of Passover until *Shavuos*.

⁷⁴*Shmitta* is the sabbatical year. Israel must display the sovereignty of the Almighty. Therefore agricultural labors may only be performed for six years. On the seventh year the land is to rest. The seventh year is called the *shmitta* year.

yovel; ⁷⁵these are all expressions of the seven *middos*. Whatever is connected to seven is in this world, what is above seven is from a higher world.

In *sefiras haomer* we have seven weeks of *sefirah* and after them the festival of Shavuos. During Shavuos the first three *middos* are revealed. These three intellects are an emanation from the world to come, they are a bit and a model of the world to come. The hidden world, the world to come, was revealed when Hashem gave the Torah at Sinai. The Torah was given on such an "eighth" day, after the seven times seven days of *sefirah*. Again the rule: the number eight is always related to that which is higher than this world, to the realm of the *gimmel rishonos*.

The *gimmel rishonos* are sometimes called *Chochmah, binah, daas* and sometimes they are called *kesser, Chochmah, binah*. First a general explanation is in order, then we can move to the details.

Will Is An Extension of Essential Life

Last week we began explaining the concept of *kesser*. *Kesser* is *ratzon* and, as I explained, there are 620 letters in the Ten Commandments and 620 mitzvos: 613 *mitzvos* from the Torah and seven *mitzvos* from the rabbis, for these are the 620 extensions of the *ratzon haelyon*, the Divine will. These are *hamshachos, extensions*, of the *ratzon haelyon*.

Ratzon haelyon means mitzvos. The Almighty wants the mitzvos, the pleasure of the Almighty is felt when man fulfills His mitzvos. There is no other pleasure for Hashem other than the mitzvos. He fully reveals His will through them.

⁷⁵ After seven sets of *shmitta* cycles the fiftieth year is the *yovel* year. During *yovel* the land must rest and the bondsmen return to their families, and ancestral lands return to the families that inherited them when the Jews first entered Israel in the days of Joshua. According to the deeper wisdom of Torah during *yovel* there is a special spiritual emanation from the Divine that enters our world and this spiritual force creates the unique features of *yovel*.

Since above there is a concept of will, so too below man has within him a will. The will of the G-dly soul, the *nefesh Elokis*, is a mirror of the *ratzon haelyon*. The *ratzon haelyon* draws down G-dliness, and reveals G-dliness, through the channels called the 620 mitzvos. Each mitzvah is a type of *shleimus*, perfection, and these perfections are expressions of *ratzon haelyon*. Each mitzvah is another way to reveal the Highest will. The *ratzon* of each soul is to attach to the *ratzon haelyon*, to fulfill the mitzvos. The *neshama* wants this *giluy*, revelation. This is the hidden *ratzon* in the soul.

Ratzon is hidden, since it is the *kesser*, crown, above *Chochmah* and *binah*. It is above mind, hence the phrase *ain taam laratzon*, there is no reason for will. *Chochmah* and *binah* are *middos* of understanding. They are part of the mind, but *ratzon* is higher. What a soul truly wants in a hidden way is not based on understanding that it should want this, rather it is related to the very *mahus*, essence, of the *nefesh*. **The *atzmiyus hanefesh* is revealed in what he wants with his *ratzon*. The *ratzon* is nothing more than a vessel that draws out the *atzmiyus hanefesh*, the essence of the soul. The enjoyable *taanugim* of a *nefesh* are its *atzmiyus*. One wants what gives the being pleasure. The pleasure that the soul feels when his will is satisfied is the pleasure of the *atzmiyus haadam*, the essence of the person.**

The phrase *hu urtzono echad*, He and His will are one, should fill us with great joy when we fulfill mitzvos. *Etzem Elokis* is revealed in His *ratzon*. Thus when we perform a mitzvah we are revealing and connecting with His essence.

Whatever is in the camp of holiness also exists in the camp of the opposite of holiness. In the book *Koheles* it was revealed that our world is a balanced one, with equal forces on the sides of holiness and sin. *Zeh liumas zeh asah Elokim*, one to oppose the other G-d made (*Koheles*

7:14). The body also has hidden wills, and it wills in a hidden way pleasures. **The body enjoys honor and it enjoys eating because these are the *atzmiyus* of the *guf*!** These are not desires that emerge after deliberation and consideration. These are expressions of the *etzem mahus* of the *nefesh habbahamis*, animal soul. The animal in man enjoys these pleasures and seeks them. There are many times when a person is not even aware of his *ratzon*. This is the part of the mind which man himself is unaware of, the subconscious.⁷⁶

When a person performs a mitzvah he transforms and purifies this part of the mind. *Taamei Torah lo nisgalu*, the reasons for mitzvos were not revealed. There are no real reasons for mitzvos. The *taamei mitzvos* offered by *rishonim*, early commentators, are not the real *taam*. They are pieces of the *taam* that can be grasped by the mind. The real reasons for mitzvos cannot be grasped with the mind. The brain is a vessel of wisdom and understanding. Mitzvos however relate to the transcendent will! Therefore they can transform the innermost wishes of the physical part of man.

The pleasure that the soul feels when performing the mitzvah is the reason for the mitzvah. When doing these acts one feels his *atzmiyus hanefesh*! He feels deep pleasure! He feels life! This life is the real reason of the mitzvah. *Schar mitzvah mitzvah*, the reward of the mitzvah is the mitzvah, in doing it one feels the pleasure inherent in it (*Pirkei Avos*, Ethics of the Fathers 4:2). The *metzius Elokis*, G-dly reality, which is higher than mind is revealed through mitzvos. Just as *hu uritzono echad*, His will and is His *metzius* are one, and just as His *metzius* is above explanation, mitzvos are above explanation! Therefore when doing the mitzvah there is a feeling of life, and this life is the mitzvah, for the soul and the mitzvah are really united. There is

⁷⁶ Discussed in lesson six.

no need to explain to the soul the matter of a mitzvah, just as there is no need to explain to the body why it must eat. The mitzvah is above explanation.

When doing a mitzvah the force of *taanug*, the level above the mind, is being purified and this helps the person acquire a perfection, to be *mamshich Elokis* to the entirety of the person. This is *kesser*.

Wisdom And Understanding

Chochmah is the ability to know facts. Man has the ability to know things without an explanation. This is the force of *Chochmah*. Obviously, when a man knows something he does not make anything through this knowledge. Objects that already exist are grasped with knowledge. Man accepts the things Hashem has made.

However, the *Chochmah* of the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, the Master of the universe, is more powerful. Once Hashem knows of a creation, He makes the creature! Since a matter has come to His *Chochmah*, the *Chochmah* makes the thing. Hashem's wisdom does not function at the level of learning about what exists. Before anything existed He did not know it. The moment His *Chochmah* knew of it, it existed. At the moment of its creation He came to know of it. One cannot say something existed and Hashem did not know of it. *Chochmah* *הכח* is made of the letters for *ko'ach mah* *כח מה*, the force of matter, it makes things. It is the power of making things. King David declared in Psalms, *Kulam biChochmah asisa*, all were made with Your *Chochmah* (104:24).

Chochmah in Kabbalah is called *abba*, father, for just as a child comes from the father and the *tipa*, drop of seed, is a *kelaliyos* generalization of the child, so it is with *Chochmah*.

When the *Chochmah Elyonah* knows of a matter, the *ko'ach mah* makes a *metzius* and this existence encompasses all that it will eventually become.

Binah means understanding all the details of a matter. After knowing the matter in a general way (*Chochmah*) we have *binah* to understand all the details.

Chochmah and *binah* are described in the Zohar as two friends who never separate. Think of a person. It is not possible to know a reality and not understand it at all. Certainly I may not know all the details, but to know a reality I must understand it somewhat. It is possible that after I hear all the details I will say, "Relative to how I understand it now I did not understand it then," but this is a mere relative assessment, for basically there must be understanding with *Chochmah*. To know of something and not understand it at all is impossible. If I know of something, I understand implied points.

For example, if I know that I have a table here, I know some things about a table. I know what a table is, I know it takes up space, I know it can be felt, I have an understanding of some details. Every element of wisdom has to have some understanding of details attached to it. These two are therefore never separated, *trei reiin dlo misparshin*. *Chochmah* cannot exist alone from *binah*: if you know a matter you also understand it, at least somewhat.

In Kabbalistic terminology, *Chochmah* is the father and *binah* is the mother, the *eim*. Why is *binah* the mother? The drop of seed from the father is like *Chochmah*. In the womb of the mother this drop is developed and all matters emerge *mikoach el hapoel*, from potential to actual. All 365 sinews and 248 limbs emerge in the womb. All the matters that were in a latent state in the *tipa* the mother pulls out and makes real.

So it is with *binah*. The *Chochmah* is the first knowledge and the *binah* pulls out of it all the potential details and makes them actual. In a Heavenly sense when Hashem made the world and *kulam biChochmah asisa*, this was a general reality, a *metzius kelali*. There was a common denominator to all existences, a unity. As the *Chovos Halevavos*⁷⁷ teaches, we see in the world a great common denominator in that it is all filled with a great *Chochmah*. Everything in the world has infinite wisdom. Nothing has more *Chochmah* than anything else; even small things have tremendous *Chochmah*. For the *Chochmah* of Hashem gave a *metzius kilalis* to the world.

In details one is a bird, and the other is an angel. Words are applicable due to *binah*, which was involved in making the details. But *Chochmah* is the generalization, so in all there is a great *Chochmah*, for it is related to the *metzius kelalis*, the general reality.

The *metzius*, the existence, and the *reishis*, the beginning, of any matter are related to *Chochmah*, because the beginning is the beginning of something's existence. In *chassidische seforim*, *reishis* is frequently the term used to refer to *Chochmah*. The *reishis* has a hidden *reishis* and this is the *ratzon*. The *ratzon haelyon* is a hidden *reishis*. The *ratzon* is the *taanug elyon* to make a creation and this *taanug elyon* is the root of the creation. But it is hidden.

We said earlier that the delight of the One above is expressed in the 613 mitzvos. So this is the creation. The entire creation is really an expression of the 613 mitzvos. There is nothing else that exists.

Miracles And Nature

⁷⁷ *Chovos Halevavos*, Duties of the Heart, is a classic work of Jewish Ethical thought. It was authored by Rabbeinu Bachya Ibn Paquda in the last third of the eleventh century. It is a work filled with guidance and inspiration to live a holy, ethical life.

There are two *hanahagos*, ways of directing the world: the *hanhaga* of *nes*, miracle, and the *hanhaga* of *teva*, nature. Sometimes Hashem guides the world with miracles and sometimes He guides the world with nature. Hashem made a condition with the act of creation to perform certain miracles, for there are times when Hashem wants to run the world with miracles. There is a *hanhaga kevua*, a set way, that at certain times there will be *nissim*, miracles. Under certain conditions, G-d suspends the rule of nature and then there is a realm of miracles.

Displays of this dynamic occurred when we left Egypt, when we crossed the sea, when the *mikdash* was in existence, and even in our day in the presence of *tzadikim*. There are times when there is an *eis ratzon*, a favorable time, for *nes*, for Hashem has set up an establishaid norm that at certain times and under certain conditions the *hanhaga* of *nes* should appear.

The roots of these two ways of guiding the world are the foundations of creation. We have learned that G-d's *Chochmah* is at the root of the world, and G-d's *Ratzon Ha'elyon* is at the basis and root of the *Chochmah*. There are two beginnings: a hidden beginning, to want to make a world, and a revealed beginning, the *Chochmah* that made the world a reality. The hidden beginning, the *Ratzon Ha'elyon*, is expressed in the guidance of *nes*. The *hanhaga* of *teva*, which is called a *hanhaga* of *seder hishtalshlus*, order of devolution, is from the realm of *Chochmah*.

Nes is *limaala miseder hishtalshlus*, higher than the normal order of devolution. *Hishtalshlus* means cause and effect. For instance, since earth draws things to it, matters are dragged down. Why is this a cause for that effect, why are there laws of nature? *Kulam biChochmah asisa!* The Almighty's wisdom decided and set these rules! At a certain point the reason for a rule of nature is that the wisdom of the Almighty felt it should be this way. All *gidrey*, boundaries, and *hilchos hateva*, laws of nature, are establishaid by *Chochmah Elyonah*.

We can say the same about the holy Torah. The *Chochmah Elyonah* has determined all the laws of Torah and their details. His wisdom determined all of these things. The deeper wisdom of Torah reveals that shaking the four special plants on Sukkos creates a unique spiritual result. Shaking of *Lulav* on *Sukkos* can bring lights to unite *Kudsha Brich Hu*, our transcendent spiritual feelings, and *Shechintei*, feeling the immanence of the Divine, to draw from *daas elyon*, supernal knowledge, to *neve apiryon*, the glorious palace, *limchon beis elokeinu*, to the residence of our Lord. This is a *hamshacha* to bring the *pnimus chassadim didaas*, inner aspects of loving in knowledge, to build *Malchus*, Hashem's attribute of revealing His rule. Why is the *lulav* in particular the reason for this result? Why does it rebuild *Malchus* in this way? Because this is what the *Chochmah Elyonah* decided! This is the root of the matter. Beyond this we cannot understand: at a certain point of inquiry we say we cannot understand more than what the *Chochmah* decided and knew. The root of all was the wisdom of the One above.

Ratzon is higher than *Chochmah*. *Ratzon* wants us to fulfill the 613 mitzvos, to create a world of mitzvos. *Ratzon* is revealed through *Chochmah Elyonah*. *Ratzon* is clothed in *Chochmah*, and the *Chochmah* is the first revealed stage, while the *Ratzon* is hidden within it. The *hanhaga* of Hashem running the world without His will being clothed in wisdom engenders miracles. **The hanhaga of nes means that the Ratzon Ha'elyon is working without getting clothed in Chochmah Elyonah at all.**

Let us explain.

Why did the sea split? What was the cause? The answer is that this is what Hashem wanted! It is a revelation of the very will without the will being absorbed and clothed in any order. It is pure *ratzon* impacting the creation!

In nature there is an order of *hishtalshlus*. One cause led to the next that led to the next until the event occurred. When a miracle is revealed the *ratzon haelyon* functions directly without any order; it was just the will of the One above!

The root of the Hebrew word for will becomes significant here. *Ratzon* is related to the word *ratz*, which means to run. To run is to go out of order. The way of miracles is to break nature; it is not the way of *seder hishtalshlus*. The *ratzon* that created *yesh meayin*, something from nothing, decided to split *yam suf*, the Red Sea! The *ratzon* that created the greatest spiritual matter of the world determined that there should be a miracle here that violated all the normal order of *hishtalshlus*!

In Torah as well we can have miracles. A *horaas shaa*, a momentary suspension of law, like Eliyahu offering a sacrifice on Mount Carmel, is a Torah-like miracle. (Normal Jewish law mandated that when the Temple stood no sacrifice could be offered outside of the *Mikdash*.) Here too the will is expressed without the *levush* of *Chochmah elyonah*. According to the order of the *Chochmah elyonah* one is not allowed to offer *shechutei chutz*, offerings outside the Temple. Eliyahu's offering was pure *ratzon* to sanctify the name of Hashem without any *levush*.

There are two *reishis*, beginnings: the *reishis* of *seder hishtalshlus* (called *Chochmah*) and a *reishis* called *ratzon*, which is not a part of the *seder hishtalshlus*. *Nes* is rooted in *ratzon haelyon* in *kesser*. *Teva* is rooted in the *reishis* of *Chochmah*.

Kesser, *Chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas* are *rishonos* for they are the roots of the *middos*.

What Gets Taken to Heart

Let us talk of *daas*.

We said last week that in *sitra achra daas* and *kesser* are separated. This is why there are so many elevens in the realm of *sitra achra*, like the eleven spices of *ketores* which is the life of the other side; the eleven *yerios izim*, goat skins above the Tabernacle; the eleven Amalekites of the Purim story, Haman with his ten sons; and the eleven day journey through the desert from Sinai to Eretz Yisrael, the Land of Israel.

However, in holiness there are always ten *middos* and not eleven. We explained earlier that *kesser* and *daas* are counted as one in *kedusha*. Let us now understand. It seems that there are eleven *middos*, for you have *kesser*, *Chochmah*, *binah* and *baas*, and then another seven *middos*, but the answer is that *daas* and *kesser* are one. Therefore, sometimes they are called *Chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas*, and at other times we speak of *kesser*, *Chochmah*, and *binah*, but we always have a total of ten.

Daas is the *ikkar* of man, the primary force of *bechira*, free choice. Our sages say *daas kanisa mah chasarta*, if you have acquired *Daas* you lack nothing. *Daas chasarta mah kanisa*, if you are missing *daas* you have not acquired anything. *Kol mi sheyiesh lo deiah kiilu nivneh beis hamikdash biyamav*, anyone who has *daas* it is as if the Mikdash, the Temple, was built in his days. (Sanhadrin 92a) The Beis Hamikdash here means building the seven *middos*. The Mikdash was the building of the world, a *Beriahs olam*. Just as the world was created in seven days, so too was the Mikdash a mini-world.

The Midrash teaches that Betzalel, the builder of the first Mikdash, knew how to combine the letters of creation. It says in regards to king Shlomo, *vayivneihu sheva shanim*, he built it seven years. The Zohar points out that it does not state *vayivneihu bisheva shanim*, he built it over seven years, rather *vayivneihu sheva shanim*, and the Zohar explains this to mean that what

he built was seven years, for the Temple was a revelation of the seven *middos*. He built the seven *shanim*, the seven revelations. Building the *middos* is the building of the Beis Hamikdash.

Thus *nivneh* Beis Hamikdash *biyamav* means the building of the seven *middos*, and this is dependent on *daas*. *Kol mi sheyeish bo dieah kiilu nivneh Beis Hamikdash biyamav*, for *daas* is connected to certain concepts and builds all the good *middos* from that attachment.

For example, some hear a lesson of ethics or *chasideus* and understand the lesson yet do not become changed by it the lesson for it is not *nogeah*, truly relevant, to them. Others will hear the lesson and take it to heart and become entirely new people from the experience. Why is this?

Those who change feel that the lesson was relevant to their very lives! A person who did not feel it was very connected to him might hear another, different matter of holiness and that one will in fact change his entire being. Sometimes it has to be a higher *davar shebikdusha*, *holy matter*. There can even be a person who is not impacted by words of holiness but is drawn to some *lashon hara*, gossip, that he internalizes and makes part of his being.

What determines what will be truly internalized? Why are some changed by this and others by that? It is all a function of the *daas* of the person. *Daas* is an extension of the hidden *ratzon*. *Daas* is not a real *middah* on its own. Proof of this is that in Kabbalistic imagery there is the father, *Chochmah*; the mother, *Binah*; the son, *Zeir*, six *middos*; and the daughter *Nukvah*, *Malchus* but there is no place for *Daas*. Why?

Because *daas* links the *mochin*, intellects, to the *middos*. It does not stand independently. *Daas* changes a person when he attaches to a certain topic. *Daas* also is related to separating from something. *Im ain daas havdalla minayin*, If there is no *daas* how will there be any

separating? Knowing what is truly relevant and meaningful to me, and what is not and that I should therefore disconnect from, is the force of *daas*.

Another illustration. Imagine you have two friends who are working out the *pshat*, the plain meaning, of a comment of Rashi. One says the meaning is one way, one says the other way. How do you know what is the *pshat*? One brings a strong proof, the other has ten proofs for his *pshat*, but they are all very weak and tenuous. The winner of the argument is the one who can say my proof is better for it is from the very core of the *sugya*, the portion of text that Rashi commented on. All the other proofs taken together are not as compelling. In other words, he is arguing about *daas*. One proof was truly *nogeia*, relevant, while the other proofs were really not *nogeia* to this topic.

This is true in all areas of *avdus Hashem*. We must have the *daas* to know what is truly important and focus on that!

I was in a minyan once with a thousand *chumros*, stringencies, but no one davened there. They had all the trappings, they had a *shiur*, lesson, before davening and after davening, but they did not daven at all *during* davening! The main thing in prayer is to pray with feeling, and no one was praying there with any feeling.

Chassidim focused on this point: identify *ratzon Hashem*, what matters most! There were *chassidim* that were *meikel*, lenient, on many matters to be *makpid*, careful, for those matters that are really *nogeia*. *Chassidim* have traditions about what is really *nogeia*. *Kedushas hamachshava* and *kedushas eynayim*, holiness of thought and sight, are *eivarim shehaneshama teluya bahem*, limbs the soul depends on, and we can sacrifice many matters for these *inyanim*! *Hislavavus*, passion in serving Hashem, and acting *lisheim shamayim*, for the sake of heaven, are

essential matters. Especially *kedusha*. Look in the Zohar, there is not one page in the Zohar that does not speak of *shemiras habris*, preserving the covenant, for this is the essence of Yidishkeit. This is something so important! According to *pnimius* this is the *ikkar* of Yidishkeit! Elevate the thoughts and the eyes! *Daas* decides that these are the really important areas. They are *nogeia*, so *daas* of *kedusha* is immersed in them and is *machmir* in these areas.

In regards to prayer the essence is *kavana*, devotion, in prayer. In the Shulchan Aruch's chapter 98, which teaches the laws of *kavana*, we see the most important *halachos* for prayer! This is what *daas* tells us.

There is a famous story about Reb Chaim Brisker. They asked him who they should choose to serve as the *baal tefilla*, prayer leader, for the *yamim noraim*, the High Holidays. One fellow davened well, but was young and had few worries in his life. The other candidate had all the strengths our legal texts advise for a *baal tefilla* for *yamim noraim*: he was forty years old and had children and a family, but just did not daven well. Reb Chaim answered that the *Shulchan Aruch* in the laws of a *baal tefilla* for Rosh Hashana assumed that all candidates were capable to serve as a *baal tefilla*, yet here one is not a *baal tefilla* at all. Reb Chaim was displaying *daas*. Identify what is essential! Focus on the essence!

Kavanas hatefilla is something existential to what *tefilla* is. The *Shulchan Aruch* rules that *tefilla* should lead us to close to *hispashtus hagashmiyus*, detachment from the physical! You need to prepare and be *misbonein*, think deeply. You need a good *yishuv hadaas*, *settled spirit*, beforehand to have a good *tefilla*, to reach real *tefilla*.

Daas is the skill of evaluating matters to know what really matters and what is most essential.

Daas Leads To Acceptance Of Torah

We find that prior to receiving the Torah there is always a war with Amalek⁷⁸. At the end of *parshas* Beshalach before *parshas* Yisro we read first of the war with Amalek. On Purim the receipt of the Torah was renewed, *haddar kibluhu biratzon biymeit Achashveirosh*, and again we struggled with Haman an Amalekite. In the Torah, the section of remembering Amalek is taught right before the section about *bikkurim*, the first fruits, since *bikkurim* is a reminder of *chag habikkurim*, namely Shavuot, the holiday that marks our receipt of the Torah. Before we relive the receipt of the Torah, we mention the war with Amalek.

Why is this so?

Amalek is the daas of sitra achra.

What is the *daas of sitra achra*? The Torah says of *Amalek*, *asher karcha baderech*, Who met and cooled you down on the way. Our sages explain that all the nations were afraid to fight with us for the world was boiling with excitement after the miracles of the Exodus, and yet Amalek jumped in to the boiling tub to cool down the waters. In other words Amalek lightened the import of all the miracles. It did not allow the soul to be inspired by miracles by emphasizing the voice of the body.

Miracles excite every soul at its core! Yet, Amalek amplified bodily concerns so that souls ignored the miraculous. Amalek is a *Kellipah* that cools down the *daas* of holiness.

At Sinai, Hashem told Moshe, “I will say a few words as a test to see if the people are *baalei daas*.”

⁷⁸ Amalek is the nation of complete evil. They tried to annihilate the Jewish nation. In the Torah we are commanded to remember their crimes forever.

Atem raisem asher asisi limitzrayim vaesa es'chem al kanfey nesahrim, vavi eschem elai, viata im shamoah tishmau bikoli vihiyesem li segula mikol haamim, ki li kol haaretz etc. eleh hadavraim etc.

You have seen what I did to Egypt, how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to me, and now if you will listen carefully to my voice, you will be my treasure from amidst all the nations for the world belongs to Me etc. (*Shmos* 19:4-6)

Hashem is telling us that Torah will only be given to *baalei daas*. People who might hear the Ten Commandments and then go back to being the same people they were before will not in fact receive it! Only people who have good ears and will hear matters well can get *divrey* Torah!

People might go home and say, “We got an offer. Should we take the Torah or not?”

Moshe proposed the Torah to us, what do you think?”

“Let’s have a meeting.”

“I can take a hundred mitzvos but I cannot do 613, that is too much.”

“No! If Hashem said it is good, let us say yes.”

Is this what happened? Could this happen? No! Such people would not get the Torah! To receive the Torah we were in a state of *ama peziza*, a rash nation. We heard fire! *Atem reisem*, You saw. *Viatem tihyu li mamleches Kohanim vigoy kadosh*, You will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The infinite, the *Ain Sof*, was talking to them!

Viavi es'chem elai! I brought you to Me! Look at the *Ohr Hachaim* on this *parsha*: “I do not see any harsh words in the messages from the Almighty, only words that give life to the soul!” The people felt that they were hearing life itself! No one proposed meetings and evaluations. They said *kol haam yachdav*, the whole nation together, with a passion. *Kol asher dibeir Hashem naaseh*, Whatever Hashem commanded we will do!

No meetings!

No deliberations!

Why? For there was a revelation of *daas* and the hidden *ratzon* was expressed! *Daas dekidusha* was expressed! They were in a state of *ama pezizah*. It was the passion of Am Yisrael, the Jewish people! The essence was attached to Hashem!

It is in this state that a Jew learns Torah! The Talmud describes an interaction between the great Sage Rava and a heretic, a Sadducee.⁷⁹ The Sadducee was shocked that Rava learnt with such passion that blood dripped from his fingers and he did not even notice. A Sadducee learns Torah in a cold way. He cannot understand how Rava would learn with such passion that he would bleed and so he accused him of being part of an *ama peziza*, a rash nation. Rava answered, *Anan bichavivusa talya malsa, we are dependent on love*. Rashi explains: *kiderech osim biahava*, like those who do out of love. We learn the Torah with love! Torah is given to people who feel it is life!

Amalek is a cold *daas*. *Amalek* wages war against the *daas dekidusha* of Klal Yisrael.

Purim And Passion

On Purim the *ama peziza* emerges from latent to actual state. Purim is a holiday of actions that are seemingly not reasonable based on *daas*, for on Purim the soul expresses itself! The *ama peziza* expresses itself! Purim is a time of the *neshama* expressing itself.

⁷⁹ The Sadducees were followers of Tzadok. Tzadok denied the eternity of the soul and the existence of the world to come. His followers claimed that there was no oral tradition of Torah. They were popular during the times of the second Temple and afterwards.

Daas is a *hisgalus* of *kesser*, which is usually clothed in *Chochmah*. Then there is an order, a *seder hishtalshlus*, but inside that order there must be a great passion and fire, a feeling of *ama peziza*, above the order! Purim is a time *messugal, opportune*, for this. We received the Torah with *ratzon* and we then defeated Amalek! It is a time *messugal* to internalize what is my life. It is a time to approach Torah with passion.

Torah is my life itself. Do not approach it with cold calculations. When we feel that something affects our existence we do not wait or deliberate! When a person is sick, *chas vishalom*, he will spend everything to try and save his life. Look at people who come to the United States from Eretz Yisrael and need to go to doctors. They have no money yet somehow they raise it. People respond to their need, for there are no deliberations when it is a matter that affects life. *Kol mah laish yitein biad nafsho*, whatever a person has he will give for his life. There are no hesitations when it is a matter of life and death. So too: *Im yitein ish es kol hon beiso beahava boz yavuzo lo*, If a person would give all the wealth of his home instead of love, they would mock him. (*Shir Hashirim 8:7*) *Ahava* is worth more than *kol hon beiso*. When it comes to the love of Torah there is nothing to hold back. It is a matter of eternal life.

Daas evaluates what is really relevant, what affects my very life. It becomes part of my *atzmiyus* and this changes me.

The reason why some matters change me is that these lessons reach my *daas*. The *nekudas habechira*, the point of making decisions, is in the *daas*. The essence of a person is in his *ratzon* and his *ratzon* is in his *daas*. These are matters that reach my very essence and change the rest of my being.

Eleven Not Ten

In the *sitra achra* there are eleven. *Asher karcha baderech*. They have Amalek's *daas*, for the *sitra achra* has no *ratzon* of its own. What in fact is *etzem metzius*, real reality? *Ratzon* is *etzem metzius*. *Sitra achra* has a reality just because the *ratzon haelyon* wants to give it life. There is no real life of its own to the *sitra achra*. It exists only because *ratzon haelyon* wants it to exist. It does not have its own right to life.

Sitra achra cannot have a *ratzon* of *sitra achra* for *ratzon* is reality, *metzius*, and *sitra achra* does not have a real *metzius*! The *ratzon* that animates the *sitra achra* is not really a part of the *sitra achra*! The *levona* in *ketores*, the *loven haelyon*, the Supernal white, gives life to the *sitra achra*! Therefore the *daas* of the *sitra achra* has no connection to the *kesser*, for the *kesser* is a stolen element from a different source, a *ratzon* from somewhere else.

This is why *sitra achra* has eleven. The *ratzon haelyon* wants there to be a *sitra achra*. In each *midda* of the *sitra achra* there is a *nitzotz* that gives this *midda* life, and this *nitzotz* is attached to this *midda*, but this is not connected to the *ratzon*.

The *ratzon* is that there should be a *sitra achra*, but then the *sitra achra* has its components. The *daas* of *sitra achra* is not united with this *ratzon* of Hashem. The *daas* is part of *sitra achra*!

In holiness the *daas* draws from *kesser* and *ratzon*. It is a mere revelation of *kesser* and *ratzon*. *Kedusha* has an *etzem metzius*, so it has also *ratzon* and *daas*. All the *middos* continue

this *kesser*. *Daas* is always an extension of the *ratzon* in *kedusha*. The *sitra achra* is therefore eleven, while holiness is ten.⁸⁰

Lesson Eight defines the seven lower Sefiros. Our world of seven days to a week, and a nation of Israel with seven founding shepherds, is filled with displays of forces that emerged from these seven. A deeper appreciation of chesed, gevurah, tiferes, netzach, hod, yesod, and malchus is essential for understanding Chassidic Torah and for living a meaningful life.

⁸⁰ See the Rebbe's *Gilyonei Divrey Torah 5769, pages 185-192*, the Rebbe there explained the themes of this lesson in greater detail. He suggested that we find order and disorder in *parshas Bamidbar*, the Torah portion we read before Shavuot, the holiday that marks the receipt of the Torah. On the one hand the nation is counted, each person is assigned to his tribe and each tribe given a flag. All were assigned camping locations around the *mishkan*. The revelation of the Torah at Sinai also entailed great order, the mountain was set apart and all were warned to stay in the locations correct for them and not to come too close. Yet, *parshas Bamidbar* is out of chronological order. It tells the story of the second month of the second year in chapter one and in chapter nine tells the story of the first month of that year. While at Sinai we were all in set places we accepted the Torah with a passion characterized as *ama peziza*, a rash nation, not the hallmark of order. The answer is that the generation that received the Torah was דור דעה the generation of *daas*. *Daas* requires order, yet at its root stands *ratzon, kesser, taava, and taanug*, therefore it has passion in the cloak of order!

Lesson Eight: The Seven Middos

We have started to speak of the three *rishonos*, the first of the three *Sefiros*. They are called *imos*, mothers. After them come the seven *middos*, ethical attributes: *chesed*, *gevura*, *tiferes*, *netsach*, *hod*, *yesod*, and *malchus*; Loving or Kindness, Restraint, Beauty, Dominance, Glory, Foundation, and Kingship. All the *middos* are really included one in the other, as we find during the counting of the *omer* the first day is actually *chesed shebi'chesed*, *Loving in Loving*, not merely the day of *chesed*.

The truth is even deeper. *Chesed shebi'chesed* has a *chessed shebi'chesed shebi'chesed* and a *gevurah shebi'chesed shebi'chesed* and a *tiferes shebi'chesed shebi'chesed*. This *hiscallelus*, uniting together, continues to no end.

Loving and Giving

Let us explain the *middos*.

Chesed can be translated as loving or kindness, the most precise definition is *hispashtus*, spreading out. It is the attribute of extending the soul outward. It allows the energies within the soul to express themselves. The *middah* of *chesed* is that the person spreads himself out in action .and gives to others. More deeply, the reason for this giving is love. Love is an internal spreading. My inner soul-powers are drawn to and seek to have a relationship with someone else. These expanding feelings manifest themselves as actions of giving to others

The seven days of Sukkos attract the souls of seven Biblical guests, the seven *ushpizin*, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aharon, Joseph, and David and they visit each Jewish Sukkah, with a different guest on each day. Each of these Jewish leaders was the merkavah, the chariot,

The Way to the Tree of Life

for one of the seven holy attributes. For example Abraham displayed divine levels of *chesed*, and Yitzchok divine levels of *gevurah*. These leaders also correspond to the *ananei hakvod*, the seven clouds of glory that surrounded the Jewish nation while we traveled through the Sinai desert.

There were clouds on all six sides as well as one that went ahead of the camp to clear the way. The different sides are the six *middos*. *Mizrach*, east, is the beginning. The sun starts in the east (the term for sunrise is *zericha*) and ends in the west, so *panim*, face, and *kedem*, before and first, are terms for *mizrach*, east. *Achor*, rear, is the term for *maarav*, west. Therefore the right is *darom*, south.

Avraham was always traveling to the Negev, looking for the south because south is the *yemin*, right, and the *yemin* is *chesed* and Avraham's *middah* was *chesed*. We find this in the settlement of the world as world. When we think of the south of the United States, we think of places like Texas and Florida, where the weather is warmer than up in the north in places like Alaska. The south is warm, while the north is cold, for the south is the side of the right, the side of *chesed*, and *chesed* is connected with warmth.

Tzafon, north is *gevurah*. *Mizrach* is *tiferes*, above is *netzach*, below is *hod*, west is *yesod* and the inner point is *malchus*. Thus the clouds of glory that were on all six sides correspond to six *middos*, *ששת המידות*, and the cloud that lowered hills was a representative of *Malchus*.

Making Potential Actual Is The Meaning Of Creation

The Zohar says that the first cloud encompassed all the others and that the *ushpiza* of Avraham comes with all the *ushpizin* on each day. The verse states, “*ViHashem holeich lifneihem biamud anan yomam,*” (*Shmos* 13:21) “And G-d traveled before them in a cloud by day.” The Zohar explains the sentence to mean that the one constant cloud was *yomam*, the day of *chesed*.

Chesed on its own goes with all the *middos*, because a *middah* is the taking of something from the potential to the actual and **taking something from potential to actual is spreading out and hispashtus is chesed.** *Chesed* is *yoma diazla im kula yomah*, the day that accompanies each day.

Gevurah is the opposite of *chesed*. We have defined *Chesed* as a spreading out, a extension of self, all actions are spreading out of the self. *Gevurah* can be translated as heroic strength or restraint. Why should actions of restraint be called *Gevurah*, aren't all actions a form of *Chesed*? The answer is that the nature of *gevurah* actions is *tzimtzum*, self constriction. To pull something into oneself. Just as *chesed* emerges from a love, the *midda* of *gevurah* emerges from a hatred, a pulling inward and away from someone else. The opposite of *ahava*, love, causes the opposite of *chesed*.⁸¹

The term *gevurah* has connotations of heroic strength, just as a *gibor* is a mighty warrior. Why are actions of withdrawal associated with great strength? We must say that there is a deep reason why constriction is called *gevura*, for frequently one must overcome obstacles – one must

⁸¹ Recent studies about marriage have confirmed this Kabbalistic truth. The most dangerous behavior in a marriage is not anger from one member of the couple to the other. The most dangerous point of marriage is disconnection and alienation. When one member of the couple no longer cares for the other, when he or she stonewall and do not wish to share anything with the spouse, the marriage is in grave danger. Marriage is built on *chesed*, inner spreading of the psyche to the other which leads to acts of kindness from one to the other. When there is a *gevurah* dynamic, when one member is withdrawing inward and uninterested in giving or caring about the other, the marriage is grave danger. For further reading see Dr. John Gottman's, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*, page 46. After decades of research he found that marriages in danger usually exhibit the following four behaviors in the following order, criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling.

be *misgaber*, overcome with strength - in order to give and to be kind! Why then do we not say that *chesed* is *gevurah*? Let kindness be called strength! The answer is that the normal way of a *middah* is *hisphashtus*. The meaning of all *middos* is that G-d's intent is to give. *Hisphashtus* is the meaning and purpose of creation.

The Ari explains that until creation G-d was a *rachum bikoach*, potentially merciful, for there was no person with whom Hashem could show *rachamim* and *chassadim*! Creation enabled Hashem to bring His *middos* of *rachum* and *chanun* from potential to actual. Therefore the normal way of a *midda* is to move *mikoach el hapoel*, from potential to actual. *Tzimtzum*, however, is the opposite of normal, it is to restrain and not reveal. Therefore restraint is called *gevurah*, strength.

A Beautiful World And A Beautiful Torah

Chesed is *hisphashtus ahava* and *chassadim* while *gevurah* is the opposite: *tzimtzum* and *sinah*, hate. *Tiferes* is the middle between *chesed* and *gevurah*.

Yaakov is described in the Torah as *ish tam yosheiv ohalim*, a wholesome man who resided in tents (*Bereishis* 25:27). Avraham was *chesed* and Yitzchok was *gevurah*, while Yaakov displayed a different quality: synthesis and harmony. To have the sense to know when to do *chesed* and when to do *gevurah* and to synthesize between *chesed* and *gevurah* is *tiferes*, beauty or harmony. The beauty of a picture is in its harmony, in the balance and synthesis of all the colors. When everything is in its correct place there is a beauty to the picture. Another name for this *middah* of Yaakov is *emmes*, truth.

The truth requires that at times we do things in one way and that sometimes we do things in a different way. The letters of Yaakov's name - יעקב - can be divided to two parts, the first letter and the following three: י. *Yud*, the first letter, represents the *aseres hadibros*, The Ten Commandments themselves, and *eikev*, the remaining three, represent the 172 words within The Ten Commandments. Yaakov is also related to learning Torah, for the way of Torah is the moderate way.

For example, consider eating food. The Torah does not want us to fast too much: the Torah wants us to enter into the physical world and to elevate the sparks within the world. The Torah characterizes the *nazir*⁸² as someone *asher chata al hanefesh*, who sinned against his life (*Bamidbar* 6:11). In general one should not fast, but to heal the *yetzer hara*, and as a form of *aveirah lishmah*, a sin for G-d's sake, there is a need sometimes for a fast. The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, which caused a great degree of evil, causes us to fast several times.

These fasts are not in the five Books of Moshe, the Torah. In the *din dioraisa*, Biblical law, representing the ideal level, man would only fast once a year, on Yom Kippur! While the Torah prohibits certain foods, it allows for the eating of many delights and kosher foods if a man needs such a diet for his *yishuv hadaas*, to feel settled. *Kedoshim tihyu*, (*Vayikra* 19:2) be holy and ascetic, the Torah says, yet the Torah itself also allows man to indulge in many areas. Furthermore, the Torah allows a man to marry and to keep most of his money for himself. One is not urged to give away all his money! The way of the Torah is the way of moderation!

There is such beauty to the Torah! The nations of the world have been swayed with so many different ideologies yet it is clear that all these ways are silly and nonsense. They have

⁸² A *nazir* was an individual in ancient Israel who took upon himself special vows of restraint, such as refraining from drinking wine or cutting his hair.

afflicted themselves with so many *chitzoni* things and all of this is the opposite of Torah, for Torah is the *tiferes* of *kedusha*!

The Maharal points out that the Torah chooses that which is in the middle. This is true about the Jewish calendar as well. The months of Nissan, Sivan, and Tishrei are times of balanced weather and also the seasons of the *yamim tovim*, holidays. During the months of extreme heat or cold, we do not have *yamim tovim*, we have *taaneisim*, fast days! (Chanukah, an exception as it falls in winter, is only *midrabanan*, from the rabbis, not from the Torah.) The same can be said about geography as well. Eretz Yisrael is the middle of the earth!

Tiferes is the *inyan* of Torah, to live a life of beauty, synthesis, and balance. Among the colors, green is the color of *tiferes*. Green is balanced, not too dark and not too light and it is in the middle of the colors of the spectrum. Most of the world is green. Consider leaves and grass. For this is the color of *tiferes*: it is the color of beauty and it gives beauty to the world.

The middle way is the *middah* of Yaakov. We know that *rebbe hakadosh*, Rabbi Judah the prince who authored the Mishna, was the soul of Yaakov *avinu*. Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi was Rabbi Judah's formal name, and *nasi* נשיא is an acronym for *nitotz shel Yaakov avinu*, ניצוץ של יעקב, a spark from our father Yaakov. Just as Yaakov *avinu lo meis*, Yaakov never died, *rebbe lo meis*, Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi never died, and every Friday night he would return to say Kiddush. The *Talmud* says that just as Yaakov lived in Egypt for seventeen years, *rebbe* read that *pasuk* to refer to himself for he lived in Tzipori for seventeen years as well.

We also know that Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi is called *rebbe hakadosh*, the **holy** *rebbe*, and the third blessing in *shemoneh esrei* which corresponds to Yaakov is the blessing of *viata kadosh*, and You are **holy**. In Pirkei Avos, *Ethics of the Fathers*, *rebbe* states “*Eizehu derech*

yeshara shayavor lo haadam? Kol shehi tiferes lioseha vitiferes lo min haadam,” “What is the correct path a person should choose? Any way that is *tiferes* to the one who performs it and a source of *tiferes* to him from others.” Rav Ovadia Bartenura explains that this refers to the *derech hamimutza*, the ideal of keeping the middle path.

We know that Rav Yosef Caro⁸³ would rule in the Code of Jewish Law based on the majority opinion of three earlier deciders, the Rambam, the Rif, and the Rosh. Maimonides thus is one of those who set *halacha*, Jewish law, for us. In *Shulchan Aruch* there are no *hilchos deios*, laws of ethics, so apparently the Rambam is the *Shulchan Aruch* for *hilchos deios*. The Rambam rules we should all adopt the *derech hamimutzah* in regards to all *deios* so this is the definitive *halacha*. The middle path is the path of Yaakov *avinu*.

Models of Influence

Netzach and *hod* correspond to Moshe and Aharon. In *Pasach Eliyahu*, a passage in the Holy Zohar that describes the *Sefiros*, the *middos* are divided according to the parts of the body. The right arm is *chesed*, the left arm is *gevurah*, the torso is *tiferes*, the right leg is *netzach*, and the left leg is *hod*. You can do many things with one hand, while to walk you need both feet.

That is why Moshe and Aharon lived in the same era and together guided the Jewish people. As legs *netzach* and *hod* represent going outside of the body.

Consider a *rebbe* and a *talmid*. The *rebbe* knows the truth, while the *talmid* is not yet at a state of knowing the truth. The *rebbe* has to conquer him, the *rebbe* has to make the *talmid* into a

⁸³ Author of the *Shulchan Aruch*, a very important source of Jewish law.

vessel that can accept and receive all the truth that the *rebbe* has to give to him. The *rebbe* must impact the *talmid* and conquer him.

So it was with Moshe. He would overwhelm and dominate. Moshe conquered the natural world! He took the Jews out of Egypt. Pharaoh was limited by the *tzimtzumim*, limitations, of *teva*, natural laws. He said *mi Hashem asher eshma bikolo*, Who is Hashem that I should listen to His voice? (*Shmos* 5:2) Pharaoh only saw the fact that Hashem had been *mitzamtzeim* Himself into *levushim* of nature and *kishuf*, black magic, and he thought these *tzimtzumim* were all that was. To take the Jews out of Egypt Moshe *rabbeinu* had to break all the *tzimtzumei hakishuf* and of *teva*. Moshe was the one who was to teach the Torah to the Jewish people and he is the great *milamed* Torah to *klal yisrael*.

Had we been worthy we would not have needed all the miracles of leaving Egypt. A *nes* is necessary for a low person who needs to be impressed with a miracle. An ideal human, a *ben adam*, changes through hearing words of Torah alone. Only *ktaney hadaas*, those with weak *daas*, need *nissim*. Moshe *rabbeinu* and the *nissim* of leaving Egypt were necessary in order to prepare the Jews to enable them to learn Torah.

For example, when a *melamed*, a school teacher in the *cheder* system of old, would teach children if they did not want to learn he would use a stick. (When I was a child the *melamed* had a stick and he would give a *petch*. Today's generation is very weak and no one should ever use a stick on students.) What was the role of the stick? It was to conquer the *yetzer hara* in the *talmid*! The miracles of leaving Egypt were the stick Moshe used to break the world of nature in order to teach the Jewish people Torah. *Netzach* can be given not only with a stick. It can also be to give so much *hashpaa*, influence, that the *yetzer hara* is annulled on its own. *Netzach* is on the right

side because *chesed* is a *hisphashtus* and *netzach* is to be *mashpia* to those who are *livar migufa* with a great *hisphashtus*.

Hod is on the left and it is connected to *tzimtzum*, limits. Sometimes you cannot be *mashpia* so much to a *talmid*. If you are trying to dominate him the *talmid* might run away. This is why you must be *mitzamtzem* what you give to the *talmid* and you limit the *hashpaa* and give a *hod*, a shine, or a *chitzoniyus*, an externality. You limit yourself to the level of the *talmid* and give accordingly.

We always need these two together for one needs the other. Moshe was the one who would defeat the opposition while Aharon would smile at evil. This smile at evil behavior was *chitzoniyus*, only superficial: the inside of Aharon rejected the sin. Yet Aharon would not reveal his inside. He would only show a smile so that the people looking at him would stay attached and eventually be brought back.

When the Jews asked for an *eigel*, a golden calf, Chur rebuked them harshly, and they killed him. What did Aharon do? He used the attribute of *hod*. He smiled, “Yes I will make an *eigel* ... just one little thing, I will do it tomorrow and not today.” This was to try and delay until Moshe would return so there would be no *eigel*. This is the behavior of *hod*. “*Nachisa catzon amecha biyad Moshe viAharon,*” (*Tehillim 77:21*) “You guided your nation as sheep in the hands of Moshe and Aharon.” Hashem sees to it that the Jewish nation always has these two styles of guidance. Some teachers are *netzach*, and others are like Aharon: they smile and change students through tolerating misbehavior in order to bring people back to the correct path.

Perfected Balance Is The Key to Education And Creating Life

Tiferes is between *chesed* and *gevurah*, and *yesod* is between *netzach* and *hod*. Yosef is between Aharon and Moshe. He is the middle who knows when to use *netzach* and when to use *hod*. *Yesod* is the perfect way to influence: he knows when to spread out and when to withdraw. *Netzach* and *hod* go out of the body, while *yesod* is the primary way of going outside of oneself. When a *rebbe* teaches *talmidim* (and this is true of every *mashpia* to *nishpaim*) he needs great *gevurah* not to lose his level. He must always remain a *mashpia*, one who impacts, and not become a *mushpa*, one who is impacted. A *rebbe* must be careful not to be brought down to the level of his *talmidim*. After all he is engaged continually with the students, so they might influence him.

You have probably seen this dynamic. A *melamed* spends his whole day with young kids, and he becomes influenced by them to talk in immature and childlike cadences. You see this in the physical world as well. When we are involved in material matters there is a great danger of being drawn after the *olam hagashmi*, physical world, and being influenced by it. *Yesod* knows when to pull back from *hod*, to avoid being influenced.

On the other hand, it also knows when not to employ *netzach*. When you are involved in a great level of *kedusha* over the *gashmi* world this is *netzach*, but sometimes one has to be careful not to go too far in this type of *nitzuach*. For example, if you focus too much on the idea that food is really meaningless and that it is like *tzoah*, excrement, and the only thing that exists is the *nitzotz hakadosh*, the Divine spark, you might truly be revolted by food and might come to a bad place. You need to temper your *netzach* with *hod*, you need to allow space for your true level. **The middah of yesod is the perfect balance: to be involved in a physical matter and to still be tied to one's root.** To teach but not be overwhelmed by those you are trying to influence.

The seven *middos* are referenced in the verse, “*licha Hashem hagdula vihagvura vihatiferes vihanetzach vohahod, ki chol bashamayim ubaaretz, licha Hashem hamamlacha*” “Yours Hashem is kindness, strength, beauty, dominance, and glory, all that is in the heavens and on earth, to You G-d is Sovereignty.” (*Divrey Hayamim Alef 29:11*) The phrase *ki chol bashamayim ubaaretz*, all that is in heaven and earth, is a reference to this level of *yesod*. A *tzadik* should be both fully involved in the material world and attached and *davuk* to his root, still tied, to G-d. Yosef *hatzadik* went to all the low places in Egypt and still remained attached to Hashem! Yosef was in Egypt and he still did not feel the *galus* at all, he was still on this same high level. Wherever he was he was attached to Hashem. He was always connected to the *ohr haganuz*, the hidden light.

He was a very *pnimi* person and because he was so internal wherever he was did not matter! He could be in exile and he felt that he was attached to Hashem! He fulfilled *shivisi Hashem linegdi tamid*, I have placed the Almighty before me, and the external realm, the external forces, meant nothing to him! He was not *mispael*, impacted, at all from the *chitzoniyus*. Yosef was always *bisimcha*, happy, and to such a great degree that in jail he asked the *sar hamashkim* and the *sar haofim*, the incarcerated butler and baker, “*Madua pneichem raim hayom*, (*Bereishis 40:7*) “Why are you looking so downcast today?”

Amazing! In three days it will be Pharaoh’s birthday and he will judge people and prisoners might be killed, yet to Yosef there is no reason to be sad and depressed. He is surprised that someone has a bad mood on his face! When Yosef was in charge of the jail he in fact brought a tremendous joy to the prison, no one was depressed there! “*Vayehi Hashem es*

Yosef,” (*Bereishis* 39:21) “Hashem was with Yosef,” there was a *giluy shechinah* there! There was constant joy in the *beis haasurim*! This is the level of *yesod* and Yosef.

Use *Malchus* Correctly

Malchus is the last *middah* and it receives from all the other *middos*. The *middah* of *hashpaa*, the *middah* of *yesod*, is in a certain way the opposite of *malchus*.

Malchus denotes revelation. The part of man that he reveals is his *malchus*. In other words, when a person reveals a part of himself he is only revealing an external fraction of who he truly is. When Hashem reveals something from Himself it is a mere *ziv*, a mere glow relative to the light of *Ain Sof*, His essence. The glow hardly exists, it is not *tofeis*, occupy, any *makom*, space, relative to the essence! The glow of the sun is nothing relative to the sun itself.

So it is that the part of man in which he reveals himself is merely his *malchus*. The person himself is much more internal! He has more *metzius* than what is revealed! Since a minimal fraction of essence is revealed, *malchus* is characterized as *leis leih migarmeit klum*, it has nothing of its own! Just as in the world the way something appears in the inside, as a G-dly display, is the *atzmiyus*, true essence, the way it is revealed is just a *ziv*, a mere *haara*, radiance, from the *atzmiyus* of Hashem. So too the *middas hamalchus* of a man is not *tofeis makom*, relative to his true essence.

A good matter to help us clarify this thought is honor. Many of us have a *taava* to look at ourselves through the eyes of others. Our primary focus is how will others think of me. Imagine a man who is famous and he has ten thousand students in his Yeshiva. He might feel, “I am an honored person **because** ten thousand people honor me.” Tomorrow something might happen

and he loses the Yeshiva and he is no longer the Rosh Yeshiva. Even if it happens *bi'ones*, against his will, he might be a deflated person. Say he meets someone who does not hold him in esteem now that he has no Yeshiva, he feels bad.

Why should he feel bad? He knows in himself that he is the same person that he was, he knows as much today as he knew yesterday! What happened? Someone else no longer thinks of him as highly. But he is the same person!

He is deflated for he has conflated ray with essence! He has gone to live in his *ziv*! He lives in his reputation instead of in his essence. The reputation is a small part of his *atzmiyus*, the small glow that can be revealed! The correct way is to just ignore the *ziv* and *haara* and to treat it as it truly is.

Now we are close to Purim, when Haman was asked by the king "*Mah laasos baish asher hamelech chafeitz biyikaro,*" "What should be done with the man the king wishes to honor?" Why did he ask for something as silly as wearing the clothes of the king and riding a royal horse for a day? Such gifts would not last long! Why not ask for money or a country?

He was looking for some *kavod*! He will ride on the horse, people will look at him, cheer for him, and talk about how important he must be; there will be great honor that he will receive. The truth is however that the all of *kavod* is meaningless. It is only for a day and then everyone will forget about it.

There are people today as well who live in an imaginary world, a reality of "I am what others think of me." This is a false world, this is Haman, he wants to be in the front page of the newspaper, he wants people to honor him. Haman was depressed when he carried Mordechai around even though Haman was still the prime minister! Haman was devastated, for he lived in

the newspaper. If it was in the newspaper it was real otherwise it was not a reality! That is the way Haman lived. This is the awesome falsehood of the *kavod hemdume*, imaginary honor.

Malchus is *leis leih migarmeih klum*, has nothing of its own, it receives all. *Malchus dikhusha* is a person who is completely not moved at all by *kavod* and then can shine a real light from himself. He is aware that he is only a light and a glow from the light of the *Ain Sof*! *Leis leih migarmeih klum!*

The root of evil is when the *ziv* is a *metzius*. Good is the opposite, when a person has a clear understanding of the concept of *malchus*: what is a mere glow and what is internal and true reality.

Lesson Nine reveals secrets of the letters of the alef beis. Some letters represent the roots of reality, others the middos, and others the dimensions of the physical realm. A Jew must aspire to greatness. Thinking about the awesome nature of the Infinite Creator can arouse feelings of genuine attachment with Hashem. Each of us can reach truly great heights we need to merely truly desire them!

Lesson Nine: Unity Is The Uniquely Jewish View!

והנה כל בחי' ומדרגה משלש אלו נפש רוח ונשמה כלולה מעשר בחי' כנגד עשר ספירות עליונות שנשתלשלו מהן
הנחלקות לשתים שהן שלש אמות ושבע
כפולות פ' חכמה בינה ודעת ושבעת ימי הבנין חסד גבורה תפארת כו

Behold, each concept and grade of the three— nefesh, ruach and neshamah— consists of ten components, corresponding to the Supernal Ten Sefiros from which they have descended. They are divided into two, the three “Mothers” and the seven “Multiples.” Chochmah, Binah, and Daas are the “Mothers” and the “Multiples” are the “seven days of creation:” chesed, gevurah, tiferes, and so on.

The Three Parts Of The Alef Beis

The *middos* are called in the Tanya the *sheva kefulos*, “the seven multiples.” The Ari usually does not refer to the *middos* as the *kefulos*. This term comes from the *Sefer Yetzirah*.⁸⁴ *Sefer Yetzirah* divides the letters of the *alef beis*. And there in that division there is a discussion of the *middos* as *kefulos*. (If you study *Bney Yissaschar*⁸⁵ you will see this quoted often.)

According to the *Sefer Yetzirah*, there are three *imos*, root letters of the *alef beis*: *alef*, *mem*, and *shin*; together אמש, *emesh*. They represent sound, *kol*. Sound is from *avir*, *mayim*, and *esh*, wind, water, and energy. *Kol* produces each letter sound. The first letters of אויר מים אש, *avir*, *mayim*, *esh* produce אמש, *emesh*. The *shin* is *esh* for the *alef* is silent.

These letters represent right, left, and middle, *Chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas*. *Avir* is *daas*, the middle one. The moisture in the voice is *Chochmah*, the right, and the *esh*, which is from the left, is *binah*. *Emesh* represents the roots.

⁸⁴ *Sefer Yitzirah* is a very early work of Kabbalah. According to some sources it was written by our father Avraham. It deals with the secrets of creation and great insights that can be derived from the letters of the *alef beis*.

⁸⁵ *Bney Yissaschar* is a classic work of Chassidic thought. It was written by Rav Hirsch Elimelech Shapiro of Dinov (1783-1841). He was a student of the Chozeh of Lublin and Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Riminov. He was filled with love for all Jews and would sign his letters with the words, "The loyal lover of each Jew who seeks the welfare of his nation." In the work *Bney Yissaschar* he taught insights into the spiritual meaning of each month and its festivals.

The Ropshitzer Rav⁸⁶ points out that Lavan⁸⁷ said to Yaakov, “*Vielokei avichem emesh nigla elai leimor hishamer licha midaber im yaakov mitov ad rah* etc.” (Bereishis 31:39). “The G-d of your fathers appeared to me, *emesh*, last night, saying do not dare to speak with Yaakov whether for good or for evil.” Why mention *emesh*? For we read in the Passover Haggada “*Lavan bikesh laakor es hakol*,” “Laban wanted to uproot all the way at the root.” The root is represented with the word *emesh*. He wanted to uproot the *emesh*. To defeat him there was a root-like revelation, a *hisgallus* from the letters *emesh*, and Hashem said with the revelation of “*Emesh hishamer licha midaber im yaakov mitov ad rah*,” “Watch out, do not speak with Yaakov, any good or any bad...”

The Letters Of The Seven *Sefiros*

The *Sefer Yetzirah* teaches that there are double letters, the multiples: letters that sometimes have a *dagesh*, a stress, and sometimes are *rafa*, soft without any hard accent. They are *begad kifras* בגד כפרת. These letters are doubled. They represent the seven *middos*.

They are doubled for they are counted in two possible ways: either in an *ohr yashar*, the regular order; *milmata limaala*, from below to above; or as an *ohr chozeir*, a top to bottom order. One is *biderech hashpaah* (*ohr chozer*), the way of an influence from Hashem, and the other way is the way of *avodah*, human service to G-d, (*ohr yashar*). To correspond to the *begad kifras* we

⁸⁶ Rav Naftali Horowitz of Ropshitz (1760-1827) was one of the great tzadikim of his time. He was a student of Rav Elimelech Lizhensk, the Chozeh of Lublin, and Rav Menachem Mendel of Rimanov. He was born the day the Besht left this world. He authored *Zera Kodesh* and other classical works. The Stuchin Chassidus was led by descendants of the Rav of Ropshitz.

⁸⁷ Lavan was the uncle of the patriarch Jacob as well as his father in law. After Jacob labored for his father in law for twenty years he saw that Lavan was filled with hatred and envy toward him. He took advantage of the wool cutting season to leave with his family. Lavan pursued him to try and do him harm. The night before their fateful meeting the Almighty appeared to Lavan and warned him not to harm Jacob.

have seven days of the week and the seven *kochvei leches*, the seven stars that go around the sun. They are *shabsai*, *tzedek maadim*, *chamah nogah kochav* and *levana*. Rashi quotes this concept in his commentary to tractate *Shabbes* of the Talmud.

Twelve Letters For Twelve Months

After this we have twelve simple letters. These letters are *pshutos*, for they do not have a *dagesh* or a *rafah* to impact how they would be pronounced. They parallel the twelve months and the twelve *mazalos*, stellar constellations. The *Sefer Yetzirah* also calculates twelve primary limbs that correspond to them.

In Kabbalah this is called the twelve parts of *tiferes*, for *middas tiferes* can be divided into twelve parts, and that is why our patriarch Yaakov who is *tiferes* had twelve sons. The *Bney Yissachar* explains the letter for each month. He deals with the *otiyos pshutos*, the simple letters: *heh*, *vav*, *zayin*, *ches tes yud*, *lamed*, *nun*, *samech*, *ayin*, *tzadik*, and *kuf*. These are also the twelve *gvuley alachson*, the twelve boundaries. Simply this means that if you take a box, there are twelve lines: four on the bottom, four on the top and four connecting top to bottom. Thus eight lines - the ones above and the ones below - correspond to the sons of the *gevuros*, the primary wives of Yaakov, Rachel and Leah. The four lines that connect top to bottom correspond to the sons of the *shfachos*, the maid women married to Jacob: Bilha and Zilpa. In other words, *tiferes* means *shleimus* and perfection.

Perfection in space can be divided into twelve parts. To fully complete something that takes up space twelve boundaries are necessary. The twelve tribes are also a complete array

representing the twelve ways to reach Hashem. There are twelve gates to Hashem and twelve *nuschaos hatefillah*, versions of the prayers.

Ultimately the twelve end up with the one. The sons tell Yaakov, “*Ein bileibeinu ela echad*,” “We only have the One and Only in our hearts.” This is even clear in the letters for the word one in Hebrew: *echad*, אֶחָד. There is an *alef*, with a *gimatria* value of one, then the *ches* representing eight sons from the primary wives, and the *daled* is the four from the *shefachos*. The fact is that they are united and become one.

In Aramaic the word for one is *chad*. There is no *alef*. The reason for this is that in the language of the gentiles, the *alef* of *echad* is not revealed, only in Hebrew is the *alef*, representing *achdus*, oneness, the level of Yaakov, revealed.

Yaakov encompasses all three patriarchs. He is called the best of the *avos*. Each of the *avos*, as a source for the nation, is represented by *shem havaya*, the tetragrammaton, the Divine name of creation, which is a “father” to all the other descriptions of the Almighty. *Shem havaya* יהוה-יה-י has four letters. There are three *shem havaya*’s to correspond to the three *avos*, and Yaakov is three times *shem havaya*. Three times *Shem Havaya* is twelve letters. These twelve letters correspond to the twelve constellations that parallel the twelve *shevatim*, the twelve parts of Yaakov. The word *mazla*, מזלָ, or *mazal*, מזל, constellation, with the *collel*, (adding one to the *gematria* total for the collective has an added value of one) equals three times *havaya*, 78. In other words, when the *mazalos* are united it is a oneness of all three *havayos*, and we have a *mazla*.

Some years we have a month of *Ibbur*, a thirteenth month. This month corresponds to the *alef* in *echad*, the one that unites the twelve. The added month is the month made by a *beis din*, a

Jewish legal court. In this month there can be no *kishuf*, black magic. The holy works state there are also no *kochos hatumah*, forces of impurity in it, for it is the *alef* of *echad*, the one that unites all twelve.

Anti-Semites Hate *Achdus* And They Hate Thirteen

Haman wanted with his lot to fight the unique, united nation of Israel, the *am echad*. He said to Achashveirosh, “*Yeshno am echad etc.*,” (*Esther* 3:8) “There is one nation” that is not loyal to the king. We are the one nation, for we reveal the *achdus*, oneness, in the world.

Haman also threw his lots on the thirteenth day of Nissan. In Nissan each *nasi*, leader of a tribe, donated sacrifices to inaugurate the altar, because Nissan is the head of all the other months, as the first twelve days correspond to the twelve months and each *nasi* corresponds to a month. The thirteenth day corresponds to the thirteenth month, *chodesh haibur*, so Haman threw his *goral* then, “*Bishlosa asar yom lachodesh harishon*,” (*Esther* 3:7) On the thirteenth day of the first month Haman wanted to uproot the unity, he wanted to uproot the *alef* of *echad*, he wanted to uproot the oneness, the point that makes it all one.

We also know that Haman had a soul-spark of Esav while Mordechai had a spark of Yaakov. Haman wanted to destroy and uproot Yaakov. He was very happy when the *mazal*, luck, which determines a *goral*, lot, came out on the thirteenth day of the thirteenth month. He thought this was an omen. He had in fact waited to cast his lots for the thirteenth day of Nissan. The *goral* had come out for the thirteen of the thirteenth! He seemed about to uproot the *achdus*, the unity that is represented with the number thirteen. We all know that many *goyim* claim the number thirteen is unlucky, it is not *mazaldike*, for this is the *mazal* of the Jewish people! What

for the nations is *ain mazal*, unlucky, for us is the *mazal*! They sense that they do not have a *mazal* in the realm of the thirteenth. For us it is *achdus* and they therefore oppose it.

The Oneness of Shabbes

Thirteen times thirteen equals 169 and this is the real *echad*, the real oneness. If you calculate how many hours there are in a week, you come out to 168 hours. Thirteen times thirteen is one more than 168, this is *echad* based on *tosefos* Shabbes, adding to Shabbes.

We all add to Shabbes. The Ari says that you should add six hours before Shabbes, namely from *chatzos*, midday, and then you should continue after Shabbes another hour, to have thirty-one hours to shabbes. The primary *tosefes shabbes* is the hour at the end, that is the *raava diraavin*, will of all wills, it is an *eis ratzon*, a time of favor. The course of Shabbes travels from the lowest to the highest level, therefore the *raava diraavin* is the highest level of Shabbes.

I once thought that the statement of Rabbi Yosi in the *Talmud*, “*Yehi chelki mimachnisei shabbes bitverya umimotzai shabbes bitzipori*,” “May my portion be among those who begin Shabbes in TiBeriahs and complete it in Tzipori,” (*Shabbes 118b*) refers to this concept. TiBeriahs is low while Tzipori is high, Shabbes is a climb, we start at the lowest level and by the end we are on the highest point of Shabbes. When you add an hour of Shabbes you add an hour to the week: an hour of Sunday that is still Shabbes. It is, as it were, *limaala min hazman*, above the limitations of time! You have gone to a place that is above time to add another hour to Shabbes! Once you have added this hour, *shaa achas*, the week has 169 hours. This is thirteen times thirteen, *echad times echad*, this is the full oneness of the week! One sixty-eight is not yet full oneness. Only once you add the 169th hour do we have the full *echad*.

This is why at *mincha* on Shabbes we say *Ata echad vishimcha echad*, You are one and your name is one. The *raava diraavin* is when we attach ourselves to the levels of *ata echad vishimcha echad*, this is the time when the *echad* is revealed! The *Chidushei Harim* ⁸⁸explains the statement of our sages, “*Yafah shaa echas biteshiva umaasim tovim biolam hazeh mikol chayei olam haba*,” “Better one hour in *teshuva* and good deeds in this world than all the life of the World to Come,” refers to this hour of *tosefes* Shabbes. This hour is the moment of *achdus*, it is a moment of *achas*, this is the primary *tosefes shabbes*.

וכך בנפש האדם שנחלקת לשתיים שכל ומדות. השכל כולל חכמה בינה ודעת. והמדות הן אהבת ה' ופחדו ויראתו ' ולפארו כו' וחב"ד נקראו אמות ומקור למדות כי המדות הן תולדות חב"ד:

And the human spirit is also divided into two, intellects and emotions. Chochmah, binah, daas, are the intellects, while the middos entail love of Hashem, awe and fear toward Him, appreciating His beauty, etc. The intellects are the mothers for they are the source for the middos.

וביאור הענין כי הנה השכל שבנפש המשכל' שהוא המשכיל כל דבר נקרא בשם חכמה כ"ח מ"ה

The explanation of the matter is that the power of the mind to grasp matters and know them is called Chochmah, and Chochmah is the koach of knowing things. [With G-d] it is what creates matters, koach mah, the force of the matter. In the human it merely grasps matters

וכשמוציא כחו אל הפועל שמתבונן בשכלו להבין דבר לאשורו ולעמקו מתוך איזה דבר חכמה המושכל בשכלו נקרא בינה

And when man actualizes his potential, delving into a matter to understand it fully to its depth, this is binah. With Chochmah one knows matters in a general way, to know something in detail requires binah. To grasp the full picture is Chochmah to spell out what is included in this is binah.

והן הם אב ואם המולידות אהבת ה' ויראתו ופחדו

And Chochmah and binah are the av and the eim, the father and mother, who give birth to love of Hashem and fear of Him.

⁸⁸ Rav Yitzchok Meir Alter (1799-1866) was the author of the work *Chidushei Harim*. He was a student of Rav Menachem Mendel Morgenstern of Kotzk and of Rav Simcha Bunim of Pshis'cha. He was a great master of Torah and service who started the Gerrer Chassidus.

The *middos* are *banim*, they are the children of this father and mother. We know that the seven days of creation are the revelation of the *middos* of Hashem. Light was a display of His *Chesed* and the *rakia*, firmament, a manifestation of His *Gevura*. “Hashem *biChochmah yased erets*,” (*Mishlei* 3:19) “G-d establishaid the world with wisdom.” There is great Heavenly wisdom in creation, yet we only see it through the seven *middos*. The real *Chochmah* as it is in its root has not been revealed. We apprehend wisdom only through the *middos*.

In the future there will be ten musical notes, as King David predicted, “*Elokim shir chadash ashira lach binevel asor azamer lach*,” “Lord I will sing for you a new song on a ten string harp.” (*Tehillim* 144:9) While in today’s music there are only seven notes. Now, there are only seven notes in music for we are in a physical world, with seven *middos*. In the future there will be ten musical notes, *binevel asor azamer lach*, we will sing with an awareness of all ten levels. All wisdom today is only wisdom in the clothing of *middos*. The true *Chochmah* is a level that will be revealed only in the future.

כי השכל שבנפש המשכלת כשמתבונן ומעמיק מאד בגדולת ה' איך הוא ממלא כל עלמין וסובב כל עלמין

For the mind in the comprehending soul when it delves into great depth about the grandeur of Hashem, how He fills all world, mimale kol almin, and transcends all worlds, soveiv kol almin

וכולא קמיה כלא חשיב

And how all are as nothing before Him,

נולדה ונתעוררה מדת יראת הרוממות במוחו ומחשבתו לירא ולהתבושש מגדולתו ית' שאין לה סוף ותכלית ופחד ה' בלבו ושוב יתלהב לבו באהבה עזה כרשפי אש בחשיקה וחפיצה ותשוקה ונפש שוקקה לגדולת אין סוף ב"ה והיא כלות הנפש

finds born and aroused in his mind and thoughts an attribute of awe of transcendence, and he fears and is embarrassed by His greatness that has no end, and the fear of G-d is aroused in his heart, and then his heart will be excited with a strong love, like flames of fire, with longing, desire, and thirsting heart for the greatness of the blessed Ain Sof, and this is called klos hanefesh, the pining of the soul

כדכתיב נכספה וגם כלתה נפשי וגו' וכתוב צמאה נפשי לאלהים וגו' וכתוב צמאה לך נפשי וגו' והצמאון הוא מיסוד האש שבנפש האלהית וכמ"ש הטבעיים וכ"ה בע"ה שיסוד האש הוא בלב ומקור המים והליחות מהמוח וכמ"ש בע"ה שער נ' שהיא בחי' חכמה שנקרא מים שבנפש האלהית ושאר המדות כולן הן ענפי היראה והאהבה ותולדותיהן כמ"ש במקום אחר

of which Scripture speaks, as “My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth...” and “My soul thirsteth for G-d...” and “My soul thirsteth for Thee...” This thirst is derived from the element of Fire, which is found in the Divine soul. As students of natural science affirm, and so it is in Etz Chayim, the element of Fire is in the heart, while the source of [the element of] Water and moisture is in the brain, which is explained in Etz Chayim, Portal 50, to refer to the faculty of Chochmah, called “water of the Divine soul.” The rest of the middos are all offshoots of fear and love and their derivations, as is explained elsewhere.

The Tanya here says that if the mind delves into the fact that Hashem fills the world and transcends the world, religious feelings will awaken. The Zohar says that people do not think about all that they should. But we should think about this, what is *mimale kol almin* and *soveiv kol almin*.

Religious Thoughts

Milo kol haaretz kvodo, the whole earth is filled with His glory. (*Yeshayahu 6:3*) Think of this room - it is all G-dliness! This is a great *hassaga*, apprehension! We can think with parables and other ways, but there is no physical world in reality, there is really only a life of *dvar* Hashem!!! The whole world is the word of G-d! The Divine command gives life to all that is in the world! This is the idea of *mimale kol almin*. He gives life to all that is in the world.

Soveiv kol almin is a different point. It tells us that there is an illumination in this world, a *haara*, from the level that is above this world. It is not clothed in the world, it works as a *haara* above impacting matters in the world. *Soveiv kol almin*.

For example think about the concept of *Ain Sof*. We so often think of limits that we do not usually consider the *Ain Sof*. *Ain Sof* is a matter that transcends any type of *sof*, end. *Ain Sof* is a type of such a great light that you can think about it for an entire year, you can reach deep *hassagos* each moment, and yet reach nowhere near the end!⁸⁹

Think of how much space light will travel through in a single year. In one second light can go around the world six times. Imagine if you would travel that amount of space in a moment and keep traveling at that speed for five hundred years. Imagine these details as much as you can. How far will you travel? Five hundred light years! Even after so much travel we would say you are still no closer to *gedulas Ain Sof*, the greatness of infinity, than before these last five hundred light years! For *Ain Sof* has no limits! You could travel that far and still be as if you had just started! Travel for another five hundred years and you have still not yet begun, for *Ain Sof* has no limits at all! And now when you say a blessing, *boruch ata Hashem*, Blessed are you O' G-d, you are talking to *Ain Sof*! Despite the fact that Hashem is *Ain Sof*, with no limits, He still lowers himself enough so that a human being can literally talk with Him!

This is a meditation that can arouse love and fear. Learning Torah is better than all *hisbonenus*, meditations, for He is one with His wisdom, *Hu vichachmaso echad!!* We should still take the time to fulfill the mitzvah of “*Viyadata hayom vihasheivosa el levavecha ki Hashem*

⁸⁹ Rav Yisrael Salanter would tell his student to imagine a huge courtyard filled with poppy seeds. Once a million years a bird comes and takes a single seed. If you can imagine how long it would take for the entire courtyard to be emptied you still have not begun to imagine the years of eternity, the *Ain Sof* relative to time. (*Tenuas Hamussar, Volume 1, page 241 footnote 21, Trails of Triumph page 377* records Rav Yosef Leib Nendyk of Kletzk Yeshiva employing this illustration to great effect.)

hu haElokim bashamayim mimaal vial haaraetz mitachas ain od,” (Devarim 4:39) “Know it today and bring it to your heart that Hashem is the Lord in the heavens above and on the earth below, there is no other!” If you internalize these meditations you will fulfill mitzvos in a whole new way!

You have to be a person who is aware, you have to find the time to think about how great in the real world is the realm of Heaven.⁹⁰ Do not only think about the nonsense of this world, which is a joke. Think instead about all the angels! *Chazal* teach us that in *gedud echad*, a single battalion, *ribo rivavan mishmshasei*, ten thousand ten thousands serve Him!⁹¹ *Ligedudav ain mispar!* And to his battalions there is no number! In other words, numbers cannot limit how many *gedudim* there are. A number usually encompasses the entire set at once, such as a million or a billion, is *kollel* all the many things in one phrase. But there are numbers that you cannot use, there are matters that are not encompassed by a number, *ain ligdudav mispar!* This is all in the realm of *Yetzirahh!*

And the worlds of *Beriahh* and *Atzilus* are much more! Think about all this and remember what we say in our daily liturgy, this Almighty has loved us with a great love! “*Ahava rabba ahavtanu Hashem elokeinu,*” “With an awesome love You have loved us Hashem our Lord.” He gave us His Torah and when you do a mitzvah you are attached in an awesome *yichud*,

⁹⁰ Another meditation that can arouse such feelings would be to consider current atomic theory. If one would fill a grapefruit with nitrogen atoms, and then inflate each atom to the size of a blueberry, the grapefruit would be the size of the globe! Within the atom the nucleus is its tiny center. To see the nucleus of the atom, you would have to inflate the blueberry to the size of a football stadium, and then the nucleus would only be the size of a small household marble. The mass of the atom is overwhelmingly in its tiny nucleus. The rest of the atom is filled with huge regions of empty space. The nucleus has enormous density. If you took pieces of cardboard, and made a box one foot long, one foot wide, and one foot high, and then took all the nuclei in a car which weighs two tons, and stuffed them into this box, you still would not have the correct density of a single nucleus. You would have to take the nuclei of 6.2 billion cars and stuff it into this box to get the density that exists in a single nucleus of a single atom! Hashem who has compacted so much into such tiny spaces is the one we address directly when we pray!

⁹¹ See Talmud Tractate Chagiga 13b

unification, with *Ain Sof mamash*, for *hu uritzono echad*, He and His will are one! This *dveykus* will be revealed in the future when you will see how when you did mitzvos you were involved in truly great matters: attachment with the infinite.

The *Chovas Halevavos*⁹² pointed out that a person born and raised in a jail cell has no idea of what the world is like! Due to *katnos hamochin*, limited intellectual capabilities, we live in a jail and darkness and we do not know what is going on outside! We imagine that there is no real freedom, we think the whole world is a jail for that is all we have experienced, but we should not let it be so! Use your imagination to create a small sense of greatness and grand measure and start to connect to these awesome levels. This is what the Tanya is encouraging when he says *yisbonein bidaato*, man has to use his mind to arouse himself and begin to reach the depths of understanding that his soul can reach. Use *binah lihavin davar mitoch davar*, understanding to infer one matter from the other, and immerse yourself in thoughts of *elokus*. This is the obligation of man, to be *misbonen in gadlus*, and make it part of the person himself! Make it part of your *atzmiyus*, essence, and it will effect a transformation; it will sire holy love and awe.

All *ovdei Hashem*, servants of G-d, in all generations were immersed in this to truly acquire the real *madreigah*, stage, of *dveykus haborei*, attachment with the Infinite. They were always thinking how they could truly connect to *dveykus* with Hashem. The Besht⁹³ taught that this was the purpose of all *chassidus*: to acquire true *dveykus haborei*, attachment to the Creator.

⁹² A classic work of Jewish ethics written by Rabbeinu Bachya at the end of the eleventh century.

⁹³ Rav Yisrael Baal Shem Tov, 1680-1760, the founder of the Chassidic movement.

It is true that we live today in a low generation, so now is a time for *chizuk*, stepping up with strength. In Ethics of the Fathers we are taught “*Bimakom sheiain ish hishtadel lihiyos ish*,” “Where there are no men try to be a man!” (*Avos* 2:6) And the main thing is to make this your life. Take this seriously and open the gates for *dveykus haboreih* and true spirituality. The key is to realize: “I am alive for this.” As *Messilas Yesharim* ⁹⁴writes, “*Ma hi chovaso she adam biolamo*,” “Know what is your purpose, why you are living and what you are living for.” In this way you will come to the level of *lidavkah bo*, you will realize: “I was created to reach this level: *dveykus baborei*.”

The Pleasure Of *Dveykus*

When you reach this level you taste eternity here on earth! The taste of eternity is so pleasurable! Once you grasp it you know, “This is why I live on earth!”

Life is filled with pain and difficulty - the pain of death for example is the worst imaginable pain that man knows - and sometimes a person thinks, “Why was I created? What does Hashem want from my existence?” We need to remember: *ki tov* Hashem! All He has made is for the good, so why is there the pain of death? The key here is that “*taamu ureu ki tov Hashem*,” “Taste and you will see Hashem is good!” When you taste eternity all questions are answered.

The answer is King David’s words: “*Mi haish hachafetz chayim*,” “Who wants to taste eternal life?” Who is *ohev yamim liros tov*, loves days to see good? Every day has a hidden goodness.

⁹⁴ *Messilas Yesharim*, Path of the Just, was written by Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato (1707-1746). It is a work of ethics and philosophy. It is literally a Code of Jewish Law for how to serve Hashem with love, fear, and attachment.

As the Zohar explains, man is looking for this *tov* and the *pasuk* gives us ways to break the barriers to get to the real *tov*, the *tov haganuz*, the hidden good: *Netzor lishoncha mera*, Guard your tongue from evil, *usfasecha midabeir mirma*, and your lips from uttering falsehood, *sur mera*, leave evil, *vi'aseh tov*, and do good, *bakesh shalom*, seek peace, *viradfeihu*, and pursue it. Through mitzvos you will taste a taste of eternal life! This is such a great *tov* that it answers all questions. Once you have tasted this good, the questions will no longer bother you!

Our sages say about Acher ⁹⁵that it would be worthwhile for him to have the pain of *gehenom* so that he could enter *olam haba*, the World to Come. Even though *gehenom* is a great pain, all the pain of Iyov is less than the pain of *gehenom*, yet the determination was that it is better to have some *gehenom* in order to get the *tov* of *olam haba*. You can taste this taste of *olam haba* in this world! If you want to taste the taste of *olam haba*, make seeking Hashem your life!

Especially as a young man consider your purpose in living! A young *bochur* works on his roots. Afterwards you can return to these roots, but now is the time to work on your roots, these years fashion the *shorashidike chelkei hanefesh*, the foundational parts of your soul. If you wait until later – imagine perhaps until after twenty years old - to start working on your roots, it will be very hard! You will need to go back and uproot the roots you have created in order to put other roots there.

If you try to make thinking about Hashem and *dveykus* in Hashem a true part of your essence now you can taste *olam haba* in this world! That taste of life is the answer to all questions! It resolves all challenges! It makes everything worthwhile! Learn Torah and do

⁹⁵ Acher literally means the other, this was the name given to the apostate second century sage, Elisha Ben Avuya, after he became a heretic and ceased to observe the Torah's laws.

mitzvos in such a way that it becomes your core! Learn stories about *tzadikim* and tell yourself, “This is me, I will become such a *tzadik*, I will reach that level.”

Keep Growing Closer to Hashem

Know that *tzadikim* were also *bochurim*. They also had *yetzer haras*. When they were younger they were *mamash nichshal*, they truly fell. A human is a human.

But they did not give up. They kept striving and growing. We do not talk of these failures because of their honor, but they were *nichshal* when they were younger and their *yetzer hara* conquered them. They may have wasted time in Yeshiva. They spoke *devarim beteilim*, empty words, and politics, yet they did not give up. They kept striving and growing until they reached very high levels and they became *tzadikim* of whom we all speak.

Rav Yitzchok Hutner (1906-1980) wrote a letter to a student encouraging him despite religious failures. (Pachad Yitzchok, Igros Ukessavim page 217)

“Rosh Chodesh Iyar 5723

*My Dear Beloved,
Peace and Blessings!*

*I received your letter. Your words touched my heart. Know my dearest that the very existence of your letter rejects all the descriptions that are found in it. Let me explain this sentence. There is a terrible illness of ours that when we deal with the aspects of perfection of our giants, we deal with the final conclusion of their greatness. We talk of their greatness while we skip over the inner struggle that was waged in their souls! The impression one receives from our talks is that the giants emerged from their Maker's hand in all their glorious greatness. All speak and are amazed about the Chafetz Chaim's purity of speech, but who knows about all the wars, the struggles, the failures, and the retreats the Chafetz Chaim had in his war with his evil urge!? This is merely one of a thousand examples. A wise one like yourself can derive from the detail a general truth about many. The result of this is that when a young man with spirit, aspirations, and a stormy nature finds himself stumbling, failing, and falling he considers himself one who is not “Firmly planted in the house of G-d.” For according to the fantasies of this young man to be “Firmly planted in the house of G-d” means he sits in tranquility on lush pastures, along pleasant streams, and he enjoys his urge for holiness, like the *tzadikim* enjoying the glows of the *shechinah* with crowns atop their heads in the parties of Gan Eden. On the other hand, not to be afflicted with the storms of the *yetzer hara*, as in the verse, “the dead are free.” (Psalms 88:6)*

*Know this well my dearest, the root of your soul is not the tranquility of the goodness, rather the **war** of the urge for good! Your precious, heartfelt letter testifies like a hundred witnesses that you are a loyal warrior in the armies of the yetzer tov. In English they say, "Lose a battle and win the war." Certainly you are failing and you will fail yet again (this is not a wish for your misfortune). In many future battles you will fall wounded and defeated. But I promise you that after losing battles you will leave the war with the crown of victory on your head and the defeated game between your teeth. Lose battles, but win wars. The wisest of all men said, 'Sheva yipol tzadik vikam,' 'The tzadik will fall seven times and rise.' The fools think he meant to say, even though this tzadik fell seven times nevertheless he got up. But the wise ones know well that the nature of a tzadik's rise is only through his seven falls! And He saw all that He had made and behold it was very good, (Bereishis 1:31) good would refer to the yetzer hatov, very good to the yetzer hara. (Midrash Rabba Chapter 9)*

My beloved, I am holding you tightly against my chest, and I am whispering in your ear, 'Had your letter told me about the mitzvos and good deeds of yours I would say, "I received a good letter." Now that your letter tells about collapses, failures, and obstacles, I say, "I received a very good letter."' Your spirit is storming upward seeking to become a gadol, a giant. Please do not picture to yourself the giants as individuals who are united with their urge for good. On the contrary, picture the greatness of the giants of the world with letters of an awesome battle with all the lowly urges. When you feel in yourself a storm from the yetzer hara, know that you are resembling the giants then more than when you are in a state of tranquility that you so desire. It is from the places where you find yourself falling the most, it is in those places where you will become an exceptional vessel for Hashem's honor!"

The Komarna Rebbe in his work Megillas Setarim revealed some of the struggles he contended with:

"When I was twelve years old ... My father went to his eternal reward, on the twenty first of Av, in the year 5578 (1815)...

Then I was raised in the home of my holy uncle, the brother of my father, whose soul is in Eden. There I studied Torah in great poverty and distress, all my joy was due to the great sweetness of the awesome lessons that my holy uncle revealed. He revealed to me awesome matters...

After this, I had a short period when the forces of evil overcame me greatly. I did not watch the gaze of my eyes. Before me there were two paths, one led to Eden and the other to Gehenom. The good awakened, and I once entered the synagogue alone, and I shaid tears like a gushing spring, before the Creator. I begged him to forgive me. I fainted. I then heard them declare the verse, "And I will pay consolation to him!" (Yeshaya 57:18) From that day until today, twenty five years, I have not gazed not have I even seen in a passing glance the form of a woman. The heavens protect me, that it not even happen by mistake. And I returned to serving my Maker with Torah study and prayer." (Entries 19-20)

After he married he had a period of spiritual elevation and achievements. He then realized that his spiritual achievements were not truly earned and he was still far from truly serving Hashem: "I then separated myself from all material matters. It was in the year 5583 (1823), at the beginning of the winter. I had a special room, it was extremely cold, it had not been warmed

even once during all the days of winter. I was in the habit of sleeping only two hours out of every twenty four. I would spend the rest of the time (in that room) immersed in studying Torah, Talmud, Legal Writings, Zohar, the writings of the Ari, and the writings of Rav Moshe Cordevero. "Then I fell from all of this. I was in a very limited state of mind for more than three months. Many tough, and bad kellipos stood against me. They tried to entice me to leave my Torah study. Worst of all they dropped a depression upon me. My heart became a rock. I did not enjoy anything during those days. I only ate a little bit of bread and water each day, I had no pleasure in the learning and praying that I was doing. The cold was very difficult, the kellipos became very strong, I was literally caught with two paths before me. I was very embittered from all these enticements. It was literally worse than a thousand deaths.

"After I overcame all these enticements, suddenly in the middle of the day, when learning tractate Yevamos for the sake of the Almighty above, to adorn the Shechinah with all my strength, a great light fell upon me. The whole house was filled with an awesome light, the glow of the Shechinah! This was the first time, that I truly tasted a bit of His light. This time there was nothing mixed in to the light, there were no deceptions, it was a wonderful delight, a very, very sweet experience, the imagination cannot begin to grasp it. From then and on, I entered into Divine service with a great light, without seeking any heights, and I no longer had those enticements for evil, as I formerly had.

"Then I fell again for a time. I realized I need to travel to tzadikim so they would draw on me some of the light of the Almighty, for I had a very refined vessel. I traveled to Mezhibuzh to our holy master and teacher, the Godly man, Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel..."

(Entries 21-26)

I heard from the Amshinover Rebbe that one of the *tzadikim*, a student of the Rebbe Reb Bunim, once had *mamash*, literally, a terrible *nefila*, fall, he committed a real sin. As a result he could not keep up with the *chevrey*, the holy students, and it was Shavuos. All the *tzadikim* were preparing for Shavuos and he could not reach their level. That group contained the *Chidushei Harim*, Reb Yitzchok Vorke and others, and they were reaching great *mochin*, intellectual lights! When they were talking about the Sinai revelation, he could not stand there, for he was not on the level of their words!

He went to the Rebbe Reb Bunim with a complaint that the friends were pushing him away. It was not true. They were not distancing him, he just was not at their level. The Rebbe Reb Bunim said nothing. On the eve of Yom Kippur, the Rebbe Reb Bunim came to his student

and said, "I am not worth anything and you are not worth anything, let us now do *teshuva* together to enter into the holiest day." He did *teshuva*. He became *mamash* one of the greatest disciples of the Rebbe Reb Bunim, one of the great *tzadikim*. The Amshinover Rebbe told us this story but he would not relate who it was because this is the story of one of the great *tzadikim*.

You must remember that *tzadikim* had real *nefilos*, real downfalls, yet they kept struggling and they overcame eventually. You see this in the Torah itself. You see it throughout Tanach. Know that Hashem accepts *teshuva* and that one can become a great *tzadik*. The main thing is that you have to make this your real *ratzon*, will, your *ikar*, essence, has to be to truly attach to Hashem, that you want to become a person of "*Naase adam neemar baavurecha*," "Let us make man was said for your sake!" Wish to be a true *oveid* Hashem, servant of G-d. Always desire to be *davuk* in Hashem!

There can be different levels based on different roots of *neshamos*, but the *nekuda*, essential point, must be the same: to truly fulfill *ratzon* Hashem so that one is *davuk* in Him!

We Can Get Close To Hashem

In this week's Torah portion it says, "*Viyikchu li terumah*," "And they should take for Me a donation." Moshe says that *afilu echad mehem yechol laasoso*, even one of them can make the sanctuary. Even though the Heavens cannot contain Hashem, a single Jew can make a residence to Hashem as long as *yidvenu libo*, he is sincerely generous. If he is willing to give away all for *avdus* Hashem, Divine service, he can make for Him an abode!

Your thoughts should only be about *avodas* Hashem! When you go to sleep, when you wake up, even when you walk in the street, you can serve Hashem! Think about learning or think

about *gadlus haboreih*, think about Hashem constantly! Do not live an empty life, be an *oveid* Hashem! If you are a person who is *yidvenu libo*, if you are someone who donates his heart, someone who is truly seeking Hashem, then you can merit to become *heichal Hashem heichal Hashem heima*, the palace of Hashem, the palace of Hashem is who they are! (*Yirmiyahu 7:14*) You can become a personal sanctuary for Hashem's presence!

The deeper understanding of Torah provides a new definition for sacrifice. Sometimes we view our obligations to sacrifice our physical comforts to fulfill Divine law as demands of a strict and unyielding law. Lesson ten opens a new perspective to messirus nefesh, self sacrifice. Judaism always advocates life and pleasure. It reveals that true life is attachment with Hashem, sometimes physical life conflicts with true life. Our faith demands that we trade up, and replace our physical sensations of life, with truer and stronger life, attachment with Hashem!

Lesson Ten: Chochmah Is Life At Its Essence

Daas Is A Connection To Life

והדעת הוא מלשון והאדם ידע את חוה והוא לשון התקשרות והתחברות שמקשר דעתו בקשר אמיץ וחזק מאוד ויתקע מחשבתו בחוזק בגדולת אין סוף ב"ה ואינו מסיח דעתו כי אף מי שהוא חכם ונבון בגדולת א"ס ב"ה הנה אם לא יקשר דעתו ויתקע מחשבתו בחוזק ובהתמדה לא יוליד בנפשו יראה ואהבה אמיתית כי אם דמיונות שוא ועל כן הדעת הוא קיום המדות וחיותן והוא כולל חסד וגבורה פי' אהבה וענפיה ויראה וענפיה

Daas, the etymology of which is to be found in the verse: "And Adam knew [yada] Eve," implies attachment and union. That is, one binds his mind with a very firm and strong bond to, and firmly fixes his thought on, the greatness of the blessed Ain Sof, without diverting his mind from Him. For even one who is wise and understanding of the greatness of the blessed Ain Sof, will not— unless he binds his knowledge and fixes his thought with firmness and perseverance— produce in his soul true love and fear, but only vain fancies. Therefore daas is the basis of the middos and the source of their vitality; it contains chesed and gevurah, that is to say, love with its offshoots and fear with its offshoots.

The Tanya is speaking here about the matter of *daas*.

We have explained previously that *daas* is the ability to know what is truly relevant, what is *nogea*. To be able to evaluate the things one knows, measure relevance, and thereby realize whether they should be internalized. *Daas* is the connection between *mochin*, intellects, and *middos*, behaviors and emotions. It gives birth to *ahavas Hashem*, love of G-d, and *yiras shmayim*, fear of heaven. *Daas* means connection and *daas* connects the intellects with the *middos*.

Daas is very important within man. You should know the primary nature of a man is *daas*. “*Daas kanisa mah chasarta, daas chasarta ma kanisa,*” (Midrash Rabba, Koheles parsha Seven) “If you have acquired *daas*, what are you missing? If you are missing *daas*, what have you acquired?” *Daas* is essential: in *halacha* as well one needs *daas* to acquire something and to be obligated in mitzvos.

Generally we talk of *Chochmah*, *binah*, and *daas* and we usually consider *daas* a *middah* like any other *middah*. *Chochmah* is a *middah*, *binah* is a *midda*, and *daas* is a *middah*. In truth, however *daas* is different.

Chochmah is a *moach*, it is a high level of *mochin*. It is comprised of the letters of *koach mah*. It is knowledge of the *etzem mahus*. When a man realizes the essence of a matter, when he has knowledge of the very *mahus*, the very root of something, this is *Chochmah*. After *Chochmah*, *binah* appears as the facts that emerge through analysis out of the *Chochmah*. Root knowledge is *Chochmah*.

Later the Tanya will teach that when the *Chochmah* of the *nefesh Elohis* is revealed then even the *kal shebekalim*, the man who takes religion very lightly, is ready for great sacrifices for

Hashem. Chochmah will annul his *ruach shtus*, his temporary insanity, and he will be willing to be *moser nefesh*, to give his life up for the sake of observance and mitzvos.

What is the reason for this? The reason is that *Chochmah tichayeh baaleha*, wisdom will give life to its possessors, *Chochmah* is the essential life of a thing, the *chiyus* of a matter is the *Chochmah*. *Chochmah* is *koach mah*, it is knowledge of the matter as a *metziyus*. *Chochmah* touches the *etzem*, the essential life! *Chochmah elyonah* made the *etzem* of the matter. When the *Chochmah* of man is revealed he sees the real *chiyus* of his life! His *mahus* and *atzmius* emerge! Generally people do not feel their real life. The *neshama* is hidden in the *guf*, body, and in its *kochos*, abilities. The soul is obscured and covered by the body and its forces. There is a life of the body. There is *chiyus haguf*. But the *guf* is the *olam hagashmi*, the physical realm, it is merely *nitzotzos*, sparks, of *Chochmah*. A heavenly *chochmah* which fell into a physical state and now gives life to the physical world.

Chochmah chitzonis, external science, seems to be the life of the world because the material it is concerned with devolved from the Supernal Wisdom. Man is frequently fooled as to what is his real life and what is life. Man is waylaid by physical vitality. When the *chochmah* from the *nefesh Elokis* is revealed man now realizes where his life comes from and what is true life! In a *hassaga* higher than understanding man experiences his real life and *chiyus*. It is higher than *binah* and that is why it cannot be explained!

The truth is that man has no choice in questions of life or death. No one wants death. Man does not desire death. Man's choice is to determine for himself what life is. He has the choice of actualizing real life or leaving it hidden. Once he has revealed to himself what life is then it is clear to him to be *moser nefesh*, sacrifice, for Hashem.

There are many stories that illustrate this truth:

Rabbi Yosef Wallis, director of Arachim of Israel, told Project Witness about his father, Judah Wallis, who was born and raised in Pavenitz, Poland, and how he met his mother:

“While he was in Dachau, a Jew who was being taken to his death suddenly flung a small bag at my father, Judah Wallis. He caught it, thinking it might contain a piece of bread. Upon opening it, however, he was disturbed to discover a pair of tefillin. Judah was very frightened because he knew that were he to be caught carrying tefillin, he would be put to death instantly. So he hid the tefillin under his shirt and headed for his bunkhouse.

“In the morning, just before the appel [roll call], while still in his bunkhouse, he put on the tefillin. Unexpectedly, a German officer appeared. He ordered him to remove the tefillin, noted the number on Judah’s arm, and ordered him to go straight to the appel.

“At the appel, in front of thousands of silent Jews, the officer called out Judah’s number and he had no choice but to step forward. The German officer waved the tefillin in the air and said, ‘Dog! I sentence you to death by public hanging for wearing these.’

“Judah was placed on a stool and a noose was placed around his neck. Before he was hanged, the officer said in a mocking tone, ‘Dog, what is your last wish?’

“‘To wear my tefillin one last time,’ Judah replied.

“The officer was dumbfounded. He handed Judah the tefillin. As Judah put them on, he recited the verse that is said while the tefillin are being wound around the fingers: ‘Ve’eirastich li le’olam, ve’eirastich li b’tzedek uvemishpat, ub’chesed, uv’rachamim, ve’eirastich li b’emunah, v’yodaat es Hashem—I will betroth you to me forever and I will betroth you to me with

righteousness and with justice and with kindness and with mercy and I will betroth you to me with fidelity, and you shall know Hashem.'

"It is hard for us to picture this Jew with a noose around his neck, wearing tefillin on his head and arm — but that was the scene that the entire camp was forced to watch, as they awaited the impending hanging of the Jew who had dared to break the rule against wearing tefillin. Even women from the adjoining camp were lined up at the barbed wire fence that separated them from the men's camp, forced to watch this horrible sight.

"As Judah turned to watch the silent crowd, he saw tears in many people's eyes. Even at that moment, as he was about to be hanged, he was shocked. Jews were crying! How was it possible that they still had tears left to shed? And for a stranger? Where were those tears coming from? Impulsively, in Yiddish, he called out, 'Yidden, don't cry. With tefillin on, I am the victor. Don't you understand, I am the winner!'

"The German officer understood the Yiddish and was infuriated. He said to Judah, 'You dog, you think you are the winner? Hanging is too good for you. You are going to get another kind of death.'

"Judah, my father, was taken from the stool and the noose was removed from his neck. He was forced into a squatting position and two huge rocks were placed under his arms. Then he was told that he would be receiving 25 lashes to his head — the head on which he had dared to position his tefillin. The officer told him that if he dropped even one of the rocks, he would be shot immediately. In fact, because this was such an extremely painful form of death, the officer advised him, 'Drop the rocks now. You will never survive the 25 lashes to the head. Nobody ever does.'

The Way to the Tree of Life

“Judah’s response was, ‘No, I won’t give you the pleasure.’

“At the 25th lash, Judah lost consciousness and was left for dead. He was about to be dragged to a pile of corpses, after which he would have been burned in a ditch, when another Jew saw him, shoved him to the side, and covered his head with a rag, so people didn’t realize he was alive.

Eventually, after he recovered consciousness fully, he crawled to the nearest bunkhouse that was on raised piles, and hid under it until he was strong enough to come out under his own power.

Two months later he was liberated.

“During the hanging and beating episode, a 17-year-old girl had been watching the events from the women’s side of the fence. After liberation, she made her way to the men’s camp and found Judah. She walked over to him and said, ‘I’ve lost everyone. I don’t want to be alone any more. I saw what you did that day when the officer wanted to hang you. Will you marry me?’

“The rest is history. Rabbi Yosef Wallis’ parents (for this couple became his parents) walked over to the Klausenberger Rebbe and requested that he perform the marriage ceremony. The Klausenberger Rebbe, whose kiddush Hashem is legendary, wrote out a kesubah by hand from memory and married the couple. Rabbi Wallis has that handwritten kesubah in his possession to this day.”

When a person is immersed in this world and he thinks that it is all of life he may be drawn to physical matters. These are the *dimyonos*, fantasies, of the *olam hagashmi*, but once he clarifies to himself what his life is, when the Chochmah of the nefesh Elohis is revealed, he appreciates that his life is really attachment to G-d! At this point he is willing to give up everything for G-d because he feels that G-d is life.

Aveilus Is Only From The Point Of View Of The Body

Man is told to remember the day of death. Why do we need a reminder? Because our nature leads us to avoid death and stop thinking about death, for we deeply desire life. The greatest desire is the desire to live. For man to exist he must live. Man is a *metzius*, reality, who lives. Life is essential to the definition of man, so he does not like death or wish to think about death. Man always tries to forget death. In our literature death is connected to forgetting. “*Gezeirah al hameis shetishtakach min haleiv!*” “There is a decree that the dead will be forgotten from the heart!” (*Pesachim 54b*)

Death is deeply connected with forgetting. Life equals *chochmah*. When man dies the part of *chochmah* that gives life to the body leaves. Without wisdom there is no memory! Therefore, *gezeira al hameis shetishtakach min haleiv!*

Even when man is alive the dead part in him leads him to forget. When man ate from the tree of knowledge he caused *zahamas hanachash*, the filth of the serpent, to enter him. The snake is associated with dust. G-d told the snake, “*Viafar tochal kol yemei chayecha,*” (*Bereishis 3:14*) “And you shall eat dust all the days of your life!” When man dies his body literally becomes dust, for his snake part returns to dust, its element. Because of man’s sin, G-d decreed, “*Afar ata vel afar tashuv,*” “You are dust and to dust you shall return.” (*Bereishis 3:19*)

There is a *luz* bone in man that is eternally vibrant and does not decompose. This bone is the *kusta dichiyusa*, the meager measure of life, that remains even after death. This meager amount of life will be used to bring the person back to life in the future. Most of man however decomposes. At the moment of death most of the sparks of *chochmah* leave the body. Once life

has left, the body reverts to its snake-like quality, it merges into the realm of death, and decomposes. The dead part in man, the body of man, is associated with forgetting.

You can remember that which is connected to your very life. If something has little life in it, then you forget it. The body that is dead has limited life, as a result it is forgotten, it slips from the mind.

The Talmud teaches that olive oil is a *segula*, it miraculously helps, for memory. Oil is light, it brings light to the world. It is a symbol of *chochmah*. That is why it helps memory, for memory is linked to *Chochmah* and life.

The *guf*, body, is innately in a place of *missa*, death, and *therefore gezeira al hameis shetishtakach min halev*, there is a decree about the dead that they will be forgotten from the heart.

When a person passes from this world one mourns. He may have been a friend, one he had a physical connection to, and the physical connection misses his presence. My body still has a soul, and his soul is not in a body, hence our bond is broken and we mourn for a time.

However, after twelve months we stop mourning, for after these months have passed so too has our physical connection to our friend's body passed. *Gezeirah al hameis shetishtakach min haleiv!*

But from the perspective of the soul, from the soul-connection, the *pnimiusdike keshet*, there is no mourning at all! That soul bond was never severed! The soul relationship was never lost. Spiritual connection allows for no mourning! Of this spiritual bond there was no *gezeirah shetishtakach min haleiv!* For this slipping from the mind is a further element of the death of a person. But it only applies in the physical realm. In the spiritual realm there is no such thing as

forgetting or loss. The extent of *aveilus*, mourning, is a function of the nature of the bond between us: whether it was a physical bond or a bond of souls, a link of *neshamos*.

The Soul Of Torah And The Body Of Torah

Reb Tzadok ⁹⁶uses this principle to explain the difference between the seventh of Adar and Lag Baomer.

Lag Baomer, the *yahrtzeit* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai,⁹⁷ is a Yom Tov, a holiday. The Ari relates how one of his students said *nachem*, the mournful prayer of the ninth of Av, on Lag Baomer and the Ari told him that Rashbi (the acronym for Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai) was upset because it is a *hillula*, a *chasunah*, a wedding, and one should not say *nachem* on his day of joy. Rashbi says that his *yahrtzeit* is “*yom simchasi*,” my day of joy! Yet the seventh of Adar, the day Moshe Rabbenu died, is a fast day. Why the difference?

Rashbi was *nishmasa dioraisa*, the soul of Torah. His wisdom was a wisdom of soul. Moshe Rabbeinu, in contrast, revealed to us the *gufa dioraisa*, the body of Torah. In Moshe’s revelation we have *halacha*, the simple meaning of text and the Torah for the body. To the entirety of the Jewish people Moshe revealed the *nigleh*, revealed part, of Torah. The revealed Torah entered Moshe’s body so on the day that Moshe’s soul left his body we mourn.

Rashbi though is only the *neshama* of Torah. From the *neshama* perspective there is no such thing as *aveilus*! Our connection to him was only on the level of soul. The soul is not

⁹⁶ Rav Tzadok HaKohen Rabinowitz of Lublin 1823-1900 was a brilliant Torah scholar and master teacher of Jewish thought. Unfortunately we lost many of his writings in the Lublin ghetto during the holocaust.

⁹⁷ Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai was a second century sage and student of the great teacher Rabbi Akiva. He was the author of the book of Zohar, the primary text of Jewish mystical thought.

affected by death; on the contrary, the day the body dies, the soul is freed and rises higher.

Rashbi's day has no *aveilus*. It is a day of joy.

The bottom line is that *chochmah* is the secret of life. It is the *eitz hachaim*, the tree of life, the existence and deepest life of the person.

Ultimately at *techiyas hameisim*, the revival of the dead, the *Chochmah tichayeh baaleha* will be true on the level of body as well as soul. The body will be purified and we will see the *chochmah elyonah* that is in the body as well. At *techiyas hameisim*, both body and soul will be alive and eternal, for the *Chochmah* in the body will be revealed, it will unite with the soul and both will be eternal. This requires a longer explanation for another time. In short: the *Chochmah* in the *guf* will be revealed and it will unite fully with the *Chochmah* that is in the *neshama*.

Purim Is A Time Of Life!

Shabbes zachor, the Shabbes of remembering the war with Amalek, has a profound message. It is the time to nullify the places of death and forgetting! Man wants to forget the day of death because the soul does not want to go to the places of no life! The soul wants life!

On a deeper level, to remember the day of death is also to be aware that we need not fear death! Death will only affect the external, the body, but the soul will continue in a place of true life! And even more the body will have a little life left in it so eventually it can rise to *techiyas hameisim*. Death is necessary to be *mevarrer*, to purify, the *zahamas hanachash*, the filth of the serpent, so that a new body will be able to arise, the body of *techiyas hameisim*. The *yom hamisa*, day of death, is a preparation for *techiyas hameisim*. It is really a day of joy!

Techiyas hameisim is the greatest joy in the world, the day when the *Chochmah elyonah hamechaya es haguf* will be revealed. “*Umacha Hashem dimah meal kol panim,*” “And Hashem will erase tears from all faces,” (*Yeshayahu 25:8*) at the time of *techiyas hameisim*!

“*Umechabeish liatzvosam,*” “He who heals their depressions,” (*Tehillim 147:3*) the Zohar says refers to *techiyas hameisim*. All sadness is *histalkus hachiyus*, a loss of vitality, a mini-form of death. *Yisurim*, suffering, is also *histalkus hachiyus*. It is a bit of death. *Umechabesh liatzvosam*, Hashem heals all death and sadness. He is *mechaye meisim*.

In fact we find that in the Torah (*Bereishis 25:11*) after we are told of the passing of Avraham the verse states that Hashem blessed Yitzchok. Rashi explains the blessing in two ways: that Hashem consoled Yitzchok and that he blessed Yitzchok since Avraham had not, fearing that to do so would mean He would also bless Esav.

What is the meaning of these two explanations? Both are really parts of a single whole. We must ask, if Avraham did not want to bless him because Esav would be blessed also, why did Hashem bless him? In depth the blessing of Hashem on the day that Avraham left us is a spirit of consolation for the bereaved. Hashem gave Yitzchok a *hassaga* of *techiyas hameisim*. The only *nechama* from the pain of death is a taste of *techiyas hameisim*, an illumination from the future. For that is all that can console, nothing else can provide comfort. On this day Hashem blessed Yitzchok with a taste of *techiyas hameisim*, and on the same day Esav went and denied *techiyas hameisim*. He said, “*Hinei anochi holeich lamus,*” “Behold I am going to die.” (*Bereishis 25:32*) Our sages explain that he was denying the concept of eternal life, *techiyas hameisim*.

Esav was a material person, the *shav shebarasi biolami*, the waste I have created in my world. He was filled with the filth of the serpent. He had no faith in *techiyas hameisim*. Esav was

a very *gashmi* being. He denied that there is a *ruchniyisdike* realm! The Zohar says that we are in *galus* until the tears of Esav are exhausted, for the tears of Esav are the tears about matters of this world. To cry about *olam hazeh* matters is to cry the tears of Esav.

The truth is there should be no *aveilus* for we should not cry about a material loss. The Torah permitted the practices of mourning like a *sair lazazel*, a concession to the evil realm, but in essence there should be no mourning. Hashem blessed Yitzchok with *birchas aveilim*. He gave Yitzchok a little bit of *techiyas hameisim* and once this level was revealed Esav disconnected for Esav has no connection to *techiyas hameisim*, he has no attachment to *kedusha*. Now Esav will not draw from the blessings of *kedusha* for he is in another place.

Thus the two explanations of Rashi complement each other. Avraham would not bless Yitzchok for he feared that Esav would be *yoneik*, derive nourishment, from these *brachos*. Hashem blessed Yitzchok with consolation, a bit of *techiyas hameisim*. Esav then denied *techiyas hameisim*, and this is why Hashem could bless him now and earlier Avraham would not bless him. As long as Esav was still connected Avraham did not want to bless him for he did not want to give him something he could be *yonek* from. However with the atmosphere of *techiyas hameisim* Esav disengaged from our community. Thus Hashem could give this blessing to Yitzchok.

Parshas Zachor is the *parsha* when we should remember that which should be remembered and therefore we should not fear *yom hamisa*. Why do we avoid the day of death? Because we think it is a time of loss! We are focused on the material! From the spiritual perspective we need not fear death!

Amalek And Esav

Amalek is the primary inheritor of Esav. He too denies *techiyas hameisim*, and since he denies it, he will also have no *techiyas hameisim*. He is the opposite of life, we are enjoined, *timche es zecher* Amalek, eradicate every vestige of Amalek, (*Devarim 25:19*) there is no memory left, no *zechira* left, there is no *kista dichiyusa*, remnant of life, left from him. He is the *shav shebarasi biolami!* He is to be completely wiped out, and since he is death, he has no life at all. He has no connection to truth. Amalek hides life, he denies *chayim*, life, for he denies the *chayim nitzchiyim*, eternal and real life.

Yaakov is truth and Yaakov *aveinu lo meis*, our father Yaakov never died. Yaakov is the opposite of death. Esav is *shav shebarasi biolami*, while *titen emmes liyaakov*, truth is given to Yaakov. Yaakov is *emmes* and Yaakov *avinu lo meis*.

On Purim we feel that the body and the soul connect to eternity. Purim is when the point of *Chochmah* that is in the body is revealed again and we are reminded that we will stand again for *techiyas hameisim*. The *Chochmah shebanefesh* is revealed!

Chanukah is for the soul, but Purim is a yom tov for the bodies!

Purim and Mattan Torah

At *mattan* Torah, the giving of the Torah, "*Kafah aleihem hahar kigigis*," "He held the mountain over them like a barrel." "*Hadar kibluha biyemei achashveirosh*," "They later accepted the Torah willingly during the days of Achashveirosh." (*Shabbes 88a*) At Sinai there was such a great revelation of soul that we had no choice. The body was conquered by the great light of *Chochmah elyonah* that appeared at *mattan* Torah. We felt the *Chochmah* of Torah, we felt that

real life is Torah. We experienced a willingness to give up everything, to be *mosser nefesh*, for the sake of Torah. The body was *battel*, annulled, at mattan Torah. It realized that relative to the life of the *neschama* it is nothing.

This is the *parcha nishmasan*, their souls flew out of them, of *mattan Torah*. *Kafah aleihem har kigigis*, the body realized that its life is nothing relative to the *chius* of *neschama*. But if the *guf* is not *battel* then it is different. On Purim the body is not *battel*, and even then the *guf* was willing to be *mosser nefesh*! The *Chochmah* in the body was revealed! The body too felt that its life required dedication against an *aveirah*. This is the greatness of Purim! This is the depth of *ad dlo yada*, one must drink wine on Purim until he does not know the difference between Mordechai and Haman. A person who is drunk *tefillaso toeva*, his prayer is an abomination, for he has lost his *daas* and he is all body.

But on Purim one must drink *ad dlo yada*, one must lose his *daas* and be left only with the body. Then the body as body will accept the Torah! For the *etzem* life of the body will be revealed! The saying *arrur Haman*, cursed is Haman, is about the body. It is the body that is cursed, but *ad dlo yada bein arrur Haman libaruch Mordechai*, means that the body itself will be on the level of *boruch Mordechai*, blessed is Mordechai. The body itself will be *mosser nefesh* to Hashem! This greatness of Purim is this revelation of *Chochmah* within the *guf*.

Our sages teach that of Purim it was said, “*Vizichram lo yasuf mizaram*,” (Esther 9:28) “Memory of the days will never leave their children,” to mean that even when all the other festivals will be annulled, we will still celebrate Purim. The explanation is that the laws of mixtures teach that a true *min bimino*, something with another of its kind, is really not *battel*, lose its identity. This is why a *davar sheyeish lo matirin*, something that can become permitted, is not

battel when it falls into a mixture. For when two things are of the same type they are the same thing, and you cannot have any loss of identity.

The Taz, ⁹⁸explains that when a small measure of prohibited milk falls into large amounts of permitted milk there can be a loss of identity even though it seemingly is a mixture of *min bimino*, an item with its own type, because the fact that one is prohibited and one is permitted makes them two types, but in a *davar sheyeish lo matirin*, a prohibited item that can be permitted, that is *min bimino*, it is a true *min bimino* and therefore it is not *battel*. There cannot be *battel* when there are two parts of one thing for it is one thing.

The Ramban explains the verse “*Vlo yomru od chai Hashem asher heela es bnei yisrael meieretz mitzrayim kee eem chai Hashem asher heelah vasher heivee es zera Beis Yisrael Meieretz tzafona umikol haaratzos asher hidachtim sham...*,” “They will no longer say, ‘Live G-d who has raised Israel from Egypt,’ rather, ‘Live G-d who has elevated Israel from Babylon and the northern countries’” (*Yirmiyahu 23:7-8*) to refer also to the exit from Babylon and the construction of the second Temple. Now, the simple *pshat* of this *pasuk* is that it is referring to the days of *mashiach*. (See the *Talmud* in *Berachos* about this *pasuk* that explains it in this way.) But nevertheless the *Ramban* says in *Parshas Bo* when he talks of the names of the months that we brought from Babylon that it refers to the second temple as well. He explains there that initially the names of the months were linked to *Nissan*. When we left Egypt and in the Torah and the Prophets the names of the months were first, second, third, etc. from *Nissan*. So why did we change the name of the second month to *Iyar* and the first to *Nissan* and other names from Babylon? The *Ramban* answers that it is the fulfillment of this *pasuk*: *vlo yomro od etc.*

⁹⁸ Rav David Halevi Segal (1586-1667) was a great master of Jewish law. He wrote a commentary to the Code of Jewish Law called *Turei Zahav*, known as *Taz*.

Now this is a difficulty. *Ramban* said that according to the *Talmud* this *pasuk* was talking about the future redemption? How could it also refer to the second Temple if it is about the third? Apparently, according to the *Ramban*, *geulas bavel*, the redemption from the Babylonian exile, which is the miracle of Purim, is a bit of *yemos hamashiach*, the days of the messiah!⁹⁹

Mashiach is the preparation for *techiyas hameisim*. His path is to bring holiness into the body! *Yemos hamashiach* means to bring the *shechinah*, the Divine presence, into the *matzav*, situation, of this world. There is even an opinion of the *Rambam* that “*Ain bain yemos hamashiach lizman hazeh elah shiabud malchius*,” “There will be no difference between the Messianic era and our times other than subjugation of the empires.” Either way *mashiach*’s role is to bring *kedusha* into the body, into this world!

Therefore Purim cannot be *battel* for it is *min bimino* with the future. On Purim we have a taste and a feeling of the glow from the future, we feel the *chai* Hashem, we feel the life-feelings of the body. *Chai Hashem asher heela es yisrael mimitzrayim* is a spiritual life: to enter the desert and survive on *manna*. *Yemos hamashiach* is different. It is taste of the *shechinah*

⁹⁹ The prophet Zechariah was given messages about the second temple. In chapter four of his book, he was shown a vision of a menorah of complete gold. He could not understand the meaning of the picture. Hashem then explained, “*Zeh dvar Hashem el Zerubavel leimor lo bichayil vlo bikoach ki eem biruchi amar Hashem Tzvako*” “This is the message of Hashem to Zerubavel: not with soldiers nor with strength rather with My spirit says Hashem master of the hosts.” (*Zechariah 4:6*) Rav Chaim Soloveichik o.b.m. explained the meaning of this chapter. Zechariah knew that his vision would be about the second temple. However he could not understand the picture of a golden menorah. In the times of the second temple the Jewish nation was poor. How could they afford a golden menorah? Hashem answered that this was really a vision of the third temple. The gold would be appropriate for then. The second temple was the foundation and beginning of the third temple. *Rambam* rules that while Israel was sanctified by Joshua when he conquered the land, that sanctity was lost when the Babylonians defeated the Jewish kingdom. However, the second Jewish commonwealth sanctified the land by means of settlement and that holiness was never lost. Commentators wonder, but even the sanctity of settlement should have been lost once the Romans expelled the Jews from the land and tore down our settlements. Explained Rav Chaim, the second commonwealth was rooted in the presence of Hashem. It began with the construction of the second temple and the drawing down of the *Shechinah*. Since the *Shechinah* never leaves, the sanctity on the land that was drawn from it, also never leaves. Thus the second temple was the beginning of and the foundation for the ultimate redemption. This was all included in Hashem’s words to the prophet, “Not with soldiers or strength,” the sanctification of Joshua based on soldiers will not last, “Rather with My spirit,” the sanctification of the second commonwealth was based on Hashem’s spirit, hence it lasts and serves as the beginning of the ultimate redemption.

bitachtanim, the Divine presence down below! The life of Purim is the feelings of that future! To feel the great life that is within the body! The body which is holy feels holiness. We taste on Purim the taste of *mashiach*. *Chayav enosh libsumei bipuriya ad dlo yada*, one is obligated to get intoxicated on Purim to the point of not being able to distinguish, so that *yetzias mitzrayim's* taste will not interfere with this taste of Purim.

It is said that Mordechai annulled Pesach the year of Purim because he was arousing the idea of *asher lo yomru chai Hashem asher heela es yisrael mimitzrayim*. But he was instead arousing a new gate and a new influence of holiness. This is a higher gate than *yetzias mitzrayim*. *Vayaavor* Mordechai, he went to the future, he went to the future that will be opened in the future times.

This is the *Chochmah* that is revealed on Purim: the holiness within the *guf*. The *guf* becomes *chayim nitzchi*. We need not forget the matters of the body. Amalek and Esav are forgotten. You, though are not. When Amalek is gone, then the Jewish *guf* is all filled with and displaying *Chochmah!*

Chochmah And Daas

Let us return to our subject.

There are really four *mochin* in *Chochmah*. There is *Chochmah* of *Chochmah*, *binah* of *Chochmah*, *chassadim didaas* of *Chochmah* and *gevuros didaas* of *Chochmah*. These are all levels of *Chochmah* and they are all *mochin*. So it is with *binah* as well. There are four *mochin dibinah*, *chochmah dbina*, *bina dbina chassadim didaas dibina* and *gevuros didaas dbinah*. In *kesser* as well there are four *mochin*.

In *daas* however there are not four *mochin*. For *daas* is not a *moach*. It is only a *perat*, a detail in *Chochmah* and a *perat* in *binah*. *Daas* is the connection to the *Chochmah* and the *binah*. Moshe Rabbeinu is called the *daas* of the Jewish people. Which *daas*, though, is he? The *daas* of *binah* or the *daas* of *Chochmah*? Moshe gives us the Torah, he teaches us Torah. As Hashem said, “*zichru toras Moshe avdi*,” “Remember the Torah of My servant Moshe.” He is the *daas* in *Chochmah*. He is called *yesod abba*, and this refers to *daas* of *Chochmah*. This means (we have already explained that *Chochmah* is life) that when it becomes clear to a person what is life, and *daas* is a connection to make it part of the very essence of the man. Concepts become a part of a person through connecting to them with *daas*. Moshe is the *koach* for the *Chochmah* to become part of the person and have an impact on him.

The Unique Nature Of Purim

Mikrah megilah, reading the scroll of Esther, is the light of Mordechai, *hearas* Mordechai. *Al mikra megilla* is called by the *mekubalim haaras* Mordechai and this is also called *yesod abba*, the *koach hadaas* in *Chochmah*! This is also the *daas* of *Chochmah*!

It is called the light of Mordechai and not the light of Moshe for the following reason: the revelation of Moshe comes through the learning of Torah. This is the normal order to get this *haara*. *Zichru toras Moshe avdi* is the norm. When this light appears in a different way, in a miraculous way, the *mochin* in other words did not appear through learning Torah, it is *haaras* Mordechai.

In the days of Mordechai and Esther the Jews were on a very low level. Haman was *mikatreig*, drawing attention to flaws, on earth and above in Heaven. He claimed that Israel was

“*Mefuzar umforad bichol haamim bichol medinos malchusecha,*” (Esther 3:8) “Scattered and dispersed among the nations in the states of your empire.” It was a time when Jews did not feel the life, they did not feel the life in Holiness, they were exactly the opposite of the level of Mordechai. We find that Mordechai risked his life in not bowing to Haman “*Lo yichra vlo yishtachave,*” (Esther 3:2) “He would not kneel nor bow.” He was *mosser nefesh* even for a matter that legally he did not have to be *mosser nefesh*, for the bowing was just a sign of honor to the king, and the *avdei hamelech*, servants of the king, in the *megilah* refers to the *ehrliche yidden*, sincere Jews, who were telling Mordechai, “*Madua ata over es mitzvas hamelech,*” “Why are you violating the command of the king?” You are violating the mitzvah of the king, of Hashem, you are giving your life when you are not obligated to do so so! You are in essence committing suicide! (One does not have a portion in *olam haba* if he commits suicide! The *ehrliche yidden* were accusing Mordechai of making this mistake!)

We find in Tractate Avoda Zara (18a) that Rabbi Chanina Ben Teradyon taught Torah even though it was punishable by death. Reb Yose Be Kisme was sick and deathly ill, and when Rav Chanina Ben Teradyon came to visit him Reb Yose said to him, “How could you defy the Romans?! *Ee ata yodeia sheuma zu min hashamayim imlichuha,* Don’t you know this nation has been enthroned by the Almighty? *Viani shamati alecha sheata makhil kehillos kehillos barabim?* And I hear about you that you are gathering masses and teaching them Torah!”

Reb Yose was worried for Rav Chanina. The Romans had prohibited the public dissemination of Torah. He felt that Hashem had enabled the Romans their success and Rav Chanina was therefore not halachically allowed to flout their laws and teach Torah, for they would kill him.

“*Amar lo min hashamyim yirachamu,*” Reb Chanina told him, “They will have compassion from Heaven.”

“*Amar lo ani omer licha devarim shel taam viata omer min hashamayim yirachamu,*” Reb Yose answered, “I am telling you thoughtful matters and you are saying, ‘They will have compassion from Heaven?’ *Chosheshani shema yikchu os’cha visefer Torah bichekcha viyaalo o’scha biaish,* I suspect they might take you with the Torah scroll in your lap and they will light you and it on fire.”

Reb Chanina asked if he would merit *olam haba* if that were to happen and Reb Yose answered “*Klum maaseh bah liyadcha?* How did you act in a questionable mitzvah situation?” He answered that he once mistakenly mixed Purim funds (that he had planned to use for his own meal) with the money for charity and after he realized the error he still gave all the money to the poor and did not reimburse his losses from charitable funds. “If so,” Reb Yose told him, “you will merit the world to come.”

This whole *Talmud* is difficult. Reb Chanina Ben Teradyon was a *tzadik*. Why would he think that he would not merit *olam haba*?

The answer is that he thought that since he was not obligated to be *mosser nefesh* in teaching Torah despite the Roman restriction against it that maybe he was committing suicide and losing *olam haba*, as the Rambam in fact rules that a *mosser nefesh* when not obligated loses his portion of eternal reward. But since he had had an illumination of Purim he could be *mosser nefesh*, as Mordechai, who was *mosser nefesh* even though he was not obligated to, had been. In other words, a *tzadik* connected to Purim earns the power to be *mosser nefesh* even when he is not mandated to be *mosser nefesh*! When the generation has fallen and they do not feel life where

they should feel life, they are not *mosser nefesh* the way they should be, then the *tzadik* of the generation must engage in an awesome *messirus nefesh*, more than the normal. Mordechai, as we saw in his own time and for his own low generation, *lo yichra vlo yishtachave* in order to bring the *ohr messirus nefesh*, light of self sacrifice, to Klal Yisrael.

The *remez* of Reb Chanina was that for him all year he had a light from Mordechai and he always had a sense of the special *messirus nefesh* of Purim, for he had in his money coins of Purim.

In that generation the light was lost, people were not *mosser nefesh*. In the days of Purim it was abnormal how the light of *yesod abba* appeared. Usually it appears in Torah, but in the realm of Torah there is a limit as to when there should be *messirus nefesh*. *Messirus nefesh* is limited in the halacha and in the toras Moshe *avdi*. But here where there was a *messirus nefesh* that is not mandated by *halacha* this is the new life of Mordechai, this is the *haara* of *messirus nefesh* even when the Torah does not mandate it, and this light reaches even the *amei haaretz*, ignorant Jews. Even the very lowly have a connection with this light of *messirus nefesh*.

This is why *mevatlin* Talmud Torah *limikra megi*, we are to annul our study of Torah and hear the reading of *megilah*. Many ask where is the *bittul* Torah? Well, *megilah* is also Torah! The answer is that *bittul* means that the light of *megilah* is higher even then the light of Torah. It reaches the *amei haaretz*, it is *yesod abba* that appears miraculously! The *haaras* of the Torah appears miraculously!

We need to prepare ourselves for these days, Shabbes *zachor* is here, to prepare us for Purim. The *leitzanus*, light headedness, in these days is a *sair liazazel*, a little something which we give him. Focus on the depth of the time!

The Ari says that *ad dlo yada* is to say *boruch* on Haman. The simple meaning is it is a *sair liazazel*, we need to give him a bone. When a great light appears we need to make sure we give the *sitra achra* a bone so that he will not be *battel* totally for *assur lidchok es hakeitz*, we may not hasten the arrival of the redemption before its time.

Yet children of Torah must realize that Purim is a great light and when we connect to this light we have a reliving of *haddar kiblahu biyimei achashveirosh*, they reaccepted Torah during the days of Achashveirosh, and *yemei hapurim lo yaavru mitoch hayehudim*, these days of Purim will not leave the Jews. We taste eternal life, that both the body and the soul feel this life, this is the great taste of the future. On Lag Baomer one is all soul, but on Purim the body is also all soul! *Peleg*, פלג, unites Purim with Lag Baomer. It is an awesome taste, the taste of *yismach Hashem bimaasav*. Hashem will rejoice with His creations, the real *simcha* of the future. May Hashem help us feel this *haara* of Mordechai!

Lesson Eleven reveals what is the essential distinction between angels and humans. Angels are more attached to the limits. Humans can attach to the inner essence, to fulfilling the will of Hashem. The external beings try to find fault with the inner beings. Only human service can achieve the union of worlds, uniting the physical and the spiritual.

**Lesson Eleven:
Souls and Angels: Internal and External**

Chapter four

ועוד יש לכל נפש אלהית שלשה לבושים שהם מחשבה דבור ומעשה של תרי"ג מצות התורה שכשהאדם מקיים במעשה כל מצות מעשיות ובדבור הוא עוסק בפירוש כל תרי"ג מצות והלכותיהן ובמחשבה הוא משיג כל מה שאפשר לו להשיג בפרד"ס התורה הרי כללות תרי"ג אברי נפשו מלובשים בתרי"ג מצות התורה ובפרטות בחי' חב"ד שבנפשו מלובשות

בהשגת התורה שהוא משיג בפרד"ס כפי יכולת השגתו ושרש נפשו למעלה. והמדות שהן יראה ואהבה וענפיהן ותולדותיהן מלובשות בקיום המצות במעשה ובדבור שהוא ת"ת שכנגד כולן כי האהבה היא שרש כל רמ"ה מ"ע וממנה הן נמשכות ובלעדה אין להן קיום אמיתי כי המקיימן באמת הוא האוהב את שם ה' וחפץ לדבקה בו באמת ואי אפשר לדבקה בו באמת כי אם בקיום רמ"ה פקודין שהם רמ"ה אברין דמלכא כביכול כמ"ש במקום אחר והיראה היא שרש לשם"ה לא תעשה כי ירא למרוד במלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה

In addition, every divine soul, nefesh Elohis, possesses three garments: thought, speech and action, [expressing themselves] in the 613 commandments of the Torah. When a person actively fulfills all the precepts which require physical action, and with his power of speech he occupies himself in expounding all the 613 commandments and their practical application, and with his power of thought he comprehends all that is comprehensible to him in the Pardes (literal, hinted, interpreted, and secret aspects) of the Torah— then the totality of the 613 “organs” of his soul are clothed in the 613 Commandments of the Torah.

Specifically: the faculties of ChaBaD in his soul are clothed in the comprehension of the Torah, which he comprehends in Pardes, to the extent of his mental capacity and the supernal root of his soul. And the middos, namely fear and love, together with their offshoots and ramifications, are clothed in the observance of the commandments in deed and in word, namely, in the study of Torah which is, “the equivalent of all the commandments.” For love is the root of all the 248 positive commands, all originating in it and having no true foundation without it. One who fulfills them in truth, truly loves the name of G-d and desires to cleave to Him in truth. For one cannot truly cleave to Him except through the fulfillment of the 248 commandments which are the 248 “Organs of the King,” as it were, as is explained elsewhere; whilst fear is the root of the 365 prohibitive commands, fearing to rebel against the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He; or a still deeper fear than this— when he feels ashamed in the presence of the Divine greatness to rebel against His glory and do what is evil in His eyes, namely, any of the abominable things hated by G-d, which are the kelipos and sitra achra, which draw their nurture from man below and have their hold in him through the 365 prohibitive commands [that he violates].

The *etzem nefesh Elohis*, the core of the G-dly soul, is a *chelek eloka mimaal*, a piece of the Divine. It is *Elohis mamash*, literally G-dly. The soul is a *ziv* and a *haara*, an emanation and glow, of *ohr Ain Sof*. The infinite drew into creation a bit of a revelation of the *Ain Sof*. This is the *chius*, the life of the creation, and this is *nishmos* Yisrael, Jewish souls, the inner life of creation.

There are angels and souls. *Malachim*, angels, are *chitzonius*, the external aspects, and *neshamos*, souls, are *pnimius*, the internal essence, of creation.

The Role Of Angels

Why did Hashem create *malachim*, angels?

Malach means a *shaliach*, an emissary of Hashem. All *hashpaos*, flows of blessing, that come from above come from the *Ain Sof*. The *hashpaos* must come to certain *madreigos* and *olamos*, steps and worlds. They must reach the correct destination. Some to one world, others to even lower worlds.

The *malachim* fill a key role in this process. The spiritual *shefa* comes from *Ain Sof*, i.e. Hashem sends a *hashpaa* of *chochmah* to *olam haYetzirahh*. This *chochmah*, when it emerges from the source, from *Ain Sof*, is very high and pure. This *hashpaa* must descend to a lower *madreiga* for *olam haYetzirahh* to accept it. *Olam haYetzirahh* cannot accept this flow in such a high form. It comes to an angel and then to a lower angel, and then to an angel lower than him. Each angel is *megasheim* it, makes it more material.

In other words, the part of the *hashpaa* that is more spiritual stays with the higher angel, and the lower angel takes the more *gashmi* part of the *hashpaa*. This is the meaning of the verse, “*Gavoha al gavoha shomer ugvochim aleihem,*” (*Koheles 5:7*) “Higher over higher with a watchman (over them) and higher ones over them.” The angels are levels each higher than the next. Their purpose is to serve as Divine agents who bring all the *hashpaos* down from one level to another level.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ “Angels are the intermediaries in bringing *shefa*, Divine bounty, from the higher world to lower realms. The lower realm does not have the strength to accept the gift with all the spiritual plenty it has in the higher universe. Only through the angels does the bounty become a separate and material item so that it is acceptable in the lower realms.” *Shem Mishmuel Bamidbar* page 8

We know that there are *chilukei madreigos* in *olamos*, that there can be a higher and lower level in a particular universe. For instance, in our world there are *tzadikim*, who are of a particular type. They are all *tzadikei emmes*, truly righteous. *Tzadikei emmes* is a great level. A true *tzadik* never commits a sin. According to the Tanya he does not even have a desire for *aveira*, he is ready to do whatever Hashem would want from him. Ready to do all for Hashem, he does all for Hashem. He never falters. Even an *akeida*, a sacrifice of one's own son, if it is asked for by Hashem, he is ready to do it.

Even so, within this level of *tzadikei emmes* there are different levels. All the levels share a common denominator, but there are different heights of *tzadik emmes* for different *neshamos* reach different points. We can even say that within the level of *tzadikei emmes* there are those who are higher and those who are lower.

The Difference Between Steps Within A World And Moving From One World To The Next

There are different worlds: *Atzilus*, *beriya*, *Yetzirahh* and *Asiyah*. There are certain definitions for *olam haAtzilus*, others for *olam haBeriahh*, but each thing in its world is of a certain type. Different levels within a world are all of the same type.

Hashpaos descend with a *seder hishtalshalos*, a *sibba* and *mesoveiv*, a cause and an effect. This higher angel is the reason for the lower angel. He gives the *hashpaa* to the lower angel, from one step we get to a lower steps, for they are all of one world. In other words, from the lowest step in a world I can appreciate where something came from. I know that this led to this and that to that, for they are all of one type. These are called *hashpaos* that came down *biseder hishtalshalus*. There was an order, and *Chochmah elyonah* organizes the *seder*

hishtalshalus, that this should cause this and that that. You can figure it all out because the source of this *seder* is *Chochmah*.

But when the *hashpaa* goes from one world to the next things are different. There is a barrier from one world to the next, a *parsa*. *Hishtalshalus* does not allow a *hashpaa* to get to the next world. It gets to the next world *biderech dilug*, through a leap. *Ratzon haelyon*, Hashem's will, makes the miracle that a *hashpaa* can move from one *olam* to the next!¹⁰¹

Two Types Of Growth

An example. Say a young man learns on a certain level. This type of learning will lead to a higher level of learning. Learning leading to a higher spiritual level is natural, cause-based growth.

Sometimes we see a *shelo kiseder hishtalshalus*, non cause-effect order, change. It can happen that a person chooses good and thereby arouses his power of *bechira*, choice. Or he has a powerful experience and becomes a *Beriah chadasha shelo al pi seder hishtalshalus*: yesterday he was one person, today he has become a wholly new person! You could not have predicted that yesterday would have led to today! The *ratzon*, the innermost will in his *nefesh*, was aroused and caused a *shinuy*, change, *shelo al pi seder hishtalshalus*, not in a cause-effect order! You could not have seen his past leading to this step!

¹⁰¹ Rav Nachman of Breslov applied this lesson to Divine service. One might find himself progressing from one achievement to the next. Suddenly he finds himself without inspiration. He might get depressed thinking he has fallen from his gains. It is not so. He has reached the end of a spiritual world. It is time for a new spiritual world. Between each spiritual world there is a barrier. He has not fallen, he has reached an apex. The lack of inspiration proves he is standing at a barrier in front of a higher world. He must reach for his innermost will, leap above the barrier, and reinvigorate his Divine service as if he were standing in an entirely new universe!

The Way to the Tree of Life

You see this in the world as well. Sometimes there is a *shelo kiseder hishtalshalus*, and this comes from the *nekudas haratzon*, point of will. What is *shelo kiseder hishtalshalus* has nothing to do with an angel! An angel of *Yetzirahh* cannot bring something to *Asiyah*. A *parsa*, a barrier, separates one world from the next and this wall prevents the *hashpaa* from arriving in the next world! However, there is a window in each barrier.

Each world has a Beis Hamikdash, a Holy Temple, or an *even shesiya*, a foundation stone. Each world has a *nekuda emtzais*, a central point. Each world has an *etz hachaim*, a tree of life, of the Garden of Eden of the world. There is a center to each world and this place is the *pnimius*, inner point, of that world. Angels are *chitzonim*, while *nishmos yisrael* are *pnimius haolamos*. If you ask, where are the souls of *nishmos* Yisrael of each world? the answer is with the foundation stone of that world. This is also called the *shechinah*, Divine presence. *Hashraas hashechina* and Beis Hamikdash mean the *kelal* of all the *chius* of the world - the *kelal* of all *nishmos* Yisrael of that world - is in the Temple of that world.

There is a an exile of the Divine presence when the Temple is destroyed, but to get anything from a higher world to this world, to get from *Yetzirahh* to *Asiyah*, it must go from the Temple in *Yetzirahh* to the Temple of *Asiyah*, for the Temple is the center of the world and there is a window there. From one world to the next, there is a window in the *parsa* between the worlds. From the Temple you can get to *Ain Sof mamash* for there is no *chiluk bein haolamos*. Once you travel through the *makom hamikdash*, you can go through world and world until you arrive at infinity itself.

The Inner View Unites!

Go deeper, for the difference between one world and the next is a *chitzoni* difference. When you get to the *pnimius* to the *ratzon haelyon* there is no difference between one world and the next!!

For example, when I teach students, what am I doing? I am involved in *middas hachessed* for I am transmitting Torah to students. Then I go in the street, meet a poor person, and give a coin to him, and I am fulfilling *mitzvas tzedakah* and then too I am doing *chesed*. But one *chesed* was clothed in the outfit of teaching Torah and the other *chesed* was clothed in *mitzvas tzedakah*.

If someone is a *baal daas*, he will say, he teaches Torah for he is a *baal chesed* and since he is a *baal chesed* he gives gifts to the poor. But a fool will say, "He did two different things." In one instance he handed money to someone and in the other he spoke to people. Why is the second analyst a fool? For he is a *chitzoni*: he is only looking at the external act! The key is to be internal and to realize what is really going on here, which is that a *baal chesed* is someone who does favors for others regardless of the exact content of those favors.

So, too, the difference between a *gashmi* world and a more *ruchni* world is merely superficial. It is like the difference between giving to the poor and teaching. The *pnimius* of all *olamos* is the same *ratzon haelyon*! The *taryag mitzvos*, 613 commandments, are the *pnimius* of all worlds! *Oraysa kudsha brich hu* and *Yisrael echad hu*, Torah, the Holy One Blessed be He, and *nishmos Yisrael* are one!

What is Torah? *Ratzon haelyon*, Hashem's will! *Ratzon haelyon* makes no distinction between *olam haAsiyah* and *olam haAtzilus*. A person who takes a red cow and fulfills the

mitzvah of *para adumah* ¹⁰²here is the same thing as a *mitzvah* in *olam haAtzilus*! When we want to bring a *hashpaa* from a higher world to a lower world it comes through a channel called *ratzon haelyon*. We move the *hashpaa* from being more spiritual to more physical. This is *shelo kiseder hishtalshalus*, but *ratzon haelyon* says it makes no difference. The *chiluk*, distinction, between one world and the next is only *chitzoni*, but in *pnimius* it is the same.

The Key To Sacrifice

The Beis Hamikdash would arouse the inner light, it was *miorer ohr hapanim* , the *ratzon haelyon*. When Jews would come to the Temple their *ratzon* would be aroused and they would be *mosser nefesh* at the altar for they would reach *ratzon haelyon*.

What is the meaning of *messirus nefesh*, sacrifice? To go from one world to the next! The body has *zahamas hanachash*, he wants to live a *gashmi* life, and he does not want to climb high. He wants physical pleasures. *Messirus nefesh* means to leave the body behind so that the *neschama* can rise to a higher world. The dynamic of the *mizbeiach* represents souls ascending from below to above. In the place of the *aron*, the holy ark, the *hashpaos* come down from one world to the next.

The External Tries To Tear Down The Internal

¹⁰² The mitzva of the red cow was the ultimate law that transcends reason. Hashem has commanded the Jewish nation to take a completely red cow that is not blemished, has never been worked, and has never carried a burden, and to slaughter it outside the temple. The animal is then burnt into ashes. Those ashes when mixed with pure spring water can remove *tumas meis*, impurity due to contact with dead bodies. While the red cow can purify the worst impurity its details transcend logic as those who handle it and sprinkle its ash on the impure individual themselves become impure.

Angels are *chitzonim*, they cannot grasp how *gashmius* and *ruchnius* can be the same thing. This point is incomprehensible to a *malach*. There are *malachei shalom*, good angels, even though they do not understand they are *battel* to the person. When Moshe came to get the Torah other angels said, “*Mah leyelud isha beineinu*, Why is a child of mortal woman among us?”¹⁰³ They did not appreciate that a human being can connect to *ratzon haelyon* and that there can be a bond between *gashmius* and *ruchnius*. They say *mah enosh ki tizkerenu*, what is man that you should mention him? “We are awesomely holy, but man is a mere *enosh*,¹⁰⁴ a lowly forgotten creature, why consider him great?”

The greatness of man is that he has a *nekudah binafsho*, a point in his soul: *ratzon*. He can comprehend *ratzon Hashem*! He can appreciate the key point Hashem wants from him: Hashem’s will! He can be *mechavein shmaatisa aliva dihilchasa*, develop the lesson for the *halachic* answer.

The *Talmud* in Sota (21a) tells a parable. “If a man was lost in the forest he faces many dangers: bandits, thorns, and losing his way. A candle saves him from some dangers, a torch from more, daylight from even more, yet *higia liparashas derachim nitzal mikulam*, if he has arrived at the crossroad during the day, he is saved from all of them.” The *Talmud* then asks, what is the meaning of the crossroads saving man from all dangers? Multiple answers are suggested. One that it refers to man’s day of death, *yom hamissa*, and a second is that it refers to a *talmid chacham aliba dihilchisa*, a Torah scholar who develops the law to its correct conclusion.

¹⁰³ Talmud *Messeches Shabbes* page 88

¹⁰⁴ In his commentary to the Torah, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch expounds on the meaning of the term *enosh*. “*Enosh* signifies man in decline as opposed to *Adam*, the pure state of man...שנוא, then, denotes man who does not live up to the name אדם. *Adam* is a representative and deputy of God; he works in God's service, and thus leads the world to healthy development. *Enosh* by contrast, misuses his position and seizes power for himself. Through violent and coercive means, he brings mortal illness upon the world.”(*Bereishis* 4:26 pages 146-147)

Both answers are in fact the same thing, for *messirus nefesh*, sacrifice, is the *avoda* of *yom hamissa*. The service of leaving this world is the point of getting to the *ratzon pnimi*, of realizing the *ratzon* Hashem! Leaving the false and external definition of living! This is also *halacha*! *Halacha* is *milashon halichos olam*, to go from one world to the next! Through the *ratzon pnimi*, *halichos olam lo*, through *halachos* we go from one world to the next.

This is why Elijah the prophet taught that anyone who reviews Jewish laws each day merits *chayei olam haba* as it says *halichos olam lo*! Elijah the prophet taught how you can go from one world to the next with the body! (See the Ramban on *vichai bahem*, you will live through them - that Elijah is the highest level of *vichai bahem*.) Elijah was *mamshich* another type of life: a *chius* that changed the body into *neshama*!

The angels are *chitzonim*, as some said *mah enosh ki tizkerenu*! They see so much *chitzonius* that does not fit with the *olam haruchnius*! Man's job is to stay in this world and not be fooled by the *olam hachitzoni*! He must remain in the inner realm and be *mamshich hashraas hashechina*, draw the Divine presence, into this world and make sure that the *gashmius* has no impact at all! From this *nekuda pnimis* come all the good *hashpaos*!

Hashem took these angels who said *mah enosh ki tizkerenu* and had them fall into this world. When you go through the Beis Hamikdash you do not fall. There is a ladder like the one Yaakov saw. But Hashem made the *malachim* fall into this world, and the angels saw a *gashmi* world.

A *neshama* on the other hand sees a *ruchni* world here. As far as it is concerned, nothing has changed. King David declared, *Ger anochi baaretz al taster mimeni mitzvosecha*, I am a stranger to this world do not hide from me your *mitzvos* (*Tehillim 119:19*). "I came from the

realm of *ruchnius*, now that I am in a *chitzoni* realm, I feel at home only at the place of *ratzon* where we are one with the *ruchnius*! The place of fulfilling mitzvos!” In truth, the innermost *pnimius haratzon* is only in this world!

For example, someone who can understand a *dvar chochmah* well can explain it in a way that even lowly people can comprehend. (As Reb Chaim Soloveichik¹⁰⁵ said, “A *chisaron* in *hasbarra* is a *chisaron* in *havana*,” “Deficiencies in explanation are deficiencies in understanding.”) If you understand something as well as King Shlomo did, you can give many *meshalim*, parables, so that all can understand. So too the Torah that is in this world is from the *midda elyona* that can explain Torah. To take a *para aduma* and in it there will be *ratzon haelyon*! This is from a place that is not *mis’pael* from the *chitzonius*, so it can come to this world and still see *ratzon haelyon* here. *Malachim* need a higher level to grasp anything, while here we can understand the *ratzon* better.

Malachim are *mikatreig*, declaring fault, for they are *chitzonim* and they do not understand that man is a *pnimi*. We find that many *tzdaikim* might be involved in *devarim gashmiyim*, and *chitzoni* people will have *kashyos*, questions, about the *tzadik* and not understand what he is doing. They do not appreciate the great *maala* of the *tzadik* that he can do something *gashmi* and in it there will be a *nekuda* of *ratzon haelyon*.

The Unique Role Of Yosef Hatzadik

¹⁰⁵ Rav Chaim Soloveitchik was one of the greatest Torah thinkers and leaders of the last century. He was born in 1853 in the city of Volozhin where his father taught in the famous Yeshiva there. He eventually became the senior teacher in the Volozhin yeshiva. Later he served as the chief Rabbi of the city Brisk, then in Russia, now in Belarus. He revolutionized the study of Talmud and Jewish law with his method now known as the Brisker Derech, way of study. He was brilliant but also an exceptionally kind man. It was known that children whose parents could not raise them would end up in Reb Chaim’s home and he would raise them and take care of them. He passed away in 1918, and his son Rav Yitzchok Zev Soloveitchik succeeded him as Rabbi of Brisk.

Yosef Hatzadik relative to his brothers is like a man relative to angels.

Yosef Hatzadik's *midda* is *yesod*, also called *tzadik*.

The *ikkar nekuda* of a *tzadik* is to combine one world and the next. A *tzadik* is constantly seeking to fulfill the *ratzon haelyon*! He connects one world to the next! He does an *avoda gashmis* and combines an *olam hagashmi* with an *olam haruchni*! In *Divrey Hayamim*, (1 29:11) King David mentioned the seven lower *Sefiros* in the following way: “*Licha Hashem hagedula, vihagvura, vihatiferes, vihanetzach, vihahod, ki chol bashamyim ubaaretz, licha Hashem hamalacha,*” “To You Hashem is the greatness, the heroic strength, the beauty, the dominance, the empathy, and all that is in the Heavens and the earth, to You Hashem is the kingdom.”

The Targum, classical translation of scripture, renders the sixth phrase, which corresponds to *yesod*, as *achid bishmaya ubiaraa*, one in Heaven and Earth. Apparently a *tzadik* is one who connects the world above with the world below! He does an *avoda gashmis*, physical service while being *mechavein lishem shamayim*, intending for the sake of Heaven! He connects one world to the next. *Ameich kulam tzadikim*, all Jews are *tzadikim*! Inherently, each of us seeks to fulfill the *ratzon haelyon*.

Yaakov is the truth, and Yosef extends the truth. “*Eile toldos Yaakov - Yosef,*” “These are the descendants of Jacob - Joseph!” The *seforim* point out that in the first Mikdash the *yam shel shelomo omeid al yud beis bakkar*, mobile water basin resting on twelve oxen, represented the *malchus* of *Atzilus* resting on twelve angels from *beriya*. Twelve was for the twelve *gevuley alachson*, edges of physical things, and the twelve *degalm*, flags. *Gevul* is always twelve.

Yosef becomes the thirteenth. We find that Yosef is divided into Efraim and Menashe, he represents twelve rising to thirteen. He is *nezir echav*, the prince of his brothers. In one way he is

part of the *shevatim*, tribes, but from another *bechina*, aspect, he is with the *avos*. He was described as *misham roeh even yisrael*. Rashi says *even*, אבן teaches אב בן, *av ben*, father-son. He connects fathers with children! The *avos* are *olam haAtzilus*, the *shevatim* are *Beriah*! The *yam shel shelomo* is the *malchus* of *Atzilus*, the level of patriarchs that brings *hashpaa* into *Beriah*.

How can you combine *avos* with *shevatim*, when one are *avos* and the other are *shevatim*? The answer is that it is the same *ratzon haelyon*!

For the *avos hen hamercava*, patriarchs who were the chariot for the Divine, matters were achieved in a more spiritual way. While Yosef was *roeh es achav batzon*, he pastured sheep with his brothers, he was connected to the lower level, he was with the children of Bilha and Zilpa. But even so, in this *avoda gashmis* there was a *haara* of the *avos*! “*Viyisrael ahav es yosef mikol banav*,” “Israel loved Joseph more than all the brothers!” He was the *nezir echav* for he was connected to an inner *madreiga*!

The angels are *mekatreig* on man who is a *pnimi*. The *kitrug*, finding fault, is not only when man was created - there are always *kitrugim* against man! That is why it is so *chamur*, severe, not to speak *lashon hara*, negative speech. Negative remarks about others awaken these *kitrugim*! The *kitrugim* are only *bichitzonius*.

We see when a person passes away everyone stops speaking *lashon hara* about the person. Why is this? Why at a *levaya*, funeral, do people not say this man was a *shoteh*, fool, or a *battlan*, lazy one? For when he was alive there were *kitrugim* against him in heaven and they would arouse *lashon hara*, but once he is not alive there are no longer critiques above and no angels arousing one to speak negatively about him.

The *kitrug* is from jealousy. Each mitzvah causes *yichud kudsha brich hu* and *shechintei*, union of transcendent holiness with imminent holiness! The *melachim* do not know how this happens and they are jealous of it all, hence they are *mekatreig* on the person. The negative speech of the brothers about Yosef was this dynamic in a slight measure. Yosef's siblings, the *shivtei kah*, were a *mercava* to *malachim*, they were *chitzonius* relative to Yosef Hatzadik. “*Vlo yachlu dabro lishalom*,” “They could not speak peacefully to him”

Shalom means to unite the higher worlds with the lower. They could not appreciate or understand how Yosef was accomplishing the union of above and below! To overcome this *kitrug* we had to go down to Egypt and be enslaved until we came to *mattan* Torah, and even there too there was a *kitrug* of *tnah hodcha bashamayim*, place Your glory in the heavens¹⁰⁶! But through the *avoda* of *mattan* Torah we overcame this.

The Special Power Of The Mitzvah Of Parah

This Shabbes, *parshas* Parah, is *messugal* for this *avoda*! The *para aduma* has no *taam*, logical explanation. It is the *ratzon*! It reaches and channels the innermost will!

This Shabbes can light up the *nekudas ratzon* of the person, which creates *yesh meiyayin*, something from nothing! This is why it is *metaher*, purifies, from *missa*, death! It is a *nekuda* of *techiyas hameisim*, to create new life! Even after death there is a *nekuda* that survives, the *etzem luz*. This corresponds to the *nekudas ratzon* and from this point new life can emerge!

¹⁰⁶ See Talmud *Shabbes 88a*

This is the last Shabbes of the year for *chodshey hashana*, months of the year, for Rosh Chodesh Nissan will begin a new year. We arrive at the *ratzon* and then next week we are *mis'chadesh* with *parshas hachodesh*! A whole new life!

There are 122 *pesukim*, verses, in *parshas Vayakhel* and there are 122 *pesukim* in *parshas Ki Savo*. *Ki Savo* is the last Shabbes of the year in the order of Rosh Hashana. We read the *tochacha*, verses of rebuke, then for *tichle shana vikioloseha*, let a year and her curses end.

אין *ayin* and אני *ani*, nothing and me, have the same letters for we need to be *battel*, annulled as an אין, and then we merit a *his'chadshus*, a new existence of אני. *Ayin* plus *ani* equals 122. The Ari explains this is the meaning of the *mishnah*, *im ain ani li mi li*, אם אין אני לי מי לי, If I am not for myself who will be for me.

We need to be both *ayin* and *ani*! From *bittul* to *ani*! This Shabbes we get to the *ratzon*, to the *bli taam*, to the level of *shelo kiseder hishtalshalus*, to become a new creation! From *ratzon* comes an *ani* that is made new on Rosh Chodesh Nissan!

The purpose of creation was so that the Almighty would have an abode on earth. Lesson twelve will reveal the great import of fulfilling mitzvos. Each good deed is really a vessel that gets filled with unending light.

Lesson Twelve: How Learning Torah And Performing Mitzvos Add Holiness To The World

Middle Of Chapter Four

והנה שלשה לבושים אלו מהתורה ומצותיה אף שנקראים לבושים לנפש רוח ונשמה עם כל זה גבהה וגדלה מעלתם לאין קץ וסוף על מעלת נפש רוח ונשמה עצמן כמ"ש בזהר דאורייתא וקב"ה כולא חד פי' דאורייתא היא חכמתו ורצונו של הקב"ה והקב"ה בכבודו ובעצמו כולא חד כי הוא היודע והוא המדע וכו' כמ"ש לעיל בשם הרמב"ם

Although these three “garments,” deriving from the Torah and its commandments, are called “garments” of the nefesh, ruach and neshamah, their quality nevertheless is infinitely higher and

greater than that of the nefesh, ruach and neshamah themselves, as explained in the Zohar, because the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one. The meaning of this is that the Torah, which is the wisdom and will of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His glorious Essence are one, since He is both the Knower and the Knowledge, and so on, as explained above in the name of Maimonides.

The Tanya teaches that even though Torah and mitzvos are called garments for the *nefesh ruach* and *neshama*, and they express these parts of the soul, nevertheless they are really much higher than the parts of the soul, for Hashem is one with His wisdom, with His Torah. Unlike man who knows things that are separate from his essence, Hashem is one with His wisdom, the Torah and its mitzvos.

ואף דהקב"ה נקרא אין סוף ולגדולתו אין חקר ולית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל וכן ברצונו והכמתו כדכתיב אין חקר לתבונתו וכת' החקר אלוה תמצא וכת' כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם הנה על זה אמרו במקום שאתה מוצא גדולתו של הקב"ה שם אתה מוצא ענותנותו וצמצם הקב"ה רצונו והכמתו בתרי"ג מצות התורה ובהלכותיהן ובצרופי אותיות תנ"ך ודרשותיהן שבאגדות ומדרשי חכמינו ז"ל בכדי שכל הנשמה או רוח ונפש שבגוף האדם תוכל להשיג בדעתה ולקיימן כל מה שאפשר לקיים מהן במעשה דבור ומחשבה וע"י זה תתלבש בכל עשר בחינותיה בשלשה לבושים אלו

And although the Holy One, blessed be He, is called Ain Sof ("Infinite") and "His greatness can never be fathomed," and "No thought can apprehend Him at all," and so are also His will and His wisdom, as it is written, "There is no searching for His understanding," and "Canst thou by searching find G-d?" and again, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts." Nevertheless, it is in this connection that it has been said, "Where you find the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He, there you also find His humility." For the Holy One, blessed be He, has compressed His will and wisdom within the 613 commandments of the Torah, and in their laws, as well as within the combination of the letters of the Torah, the books of the Prophets and the holy writings, and in the exposition thereof which are to be found in the Agados¹⁰⁷ and Midrashim of our Rabbis of blessed memory. All this in order that each neshamah, ruach and nefesh in the human body should be able to comprehend them through its faculty of understanding, and to fulfill them, as far as they can be fulfilled, in act, speech, and thought, thereby clothing itself with all its ten faculties in these three garments.

The Tanya is saying that when a person is involved in Torah and mitzvos a person is getting clothed with G-dliness. For He is one with His wisdom. For even though the root of His wisdom and will cannot be grasped, nevertheless **they descend** into a garment, like a *mashal*, parable,

¹⁰⁷ *Agados* is the term for the non legal sections of the Talmud, discussions of philosophy, homiletics, and ethics.

with a *nimshal*, lesson. The *nimshal* goes to the *mashal*, a low level, that can be grasped, and thereby we grasp the lesson.

The truth is that in the *mashal* which is Torah you have G-dliness, so the fact that you can grasp the parable is in itself a grasping of G-dliness. This is what the Tanya now explains.

ולכן נמשלה התורה למים מה מים יורדים ממקום גבוה למקום נמוך כך התורה ירדה ממקום כבודה שהיא רצונו וחכמתו יתברך ואורייתא וקודשא בריך הוא כולא חד ולית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל. ומשם נסעה וירדה בסתר המדרגות ממדרגה למדרגה בהשתלשלות העולמות עד שנתלבשה בדברים גשמיים וענייני עולם הזה שהן רוב מצות התורה ככולם והלכותיהן ובצרופי אותיות גשמיות בדיו על הספר עשרים וארבעה ספרים שבתורה נביאים וכתובים כדי שתהא כל מחשבה תפיסא בהן ואפי' בחי' דבור ומעשה שלמטה ממדרגת מחשבה תפיסא בהן ומתלבשת בהן ומאחר שהתורה ומצותיה מלבישים כל עשר בחי' הנפש וכל תרי"ג אבריה מראשה ועד רגלה הרי כולה צרורה בצרור החיים את ה' ממש ואור ה' ממש מקיפה ומלבישה מראשה ועד רגלה כמ"ש צורי אחסה בו וכתוב כצנה רצון תעטרנו שהוא רצונו וחכמתו יתברך המלובשים בתורתו ומצותיה

This is why the Torah has been compared to water, for just as water descends from a higher to a lower level, so has the Torah descended from its place of glory, which is His blessed will and wisdom; [for] the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one and the same and no thought can apprehend Him at all. Thence [the Torah] has progressively descended through hidden stages, stage after stage, with the descent of the worlds, until it clothed itself in corporeal substances and in things of this world, comprising almost all of the commandments of the Torah, their laws, and in the combinations of material letters, written with ink in a book, namely, the 24 volumes of the Torah, Prophets and Writings; all this in order that every thought should be able to apprehend them, and even the faculties of speech and action, which are on a lower level than thought, should be able to apprehend them and be clothed in them.

Thus, since the Torah and its commandments “clothe” all ten faculties of the soul with all its 613 organs from head to foot, it [the soul] is altogether truly bound up in the Bundle of Life with G-d, and the very light of G-d envelops and clothes it from head to foot, as it is written, “G-d is my Rock, I will take refuge in Him.”

And it is also written, “With favor (ratzon - will) wilt Thou adorn him as with a shield,” that is to say, with His blessed will and wisdom which are clothed in His Torah and its commandments.

When a person is involved in Torah and mitzvos it is as if he is now enveloped with the light of Hashem Himself. The Tanya now adds that that is why the rule is, "*yafeh shah achas*," "better a moment" "*biteshuva umaasim tovim*" "performing repentance and good deeds," "*mikol chayei olam haba*" "than all the life of *olam haba*, the world to come." *Olam haba* is a mere glow from the light of Hashem, while through Torah and mitzvos one is truly enveloped in Hashem and His honor. When a person learns Torah he is hugging Hashem.

ולכן אמרו יפה שעה אחת בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה מכל חיי עולם הבא כי עולם הבא הוא שנהנין מזי השכינה שהוא תענוג ההשגה ואי אפשר לשום נברא אפילו מהעליונים להשיג כי אם איזו הארה מאור ה' ולכן נקרא בשם זיו השכינה אבל הקב"ה בכבודו ובעצמו לית מחשבה תפיסא ביה כלל כי אם כאשר תפיסא ומתלבשת בתורה ומצותיה אזי היא תפיסא בהן בכ"י ליתא תיבת בהן. ומתלבשת בהקב"ה ממש דאורייתא וקב"ה כולא חד. ואף שהתורה נתלבשה בדברים תחתונים גשמיים הרי זה כמחבק את המלך ד"מ שאין הפרש במעלת התקרבותו ודביקותו במלך בין מחבקו כשהוא לבוש לבדו אחד בין שהוא לבוש כמה לבושים מאחר שגוף המלך בתוכם. וכן אם המלך מחבקו בזרועו גם: שהיא מלובשת תוך מלבושיו כמ"ש וימינו תחבקני שהיא התורה שנתנה מימין שהיא בחי' חסד ומים:

Hence it has been said, "Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come." For the world to come is that state where one enjoys the glow of the Divine Presence, which is the pleasure of comprehension, yet no created being— even celestial— can comprehend more than some reflection of the Divine Light. That is why the reference is to "Glow of the Divine Presence" (Ziv ha-Shechinah). But as for the essence of the Holy One, blessed be He, no thought can apprehend Him at all, except when it apprehends, and is clothed in, the Torah and its mitzvos. Only then does it truly apprehend, and is clothed in, the Holy One, blessed be He, inasmuch as the Torah and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one and the same. For although the Torah has been clothed in lower material things, it is by way of illustration, like embracing the king. There is no difference, in regard to the degree of closeness and attachment to the king, whether while embracing the king the latter is then wearing one robe or several robes, so long as the royal person is in them. Likewise, when the king, for his part, embraces one with his arm, even though it is dressed in his robes, as it is written, "And His right hand embraces me," which refers to the Torah which was given by G-d's right hand, which is the quality of chesed and water.

In summary the Tanya seems to say that Torah and mitzvos are G-dliness in clothing. Hashem enters *keilim*, vessels, this is Torah and mitzvos. Hashem is an *ohr Ain Sof*, infinite light, there

are no words about Hashem. (We know what He is not, but there are no words to describe what Hashem is.) Yet Hashem has put Himself into vessels, Torah and mitzvos, and through these vessels we can grasp His essence for “*Hu vichachmaso echad*,” “He and His wisdom are one.”

In other words, G-dliness is revealed through the ten *Sefiros*, **which are** the *klal*, the encompassing principles, of the entire Torah. There is nothing in the world other than displays of the ten *Sefiros*! The whole world is the ten *Sefiros*; nothing else. There are different manifestations of these roots, and different combinations of these roots, but the world is just these basic elements.

A parable to this is music. In music there are only seven notes. There are innumerable tunes produced from these notes. For there are many different forms of the notes and different combinations of notes and how you combine these notes creates all the music in the world. So too there are only ten *Sefiros* and yet how you combine them and which details you reveal from the *Sefiros* set up the **entire** world. Just as out of 22 letters we have all the words in the world, so it is with the ten *Sefiros* and the ten *middos*. The 613 mitzvos of the Torah are the ten *Sefiros* in a very perfect way, in the purest way.

Fulfilling the Torah in its truest way, by the way, **does not mean that we fulfill** Torah in the absolute purest way, **for** only Hashem performs Torah in the most perfect way. **For example,** **as** we know, Hashem puts on tefillin. **He** gave us a way to fulfill mitzvos the way we can and when we do so, as best **as** humanly possible, it causes Hashem to fulfill mitzvos His way. Hashem has **made His fulfillment of mitzvos dependent on our fulfillment of mitzvos.**

When Hashem fulfils a mitzvah it means that He is drawing *ohr Ain Sof* into a *keli*. The ten *Sefiros* are the ten *keilim* to reveal the *ohr Ain Sof*! The ten *Sefiros* are the *klal* of all the 613 mitzvos.

There are many, many details of halachos, and collectively they make up the *komah shleima*, complete structure, of man. This is the *adam al hakisei*, Adam on a throne, that Yechezkel saw. An Adam is ten *Sefiros* together. Yechezkel saw this *klal* of all ten *Sefiros*. Our man below arouses this revelation of man above! Adam *limata* is *miorrer* the Adam *lieila*. When man does a mitzvah as much as a *neshama* can he causes Hashem to draw a light of the infinite, a great overflow of life, into vessels, into the ten *Sefiros*! Once the light has entered the ten *Sefiros* above that causes the infinite light to enter into the *Sefiros* down below as well.

This is the purpose of the creation to bring the infinite light down to earth, “*Nisaveh hakadosh boruch hu laasos lo dira batachtonim*” “G-d desired to have a residence in the lowly realms!” (Midrash Tanchuma Naso siman 16) Hashem made a world so that infinite light would appear down below. When we fill our person, our ten sefiros, with holiness, He fills His *Sefiros* with infinite light and this causes the universe which as a whole is displays of the ten *Sefiros* to be filled with His infinite light.

The *pasuk* says “*Es Hashem heemarta hayom lihiyos lachem leElokim vilaleches bidrachav vilishmor chukav umitzvosav umishpatav vilishmoa bikolo. ViHashem haamircha hayom lihyos lo l'am segula kaasher dibeir lach vilishmor kol mitzvosav etc.*” (Devarim 26:16-17) “You have distinguished Hashem on this day, to be your ruler, to emulate his ways, keep his laws, commands, and ordinances and to listen to His voice. And Hashem has made you unique on this day, to make you a treasured nation unto Him, as He has spoken to you, and to

keep all His mitzvos.” Simply understood, the last clause is difficult. First, the verse spoke of the obligations we have to Hashem. Then what Hashem has done for us, why mention to "keep all His mitzvos" in the section speaking about what He does? Shouldn't "keep His mitzvos" belong in the first part of the verse? In light of our lesson though we can understand the verse. Apparently *lishmor kol mitzvosav* applies to Hashem, for He too fulfills mitzvos! Part of what He does for us is that He fulfills His mitzvos. How does He fulfill mitzvos? He draws a *shefa*, overflowing abundance of life, from above into His *Sefiros*! This *shefa* moves from above to below and it descends all the way down to our world, to the realm where we can feel His presence.

The Talmud asks, “*Tefillin dimara alma mah ksiiv beih?*” “What is written in the *tefillin* of the Almighty?” “*Mi kiamcha yisrael goy echad baaretz?*” “Who is like your nation Israel a singular people on earth?” (*Divrey Hayamim 1:17*) Apparently the *tefillin* of Hashem go all the way down, all the way to us, to the level of who is like Your nation Israel, a singular people on earth!

Hashem’s mitzvos, His *Sefiros*, are total perfection.

The sections of the creation and the components of the soul

According to the Ari, there are different *machtzavim*, different arenas. There are *Sefiros* - all G-dliness; then *neshamos*, souls, inner realms or *pnimiyus* (we explained this term last week); then there are *olamos*, worlds, the realm of angels who relate to *chitzonius*; and finally *choshech*, the realm of darkness and evil. This is very similar to the definitions of the four universes, for there is one basic pattern and it appears in both universes and *machtzavim*. In each universe there

is a similar classification. The relationship between *neshamos* and *olamos* is like *beriyah* to *Yetzirahhh*. It is the same thing, just in a different *bechinah*.

Nefesh ruach neshama chaya yechida, parallel the worlds with the *kutzo shel yud*, for this too is like this to that. The arena of *Sefiros* is like *Atzilus*, it is totally *elokus*. The arena of *neshamos* is like *beriyah*. (There is a little bit of evil in *beriyah*, it is not a mixture of evil but there is a little of *rah*, and this is like *neshamos*. A *neshama* can do evil even though evil stands outside it. It is almost all *tov*.) Then there is the arena of *olamos*, a parallel to *Yetzirahh*. The realm of darkness parallels *olam haAsiyah*, a physical realm which is *rubo rah*, mostly evil.

When a soul does a mitzvah he brings holiness to the arena of *neshamos*. This is what a *neshama* achieves through doing a mitzvah. A man has a body in addition to having a soul. Thus when man fulfills a mitzvah he is also bringing divine light to the arena of darkness. The body has *chitzoniut* and *choshech*. When man does a good deed he is drawing holiness to the places where G-dliness was hidden and he is transforming the darkness into light. When man does a mitzvah he transforms the *choshech* into *ohr*. This is the purpose of the creation: to increase *Elokis* in the place where He was hidden. Prior to man, Hashem was revealed in the realm of *Sefiros*; but through a man doing a mitzvah he brings *Elokis* to the realm of *neshamos* and to the realm of *olamos* and even to the realm of *choshech*!

How does this happen? Through doing a mitzvah he adds to the world more *levushim* in which Hashem is clothed in. “*Hu uritzono echad*” “He and His will are one.” The *levushim* with which G-d clothes Himself are brought to the arena of souls and even to the realm of darkness through this Godly act of giving *tzedakah*, or any other good deed! Hashem is *shoreh* in his act of *tzedakah*!

When there are more *keilim* there is more *ohr*, for when he makes more *keilim* he causes them to also be filled with *Elokis*. Hashem also fulfills His mitzvos based on human deeds. You did a new mitzvah, so a new light from Hashem enters the *Sefiros* realm and this added light overflows into the realm of souls etc. and hence there is now a greater revelation of Godliness in the world.

This is really very basic: when you do Torah and mitzvos you are doing G-dly things. You are doing here the same things that Hashem does in His realm. And this is especially meaningful in this low realm, where there is so much **that is** not G-dly. To become Godly here is very meaningful. If you act in a G-dly way you cause an increase of G-dliness in the world.

Man must constantly make these G-dly vessels, Torah and Mitzvos, to bring Hashem into this world.

To Bring Godly Light To The World Is The Uniquely Jewish Mission

There were once great souls here on the earth. They populated the world during the *shney alafim tohu*: **the two thousand years of emptiness¹⁰⁸ that preceded *mattan* Torah.** Just as there was a realm of *tohu* before the creation and then a realm of *tikkun* **after it**, this same pattern repeated itself after the world was created. There was *tohu* and then *tikkun*, the years of Torah. We need to remember that “*Mah shehaya hu sheyihyeh ... vain kol chadash tachas Hashemesh*” “What was is what will be ... and there is nothing new under the sun.¹⁰⁹” Everything that occurs later was already establishaid in the first roots of the creation of the world.

¹⁰⁸ The Talmud in *messeches Rosh Hashana* teaches that the plan of the world was that the first two thousand years were to be a time of *tohu*, confusion. The next two thousand years were to be years of Torah. The final two thousand years were to be the days of *mashiach*.

¹⁰⁹ *Koheles* 1:9

Wise people can see the matters of this world and show how they were set in place in the secrets of the processes that existed before the appearance of this world. Those roots set the tone for all that would follow later. Those were the *shorashim*, **roots**, for what happened later. One might ask, “Isn’t there choice? How can the past determine the future?” There is choice, but the roots that would set the terms of the choice have happened already.

While we have choice, our choice is somewhat limited. We do not have the ability to choose like earlier generations did. For example, after the flood *bechira* of man was limited. Man can no longer be so evil **as** to destroy the world. The men of the flood **however** could destroy the world! **But now** man’s choices can no longer bring about a destruction of the world, **for** Hashem swore after the **flood** that **He would not create** another flood!

How could He swear this way **when** man **could** be **as** sinful **as he was before the flood**? Apparently the *kochos hanefesh*, abilities of the soul, cannot do as much as they could before the *mabul*. A great soul can cause great damage. Avraham *avinu* said *bameh eidah ki eerashena*, “How can I know I will inherit the land?” (*Bereishis 15:8*) and out of this came *galus mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exile. **Indeed**, every movement of the *avos* was powerful. Look at Yosef, who tried just to move his father’s hands onto Menashe and Efraim, **about which** the Midrash says, “these hands defeated an angel, they defeated a third of the world, how dare you move them!”

Now the Midrash was talking about Yosef the *tzadik*, who was a *memutza*, intermediary, between the *avos* and the *shevatim*. Yosef was not so far from the level of the *avos*. He had a status of *bechor*, first born son, **who** gets double for he is a bit of the father. Even so **Yosef** was in the *shevatim*, **not one of the avos, and so** had no right to move the hand of Yaakov, who was one of the *avos*. “*Yad sheheizia shlish haolam!*” “**These are powerful hands!**”

When Yitzchok gave a *bracha* it affected all generations. When Yaakov got the *brachos* he knew he was getting something that would impact millennia. Even Esav recognized the power of his father and as a result screamed and cried for missing out on blessings. These cries caused all the powers of Esav through exile. The descendants of Esav became the Romans, the crusaders, and inquisitors, why did Esav had so much strength? Only because of the blessing that *Yitzchok* gave him! Again and again we see that the earlier generations were very great. As a result they had great *bechira* and their *bechirah* could have great impact.

For another example, take the era of the first Temple. It was a time of great choice: there was a *yetzer* for *avoda zara*, a yearning for idol worship, and since the evil was so great it was possible to become a navi, prophet. People could reach great levels.

We, though, are small people. We have choice. All worlds need our good choices, for the creation needs help from great people and from small people. Nevertheless, our *bechira* today is only a model from what was earlier. We can do differently, we have *bechira*, but until we do so we are only going to continue the pattern based on what was done already. Our reality is based on what was achieved in earlier generations.

During the two thousand years of *tohu* each soul could have worked on itself and become Avraham *avinu*. Each soul could have worked on itself and become the root of Klal Yisrael, the source for the chosen nation.

Those were powerful souls, they were *avos* souls, but in those days there was a great mixture of good and evil. Every great soul was mixed in with a lot of *rah*. Even Avraham *avinu* as a child worshiped idols and was in a pagan society. The Ari says he was *ben niddah*, Avraham was born with a *tumas niddah*, impurity of *niddah*. He had a great mixture of *tov* and *rah*, yet

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Avraham worked on himself. He passed the ten tests, separated the *rah* from himself, so that he could become the root of Kal Yisrael.

Noach also worked on himself, separated the *tov* and *rah*, and helped establish the world so that it should not be destroyed again. He was a *tzadik tamim bidoraosav*, a completely righteous man in his generations, a *tzadik yesod olam*, righteous foundation of the world, and he was able to reestablish the world in a way that it would never be destroyed again. **Because of Noach**, the world no longer has the option of destroying itself.

There is a bit of Noach in each non-Jew. That is why they are all called *bney* Noach: they are all related to him and all have a piece from him. Hashem was not *meyached* His name on Noach, He did not unite with Noah, we do not say *elokai* Noach, for Noach did not reach such a level. Had he reached such a level, each goy would be able to *daven* and say *elokai* Noach, for the piece of Noach in him would enable him to connect to such a holiness. Each goy is a *ben* Noach, his root was Noach, for Noach was a formative person, someone who was establishing the foundations. As a result no man can destroy **them** and that is why no current human sin can set off another destructive worldwide flood.

This is not so simple. It sounds from this **idea** that non-Jews in their actions cause a *yichud elyon* and they bring a *shefa* which helps maintain the world, **but** this is not true. Goyim **do not bring** life to the world, **only the Jewish people do**. (Later we will explain why it is not true and how it all came about.)

After the flood man's years become less, people lived less, for the people became lesser individuals. Great people have long lives for there is much that they can and should repair. Smaller people are given less time, for **there** is less they can fix and achieve.

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After the flood, Noach built a *mizbeach*, an alter. There is a *nekudah*, point, in the soul of bringing a *reiach nichiach*, sweet smell, to Hashem. There is a *nekuda* in the *nefesh*, of sacrifice, *messirus nefesh*, to Hashem. Man has a *yetzer hara*, the body is sinful, but that is not who he truly is: he has a *nekudah* that is good. Man is **essentially good**, he merely has a *yetzer* which is *rah minurav*, bad from youth.

After Noach we had Avraham, **and** Avraham *natal sechar kulam*, he took the reward all the other individuals could have earned for he worked on himself to be the source of the chosen nation. Had everyone in those days fixed themselves then all humans would have been part of Klal Yisrael. The whole world would have been one nation. Had Adam never sinned we would all be children of Adam and we would all be part of Klal Yisrael.

Essentially, there should be no difference between goyim and **Jews**. There is a mixture of good and evil, and from the good the evil draws nourishment. Yet if there would be a clarification, if the good would be taken out of the *rah*, then the *rah* would fall apart and die. That should have been the mission of all mankind.

The non-Jewish world is a mixture with a lot of bad. Its good really belongs to Klal Yisrael. It does not really belong to the goy and it must ultimately return to Klal Yisrael, and once it returns to its lawful place their life of sinfulness will collapse.

Had the generations before the flood worked on themselves their good would have stayed with them and they would have a portion in working to fix the world. But they did not work on themselves, only Avraham did!

Jews And Others

Avraham *avinu* came during the time of *dor haflaga*, a gathering of all the nations **that came to rebel** against the plan of creation. They fought against Hashem. They did not want the plan Hashem had set out for the created world.

At that point Avraham took all the good that the goyim should have been doing. All that goyim should have been doing **is** now done by Klal Yisrael. *Raah vayater* goyim, the Almighty took away the obligations of the nations to perform the seven *mitzvos bney* Noach. Even if a goy does them they now only get the *sechar*, reward, of an *aino metzuveh vioseh*, one who is not obligated yet fulfills. In other words, the part of Noach that they had, the seven mitzvos, *amad vihitiran*, has been taken from them and given to the Jewish people. This happened at the time of *haflagga* for *haflagga* means separation.

Hashem has separated the nations from the *tikkun habriah*, fixing the creation. They are under the seventy angelic ministers and have nothing to do with the kingdom of Heaven. *Malchus shamayim* is the *shechinah*. This is the *tikkun habriah*, the fixing of the creation, the task of Klal Yisrael.

In truth, **had** the nations not sinned and **been** part of Klal Yisrael we still would not all be the same. Even within the Jews there are differences: Kohanim, Leviyim, and Yisraelim, **priests, Levites, and ordinary Jews**. Even within the nation of Israel there are levels of *avoda*, service. Had the nations not sinned the Jews would have been the Kohanim of the world. Even without a *dor haflagga* the children of Avraham would be special.

Avraham was a Kohen, as it says “*Ata Kohen laolam*” “And you are a Kohen to the world.” (*Tehillim 110:4*) The holiness of *kehunah* really belongs with all of Klal Yisrael. But because the Jews have taken the *avoda* of the nations there are Jews who do the *avoda* the non-

Jews should **do** and only a small group are Kohanim doing that which originally was intended to be the task of Klal Yisrael.

Yichudim And Kohanim

The *avoda* of the Kohanim is the subject of Torah secrets!

It is a service of *yichudim*, **unifications**.

It is a level that is like Adam *harishon* before the sin. When you have a level of *paska zuhamasan*, loss of the serpent's filth, like at *mattan* Torah or Adam in *gan eden* before the sin, the *avoda* is all holy names. It is an *avoda* of *yichudim*, an *avoda* without any *zhamas hanachash*, serpent's filth.

Sheimos hakdoshim, holy names of Hashem, are great lights. **They are** *dveykus*, a very high *avoda*. Adam was sent away from *gan eden*, **which** meant he was sent away from the *etz chaim*, **the Tree of Life**. Reb Chaim Vital called his book *Eitz Chaim*, for it is a *haara*, illumination, of the *etz chaim* that in in the center of Eden. Adam was sent away from the *avoda* of *yichudim*.

When the **Kohen** in the *Mikdash*, temple, did the *avodas hakodesh*, Divine service, he would be *meyacheid yichudim elyonim*. *Kodesh* means *yichudim* of *sheimos*. These *yichudim* bring great *oros*.

This is why Kohanim are exempt from working the land and live off *terumos*, *gifts*, and *maasaros*, *tithes*. They do not have the curse Adam was given when he was exiled from Eden, *bizeias apecha tochal levhem*, By the sweat of your brow you should eat bread, (*Bereishis 3:19*) which was the result of the sin of the tree. They are more removed from the *chet etz hadaas*, sin

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of the tree of knowledge, **than other Jews** so they are supported through *terumos* and *maasros*. This is why they also are not to come into contact with *tumas meis*, **the dead**, for they are removed from *missa*, death, which was also a result of eating from the tree of knowledge.

This is what should have been the *avoda* of all **the Jewish people**. In the future it will **be**, **which** is why Rashbi - the person of the secrets of Torah - argues that a person should not do work in the material realm and **says** rather all of you are Kohanim and this is how it will be in the future when Mashiach will come. We will not have the *zahamas hanachash* and as a result we will be supported without the *avoda gashmis*, physical toil. The world is not ready for *soddos haTorah* **this is why the Talmud teaches** *harbe asu kirashbi vlo alsa biyadam* Many tried to follow this approach of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and did not succeed. (*Berachos 35b*) Leviyim are a *memutza*, intermediary, between the levels of Yisrael and Kohen: through singing **they achieve** a bit of the realm of the next world and a bit of *avoda gashmis*!

Now we can understand the *lashon hapasuk*, terminology of the verse: “*Viatem tihyu li mamleches kohanim vi goy kadosh.*” And you will be for Me a Kingdom of priest and a holy nation. First Hashem told us that we are the “*Segula mikol haamim*” “**The treasure of all peoples.**” We have all the good from all the nations and the *pasuk* explains itself *ki li kol haaretz*, for the whole world is Mine. All should have been loyal to Hashem, everyone should have been a Jew, yet they did not want this privilege and therefore Hashem sent them away to the seventy ministers and they are no longer connected to the real plan of the world, to the *malchus shamayim*, **the Kingdom of Heaven**. *Raah voyater goyim*. You are a *segula* because you took the level of the goyim. What is your essential level? “*Viatem tihyu mamleches kohanim vigoy*

kadosh.” You have the *avodah* of Kohanim, to be a people who are *kadosh*, who are engaged in *avodas hayichudim!*

The Special Kedusha Of Pesach

This week is *parshas* Hachodesh when we read about the month of Nissan and the mitzvos of Pesach. In the Haggada it says, “*Yachol meirosh chodesh* etc.” Perhaps we should start telling the story of the exodus at the beginning of the month? The Rama Mipanu ¹¹⁰ teaches that each *hava amina*, initial thought has a **place**. There is a **place** where already on **Rosh Chodesh** there is a *haara* of Pesach. The Torah states “*Hachodesh haze lachem rosh chadashim.*” “This (first of the) month, is the head of the months for you,” (*Shmos 12:2*) even though it is the first day of the month the Torah calls it *hachodesh*, the whole month. We find this also in the Mishna in Rosh Hashana: that Rosh Chodesh Nissan is Rosh Hashana *lirigalim*, the beginning of a year in regards to festivals. One can ask, the festival of Pesach starts on the fifteenth of Nissan, how is the first of Nissan then the beginning of a cycle of festivals? Apparently the light of Pesach appears already during Rosh Chodesh Nissan. So this Shabbes we have the light of Pesach.

Man is *meshubad*, obligated, to many bonds. Man is enslaved to his habits and his behaviors, he follows a certain approach, this is the way he *davens*, this is the materialism he is used to. Man who is by nature lazy cannot pull himself from **laziness**. **We each** feel enslaved to our norms. When Hashem pulled us out of Egypt there were great lights which come out of order. Now these great lights are appearing again in great measure. The whole nature of the miracle from Egypt was *chipazon*, great speed. *Gadlus* came before *katnus*, elevated

¹¹⁰ Rabbi Menachem Azarya of Panu (1548-1620) was known as the Rama Mipanu. He was a prominent Rabbi, a great authority of Jewish law, and an expert of Kabbalah. He was considered the greatest Kabbalist in Italian Jewry.

consciousness preceded small consciousness, even though usually the limited intellects precede the elevated. *Chamets* is the *achizah*, point of attachment, of Egypt. When we left, "*Lo hispik bitzeikam lihachmitz ad shenigla aleihem melech malchei hamlachim vigoalam.*" "Their dough did not have the time to rise before the King of all kings appeared before them." (*Haggadah shel Pesach*) When Egypt wanted to latch onto Klal Yisrael Hashem revealed a great and awesome light. With this sudden great light the Jewish nation left Egypt and the Egyptians had no hand on us. There was a great light that was revealed, and this light was an awesome holiness that the materialism just could not latch on to, and the Jewish souls went free! We went out with a rush, in a sudden burst. (Had we gone slowly the *tumah* of Egypt would have caught us.)

There was a way of *tzadikim* to *daven* quickly. They explained that they did so that the *shekatzim*, the rodents, the *machshavos zaros*, foreign thoughts, would not reach them. They would have a great light and quickly another great light and this is why they would *daven* quickly. Each of us is like such a righteous *tzadik* on the night of Pesach. There are bombs of *oros* that appear. Charoses and Matzah and **four cups**. These are all very great matters. The *haseiba*, reclining, and **Jewish customs** are great lights that come *bichipazon*: they grab the soul and the man leaves Egypt.

Leaving Egypt is a very high matter. The high roots of man's soul go out of Egypt on the night of Pesach. Man might not be aware of it and **only** years later will it be revealed to him what happened to him on Seder night. When you say the blessing thanking the Almighty for keeping you alive to reach Pesach, *shehichiyanu*, there is much to be thankful **for**. This night helps Jews in all generations! And lights from this great revelation can help a person break out of bad habits and bad behaviors. Many matters can go far smoother through a Pesach, because Pesach is

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leaving *mitzrayim*. You get rid of all the habits that make it so hard. You can break your lack of *emunah* and *bitachon*, **faith and trust**. You can reach humility and patience. This is a great night. You have to grab it.

“*Yachol merosh chodesh.*” The *Hava Amina*, initial thought, teaches that the lights of Pesach are already there on *Rosh Chodesh*.

This year Shabbes and Rosh Chodesh **fall together**. There is a great *ribbui oros*, increase of lights, as a result of this.

May we merit to receive these great lights and to learn all the matters to merit to move *meafeila lor gadol*, **from darkness to a great illumination**.

rev We are limited beings. Our minds produce limited thoughts. The limited cannot grasp the unlimited. Thus our thoughts cannot grasp Hashem's essence for it is unlimited. Lesson thirteen reveals that faith, attachment to Hashem, and prayer are the means through which finite man can connect to the Infinite!

Lesson Thirteen: The limitations Of Thought When Trying To Grasp The Divine

Chapter Five:

[ולתוספת ביאור באר היטב לשון תפיסא שאמר אליהו לית מחשבה תפיסא בך]

Let us explain further and fully elucidate the expression tefisa (grasping) in the words of Elijah, "No thought can grasp Thee at all..."

"Leis machashava tefisa beih klal," "No thought can grasp Him at all." In other words, thoughts cannot grasp atzmiyus Elokis at all. Music is not experienced with an eye. It is not that my sight is not strong enough to appreciate a niggun, tune, rather eyes are completely irrelevant to an auditory experience. Just as a melody has nothing to do with sight, mind has nothing to do with essential G-dliness!

It is not that my wisdom is too limited for atzmiyus Elokis, but rather that atzmiyus Elokis has nothing to do with machshava, thought. Chochmah is related to matters that are limited. It can comprehend how Hashem clothes Himself, but atzmiyus Elokis is without any limits at all and as a result thought cannot comprehend it at all.

Thought can say, "Whatever I understand, this is not Hashem." We can understand what Hashem is not. For example, thought can see nothingness and can say, "That is not Hashem." Things that are under the control of thought can be understood. I understand what is gornisht, lack of existence, and gornisht is not G-dliness for Hashem is existence, and He made existence. Something cannot come from nothing. Creation came from a metzias haborei, the existence of the Creator, from that which is the opposite of ayin, lack of existence.

An Existence That Must Be

Hashem is actually mechuyav hametzius, an existence that must be.

Everything else on earth has a reason and a source for its existence. Everything has a source and a reason it was made. Everything has a reason and its reason had a reason. When you get to the highest matter and ask about it, "Why this? Where did this come from?" you find that

here there is no prior cause, this is the source itself, the *makor*, *atzmius Elokis*. All is dependent on Him and He is not dependent on any **thing**. He is the *ilas kol hailos*, **cause of all causes**. What is not *mechuyav hametzias*, *must exist*, we can understand and all that is not *mechuyav hametzias* is not the Creator. The Creator though is *mechuyav hametzias*, not dependent on anything else, and He does not get His life from anything else.

Man's thoughts can only understand what is not Hashem **and have** no positive conception of what Hashem is. Thought knows **only** what He is not.

Leis machshava tefisa beih klal. The greatest scholar and the greatest fool have the same understanding in the positive sense of what Hashem is. For it is impossible for thought and wisdom to grasp in a positive sense the *mahus* and *atzmus* of Hashem.

A hidden force in the soul can connect with *atzmiyus Elokis*. Man must reveal this force, which is higher than *Chochmah: emunah*, the leap of faith.¹¹¹

What is *emunah*? *Emunah* is the light that shines in a hidden *koach hanefesh*. It is connected to those areas that are not connected to *Chochmah*. *Emunah* is the force that emerged from the hidden part of the soul that shone to the person. With this force an individual connects to Hashem. He believes in Hashem. It is a power like prophecy. He feels the light of Hashem even though he does not understand the matter. He feels that he came from there. He is drawn to Hashem, for he feels that Hashem is his source.

Since the soul is a *chelek elokah mimaal*, a piece of the Divine, the soul is not really a *baal gevul*, limited being, and it connects to Hashem's *mahus* and *atzmus*, which is not a *baal*

¹¹¹ Perhaps some of the wonderful aspects of *temimus* that *Shem Mishmuel* details are manifestations of this thought. *Temimus* implies wholesomeness, complete devotion, child-like sincerity and attachment with Hashem. These are all displays of enormous faith and trust in Hashem, *emunah*. *Temimus* draws from the levels that are above this world, for *emunah* is the only way to truly apprehend that which is beyond all limits.

In *Shem Mishmuel Moadim* he explained the Midrash that our father Yaakov saw the angels of different empires climbing up and then descending a ladder. Hashem told Yaakov to also climb the ladder. Yaakov was too afraid. Hashem then told Yaakov, "Because you did not follow my directives, your children will be enslaved to those nations you saw." *Shem Mishmuel* explains Yaakov's thought:

"The explanation of the matter is that the nations fall because they climb the ladder. When they ascend they become arrogant. They do not acknowledge the Source of their elevation! They become independent entities. This is idol worship. Then they become further disconnected, and as a result they fall. This is the meaning of the verse, "If you will ascend like an eagle etc. from there I will lower you." Precisely "from there." In other words, from the ascent comes the descent of the nations etc.

Yaakov did not trust himself or his descendants that they would not become arrogant like the others and therefore collapse terribly. However, the level of Yaakov was that of an *ish tam*, a wholesome man, for him this was considered a sin. Since Hashem told him to ascend, he should not have attempted to "outsmart" the will of Hashem. He should have accepted the directive of Hashem with *temimus*, he should have had *emunah* that it will be good etc. Had Yaakov trusted fully in Hashem and ascended the ladder the attribute of *temimus* would have become a part of his very essence, he would have genetically endowed it to his offspring, and then the Jews would never have descended from the heights!"(page 11)

"When a person acts with *temimus* and throws away from his thoughts the yoke of calculating matters and instead is drawn to follow *daas* Torah, the knowledge of the Torah, as a result the essential will, *ratzon*, and hidden love, deep in the depths of his heart is awakened, which is the matter of Eretz Yisrael. These are also the ideas behind the mitzvos of *shamor*, guard, and *zachor*, remember, of Shabbes.

As Shabbes enters one adopts a perspective of complete trust in Hashem, all the work is done, and then the inner point, the *zachor* is revealed." (*Shelach* page 283)

gevul. The *mahuso* and *atzmus* of the soul is a *chelek eloka mimaal mamash*. The root of the soul is *atzmiyus Elokis*.

The True I

When man says he does not comprehend Hashem he is saying, “I am I and I do not understand Hashem.” This is not accurate. **It means only that** he is unaware of who he really is.

People think that the person is **only made of** the things that are under man’s thought, **but** in truth there is a different I to the man. The real I of a man is the fact that he is a *cheilek eloka mimaal mamash*, literally a piece of the Divine! Man’s soul is the real *ani*.

The *seforim* say Rebbe, Rabbi Judah the prince, could say “*Omer ani*,” “I say,” for regular people are not connected to the real *ani*. Only Rebbe was connected to the *chelek elokah* within himself. **Only** he could say *ani*!

Most of us do not know the real *ani*. We only know imitation. Pharaoh said “*Ani parah*” for he thought he was a god. The real *ani* though is the fact that Hashem is in us. The real *ani* אני is the letters *ayin* אֵי. One has to be *mevatel*, annul, all he has to G-dliness and to the degree of

this *bittul* he feels the true I, the real *ani*.¹¹² Where does the power of this *bittul* come from, the real *ani* sends a light to the false *yeshus* in the person and because of these lights he is drawn to this root and this creates *emunah*. *Emunah* means to follow the lights that the soul sends to the person, to feel a real life and annul the false *ani*.¹¹³ *Emunah* means to be drawn to Hashem. *Tefillah* and *davening* mean connection. Through *tefillah* a person reaches the root of *emunah* and in this way he reaches *dveykus*. This is the root of *emunah*.

Lidavka bo, to cleave to Him, is the root of *emunah*.

¹¹² *Shem Mishmuel* explains the words of the Talmud that since the shofar is a reminder to Hashem it cannot be from a material that would remind the Almighty of the sin of the golden calf, for *ain kateigor naase saneigor*, the prosecution may not serve as the defense. He asked, "Aren't all mitzvos reminders?"

The verse states, "Adam *ubeheima toshia* Hashem," "Man and beast will you save G-d." The Talmud in *Chullin*, (5b) explains it to refer to people who are sophisticated with their knowledge yet they make themselves like beasts. They fulfill commands even when they do not understand the reasons. Even though they are sophisticated in their understandings generally, they realize the reasons for the mitzvos, yet they annul those reasons and fulfill mitzvos out of a spirit of *temimus*, simplicity and wholesome faith. They do it only because Hashem commanded! It would make no difference to them if they did not understand or if they did comprehend.

This is what the shofar represents, to annul our intellect and as simple animals follow the directives of Hashem! "The sin of the golden calf was that they did not follow G-d's directives without trying to think too much. Since they were a generation of understanding they failed in this test etc. The opposite of their sin is the shofar, this is why when Moshe ascended the mountain to get the second set of tablets, he first blew shofar, to remind all of the message. Throw away all the calculations, follow Hashem with complete faith like a beast, then you will not sin again!"

The strength of Israel is when it follows Hashem in total faith. The nations of the world make their mind supreme. They will do only what they understand. Israel's nature is to be drawn to Hashem fully and to rise above logic. The shofar reminds the Almighty of the true nature of the Jews. This is why especially the shofar cannot be a reminder of the golden calf, for the golden calf was when Jews were not true to their essence and instead thought of logic and limited intellectual thoughts. (*Moadim* pages 29-30)

¹¹³ The Rebbe once used this concept to help define the nature of Chanukah. "Life that is not eternal is not really life. Life means lasting existence. What ends and disappears is not lasting existence! Materialistic life, life of the body and the animal soul, eventually end and disappear. Therefore they are not life. The purpose of the entire Torah is that man should feel that he is a soul, and the body is merely a cloak for the soul." The Rebbe explained that when one is aware what is true life, he will gladly surrender imitation life to maintain and strengthen true life. Thus we can resolve a famous conflict. Many sources, especially Nachmonides and his students, teach that the *aron*, the holy ark, was the essence of the sanctuary. On the other hand, Maimonides in laws of *Beis Habechira* taught that the altar where sacrifices were offered was the center of the sanctuary. The answer is that the ark and altar were linked. The ark transcended the limits of physical space, channeled further prophetic revelation, and recreated the feelings felt at Mt. Sinai. It made us feel what was true life and inspired the altar, the sacrifice of material life for the real life of soul.

Chanukah was the time when the menorah was relit. The menorah in the Temple had seven branches to correspond to the entire physical world which was created in seven days. It faced the holy ark. For it too was reflective of this truth, feeling eternal life and therefore redefining the physical, elevating it and being willing to gladly surrender non-elevated material life. (See further *Otzar Gilyonei Divrei Torah* 5769, pages 57-66)

What Is *Dveykus*?

It is to be attached to *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbaruch*. For the *bechinas atzmuso* and *mahuso* of the *neshama* connects to the *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech*.

The *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech* mean the *kolellus*, **totality**, of *nishmos* Yisrael, Jewish souls, and this is called the *shechinah*. When a person is *davuk* the *kedusha* of *hashraas hashechinah* is *chal* on him and he is then a G-dly person.

You can see how such a person is an entirely different person. He has G-dly senses. He becomes a new person entirely. For he reaches a level of *dveykus* and his real *ani* is revealed. He *davens* in a special way, he has *Ruach Hakodesh*, he has G-dly senses for he has become another person. We find with Shaul that it says, “*Vinehepachta liish acheir*,” “You will be transformed to a different person.” When Shaul became a *navi* he became a new person entirely. *Dveykus* causes the *hashraas hashechinah* which makes man into a new being completely. For the real hidden *ani* emerges then.

“*Leis machshava tefisa beih klal*,” “No thought can understand and comprehend Hashem at all.” With thought you cannot reach Hashem. It is like taking the wrong road. To get to know what Hashem is not you can take the road of thought. To get to *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech*

you cannot take the road of thought. You have to take the road of *dveykus*: a **different** path than the way of the mind and thought.¹¹⁴

Prayer

Prayer is amazing. It has a *segula* power to attach a person to *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech*.

Tefilla means *hischabrus*, *tefilla* means connection. *Tefilla* means that in a sense Hashem is far but in another way Hashem is the closest of the close. Prayer reveals how close Hashem truly is to us. To be *masig mahuso*, grasp His essence, means to reveal how close He is. To reveal *mahuso* is not to think I was investigating and now I found Him. **It means** rather **that until** now we **did** not know that Hashem is here, but now we understand that Hashem is and has always been very close.

In *tefilla* we say *boruch ata* Hashem, Blessed are **you Hashem**. We talk to him directly.

In many *seforim* it is taught that the more intimate one is with Hashem, the more one speaks as a close friend, the greater the *tefilla*. Many times we are to speak with distance as a way of giving honor to one who is greater than us. *Tefilla* is different. It is all about getting close to Hashem.

“*Mi goy gadol asher lo Elokim krovim eilav kiHashem elokeinu bichol korainu elav?*” “Who is a

¹¹⁴ Perhaps the thoughts of the *Shem Mishmuel* on *parshas Va'aira* 5679, relate to this. *Shem Mishmuel* explains that *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshama* are clothed in limbs and correspond to *Asiyah*, *Yetzirahh* and *beriya*, realms where Hashem's light is clothed in vessels. However *chaya* is a *makif*, it is above limbs. It corresponds to *Atzilus*. Mitzvos are physical acts, they purify *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshama*. To reach *chaya* though we need something above mitzvos. We need *bittul* of the ego. *Messirus nefesh* is the key to reaching the experience of *chaya*. He explains there that the highest *messirus nefesh* is to even give up spiritual gifts for the sake of Hashem's honor. Moshe did that when he protested to Hashem to try and save or spare Yisrael. Therefore Moshe merited *chaya*, and thereby he merited to bring about miracles that were fully above the realm of nature. The *avos* fixed the *nefesh*, *ruach*, and *neshama* of Adam *harishon*. They were people of mitzvos and their *messirus nefesh* was giving up of the body for the soul, not sacrificing mitzvos for Hashem's glory.

This is why they were primarily connected to the revelation of Keil Shakai, a name that implies a world for it means He told the world enough. While Moshe through total *messirus nefesh* brought the realm of *Atzilus* and *chaya*, a realm fully above the physical, down, and was able to engender miracles that broke all the rules of nature. Moshe was thereby attached to the name of Hashem, Havaya, which was there before there was a world, and is thus independent of the world.

great nation who has powers close to him like us with Hashem our Lord who whenever we call Him He is near?” (*Devarim 4:7*)

The Midrash¹¹⁵ contrasts *tefilla* with a *mikvah* that is not always open. In other words one cannot always reach purity, but *tefilla* is always accessible, Hashem is close *bichol koreinu elav, whenever* we call to Him. One who endeavors to become pure may not become pure immediately, while in prayer “*Mi goy gadol asher lo Elokim krovim elav kiHashem elokainu bichol koreinu eilav.*” “Who is a great nation who has powers close to him like us with Hashem our Lord who whenever we call Him He is near?”

The *seforim* explain that a prayer for *avdos* Hashem, a prayer to be able to serve Hashem, is like *aseres yimei teshuva*, **the ten days of repentance**, and He is always close and open to agreeing to those requests.

The *pshat* is we can and we should ask all from Hashem! We should talk to Hashem as friends! We find this in *sefer Tehillim*. Whatever is in one’s heart is included in *sefer Tehillim*! When we are at the level of *tefillah* we can reach real *dveykus* and *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech*. This is the real *dveykus*.

The *mishnah* teaches, “*Hamehaleich biderech yechidi ... harei zeh mis'chayeiv binafsho,*” “One who walks on the path alone ... he has obligated his life.” (*Avos 3:4*) Rav Nachman explains this to mean that one who walks alone with Hashem and speaks to Hashem in personal terms through *hisbodedus*, meditation, he becomes *mischayev binafsho- a necessary soul, a mechuyav hametzius* for he attaches to Hashem's essence which is the existence that must be. *Tefillah* can bring a person very close to Hashem. It is a tremendous power.

¹¹⁵ *Devarim Rabba parsha beis siman yud beis* See also *Shem Mishmuel vaeschanan* who explains this Midrash.

הנה כל שכל כשמשכיל ומשיג בשכלו איזה מושכל הרי השכל תופס את המושכל ומקיפו בשכלו והמושכל נתפס'. ומוקף ומלובש בתוך השכל שהשיגו והשכילו וגם השכל מלובש במושכל בשעה שמשיגו ותופסו בשכלו ד"מ כשאדם מבין ומשיג איזו הלכה במשנה או בגמרא לאשורה על בוריה הרי שכלו תופס ומקיף אותה וגם שכלו מלובש בה באותה שעה.

הלכה זו היא חכמתו ורצונו של הקב"ה שעלה ברצונו שכשיטעון ראובן כך וכך דרך משל ושמעון כך וכך יהיה הפסק ביניהם כך וכך ואף אם לא היה ולא יהיה הדבר הזה לעולם לבא למשפט על טענות ותביעות אלו מכל מקום מאחר שכך עלה ברצונו וחכמתו של הקב"ה שאם יטעון זה כך וזה כך יהיה הפסק כך הרי כשאדם יודע ומשיג בשכלו פסק זה כהלכה הערוכה במשנה או גמרא או פוסקים הרי זה משיג ותופס ומקיף בשכלו רצונו וחכמתו של הקב"ה דלית מחשבה תפיסא ביה ולא ברצונו וחכמתו כי אם בהתלבשותם בהלכות הערוכות לפנינו וגם שכלו מלובש בהם והוא יחוד נפלא שאין יחוד כמוהו ולא כערכו נמצא כלל בגשמיות להיות לאחדים ומיוחדים ממש מכל צד ופנה

Now, when an intellect conceives and comprehends a concept with its intellectual faculties, this intellect grasps the concept and encompasses it. This concept is [in turn] grasped, enveloped and en clothed within that intellect which conceived and comprehended it.

The mind, for its part, is also clothed in the concept at the time it comprehends and grasps it with the intellect. For example, when a person understands and comprehends, fully and clearly, any halachah (law) in the Mishnah or Talmud, his intellect grasps and encompasses it and, at the same time, is clothed in it.

Consequently, as the particular halachah is the wisdom and will of G-d, for it was His will that when, for example, Reuben pleads in one way and Simeon in another, the verdict as between them shall be thus and thus; and even should such a litigation never have occurred, nor would it ever present itself for judgment in connection with such disputes and claims. Nevertheless, since it has been the will and wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He, that in the event of a person pleading this way and the other [litigant] pleading that way, the verdict shall be such and such—now therefore, when a person knows and comprehends with his intellect such a verdict in

accordance with the law as it is set out in the Mishnah, Talmud, or poskim (codes), he has thus comprehended, grasped and encompassed with his intellect the will and wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be He, Whom no thought can grasp, nor His will and wisdom, except when they are clothed in the laws that have been set out for us. [Simultaneously] the intellect is also clothed in them [the Divine will and wisdom].

This is a wonderful union, like which there is none other, and which has no parallel anywhere in the material world, whereby complete oneness and unity, from every side and angle, could be attained.

Why Learning Torah Is So Special

The Tanya says that the mind surrounds each thought, while the thought surrounds the minds. For example, when a person understands a matter his mind envelops the matter and the matter envelops his mind when he thinks of it. The Tanya says an example of this is when a person understands a *halacha*: on the one hand it is in his mind and on the other hand it surrounds his mind.

Let us explain this. What does **the Tanya** mean that the idea is in the mind and the idea surrounds the mind?

The simple explanation is that the mind has a *koach*, power, of comprehension. The *seichel*, intellect, can comprehend. This power to understand is matter without form, *chomer bli tzura*. For example, wood is matter and it can take on a *tzurah*, it can be shaped. The essence of a table is wood yet it is in the *tzurah* of a table if I cut it in the right way. In other words, the wood

is in a *levush* of a table. The *tzurah* of the wood is table, so the wood is encompassed with a garment: the fact that it is a table. The *levush* is how you describe **something**.

So too the mind, the power to comprehend, is like a raw piece of wood. When the mind thinks about Torah then **it** is in a *levush* Torah. The *davar hamuskal*, comprehended matter, takes the mind, for it is *malbish*, clothes, the mind. The Torah is the *levush* or the *tzurah* for the mind.

It limits the mind's thoughts. This is the first aspect of the mind.

The second aspect works in the precisely opposite way: the *davar hamuskal* enters into the mind.

For example, the mind thinks, "I am traveling from **Hebron** to **Jerusalem**." The mind takes in this matter of walking from **Hebron**. Imagine if this matter was a matter we could not think about, **for** there **are** matters that we can't think about. Maybe the taste of a food or the feeling of a tune, these are matters that thought might not be able to grasp. **So** imagine if the *inyan* of going from **Hebron to Jerusalem** was **similarly** a matter people could not think about. **Once it enters** the mind **it** becomes a *davar muskal*, comprehended matter. mind now defines it, it is clothed by the mind!

One point is that the *seichel* now has a *tzura* of this matter, and a second point is that this matter now has a *tzura* of a *davar muskal*. It is now graspable to the mind.

When mind thinks about **something** that is understood, there is a great unification. The mind is thinking about **something** and this matter is now something the mind can understand and grasp. We have learnt that Hashem's essence is beyond the grasp of thought. Torah though is Hashem's essence clothed in thoughts. When a man thinks about a matter of Torah, about a *halacha* in the Torah, what is he thinking about? He is thinking about Hashem Himself! For a

halacha is *chochmahso* and *ritzono yisbarech*, and *hu vichochmahso echad*, and this is really attached to *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech*! Once we think about Torah we are grasping His *atzmus*! And grasping with the mind, where there is an awesome *yichud*!

The *ritzono* and *chochmahso* are attached to His Torah, and you might have thought that man should not go there, for our mind cannot grasp Him, so how dare we try to grasp Hashem? Yet when man does as he is told and thinks about Hashem's Torah, there is an awesome unity for the mind becomes one with *halachos* that draw out a degree of *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech*! The mind becomes defined by the matters of Torah, and the Torah, which is *mahuso* and *atzmuso*, becomes a matter that the mind can grasp. An awesome unity on both levels. This is a frightening and awesome *yichud*. Know that such thought causes great things. It changes the person! When learning Torah we are engaging with *mahuso yisbarech*!

When man thinks about Torah, the power of thinking and understanding is transformed, the power to comprehend is cleansed, it is sanctified and it gets closer to the *mahus* and *atzmus* of Hashem. The *koach* of thinking is sanctified and is completely cleansed and sanctified, for it unites with a light that holds Hashem Himself!

The Deeper Torah Is The Most Impactful Torah

You might ask: If a person is transformed by learning, **then should not** understanding a single law make him into a G-dly being?

The answer is that truthfully if one would understand a *halacha* of Torah the right way he would become G-dly from one thought of Torah! A single *halacha* would change him, for he would become one with *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarech*.

Unfortunately man does not truly understand a matter of Torah in the right way. The reason why man does not understand correctly is that man has many parts to his ability to comprehend and some of these are under the pollution of the serpent. As a result he does not truly become one with Hashem. These parts do not unite with the matter of Torah.

For example, take the statement from tractate Kessubos, “*Besula niseis liyom harivii.*” “The virgin gets married on a Wednesday.” Ordinarily we understand this statement in a simple way. However, this idea is really a *levush* for a secret, which is in turn a *levush* for an even deeper secret. We are understanding *chochmahso yisbarech* that is clothed in *levushim*. It is not in a pure G-dly state.

The four parts of Torah (*pshat remez drash and sod*)¹¹⁶ correspond to the four universes. The part that relates to *pshat* is like the world of *Asiyah* which is *rubo rah*, mostly evil!

It is not *elokus gamur*, pure G-diness! *Elokus gamur* is in it, but relative to the other parts of Torah it is not completely pure *elokus*. That is why our understanding does not affect a complete transformation. The understanding of *sodos haTorah* is the way that can bring one to a real *yichud*! *Sodos haTorah* is not our way of learning Kabbalah. It is the food of the *neshama* in the Garden of Eden. It is levels higher and higher. You get to a higher level and then realize that relative to this level the last level was like *pshat*.

Nevertheless the *shoresh hainyan*, the root concept, is that through the understanding of Torah a person becomes attached to *mahuso* and *atzmuso yisbarach* through *chochmahso yisbarach*.

¹¹⁶ According to our tradition every verse and word of the holy Torah can be understood on four levels. The level of *pshat*, the simple and literal meaning, *remez* hinted connotations, *drash* homiletical interpretations, and *sod*, the secrets.

וזאת מעלה יתרה גדולה ונפלאה לאין קץ אשר במצות ידיעת התורה והשגתה על כל המצות מעשיות ואפ"ל .
על מצות התלויות בדבור ואפ"ל על מצות תלמוד תורה שבדבור כי ע"י כל המצות שבדבור ומעשה הקב"ה מלביש את
הנפש ומקיפה אור ה' מראשה ועד רגלה. ובידיעת התורה מלבד שהשכל מלובש בחכמת ה' הנה גם חכמת ה' בקרבו מה
שהשכל משיג ותופס ומקיף בשכלו מה שאפשר לו לתפוס ולהשיג מידיעת התורה איש כפי שכלו וכח ידיעתו והשגתו
בפרד"ס. ולפי שבידיעת התורה התורה מלובשת בנפש האדם ושכלו ומוקפת בתוכם לכן נקראת בשם לחם ומזון הנפש
כי כמו שהלחם הגשמי זן את הגוף כשמכניסו בתוכו וקרבו ממש ונהפך שם להיות דם ובשר כבשרו ואזי יחיה ויתקיים
כך בידיעת התורה והשגתה בנפש האדם שלומדה היטב בעיון שכלו עד שנתפסת בשכלו ומתאחדת עמו והיו לאחדים
נעשה מזון לנפש וחיים בקרבה מחיי החיים אין סוף ברוך הוא המלובש בחכמתו ותורתו שבקרבה וז"ש ותורתך בתוך
מעי וכמ"ש בע"ה שער מ"ד פ"ג שלבושי הנשמות בגן עדן הן המצות והתורה היא המזון לנשמות שעסקו בעולם הזה
בתורה לשמה וכמ"ש בזהר ויקהל דף ר"י ולשמה היינו כדי לקשר נפשו לה' ע"י השגת התורה איש כפי שכלו כמ"ש
בפרע"ה [והמזון היא בחי' אור פנימי והלבושים בחי' מקיפים ולכן אמרו רז"ל שתלמוד תורה שקול כנגד כל המצות לפי
שהמצות הן לבושים לבד והתורה היא מזון וגם לבוש לנפש המשכלת שמתלב
בה בעיונה ולימודה וכל שכן כשמוציא בפיו בדבור שהבל הדבור נעשה בחי' אור מקיף כמ"ש בפרע"ה

Hence the special superiority, infinitely great and wonderful, that is in the commandment of knowing the Torah and comprehending it. It is over all the commandments involving action, and even those relating to speech, and even the commandment to study the Torah, which is fulfilled through speech. For, through all the commandments involving speech or action the Holy One, blessed be He, clothes the soul and envelops it from head to foot with the Divine light. However, with regard to knowledge of the Torah, apart from the fact that the intellect is clothed in Divine wisdom, this Divine wisdom is also contained in it, to the extent that his intellect comprehends,

grasps and encompasses, as much as it is able so to do, the knowledge of the Torah. Every man according to his intellect, his knowledgeable capacity, and his comprehension in pardes.

Since, in the case of knowledge of the Torah, the Torah is clothed in the soul and intellect of a person, and is absorbed in them, it is called “bread” and “food” of the soul. For just as physical bread nourishes the body as it is absorbed internally, in his very inner self, where it is transformed into blood and flesh of his flesh, whereby he lives and exists— so, too, it is with the knowledge of the Torah and its comprehension by the soul of the person who studies it well, with a concentration of his intellect, until the Torah is absorbed by his intellect and is united with it and they become one. This becomes nourishment for the soul, and its inner life from the Giver of life, the blessed Ain Sof, Who is clothed in His wisdom and in His Torah that are [absorbed] in it [the soul].

This is the meaning of the verse, “Yea, Thy Torah is within my inward parts.”

*It is also stated in Etz Chayim, Portal 44, chapter 3 that the “garments” of the soul in paradise are the commandments, while the Torah is the “food” for the souls which, during life on earth, had occupied themselves in the study of the Torah for its own sake. It is [similarly] written in the Zohar. “For its own sake” **means to** [study with the intent] to attach one’s soul to G-d through the comprehension of the Torah, each one according to his intellect, as explained in Peri Etz Chayim.*

(The “food” [of the soul] is in the nature of Inner Light, while the “garments” are in the nature of Encompassing Light. Therefore our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have said, “The study of the Torah equals all the commandments.” For the commandments are but “garments” whereas the Torah is both “food” as well as “garment” for the rational soul, in which a person

is clothed during learning and concentration. All the more so when a person also articulates, by word of mouth, for the breath emitted in speaking [the words of the Torah] becomes something in the nature of an Encompassing Light, as is explained in Peri Etz Chayim.)

The Tanya explains that **there is a** certain advantage to the mitzvah of learning Torah **that** makes it superior even to the performance of mitzvos, for through the learning of Torah there is a great *yichud* that is unmatched in any other realm.

Here is the way I understand this lesson of the Tanya. When a man does a mitzvah, as has been explained earlier, the *levush* of a matter is the *tzurah* **the** matter takes on. When a man does a mitzvah, the power of acting, *maaseh*, has taken a *levush* of *ratzon* Hashem! Man could do other things, **but** the fact that his present act is a mitzvah means his act has taken a garment of the will of Hashem! His actions are **therefore the** will and thought of Hashem!

Yet there is a great difference between mind and action. **When one does a mitzvah it is not as related to the** essence of action **as a thought is** to the power of thinking. The power of acting (the essence of doing is a *koach* to do) is a spiritual matter, but here he did an act that is a physical matter. I can see the act. He gave *tzedakah*.

On the other hand, in regards to intellect, a thought is very close to the power of thought. What the mind thinks of is spiritual. It becomes a matter that is comprehended, it becomes mind, it becomes intangible, to become one with the power of comprehension. When you do something though the hand maybe did something, but the power of doing is still something different. It is something spiritual, not physical.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Rav Hutner in his introduction to *Pachad Yitzchok* taught that there is an advantage to Torah lessons about worldviews and *middos* over lessons about Jewish law. Jewish law details actions. There is great distance between mind and action. Worldviews and *middos* are in the mind and heart, Torah lessons about these subjects are close to their destination and therefore reach their intended purpose faster than lessons about changes in behavior.

Thus, in doing the power to do **takes on a levush**, yet the act **performed** is not one with the *koach*. **At the same time** in mind, in thoughts, there is a unity of the matter that is comprehended **simply through that act of** becoming a matter of thought and thus there is an absolute unity in the realm of thought much more than **in the realm of** mitzvos. (This **formulation** does not work as well in the language of the Tanya, who says in a *maase* mitzvah there is a unity from one side, while in thought there is a unity from both sides. In light of our explanation it is really that in an act of a mitzvah there is no unity on any level. But I still think this is what he means that in *Chochmah* there is a degree of unification which does not exist in the doing of a mitzvah.)

In a practical sense, we see that when a man thinks thoughts of Torah the entire essence of man becomes transformed. A person who only does and never thinks is not transformed in the same way. *Machshava* transforms the person. The holiness of a *talmid chacham*, **a good student**, is completely different than the nature of a person who is an *am haaretz*, **an ignorant Jew**. For the Torah has an impact **on the soul of the talmid chacham that transforms** his mind. *Chochmah*

binah daas impacts the *middos*.¹¹⁸ Through thinking about Torah the entire person is transformed!¹¹⁹

Mitzvos improve a person, but not to the same degree. The difference between a *talmid chacham* and an *am haaretz* is much sharper than the difference between an *am haaretz* who does mitzvos and an *am haaretz* who does not do mitzvos, because Torah transforms the core of the person!

Therefore it is very important to understand well what you learn. To understand something clearly requires a great attraction to the matter. There is a need for a feeling of pleasure in the matter. For example, the *Talmud* says one should always learn *mah shelibo*

¹¹⁸ Rav Morgenstern expounded on the thought that intellects sire emotions and that the mind is the key to complete transformation.

“The *Tzemach Tzedek* wrote in a letter that one should be certain that each *midda* one has, such as depression or happiness, is rooted in a *moach*, an intellect. If a person feels sad he must have in his thoughts conceptions that are causing feelings of depression. Those thoughts are parents who create children, the feelings of depression in the heart. The same is true with wasting time. If a Yeshiva man wastes time it is because in his mind he does not truly appreciate the value of every moment of learning Torah and hence he wastes time.

The solution to this is to regularly learn works that talk about joy as an antidote to depression. Even if this learning does not have an immediate impact, since the emotions are still rooted in earlier conceptions, when he regularly, day after day, is immersed in these studies, by definition, ultimately the intellects will change the emotions!

This was the foundation of the way of Rav Yisrael Salanter. He taught that each *midda* one must fix can be changed through intensive learning, with great concentration, of the matters of this *midda*. Then the mind will change the *midda*, even though this does not happen right away and it takes much time.

It is said in the name of Rav Avraham the brother of the Gra that the way to become an intensive learner of Torah is to spend several months learning holy works that speak about the greatness of learning and he should repeat and review the ideas many, many times, for Torah is a matter that one must continually strengthen. When he constantly learns this matter eventually he will find his heart filled with passion for learning.” (*Yam HaChochmah* 5769, page 479)

¹¹⁹ In *Trails of Triumph* (page 279) a story is told about the great Rabbi Yisrael Yaakov Lubchansky, *mashgiach* of the Baranovitch Yeshiva. He once saw the students taking positions near where Rav Dovid Rappoport was slated to deliver a class half an hour before the *shiur*. He approached them and reminded them that they still had a half hour to learn with their study partners and it was not yet time for the class. The boys said they would return to their studies but did not. He got upset with them and raised his voice telling them to return to their seats. That night his wife entered the Yeshiva at a late hour, for her husband was missing. The boys went to find Rabbi Lubchansky. They found him in a secluded area repeating to himself again and again, “Anyone who gets angry it is as if he worships idols.”

Even though his anger had been for the sake of Heaven. Even though the boys had not been respectful to him, he still was disappointed in himself for having lost his temper. He wished to change his intellectual thoughts. Hence he lost himself in repeating again and again the horrors of anger, so that his mind and then his actions would change.

chafetz, what his heart desires. Why do we not say here that “*Yakuf es yitzro adif*,” “Better to coerce one’s urges.” The answer is that *mah shelibo chafeitz* is part of the act of truly learning Torah. The *yichud* and the *taanug* are one matter. The mind must become one with the matter. The mind becomes one with a matter, when he cannot leave the matter, when he enjoys a matter. That is the *yichud* of Torah!

When you get to a good *sevara* and you cannot leave it, when there is the awesome pleasure of looking at the truth and you cannot let go, this is the *yichud* of Torah. This *yichud* transforms the mind and the person!

You have to learn those parts of Torah that you enjoy, those parts that you are drawn to, those matters you can unite with your wisdom. The pleasure of Torah comes from *iyun*, when you work hard on a matter and you reach a real *sevara* of truth that you cannot leave. This is the truth of Torah: when you feel a great pleasure that you never want to leave.

It takes work. Especially, in the young years, we need to work to reach these levels. We know that **now is the time** to *prepare* for the Torah. During the *sefirah* ¹²⁰we must prepare ourselves to learn Torah in a way of understanding the truth in Torah! In a way that we will feel that we cannot disconnect from Torah. We need to be *mekabel* the Torah!

I have seen *tzadikim* that were immersed in learning and could not stop learning. It was not in the way of *kabbalas ol*, **accepting an obligation**, it was in the sense of *lifrosh mimenah eini yachol, I cannot separate from her!* It was in the sense of *ki heim chayeinu!* For the words of Torah are life! They got life from Torah. It was in the feeling that *haporeish mimcha kiporesih min hachaim!* One who separates from You is separating from living! It was the feeling of *Im*

¹²⁰ The seven week period from Passover to the holiday of Shavuot during which we count each night and try to improve our character to become worthy of reliving the giving of the Torah.

yitein ish kol hon beiso biahava boz yavuzo lo, If a man would give all the wealth of his house in place of this love, they would scorn him. (Shir Hashirim 8:7) All their bones were filled with the sweetness of Torah. They drew life from Torah. Reb Tarfon said **that** to leave Rebbe Akiva is to leave life. They felt this **learning** was life **itself**.

We need *siyata dishmaya* for this level, we need to break the *middos* to reach this sweetness and to merit this level of truly connecting to Torah and to its understanding. Shavuos is the time for this, and now during *sefirah* we have to use these days *likadsheinu, to sanctify us,* and *litaharienu, to purify us,* to truly appreciate Torah. *Haskein atzmecha lilmod Torah!* Prepare yourself to study Torah!

We need to learn a lot now, and we need to *daven* a lot now, so that we can reach the true *yichud*, unification, available on the day of *mattan* Torah. And we should know that learning Torah helps a lot in regards *to this union*. It helps us break our *taavos*, as well, and now is the time, to grab this time and prepare for this great *yichud* of **the holiday of Shavuos**.

When you say words of Torah the Tanya adds that you have the *maalah* of an act of mitzvah together with the awesome unity of the thoughts and immersion into Torah.

May Hashem help us to prepare during the days for *tahareinu* and *kadsheinu bikdushascha haelyonah, our purity and holiness in Your great holiness!*

Some differences are incidental others are essential. It is part of the essential character of holiness that in the sacred the mind leads. Part of the essential definition of the unholy is that it begins with lusts. The Tanya seems to teach that evil urges are a function of the mind. How can this be? Lesson fourteen reveals that due to our exile the forces of evil have taken some of the qualities of the holy.

Lesson Fourteen: Holiness Integrates All While Evil Separates

Chapter Six

והנה זה לעומת זה עשה אלהים כי כמו שנפש האלהית כלולה מעשר ספירות קדושות ומתלבשת בשלשה לבושים קדושים כך הנפש דסטרא אחרא מקליפות נוגה המלובשת בדם האדם כלולה מעשר כתרין דמסאבותא שהן שבע מדות רעות הבאות מארבע יסודות רעים הנ"ל ושכל המולידן הנחלק לשלש שהן חכמה בינה ודעת מקור המדות כי המדות הן לפי ערך השכל כי הקטן חושק ואוהב דברים קטנים פחותי הערך לפי ששכלו קטן וקצר להשיג דברים יקרים יותר מהם. וכן מתכעס ומתקצף מדברים קטנים וכן בהתפארות ושאר מדות

*“The Almighty has created one thing opposite the other.”
Just as the divine soul consists of ten holy Sefiros and is clothed in three holy garments, so does the soul which is derived from the sitra achra of the kelipas nogah, which is clothed in man's blood, consist of ten “crowns of impurity.” These are the seven evil middos which stem from the four evil elements mentioned above, and the intellect begetting them which is subdivided into three, viz., wisdom, understanding and knowledge, the source of the middos. For the middos are according to the quality of the intellect. Hence a child desires and loves petty things of inferior worth, for his intellect is too immature and deficient to appreciate things that are much more precious. Likewise is he provoked to anger and vexation over trivial things; so, too, with boasting and other middos.*

The Tanya now explains that the *nefesh haadam* is in the blood, which in a Jew comes from *Kellipahs nogah*, from the *eser kistrin dimisaavusa*, the ten crowns of impurity. *Kistrin dimisaavusa* is a parallel to the ten *Sefiros*.

The Tanya explains that all comes from the mind. Just as in holiness the mind sires the holy *middos*, so too in *sitra achra* does the *seichel* sire *middos raos*, terrible behavioral traits. *Seichel* is the source of the *middos* and the *middos* are according to the nature of the *seichel*. Thus a young and immature person who cannot understand great matters will get excited about small things and will get angry about small things. He will have pride about small things since he is young and has a limited mind. So we see that in the realm of evil, the *middos raos* are also linked to the mind.

Let us explain this matter. How can the Tanya teach that evil emotions emerge from evil thoughts? In holiness we understand that the mind is what gives birth to *ahavas* Hashem and to *yiras* Hashem. The mind, through thinking about holy matters, gives birth to *ahavas* Hashem and *yiras* Hashem. Without thinking one would not get *ahavas* Hashem and *yiras* Hashem. (True there is a hidden love of Hashem, but we are not talking here of that love. Here we are talking of the revealed love, which only emerges from *hisbonenus* in *ahavas* Hashem and in *yiras* Hashem). Yet isn't evil always characterized as lusts? Most evil acts seem to emerge from drives that are independent of the mind. What is the meaning of evil thoughts siring evil emotions? Are there some evil thoughts that beget evil emotions? We see that it is not so. The realm of evil seems to be a realm where emotions impact the mind! While it is true that the degree of *ahava* and *yirah* is dependent on what level of mind one has, nevertheless, you cannot say in evil that mind creates the *taava*, lust? One person with a small mind desires small things and another with a big mind wants big things, but the person **who desires** evil on a large **scale** has the same desire for evil as the one who **desires evil on a small scale. In both cases** the essential desire is the same. The mind creates difference in terms of what the person wants, but the desire itself is not born in the mind!

There is a need here for a deep and complete explanation, **so** let us begin.

There is a great difference between *sitra achra* and holiness. *Zeh liumas zeh asah Elokim* means that there is a similarity in all areas yet there is also a basic difference: one is holy and one is *sitra achra*. Therefore, in all matters relating to this core difference they are different, **yet** in all other matters they are the same. There are matters that our teachers reveal relate to the very difference between *kedusha* and *sitra achra*. One of these matters is that holiness is called *reshus*

hayachid, the domain of the individual, **whereas** *sitra achra* is the domain of many, *reshus harabim*.

The United Realm

In a *reshus hayachid* all work together. In holiness all attributes work together. In holiness all attributes of holiness are part of one plan, each *midda* has to fit with the others, and there is a set order for how the *middos* are to work, a *shiur komah*, complete structure. For example, in holiness one might do *chesed*, yet he will only do *chesed* in a way that conforms to the mandates of *gevurah*. He will not do *chesed* if it is against the mandates of *gevurah* or the purpose of the *chesed*. “*Kol mi sheain bo deiah assur liracheim alav*,” “Anyone without *daas*, good judgment, one may not have compassion on him.” You might want to have *rachmanus* on him, but the Torah says there are some **to whom** you should not display mercy!

Sometimes you cannot do *chesed* if you are truly a man of the realm of holiness. For example, say there is a student who says a *pshat* in the *Talmud* and he comes to me and I know that the *pshat* does not work and is incorrect. The student is making this mistake **because** he did not learn enough. If I tell him the truth, “This is wrong you need to put more effort into your study,” he will feel bad but he will then learn and grow from this experience. If I tell him, “This is a great *pshat*,” he will not learn the way he should. Now I might have a natural desire to do *chesed*, I cannot bring myself to cause people to feel bad, I do not want to cause anyone to ever feel bad, I do not want to ever see people in pain. Then I do *chesed* because that is my nature and I am not thinking of the big picture, **but** then I will compliment **the student** and not accomplish the goal! If I merge *chesed* with *gevurah* in this instance I will tell the boy you are wrong and you have to work harder, **and thereby** accomplish the plan, the goal of holiness. In truth this is a

much deeper *chesed* than the *chesed* of the compliment, because when I tell him, “You did not learn as you should,” he will walk away feeling bad but he will learn now and grow to become a *talmid chacham*!

In holiness man is a complete structure. Man has *mochin* and *middos*. In holiness if you ask who should rule, the *moach* or the *middos*, the answer is that the *moach* of the man should be the ruler over the *middos*. This is the plan of man. The *shleimus* of man is that the *moach* should rule over the heart. The *mochin* should impact the *middos* more than the *middos* impact the *mochin*. This is the meaning of Hashem telling Eve about Adam *vhu yimshol bach*, And he will rule over you. Intellect must rule emotion, the *ish* must rule the *isha*, the *mochin* must be sovereign over the *middos*! In holiness *ahavas* Hashem and *yiras* Hashem only come from the *mochin*! The *mochin* are the *av* and the *middos* are the *ben*, the child.

The Brazen Realm

Sitra achra is *reshus harabbim*. *Sitra achra* is *alma diprida*, the world of division. In *sitra achra* each element works for itself. In *sitra achara*, *chutzpah yasgei*, brazenness is ascendant. Man has *chutzpah* within himself: the lower forces assert themselves despite the higher forces. Man has bad *kochos hanefesh*. He has *middos raos*. These *middos* have no *derech eretz* for the *mochin*. These *middos* say *ana emlokh*, I will rule. *Ahavos raos* think they can rule over the *mochin* as well! In evil the *middah* might not start with the *mochin*, for in *sitra achra* the definition of evil is that each is his own ruler, there is no *derech eretz* and there is no order of respect. Each works in its own realm, the *mochin* and the *middos*.

However, there must also be a resemblance to the realm of holiness and this is why the nature of the *middos* conforms to the nature of the mind. The fact that in *sitra achra middos* are not born from the *mochin* is related to the very difference between *rah* and *tov*.

The evil in the world has become very extensive. It is the result of many *pegamim*, deficiencies. First the sin of the tree of knowledge followed by many other sins lead us to say that, especially after the destruction of the Second Temple, we live in an abnormal world. The way the world should be is a world with a Beis Hamikdash. Chazal tell us that after the loss of the Beis Hamikdash there were those who did not want to have children any more. They were overruled, yet the concept is true: without a Beis Hamikdash there should be no world. The world should have a Beis Hamikdash. Since its loss, evil has become much greater and the world has been devalued and destroyed.

No one believed the Beis Hamikdash could be destroyed, to the extent that they wanted to kill Yirmiyahu the prophet for predicting it. When the Jews of the time saw the eventual destruction they thought the world was coming to an end and that there was no longer a reason to keep mitzvos. Hashem said to them, "I will rule over you with a strong hand. You must continue to observe." Apparently evil was really strengthened after the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.

Now there is a *shita* of *rah*. Now evil is an ideology! Before the destruction of the Temple, evil was not at such a strong level. Now there is a *komah* of *rah*. Now *rah*, the *middos raos*, will emerge from the *mochin*. Now you can have a philosopher and he creates ideologies and thoughts that spawn *middos raos*. This is because evil has taken the concept of *komah shleimah* from us once the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed.

Our tradition teaches that Jerusalem, representing holiness, and *Tzor*, Tyre, representing the unholy are in an inverse relationship. *Tzor* was built up from the ruins of Jerusalem (*Rashi, Bereishis 25:23*). This statement is more than a physical reality of the gentiles taking Jerusalem's treasures. It is a spiritual reality. On the simple level, when Jerusalem fell, Bavel took much wisdom from the Jews who had wisdom from Shlomo. The Persians took wisdom from them and the Greeks from the Persians and the Romans from them. It is also true in another sense. Evil now has a *shita* of *rah*. Once the *binyan*, building, of *kedusha* was destroyed evil took this power of *binyan*, a complete structure, and now they created a *shita*, ideology, of *tumah* and *rah*. Today evil thoughts lead to evil emotions, for the power of a structure has been taken from holiness with the fall of Jerusalem.

The Mission of Exile

The Talmud teaches that Klal Yisrael went into exile to get converts. This means the Jewish people went to exile to remove the good part from the nations, this leads to gentiles from that nation converting and then **that nationality would** be left with just pure evil, which will not last.

For example, take the French. Perhaps their good part is that they are happy people. With this joy they are a strong nation. When the Jews go into exile in that place, Jews have a relationship with those people. Furthermore the air of a country, based on the *sar*, **guardian angel**, of that country, creates a particular *levush* that all native born children in that land possess. French people are therefore born with a natural urge for the joy that the *goyim* of that country have. A Jew born in France has a mission. He is to be sincere and modest and reveal what is real *simcha*. He displays *simcha* of holiness and shows what is false *simcha*: he is *mevarrer*, clarifies,

the real *simcha*. The *goyim* do not need to all know what Jews are accomplishing in a land. The point of exile is that the essential good of a country should be *misbarrer*, become refined.

In other words, ever since the *dor haflaga*, generation of dispersion, the *goyim* are not part of *malchus shmayim*, the Heavenly kingdom. They are **rather** part of the *sar* of their nation. What is important is that the matter of the nation rise. Once the matter is raised, many non Jews of that country will convert. In the case of France, the gentiles there would not convert from sadness. They will convert from encounters with genuine holy joy, for joy is their ideology and therefore once we raise the *nitzotz*, spark, in that country to its rightful place many **converts** will join us. “*Lo galu yisrael ela cdei shiyatvasfu aleihim geirim.*” “Jews only went into exile to add converts.”

Yet this all **happened** because of exile. Had we not sinned in Israel there would have been such wisdom **that** we would have had no need to go into exile to raise sparks.

Consider the days of Shlomo. There was enormous wisdom and the nations came to us to be inspired. Due to our sins we no longer have the spiritual strength in Jerusalem to subdue the forces of evil. The forces of evil have taken sparks from us. We now need to go to the nations and we need to hold strong with holy actions and in this way the nations will be impacted and elevated and will return to holiness.

Kabbalah Is A Great Light

In the days of Rashbi it was *mesugal*, fortuitous, to clarify matters.

The Torah of Rashbi is a part of Torah that the *sitra achra* cannot draw nourishment from. A goy cannot really learn the true matter of the secrets of Torah. “*Uchvodi liacher lo*

etein,” “I will not give my honor to others.” “*Ani Hashem hu shmi uchvodi liacheir lo aten.*” “I am Hashem, it is my name, and I will not give my honor to others.”

If the *sitra achra* wants to hold onto this level, the holiness will leave. *Chillul Hashem* is the name for the void felt when holiness leaves. The hidden secret of Rashbi is hidden in Jewish souls.

We may not reveal too many of the secrets of the Torah. If these secrets would be revealed it would be like *bittul bechira*, nullification of choice, **for** the *rah* would be *battel*. If a man or a *tzadik* would reveal this inner holiness he would destroy the evil and then there would be no *bechira*. Wherever there is a matter of *bittul bechira*, there is a great *kitrug*, prosecution, against it, for Hashem allows the *mikatreig* to fight against these matters. For Hashem wants a world of Bechira.

There are some souls, like Rashbi, **who** have no fear. Rashbi had no fear of any *kitrug* and he could reveal the secrets of Torah. Hashem allows a Rashbi to reveal the secrets even though these matters are like a *bittul bechira* **because** there is a *liumas zeh*, there are powers of *rah* that are very, very potent. Once someone overcomes this *rah* he can become a part of the realm of holiness. Rashbi was one of these great souls: he could reveal the secrets of the Torah with no fear.

Lag Baomer is Rashbi’s day, and so this day has the same quality. This day has a different type of sun, **for** the sun did not want to set on this day. It wanted Rashbi to reveal more and more on this day. On this day Rashbi is the *baalebas*, master of the house. So on this day one can connect to the light of the secrets of Torah. The light of the secrets of Torah is like a level of no

choice, it is like *mattan* Torah of *paska zuhamasan*, when the filth of the serpent ceased, it is like Adam *harishon* before the sin! This light appears on Lag Baomer.

On Lag Baomer, there was a gathering, a *knesiya*, around Rashbi. Why a gathering? Because the holy realm is a *reshus hayachid*, all are united and working together! Each of the different students of Rashbi is a different *middah*, and the primary revelation of Rashbi, in all the *derushei hazohar*, lessons of Zohar, is to reveal how everything works together, how the entire structure is united and part of one whole. The section of Zohar called *idra* is the *komah*, structure, of how all levels unite to be one *reshus hayachid*.

This is the *idra rabba* where each student was told what to reveal according to his *middah*. On Lag Baomer it is *idra zuta*. Now Rashbi himself speaks. Rashbi is a *yachid* who is *kollel* all the others, and he reveals great secrets.

Rashbi is talking about the world from the head to the heel. He is revealing the *middos* of Adam *harishon*. For Adam unites all the *middos* and employs them in tandem. From the top to the heel it is all one. **Since we say that we**, our generation, are linked to the heels **we must ask**, what are heels? A *middah*: the legs are *nehi, netzach, hod yesod*, dominance, empathy, and foundation, the ankle is *nehi* of *nehi* the heel is *nehi* of *nehi* of *nehi*.

We know that *Reb Yochanan Hasandler*¹²¹ is buried next to Rashbi. He is the one who teaches **in Pirkei Avos** that “*Kol knessiya shehi lisheim shmayim sofa lihiskayim*,” “Any gathering for the sake of heaven will ultimately last.” (*Avos 4:11*) He is a shoemaker. He would fix the legs, symbols of the lowest levels. He goes to *Rashbi*’s grave and testifies, “This

¹²¹ Rav Yochanan Hasandler was from the fourth generation of sages called Tannaim. He was a student of Rabbi Akiva.

gathering reaches even the heels!” He is saying that this light and unity touches all, even the heel, even to the generation before *mashiach*. For this is a gathering *lishem shamayim*.

We need to connect to this light. If the *yetzer hara* fights this light know there is a rule, *zeh liumas zeh*, this one is opposite this one, and with this light you can conquer the *yetzer hara*. Secrets of Torah is a light of depth and with this light of Rashbi we can overcome the *sitra achra*.

ועשר בחי' אלו הטמאות כשאדם מחשב בהן או מדבר או עושה הרי מחשבתו שבמוחו ודבורו שבפיו וכח המעשיי שבידיו ושאר איבריו נקראים לבושי מסאבו לעשר בחי' אלו הטמאות שמתלבשות בהן בשעת מעשה או דבור או מחשבה והן הם כל המעשים אשר נעשים תחת השמש אשר הכל הבל ורעות רוח וכמ"ש בזהר בשלח שהן תבירו דרוחא כו' וכן כל הדבורים וכל המחשבות אשר לא לה' המה ולרצונו ולעבודתו שזהו פי' לשון סטרא אחרא פי' צד אחר שאינו צד הקדושה וצד הקדושה אינו אלא השראה והמשכה מקדושתו של הקב"ה ואין הקב"ה שורה אלא על דבר שבטל אצלו יתב' בין בפועל ממש כמלאכים עליונים בין בכח ככל איש ישראל למטה שבכחו להיות בטל ממש לגבי הקב"ה במסירת נפשו על קדושת ה'. ולכן אמרו רז"ל שאפי' אחד שיושב ועוסק בתורה שכינה שרויה כו' וכל בי עשרה שכינתא שריא לעולם אבל כל מה שאינו בטל אצלו ית' אלא הוא דבר נפרד בפני עצמו אינו מקבל חיות מקדושתו של הקב"ה מבחי' פנימית הקדושה ומהותה ועצמותה בכבודה ובעצמה אלא מבחי' אחרים שיורדים ממדרגה למדרגה רבבות מדרגות בהשתלשלות העולמות דרך עלה ועלול וצמצומים רבים עד שנתמעט כל כך האור והחיות מיעוט אחר מיעוט עד שיכול להתצמצם ולהתלבש בבחי' גלות תוך אותו דבר הנפרד להחיותו ולקיימו מאין ליש שלא יחזור להיות אין ואפס כבתחלה מקודם שנברא

הגהה עם היות בתוכו עשר ספי' דעשיה דקדושה וכמ"ש בע"ה שער מ"ג ובתוך עשר ספי' דעשיה אלו הן עשר ספי' דיצירה ובתוכן עשר ספי' דבריאה ובתוכן עשר ספי' דאצילות שבתוכן אור א"ס ב"ה ונמצא אור א"ס ב"ה מלא כל הארץ הלזו התחתונה על ידי התלבשותו בעשר ספי' דארבע עולמות אבי"ע כמ"ש בע"ה שער מ"ז פ"ב ובספר גלגולים :פרק כ

אלא שהקליפות הן נחלקות לשתי מדרגות זו למטה מזו המדרגה התחתונה היא שלש קליפון הטמאות ורעות לגמרי ואין בהם טוב כלל ונקראו במרכבת יחזקאל רוח סערה וענן גדול וגו' ומהן נשפעות ונמשכות נפשות כל אמות עובדי גלולים וקיום גופם ונפשות כל בעלי חיים הטמאים ואסורים באכילה וקיום גופם וקיום וחיות כל מאכלות אסורות מהצומח כמו ערלה וכלאי הכרם כו' וכמ"ש בע"ה שער מ"ט פ"ו וכן קיום וחיות כל המעשה דבור ומחשבה של כל שס"ה לא תעשה וענפיהן כמ"ש שם סוף פ"ה

Now these ten unclean categories, when a person meditates in them or speaks them, or acts by them, his thought — which is in his brain; and his speech—which is in his mouth; and the power of action—which is in his hands, together with his other limbs— all these are called the “impure garments” of these ten unclean categories wherein the latter are clothed at the time of the action, speech or thought. It is these that constitute all the deeds that are done under the sun, which are all “vanity and striving after the wind,” as interpreted in the Zohar, Beshallah, in the sense of a “ruination of the spirit...”

So, too, are all utterances and thoughts which are not directed towards G-d and His will and service. For this is the meaning of sitra achra— “the other side,” i.e. not the side of holiness. For

the holy side is nothing but the indwelling and extension of the holiness of the Holy One, blessed be He, and He dwells only on such a thing that abnegates itself completely to Him, either actually, as in the case of the angels above, or potentially, as in the case of every Jew down below, having the capacity to abnegate himself completely to the Holy One, blessed be He, through martyrdom for the sanctification of G-d.

That is why our Sages have said that “Even when a single individual sits and engages in the Torah the shechinah rests on him,” and “On each [gathering of] ten Jews the shechinah rests” always.

However, that which does not surrender itself to G-d, but is a separate thing by itself, does not receive its vitality from the holiness of the Holy One, blessed be He, that is, from the very inner essence and substance of the holiness itself, but from “behind its back,” as it were, descending degree by degree, through myriads of degrees with the lowering of the worlds, by way of cause and effect, and innumerable contractions, until the Light and Life is so diminished through repeated diminutions, that it can be compressed and incorporated, in a state of exile as it were, within that separated thing, giving it vitality and existence ex nihilo, so that it does not revert to nothingness and non-existence as it was before it was created.

Consequently, this world, with all its contents, is called the world of kelipot and sitra achra. Therefore all mundane affairs are severe and evil, and wicked men prevail, as explained in Etz Chayim, Portal 42, end of ch. 4.

Note: To be sure, there are contained in it [this world] the ten Sefiros of Asiyahh, action, of the side of holiness, as is written in Etz Chayim, Portal 43, and within these ten Sefiros of Asiyahh are the ten Sefiros of Yetzirahhh, formation, and in them the ten Sefiros of Beriahh, creation, and in them the ten Sefiros of Atzilus, emanation, in which abides the light of the blessed Ain Sof. Thus the light of the blessed Ain Sof pervades this lower world through being clothed in the ten Sefiros of the Four Worlds, namely those of aitzilus, Beriahh, Yetzirahhh and Asiyahh, as explained in Etz Chayim, Portal 47, ch. 2, and in sefer ha-gilgulim, ch. 20.

*However, the kelipos are subdivided into two grades, one lower than the other. The lower grade consists of the three kelipos which are altogether unclean and evil, containing no good whatever. In the “chariot” of [the prophet] Ezekiel they are called “whirlwind,” “great cloud...” From them flow and derive the souls of all the nations of the world, and the existence of their bodies, and also the souls of all living creatures that are unclean and unfit for consumption, and the existence of their bodies, as well as the existence and vitality of all forbidden food in the vegetable kingdom, such as orlah and “mixed seeds in the vineyard...” as explained in Etz Chayim, Portal 49, ch. 6, as also the existence and vitality of all actions, utterances, and thoughts pertaining to the 365 prohibitions and their offshoots, as is explained *ibid.*, at the end of ch. 5.*

Holiness Equals Surrender

Sitra achra means the other side is already evil. *Sitra achra* means there is no middle.

Either you are on the side of holiness or you are on the side of the opposite of holiness. There is no middle. Either it is *gan eden* or *gehinnom*.

The Tanya explains if it is *battel* to Hashem it is good. If I am not *battel* to Hashem, if I do something because I want it, then it is bad. There is no such thing as my own will, “what I want.” Our only wish should be to fulfill the will of Hashem. How can I say “I do this because I want to?” *Milo kol haaretz kvodo!* His glory fills the world! (*Yeshayahu 6:3*)

I should only do that which is *ratzon* Hashem. I should not be doing what I want to do. All that should exist for me should be *ratzon* Hashem! Either it is good or bad. The *Chovos Halevavos* talks about this as well.

The Tanya explains that when you have ten Jews there is *shechinah*, for in the hidden realm of these Jews there is *bittul* to Hashem. The *shechinah* is only revealed - there is a *giluy shechinah* - where there is *bittul* to Hashem. And so when the ten are together there is a *bittul* to Hashem and that causes a revelation of *shechinah*. For Hashem is in truth everywhere, but He is only revealed in a place where there is *bittul* to Hashem.¹²²

A Soul Ascending

Rashbi spoke about Yom Kippur. The last words he spoke about were about Jews entering into the Holy of Holies. When the *Kohen gadol* went into the Holy of Holies it was a *bechinah* of the *tzadik* going into a higher world. It was like a *tzadik* reaching the level of Adam *harishon*

¹²² For example, *Shem Mishmuel* on Bamidbar (5670) page 6 points out that to succeed in battle the warrior needs self esteem and confidence. Yet what can divide man from Hashem is ego. אנכי עומד בין השם וביניכם, (Devarim chapter 5) “I was standing between Hashem and you” the feelings of ego and self importance serve as the barrier between a person and Hashem. Ego is a root that spawns poisonous plants. “The correct advice is to consider and internalize that a person is an emissary of God. From Him comes all greatness and courage. The more one has surrendered to God the greater his success will be!”

kodem hachet, Adam before the sin. We see that Reb Yishmael *Kohen gadol* in the Holy of Holies had an *aliyas neshama*, elevation of soul.

When Rashbi died he said that that place was “*ki sham tzivah Hashem es habracha*,” “For there Hashem has commanded blessing.” He was not able to say the words *chayim ad olam*, life forever, but he ended with the words *sham tzivah Hashem es habracha*.

Lag Baomer is a time for *brachos* and *parshas Kedoshim* is a time of this *bracha* and this holiness. May Hashem help us that the *Kohen gadol* should enter the *kodesh kodashim*, **the Holy of Holies**, and we should merit *chayim ad haolam*.

Our world is filled with bridges between opposites. For instance night seems to be the opposite of day. Yet the twilight period between day and night is a bridge linking day and night. Bridges create unity. Our world is an arena where holiness can come to life, where there can be unity. Lesson fifteen delves into the realm of the permitted and prohibited matters and what role unity is to play.

Lesson Fifteen: *Achdus*, Unity And Its Importance

Chapter 7

אך נפש החיונית הבהמית שבישראל שמצד הקליפה המלובשת בדם האדם כנ"ל

On the other hand, the vitalizing animal soul in the Jew, that which is derived from the aspect of the kelipah, which is clothed in the human blood as stated above

ונפשות בהמות וחיות ועופות ודגים טהורים ומותרים באכילה וקיום וחיות כל הדומם וכל הצומח המותר באכילה וכן קיום וחיות כל המעשה דבור ומחשבה בענייני עוה"ז שאין בהם צד איסור

and the “souls” of the animals, beasts, birds and fish that are clean and fit for [Jewish] consumption, and also the existence and vitality of the entire inanimate and vegetable world which are permissible for consumption, as well as the existence and vitality of every act, utterance and thought in mundane matters that contain no forbidden aspect.

The Tanya first speaks of objects of *Kellipahs nogah* and then about actions from this form of physicality.

לא שרש ולא ענף משם"ה מצות לא תעשה וענפיהן דאורייתא ודרבנן רק שאינן לשם שמים אלא רצון הגוף והפצו ותאותו ואפ"ל הוא צורך הגוף וקיומו וחיותו ממש אלא שכוונתו אינה לשם שמים כדי לעבוד את ה' בגופו לא עדיפי מעשה דבור ומחשבות אלו מנפש החיונית הבהמית בעצמה והכל כאשר לכל נשפע ונמשך ממדרגה השנית שבקליפות וסטרא אחרא שהיא קליפה רביעית הנקראת קליפת נוגה שבעולם הזה הנקרא עולם העשיה רובו ככולו רע רק מעט טוב מעורב בתוכה [שממנה באות מדות טובות שבנפש הבהמית שבישראל כמ"ש לעיל] והיא בחי' ממוצעת בין שלש קליפות הטמאות לגמרי ובין בחי' ומדרגת הקדושה

Being neither root nor branch of the 365 prohibitive precepts and their offshoots, either on the explicit authority of the Torah, or by Rabbinic enactment— yet are not performed for the sake of Heaven but only by the will, desire and lust of the body, and even where it is a need of the body, or its very preservation and life, but his intention is not for the sake of Heaven, that is, to serve G-d thereby — all these acts, utterances and thoughts are no better than the vitalizing animal soul itself. And everything in this totality of things flows and is drawn from the second gradation [to be found] in the kelipos and sitra achra, namely, a fourth kelipah, called kelipas nogah. For in this world, called the “world of Asiyahh (action),” most, indeed almost all, of it [the kelipas nogah] is bad, and only a little good has been intermingled within it (from which come the good qualities contained in the animal soul of the Jew, as is explained above.)

This [kelipas nogah] is an intermediate category between the three completely unclean kelipos and the category and order of holiness.

The Tanya speaks of the *nefesh hachiyunis*, the life of physical matter, which is in a Jew. He teaches that this soul is not from the three *kellipos hatemeios*, rather it is from *kellipos nogah*, the *nogah* barrier. The Tanya explains that matters which are forbidden from the Torah are from the three totally impure *kellipos*, while matters that are permitted yet not mandated are from *Kellipahs nogah*. A person has many physical needs yet when fulfilling them his *kavvana*, intention, might not be *lishem shamayim*, for the sake of Heaven. Such actions are from the *nefesh hachiyunis*, which is from *Kellipahs nogah*. *Nogah* is mostly bad, just as this world is mostly bad with a little bit of *tov* mixed in to it.

Bridges And Intermediaries Help Unite

Kellipahs nogah is an intermediary. It is not all bad and it is also not all good. It has parts that are good and it has parts that are bad. You should know that all opposites need an intermediary. Why did Hashem make intermediaries? Hashem is one, and “*Bayom hahu yihye Hashem echad ushmo echad,*” “On that (future) day Hashem will be one and His name will be one.” (*Zechariah 14:9*) This means all must arrive eventually to a level of *achdus*, a state of being one. Night is dark and it is the opposite of day. Day is light, yet at one point *layla kayom yair*, night will shine like day, they will become one. In other words, the matter we call *choshech*, darkness, will be revealed as really being an *ohr*, a light. The *choshech* is a darkness *lierkeinu*: it seems to us to be dark, but in truth there is a light there. When we arrive at the future this hidden light will be revealed and *layla kayom yair*.

We know that for bad things we bless Hashem with “*Boruch dayan haemes,*” “Blessed is the true judge.” For good tidings we say a different blessing, “*Boruch hatov vihameitiv,*” “Blessed is the Good One who provides benefit.” The Talmud teaches that in the future it will only be *hatov vihameitiv*, for in the future the fact that Hashem *echad* will be revealed. (*Pesachim 50a*)

Now too Hashem is one. Yet now **He** is hidden. Basically we should always say *hatov vihameitiv*, we do not do so now for this fact has yet to be truly revealed. Had it been revealed there would be no punishments and there would be no choice. Therefore in our realm it is hidden. Even one who accepts *yisurrim* with love does not feel that pain is the same as when Hashem reveals *tov hanigleh*, revealed good. Our reality does not display complete oneness. In the future there will be a revelation of *echad*, the One. This is the peace that is coming to the world. It is the unity and oneness of the opposites.

This is the secret of “*vigar zee vim keves*,” “the wolf will live with the lamb,” (*Yeshayahu 11:6*) and “*Viaryeh kabakar yochal teven*,” “And the lion will eat hay like the cattle,” (*Yeshayahu 11:7*) and “*Efraim lo yikaneh es Yehudah*,” “Ephraim will not fight with Judea.” (*Yeshayahu 11:13*) All of these are opposites and in the future they will be united and become one. This is the plan in the creation: to bring about a state of oneness. Shabbes is a *me'en*, a bit, of the future. It is a time of the secret of one. The fact of oneness and bringing about a unity between opposites is one of the foundations of the world.

We know that “*Mutar lishanos limaan hashalom*,” “One may change the truth for the sake of peace.” *Emmes*, truth, is so necessary: holiness is all *emes*. Yet shalom is so important that we can change matters for the sake of arriving at this oneness and shalom. Certainly the shalom has to be a matter of truth to reach the true level we should be at, namely Jews in peace with each other.

Because unity is so important the world is filled with bridges, with beings that are intermediaries to bring the opposites together.¹²³

¹²³ In *parshas Beha'alos'cha* the Jewish nation complain about the manna and lack of meat. The manna could taste like meat, why were they upset they did not have physical meat?

Shem Mishmuel answers that the world needs bridges. After slavery in Egypt, we had manna in the desert. To transition from slave food to angelic food we needed a bridge, an *emtzai*. The matzos we took out of Egypt were physical food, yet they had the taste of manna. Thus they had an element that was Egypt-like, physical food, and an aspect that was heavenly, the taste of manna, and they served as a transition to the level of manna. Thus too we find a transitional food as we enter the holy land. In the desert each day we had new manna. It would not stay fresh past one day. When we entered Israel from the desert we had old manna for a period of time. This manna was the *memutza* between the food of the desert and the food of the holy land. The Jews in *parshas Beha'alos'cha* thought they were about to enter the holy land. They knew they would have different food there. In the desert we ate manna food that was all *chesed*. Israel also has *din*. To prepare for the land of Israel, they asked to have real meat, a food that displays G-dly *din*, as evidenced from its red color, in addition to the manna. This way they thought they would have a transition to Israel whose food will display *din*. They sinned in a lack of *temimus*. The logic was correct but if Hashem did not command eating meat and manna they should have trusted Him. (page 176)

Bridges That Unite

For example *domeim*, inanimate **objects**, have little life. *Tzomeiach*, growing plants, have more, **for** they grow. In *chai*, living animals, there is even more life, it is a higher level of life. And then you have *medabrim*, humans, whose life is so powerful that you cannot compare other levels of life to them. This corresponds to the four letters of Hashem's name *havaya*. There is also a fifth level, the life of Yisrael, which corresponds to the level of the *kutzo shel yud*.

Between each level there is a bridge that unites. We always need a bridge. Between Jews and non-Jews we have *geirim*, converts. They have no portion in the land, so in a certain way they are not fully part of the Jewish nation. Yet they are not non-Jews. They are obligated in mitzvos. They have some qualities of this side and others of the other side. They are an intermediary, a bridge that brings the two opposites together, a *mimutza*.

(*Seforim* say **that** you always have two intermediaries: one from your side and one from **the other** side. So from the Jewish side **the intermediaries are** *geirim*, converts, and from the non-Jewish side **they are** *chasidei umos haolam*, the pious of the nations, who have a portion in *olam haba*. I am not sure of this point, yet I would suggest it.)

The *memutza* between living animals and people is the monkey, who is the most intelligent of the animals. Then you have plants and living creatures and the middle between these two is what is called *adney hasadeh*, a living creature that is a type of animal yet **is also** rooted in a set place. There are also birds that grow in trees, so they are **also a** *memutza* between *tzomeach* and *chai*. In the next level of *domeim* and *tzomeach* there is also a *memutza*: silver, although I do not remember exactly how silver is the *memutza*.

Shabbes is the opposite of the days of the week. *Motzai* Shabbes, the escort of Shabbes, and *tosefes* Shabbes, adding to Shabbes on Friday, are the *memutzaim* between Shabbes and *yemos hachol*. After Shabbes we have some holiness of Shabbes left over and that is the *memutza* between Shabbes and the days of the week. *Chol hamoed* as well is the intermediary between the holiness of *yom tov* and the holiness of the week.

Take *mishnayos* and *gemarah* as well.¹²⁴ Between them you have a *baraisa* that if it is *bilashon hamishna*, in the language of a mishna, it has the status of a law of *mishna*. (Apparently if it is not phrased in that way it has the status of *Talmud*.) In the world as well you have the *sadeh*, fields, and you have the *ir*, cities, and then you have the *migrash ha'ir*, the yards around the city.

So too in all areas you can find a middle man, because all is one. The entire world eventually must reveal the matter of oneness. Water and dust are opposites and the *memutza* is the *rekak*, the mud. In all different matters there is a *memutza*.

***Kellipahs Nogah* Is The Bridge That Unites The Physical And The Spiritual**

Kellipahs nogah is also a *memutza*. It is the intermediary between good and bad. It shines into both realms. There is good in the world and there is bad in the world. The *Kellipahs nogah* is a shine of good that shines into the realm of evil. There is a light of good which shines into the realm of *rah*. And there is a *choshech* that hides this good. Because of this darkness there is only a shine of light.

¹²⁴ The Mishnah is the basic text of Oral Law. It is a collection of tractates filled with short lessons of Jewish law. It was compiled by Rabbi Judah the prince around the year 200 of the common era. Legal texts that were not edited by Rabbi Judah but were from the same era are called *baraisos*. The *gemarah* is the Babylonian Talmud. It contains about 2,700 folio pages of analysis of *Mishnayos*. It was completed by Ravina and Rav Ashi in Babylon around the year 500 of the common era.

There are four letters of *havaya*. Let us say the first three correspond to the three *avos* and the fourth to the level of *malchus*. Now *malchus* we have explained is a glow. So too we have three *kellipos* of *rah* and then *nogah*, **which** is not really bad. Rather in *nogah* the *rah* enters the realm of *toy*, or the *toy* enters the realm of *rah*. It is not a realm of real *rah*, **and** thus it is the bridge between *toy* and *rah*. It is not a realm of *etzem*. It is a realm of *hispashtus*.

So too *alos hashachar*: **the time before** the sunrise is the bridge between day and night. *Bidieved*, in the worst case scenario, you can fulfill all the daytime mandates at this time. Yet since the sun has not yet risen it is not really day.

Yemos hamashiach, the days of Mashiach, are the connection between the *hayom liasosam*, today fulfill them, and the *limachar likabeil scharam*, tomorrow receive their reward. The Torah does not talk of the *lemachar likabeil scharam* because all is truly one.

In depth the *hayom liasosam* is one with the *limachar likabeil s'charam*. They are all one, and the real reward is to do the mitzvos. The days of *mashiach* are the bridge between these two points. In the days of *mashiach* we will still have the mitzvos for “*Zos haTorah lo tehe muchlefes*,” “This Torah will not be replaced.” However, we will be in a state of “*Yamim asher ain bahem cheifetz*,” “Days that are not desired.” We will not accomplish as much with our mitzvos for we will not have a *yetzer hara* on the same level. So it has elements of the *limachar likabeil scharam* already.

***Kellipahs nogah* shows that *rah* will eventually be turned into *toy*.**

The Spiritual Source For Evil **Things**

Now we have a deep matter. The Tanya talks of this in *Likutei Torah*.

We know that evil gets its life from Hashem **because** *ain od milvado*, there is nothing other than Him. *Rah* does not have its own life. It too gets *kium*, existence, from Hashem. This is difficult to understand. We have said that *nogah* is a mixture of good and evil while the three evil *kellipos* are completely evil **and** that is why we must avoid them. But this is difficult. How can evil acts and things have life if they have no spark of good in them? How can matters that are *tamei* and bad have life? If they do have a good spark in them, in what way are they different from the *Kellipahh* of *nogah*?! Why can we not raise these sparks and be involved in them?! If they have a *davar tov* here, **then** let us do these acts, connect with the *tov* therein, and elevate the *tov*!

The answer is that **while there is tov** in the three *kellipos hatmeios* it does not relate to the very core of the matter. The good is not part of its very essence. In *nogah*, the good, to some degree, is the **thing** itself. In *rah* the life is from one place and the matter itself is something else. In *tov* the *chius* is the **thing** itself. In *tov* the *kedusha* that is *mechaye* the matter is the **thing**. In *rah* the *chius* is one thing while the bad **thing** is something else.

This is still difficult to understand. What is the **thing** itself **in rah**? If it has life it must be good! It must have some good matter which gives it life. If **something** exists it has life, so then it must have good?!

Let me just say that to understand this matter one needs a great *hassaga*, apprehension, of G-dliness.

There are *hassagos* of *Elokis* that require great levels to reach them. There are levels we can reach through the negative, we are *massig derech shelilah*, and to understand the **issue at**

hand - the G-dliness in evil - we must understand levels of G-dliness that are only accessible through *shelila*, negating a matter.

What is the *hassaga Elokis* that we are *massig derech shelila*?

When we say Hashem is kind we are speaking *derech chiyuv*, in a positive and direct way. The real truth is that Hashem is more than kind! In a true sense when we say “Hashem is kind” what we are really saying is that He is not unkind. He is the opposite of *rah*, so we say He is *tov*. He is a *chacham*, a wise one, in the sense that he is the complete opposite of a fool. When we say He is *gibbor*, a mighty being, what we really mean is that He is the opposite of *chalach*, a weakling. *Gibbor* is a *gevul*, a defined term, **so** how can you say, “He is a *gibbor*?!” That would limit Him! The positive points we say about Hashem is based on **His** *malchus*, an illumination from Hashem **that** is clothed in letters and limits in this world. Of that light we can speak *biderech chiyuv*; the emanation can be characterized.

Yet when we talk of *atzmiyus Elokis*, essential G-dliness, that which is above the *ziv of Elokis*, we cannot speak *biderech chiyuv*. We can only speak honestly *biderech shelila*, to be *sholel* the inaccurate from Hashem.

In the realm of *chiyuv*, Hashem is connected to things that are *tov*. All the things that are *tov* are appropriate descriptions of Hashem. You can be *mechane*, nickname, Him as *tov*, good; *rachum*, merciful; and *chanun*, gracious. He performs *chesed* so He is called the *baal chesed*, master of kindness. He wants us to fulfill mitzvos for the light of G-dliness: the *haara* of *Elokis* enters into the vessels of the Torah and mitzvos and this is the life of all the good things. The life which gives life to good things comes from the *chiyus Elokis* of which we can speak *biderech chiyuv*.

Yet when we speak of *rah* these are matters Hashem **does** not *meyached*, unite, with. He tells us not to do these things. From where do these matters have life? They have life from the *chelek Elokis* that we cannot speak of *biderech chiuiv*! “Hashem is not in this *keili*” **in the sense** that *Elokis* is not in the *keili*: this is where the *rah* is *yoneik* from. The *chius Eloki* that is not a *hamshacha* into a *keili* is the part of *Elokis* that gives *chius* to matters that are *rah*. (These matters have life from the fact that there are things that Hashem is not described by. These matters relate to *rah* **for** *rah* relates to the level that is higher than *hamshacha* into *keilim*. *Rah* relates to the fact that Hashem is not in the *kelim* and this G-dliness only relates to *shelila* and is higher than definition and *keilim*.)

Let us explain further. The Zohar explains the verse, “*Hanistaros liHashem elokeinu vihaniglos lanu ulivaneinu*,” “The hidden matters are for Hashem our Lord, while the revealed matters are for us and our children.” (*Devarim 29:28*) *Hanistaros* connects to the *yud keh* of *havaya: almah diskasya*, the hidden realm. The *niglos* are the *vav keh*, the *alma diisgalya*, revealed world, of *havaya*. “*Zeh shmi liolam*,” “This is My name forever,” “*Vizeh zichri lidor vador*,” and this is My appellation **from** generation to generation.

Shem שם with 15 (the *gimatria* of *yud י* and *keh ה*) is 365, while *zichri זכרי* with 11 (the *gimatria* of *vav ו* and *keh ה*) is 248. The Zohar explains **that the *yud keh* represent the negative commandments, things you should not do and that the *vav keh* represent the 248 positive mitzvos, the things you should do.** In other words, the 365 *lo taaseh*, **things you should not do**, all the *devarim temaim* and *assurim*, draw life from a level that is higher than the level of the 248 positive mitzvos! They are *yoneik chius* from such a high place that we cannot apprehend it!

As we said earlier about *boreih choshech*: *chosheich* comes from a higher level than *ohr*, which is only *yotzeir*. On our level, these levels look to be darkness but in truth they are a higher and brighter light. Just as we explained the phrase *borei chosheich* (for *boreih* is higher than *yotzeir* yet we say *yotzeir ohr* and *borei choshech*) it looks to us as darkness but in truth it is such a high light that it looks dark to us. It draws from such a place of G-dliness where we cannot speak in positive terms. We can only speak of what He is not, a level where He is higher than all the definitions. This is a level of G-dliness with which we cannot talk *biderech chiyuv*. This level, that is so high, can give *chius* to all *devarim temaim*. It can be *mechaye* a matter that is totally not related to it.

Chiu and comprehension have nothing to do with *rah*, for *rah* is the opposite of this. But *rah* is related to *shelila*, to what we grasp from being *sholel* matters. Therefore the Tanya says this also has a *hassaga*. To clearly understand “He is not this” represents a *hassaga* and comprehension.

The Rambam says in *Moreh Nevuchim* on the verse “*UMoshe nigash el haarafel asher sham haElokim*,” “And Moshe stepped to the cloud where the Almighty was” (*Shmos 20:17*) that this was when Moshe reached a clear *hassaga* in the matters we know through the *shelila*. To clearly reject from Hashem matters that we comprehend.

For example, taking up space is an essential part of items that are real to us. We know with our physical senses that what exists takes up space. Yet we know that some items do not seem to take up space. Think about a song, or electricity. Even though they exist, they do not fill space. Only if we think in a more physical way do we make the mistake of thinking that all things take up space. Hashem is real. He exists. Yet to think that Hashem takes up a certain

space is ridiculous! If a person thinks Hashem takes up space then he is being *megashem* Hashem!! A person who realizes with clarity that Hashem is entirely not *tofeis makom* understands Hashem better. He reaches Hashem through *shelila*! Through understanding clearly that “Hashem is *mamash* not like the *chacham* I know” I am *massig* Hashem *derech shelila*.

The Tanya explains that to grasp Hashem *biderech shelila* I must be *poreish*, step away, from certain actions, hence the prohibitions of *negative commandments*. Through the act of separating from *lo taaseh* I reach levels through *shelila*, through *perisha*.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ *Shem Mishmuel* points out that the Zohar explains the great honor given to Sarah in the Torah to be a result of Sarah maintaining her purity when she was taken by Pharaoh. Why is this her primary merit? Why not mention her great levels of prophecy?

“The holy Zohar teaches that to the degree a person flees from and distances himself from the *sitra achra* to that degree he reaches in holiness. This is how it interpreted the verse, “*Vayivrach Moshe mipnei Paroh,*” “And Moshe fled Pharaoh,” the *malchus* of evil, therefore “*Vayeishev al habe’er,*” “And he settled at the well,” this means he received the *malchus* of holiness. This is the lesson of the Zohar about Sarah: that her great merit was her purity in the house of Pharaoh. Had she been defiled by him she would have been completely attached to *Kellipahh* and it would have been very difficult to ever leave the realm of evil. Through resisting him she received a corresponding measure of holiness, a *kedusha* that filled all her limbs. Her holiness did not come from *aseh tov*, doing good, rather it emerged from *sur mera*, leaving evil.” In a similar vein he explains that each Jew receives the holiness on Friday night through emotionally and intellectually leaving the worries and sins of the week. Through detachment we are blessed with corresponding attachment! (page 207-208)

He also explained the Midrash which interprets the sentences of the *aishes chayil*, woman of valor, poem to refer to Sarah with the principle that detachment leads to attachment. According to the Midrash, *zam’ma sadeha vatikacheihu*, she plotted for her field and purchased it, refers to Sarah’s purchase of the cave of Machpela and it’s field. This is very difficult. How could Sarah have purchased the Machpela? The Machpela was purchased by Avraham after her death in order to bury her!

“The Zohar explains that the four hundred silver shekels used to purchase the Machpela cave truly refer to four hundred universes of spiritual longing. The meaning of this is that the only way to merit four hundred universes of spiritual longing is through detaching from the desires and attachments of this world, in equal measure to detachment from the physical one merits attachment to spiritual universes! The four hundred shekel Avraham paid are a hint to the hundreds of levels of physical desire Avraham gave away to be blessed with exclusively spiritual longings. This is why Avraham only tried to purchase the Machpela cave now... After the *akeida*, binding of Isaac, Avraham became aware of how he was willing to give away all his desires for Hashem, for Yitzchok was the culmination of all his pleasures and deepest wishes... Then he knew he could acquire the cave of Machpela which is dependent on four hundred universes of spiritual desire, for once he had sacrificed all his physical wishes he received corresponding levels of spiritual desire...The approach of reaching holiness through detachment from desiring this world was the essence of Sarah and she imparted this ability to her descendants...Avraham also got this ability from her. Therefore whatever Avraham achieved in this realm is due to her, hence it can be said that she acquired the Machpela field, *zam’ma sadeha vatikacheihu!*” (page 212-213)

Nechemyah haamsoni used to interpret every word *es* in the Torah. He was *poreish* from all his *drashos* when he got to “*Es Hashem elokecha tira*,” “Fear Hashem your Lord.” (*Devarim 6:13*) He explained “*Kisheim sheani mikabel sechar al hadrisha ani mekabel sechar al haperisha*,” “Just as I got reward for the interpretations I will get reward for separating from interpretations.” (*Pesachim 22*) He was connecting to an awareness of Hashem that can be reached only *biderech shelila*.

Es Hashem elokecha tira. The question was, is it possible to have something associated with Hashem, a bit of *Elokis* that is *tafel*, secondary, to *Elokis*, that deserves fear like Him? *Biderech chiuiv* we cannot reach this point! In *ahava* we have **positive commandments**, we have *hamshachos*, so there we have true passages. But *yirah* **represents negative commandments**, **which** cannot be grasped *derech chiuiv*. *Es Hashem Elokecha tira* is related to *derech shelila*. So here he was *massig derech shelila* and then he was *mekabel sechar al haperisha*.

The Future Enables Us To Grasp Positively What We Can Now Only Infer From Negatives

In the future, we will merit to be *massig* all things *derech chiuiv*. In the future we will have revealed the part of G-dliness which gave life to all evil. The *rah* will become *tov*. We will understand matters as they are in their root. We will understand all *biderech chiyuv* and the *rah* will be comprehended in a positive sense.

A small light of this future, to be *massig derech chiuiv* matters that now we can only be *massig derech shelila*, comes through *teshuva*. *Teshuva* is to return evil to good. It causes *zdonos*, willful sins, to become *zachuyos*, merits. It causes the evil to become good and it enables matters that till now were accessed through *shelila* to be reached *biderech chiyuv*.

Yom Kippur is the day of *teshuva*, return to Hashem. On it we bring *rah* to *tov*. We do not eat or drink that day for it is a bit of *olam haba*. On Yom Kippur the high priest would enter the holy of holies. Generally, “*Vial yavo bchol eis el hakodesh*,” “He may not come at anytime to the holy.” (*Vayikra 16:2*) First there must be a sense of reward for separating, there must be a *hassaga biderech shelila*, *al yavo bichol*, for “*Bianan eiraeh el hakoperes*,” “I appear in a cloud over the ark.” First a *hassaga biderech shelila*, first *mekablin sechar al heperisha*, a holy rejecting. Just as when Moshe ascended Sinai, at first he confronted darkness. There was an *arafel*, a cloud. “*Umoshe nigash el haarafel asher sham haElokim*.” There is a *hassaga biderech shelila* and after this comes the level of comprehending a matter *biderech chiyuv* and “*Bzos yavo Aharon el hakodesh*,” “With this Aharon can enter the holy.” (*Vayikra 16:3*) The whole year Aharon stayed away from the *kodesh hakadoshim* and reached this level of *Elokim* through *shelila*.

On Yom Kippur he enters the Holy of Holies with *ketores*. He is *massig Elokim derech chiyuv*! The *ketores* is the life of the *sitra achra* being returned to *tov*. This is why the *samech mem*, the angel of death, taught this secret to Moshe. (*Shabbes 89*) This means reaching the *hassaga* of *alma diiskasya biderech chiyuv*. This is also the second set of **tablets of the Ten Commandments** which Yom Kippur celebrates.

All the great revelations of the thirteen attributes of mercy only came about through the *teshuva* following the sin of the *eigel*, **calf**. After the great return Moshe was able to ask “*Hareini nah es kvodecha*,” “Please show me Your glory,” (*Shemos 33:18*) and a he was given the gift of a new apprehension, “*Ureisem es achorai*,” “You will see that which is in the back.” (*Shemos 33:23*) How would we have **achieved** these levels without the sin of the *eigel* and

the subsequent *teshuva*? The answer is that all the *hassagos* could have been achieved at *mattan Torah*. *Mattan Torah* was the teaching of the mitzvos. The **positive commandments** are matters we get *derech chiyuv* and the **negative commandments** are the levels we get *derech shelila*. Had we not fallen with the golden calf, we would have comprehended in a positive way that which today can only be accessed through a rejection, at the end of the forty days when Moshe returned with the **tablets** and brought the Torah to this world. We would have **had** a correct acquisition in the *hassaga* of *mattan Torah* and then we would have reached all the levels that now we reach through *shelila bederech chiyuv*.

Before we received the Torah there were three days of separating, when the men separated from their wives. The Jews were also told during this time, “Don’t come close to the mountain.” These days were called *shloshes yemei hagbalah*. Moshe could **get** very close but the rest of us were held back during the **three days of hagbala**. Why call them days of *hagbala*? Why not three days of *prisha*? (Their essence was to separate from the women, *perisha*, and *hagbala* means to stay away from the mountain.) Why are they called days of *hagbala*? The answer is that *hagbala* is the same as *perisha*. These were days where the levels we do not comprehend *biderech chiyuv* we **achieved** *biderech shelila*.

Al tigshu el isha, Do not near a woman (*Shemos 19:15*) means to avoid evil and the *yetzer hara*. If a person tries to reach these sparks that are reached through *shelila*, through *chiyuv*, it is like violating a **negative commandment**. Someone who tries to be *massig* matters *derech chiyuv* that can only be reached *derech shelila* in depth is like someone trying to raise a spark in a **negative commandment** by performing the act that is sinful! There are matters that we must be *poreish*, *separate*, from! The three days of *hagbala* are three days of separating from the *rah*.

Someone who violates this boundary and tries *biderech chiyuv* **does not understand** Hashem! He is distorting Hashem! These were three days of staying away. This was the time for the great *hassaga* through *shelila*. Someone who says *biderech chiyuv*, “Hashem is a *chacham* like us” is being *megashem* Hashem! You cannot say that about *etzem Elokis*! You can say it about the *ziv* from Hashem, the *malchus* that shines into the *Chochmah*, but to say this about the *etzem Elokis* is forbidden! “He is a *chacham*” is a *hagshama*, making Hashem physical! To say this is **to say that** Hashem endorses the *rah* that **are** prohibited by **negative commandments**!

In regards to the light from Hashem we can talk in positive and absolute terms. However, in regards to *atzmiyus Elokis* we can only talk in terms of *shelila*. To do otherwise is *kitzutz netios*, cutting saplings from their roots. It is a *hagshama* of *Elokis*. To be *megashem Elokis* is like saying - heaven forbid - that Hashem cares for *rah*.

To say Hashem is a *chacham* and that this *chacham* is *mechaye* the *rah* **and that therefore** this *chacham* is associated with the *rah* **is one thing**. But if we say **that** Hashem is above *chochmah* then He can be *mechaye rah* and not really care for this *rah*. Being *megashem* Hashem is like violating a **negative commandment**. The three days of *hagbala* are three days of being *poreish* from *rah*.

After these three days Moshe went to the cloud. First, he reached *hassagos* in the way of *shelila*. Then Moshe **received the tablets**, the Torah. With the **tablets** he **brought** the *arafel asher sham haElokim* down in the **tablets** to Klal Yisrael. Had we merited and not sinned with the golden calf we would have a Yom Kippur on the 17th of Tamuz. We would have been *massig* the light of the *arafel* in a way of *chiuv* without having to sin first! *Teshuva* is a type of light and we do not always need a sin to get to this light. We would have the light of *teshuva* and the light of

teshuva is a light of bringing the *rah* back to *tov*! This light does not require that you do bad.

Teshuva is the light of Reuvein who is the tribe of the month of Tamuz of whom it was said “*Reumah bein bni libein chami*,” “See the difference between my son and the son of my mother in law.”

When the Jews came to the mountain they traveled from Refidim with the light of *teshuva*. “*Vayisu merifidim vayavau midbar Sinai, mah biasan limidbar Sinai biteshuva af nessiasan MeRifidim biteshuva.*” “And they traveled from Refidim and came to the Sinai desert, just as they arrived at Sinai in a state of *teshuva*, they left Refidim in a state of *teshuva*.” (*Shemos 19:2 and Rashi’s commentary to the text*) We repented from Refidim. “*Rafu yedeihem midivrey Torah*,” “Their hands weakened from words of Torah.” All Jewish hands have to hold on to the **tablets** when *rafu yedeihem min haTorah!* The Jews were not holding on to the **tablets** as they should **have** and at that time “*Vayichan sham Yisrael kiish echad bilev echad*,” “Israel camped (at the foot of Sinai) as one man with one heart.” This *lev echad* was the returning of the *rah* to *tov*. When the *rah* becomes *tov* then you have the real *achdus*. We have two hearts: a *yetser hara* and a *yetzer tov*. When it was *bilev echad* there was only one heart for the *rah* became *tov*!

We sinned the sin of the *eigel*, but a *roshem*, an impression, of *mattan Torah* remained.

Reb Yose would say about Shavuos, “Without this day *kama Yose ika bishuka?*” “How many Yoses **would there be** in the market?” (*Pesachim 68b*) The Talmud says we must give honor to a scholar who forgot his learning for *luchos* and **that** *shivrei luchos*, broken tablets, are in the *aron*. Apparently we must honor the broken *luchos* and this is why Rav Yose would celebrate Shavuos. He forgot his learning (**the level of broken *luchos***) and Shavuos is the day of the first

luchos, which were broken but still deserved honor. Apparently a *roshem* was left and therefore we still mark a *yom tov* on Shavuos, the day of the *luchos rishonos*, **the first tablets**.

So Reb Yose who forgot his learning, and a *talmid chacham* who forgets his learning, **are both shivrey luchos, broken tablets. They** would **both** appreciate Shavuos, for it is the day that proves a *roshem* should be appreciated. Either way Shavuos leaves a *roshem*. The *roshem* of the *teshuva* with which we left Refidim was a *roshem* of returning the *rah* to *tov*.

This is related to *Kellipahs nogah*. *Nogah* enables us to unite the *rah* and the *tov* and thus to bring the *rah* back to the level of *tov*. *Nogah* is in the middle to help us unite the *rah* and the *tov*. And we find in Shavuos that we read of converts and all agree that *Atzeres, Shavuos*, requires *lachem*, your material enjoyment. Namely **that** there is a need for *Kellipahs nogah on Shavuos* because it is *yom shenitna bo* Torah, the day the Torah was given. **In other words, on Shavuos we must turn the rah to tov and understand all in the way of chiyuv.**

The *hassaga* of *boreih rah* is also in the Torah. The Talmud discusses whether holidays and Shabbat should be celebrated with spiritual enjoyments or with physical enjoyments. The Talmud teaches that "*Hakol modim dibaatzeres bainan lachem.*" "All agree that on Shavuos the material must be enjoyed." Even the *kofrim*, the heretics, must admit on Shavuos that there is only *tov* and there is no *rah*. *Achdus* is revealed on *chag hashavuos*.

Prepare For Shavuos With Unity

We find in the days of *sefira* **that** there was not enough unity between the students of Rabbi Akiva. "*Lo nahagu kavod zeh bazeh,*" "They did not treat each other with respect." At *mattan*

Torah we stood *ki'ish echad bilev echad*. Everything is about *achdus*, for the way to reach the great *hassaga* of Shavuot is to strengthen our sense of oneness.

Following *lag bomer* the gates are sealed, for before we come to the level of *ilas hailos*, the source of all sources, there is a smallness. We need smallness before the greatness. Now the *shechina* is busy getting ready for *mattan Torah*. We now need to dedicate our thoughts to prepare all the jewelry for the *shechinah*. We need to fix our *middos* so that we might merit to reach a great *hassaga* in knowing Hashem, a great *hassaga* in understanding Hashem.

The *Kozhnutzer maggid*¹²⁶ explained that kids are allowed into the room where the queen prepares. In the same way in these days we must lower ourselves and think about the coming great days and try to prepare ourselves for the great unity of *anochi Hashem elokecha*. All our thoughts should be about *mattan Torah* to find favor in the eyes of Hashem, so that Hashem will be *mashpia* a high level of *hassagas Elohis*, a high level of *mattan Torah*. And if we are small in our eyes and not *tofeis makom*, Hashem will allow us in to appreciate the *kishutey kallah*.

Our world presents complex choices. Some matters are mitzvos others are sins. Man is also challenged with actions that are permitted. Permitted matters emerge from Kellipahs Nogah and man's intent can cause these matters to either rise or fall. Lesson Sixteen explores this concept. Why did the Almighty create a realm dependent on intent? Lesson Sixteen reveals that the Almighty wanted to challenge us, a world of only apparent good and obvious evil would make our choices too clear. Therefore we have a truly complex

¹²⁶ Rav Yisrael Hofstein (1736-1814) was known as the Maggid, preacher, of Kozhnitz. He was a student of the Maggid of Mezeritch and Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk. He was one of the great tzadikim and leaders of the early nineteenth century.

world that has difficult challenges. Even tzadikim have complex choices to make when they must choose between two ways of Mitzvah. Much prayer is needed to merit to know what Hashem wants us to do.

Lesson Sixteen: Why Not Only Mitzvos?

In chapter seven the Tanya explains that while Kellipahs nogah can become part of the realm of kedusha, holiness, it can also become part of an opposite realm. It all depends on the kavanah, the intent and purpose, why one engaged in this act of nogah.

ולכן פעמים שהיא נכללת בשלש קליפות הטמאות [כמ"ש בע"ה שער מ"ט ריש פ"ד בשם הזהר] ופעמים שהיא נכללת ועולה בבחי' ומדרגת הקדושה דהיינו כשהטוב המעורב בה נתברר מהרע וגובר ועולה ונכלל בקדושה

Hence it is sometimes absorbed within the three unclean kelipos (as is explained in Etz Chayim, Portal 49, beginning of ch. 4, on the authority of the Zohar) and sometimes it is absorbed and elevated to the category and level of Holiness, as when the good that is mixed in it is extracted from the bad and prevails and ascends until it is absorbed in Holiness

כגון ד"מ האוכל בשרא שמינא דתורא ושותה יין מבושם להרחיב דעתו לה' ולתורתו

Such is the case, for example, of he who eats fat beef and drinks spiced wine in order to broaden his mind for the service of G-d and His Torah

כדאמר רבא חמרא וריחא

as Ravah said: "Wine and fragrance [make a man's mind more receptive],"

או בשביל כדי לקיים מצות ענג שבת וי"ט אזי נתברר חיות הבשר והיין שהיה נשפע מקליפת נוגה ועולה לה' כעולה וכקרבן.

or in order to fulfill the command concerning enjoyment of the Sabbath and Festivals in such a case the vitality of the meat and wine, originating in kelipas nogah, is distilled and ascends to G-d like a burnt offering and sacrifice.

וכן האומר מילתא דבדיחותא לפקח דעתו ולשמח לבו לה' ולתורתו ועבודתו שצריכים להיות בשמחה

So, too, when a man utters a joke in order to sharpen his wit and rejoice his heart in G-d, in His Torah and service, which should be practiced joyfully,

וכמו שעשה רבא לתלמידיו שאמר לפנייהם מילתא דבדיחותא תחלה ובדחי רבנן

as Ravah was wont to do with his pupils, prefacing his discourse with some witty remark, to enliven the students.

A joke **usually seems to be** an expression of the physical element of wind and not a holy matter, yet we see here that when used correctly a joke can be elevated.

Permitted Matters Rise With Correct Intent

Mitzvos are essentially holy. Kelipahs nogah are permitted matters such as a milsa dibidichusa, a joke, **that assists** learning. The pleasure one has from this laughing matter is not at its core good. This pleasure of the well-intentioned is the same as the pleasure **that** a person who is not being mechavein lishem shmayaim feels in a joke. If the same thing for one person would be a mitzvah and for another it would not be a mitzvah means that at its core this **thing – a joke -** is not **definitively something good**. Rather it is not **inherently** good nor is it **inherently** bad. If one is mechavein lishem shamayim, that it should help in avdus Hashem, this is what makes it good. Through the kavanah lishem shamayim it becomes something holy.

Why did Hashem make things whose goodness is dependent on the intent of their use?

Further, what is better: a joke or a pure mitzvah? Presumably a mitzvah. Why did Rabba start his class with a joke? Why start with something that is only good through the intent one has in its performance? Why not start with words of Torah that are intrinsically and innately good?

The challenge of good judgement

Let us realize that Hashem wants man to acquire a great perfection. Human life is a big job. Heaven puts man in challenging situations. He must work through things in order to fulfill the mission Hashem sent him to do. It is not supposed to be simple and easy. If it would be forbidden to enjoy muttar items, if all jokes would be assur and all enjoyments of food enjoined, then the service of Hashem would have been to avoid all devarim muttarim and only do mitzvos. While it would be very hard to fight nature and avoid things that are naturally pleasing to us in this way, in a certain way it would be easier. Why? Because we would always easily know what we must do and what we must avoid! We would have bittul to ratzon haelyon and avoid everything not mandated!

But Hashem wanted us to reach a higher holiness! Therefore Hashem gave us a world where there is much gray and few clear boundaries and definitions. We do not have clear guidelines of what to do and what not to do to be a tzadik. The Shulchan Aruch, Code of Jewish Law, only guides man to a simple level of shleimus, perfection. But for the higher level of shleimus, to achieve the holiness of permitted matters, we do not have a Shulchan Aruch. We do not acquire shleimus on a truly high level with what is set in the Shulchan Aruch! This is the real challenge of avodas Hashem.

Man now must eat, and it is not clear to man when he can enjoy the food and when he should not. **Sometimes** in order to succeed in avdus Hashem we should do permitted things, such as **joking** and eating permitted foods. Sometimes the devarim muttarim are **themselves** avodas Hashem! To be upbeat one must do the devarim muttarim!

For example, enjoying food. In general most tzadikim did not push themselves to only eat food that was unpleasant. They did not only eat straw and tasteless foods. **True, they** limited their intake of food, they did not stuff themselves, but they would eat food even when it was tasty.

The reason for this was that the yishuv hadaas, settlement of mind, of man needs the taam, taste, of food. The creation of man is such that enjoying edible delights helps man feel settled and then serve Hashem better. Even more, tzadikim are maale nitzotzin, elevate Divine shards, when they eat physical food.

If you ask, would it have been better not to make a joke at the beginning of the shiur, the answer is that had man been created differently it would have been better not to make the joke. However, since the nature of man is that man needs jokes, the right thing is to make jokes lishem shamayim.

Rav Yitzchok Hutner in his letters, Pachad Yitzchok Igros Uksavim, addressed a student who was having a hard time with serving Hashem in the permitted realm.

"My beloved and adored friend!

I received your letter from after your return to chutz laaretz, the exile. In truth I enjoyed your letter a great deal. There were two sources to this enjoyment. 1) The content and form of your words displayed thought and wisdom. 2) You openly expressed the struggles in your soul. Let me

tell you, in my opinion, the difficulties with which you struggle are all based on a mistaken assumption about the subject. The general impression one gets from your words is that it is clear to you that a "secular career" is a "double life." Obviously, I would never agree to lead a "double life." One who rents one room in a house to settle in, and rents another room in a hotel as a guest, lives a "double life." However, one who rents an apartment with two rooms has a broad life not a double life.

I remember once visiting the hospital of Dr. Wallach shlit" a in Jerusalem and I saw him approach a patient who was about to enter the operating room and he asked him for his mother's name so he could pray for him before the surgery. When I related this to one of the unique giants of Yerushalayim o.b.m. he said, "How jealous one should be of this Jew who has such a great opportunity to be a serving vessel for the cause of kvod shamayim, Divine honor!" Please tell me the truth, my beloved and adored friend, is the recital of psalms for the welfare of a patient by his doctor who is about to operate on him a double life?

And you, my beloved and adored friend, forbid it from yourself from seeing yourself in the double lenses of a double life. Anyone who extends the echad, one, (of the Shma prayer) merits that his days and years will be extended! On the contrary your entire life should be a form of extending the echad! One not two! It pains me greatly about you if this point is hidden from your eyes.

Many scattered points, one under the other, are certainly a mass of many, yet those same points if they are arranged around a single center point in an arc, are all parts of one circle! This my friend is your obligation in living, to make the One the center of your life and then you need not worry about any doubles! Any new point you acquire will merely expand the circle but the unity will not leave its place. I am pained that you did not understand this point till now. Out of pain I

judge you favorably that a momentary mood put in your mouth the words you expressed in your letter. Be strong and brave my friend, ascend and succeed my precious one. Ride on the matter of justice and make all your successes a foundation for increasing the honor of Heaven!

The one praying for your success,

*Yitzchok Hutner*¹²⁷

If it is needed for avdus Hashem it must be done and **moreover** if **it is** not done **then** it is a sin.

A person needs shikul hadaas, good judgement, to know when to make a joke and when not to make a joke. **It is a difficult kind of service** to know how much of divrey reshus to include. There is no *Shulchan Aruch* here, **and** you need to judge well for yourself. This is the *avoda kasha shebimikdash*, the most difficult sacred service.¹²⁸

For example, consider jokes. You might need to laugh to have the joy to learn and to daven. But if someone **makes** a joke and it **is** not lisheim shamayim, **for the sake of Heaven**, he could have served Hashem without this joke. **Then it** is a sin: it is the rah shebinogah, **though** that

¹²⁷ *Pachad Yitzchok, Igros Ukessavim*, pages 184-185

¹²⁸ Rav Yitzchok Hutner in *Maamarei Pachad Yitzchok, Sukkos*, discusses the theme of the challenge of *divrey reshus*.

"There are two ways of divine service 1) literal mitzvos 2) *divrey reshus*. The first is a realm where the will of God is already clear as to what actions will increase the honor of heaven. The second is unclear. Man must determine what will increase the glory of Hashem in this realm. Man must think thoughts how to squeeze out the most glory to Hashem from his actions in all the permitted matters that have been given to man to use for his own needs. As our sages taught, *kol ma'asecha yihyu lisheim shamayim*, all your actions should be for the sake of heaven. (Avos chapter two) ...

Paralleling the difference between these two realms is the distinction between a simple Torah scholar, a *talmid chacham*, and a *talmid chacham sheyeish bo da'as*, a scholar with good judgement. Through his study of the essential parts of Torah, the *talmid chacham sheyeish bo da'as* is filled with the passion and the judgement to know how to maximize the glory of heaven from *divrey reshus*. A simple *talmid chacham* though has acquired much knowledge of Torah yet he does not know how to graft that knowledge into the realm of permitted actions. He does not know how to decide in the realm of the permitted. To use a common cliché, "A *talmid chacham* is an expert in all four parts of the *Shulchan Aruch*; a *talmid chacham sheyeish bo da'as* is an expert in the fifth part of the *Shulchan Aruch* as well." (page 69) He then explained why King Shlomo taught about celebrating the completion of Torah when he celebrated his receipt of a gift of wisdom. The beginning is the Torah itself, the completion of Torah is the *talmid chacham sheyeish bo da'as* level. When Shlomo received divine wisdom he received the ability to exercise correct judgement in the realm of *divrey reshus*, hence his celebrating this wisdom was a rejoicing about a completion of Torah! (page 71)

sounds harsh. In a way, it is an aveira but in another way it is not as bad as a sin, **for a matter like a joke** can easily rise and be used for Hashem.

Does Hashem truly judge all permitted matters as sins if they were not necessary and not lishem shamayim? In truth **they are** not the same as a sin **but rather have the character of an unredeemed permitted matter.** Therefore if, ultimately, a **joke** helped in the service of Hashem (for example the humor helped the person serve Hashem with joy, even though when he made **that particular joke it was not lishem shamayim**) **they are** raised and lifted.

This is what the Tanya says. If one ate *shelo lishem shamayim* **and** if afterwards he uses the energy he gained for his learning, then this act will have an aliyah. Since this is a matter that has a *chomer bitchilaso*, a difficulty at the beginning, that Hashem put man in a world with no *Shulchan Aruch*, or clear rules, and man must exercise his good judgement, therefore Hashem was *meikil bisof*, lenient at the end, and allowed for easy retroactive elevation.

Another leniency in an act of *nogah shelo lishem shamayim*: it is very easy to do teshuva for it. Furthermore the Tanya will explain that *chibut hakever*, the suffering one feels with death due to the excess material pleasures in this world, atones for the flaw of not utilizing *divrey hareshus* in the right way. However full sins are only cleansed after life through the pains of *Gehenom*.

There is no clear *Shulchan Aruch* in these areas in order to enable us to work through this very difficult service and reach a *tikkun* for our souls. Therefore Hashem has added many leniencies to this area of service.

אך מי שהוא בזוללי בשר וסובאי יין למלאת תאות גופו ונפשו הבהמית שהוא בחי'

יסוד המים מארבע יסודות הרעים שבה שממנו מדת התאוה הנה ע"י זה יורד חיות הבשר והיין שבקרבו ונכלל לפי שעה

The Way to the Tree of Life

ברע גמור שבששלש קליפות הטמאות וגופו נעשה להן לבוש ומרכבה לפי שעה עד אשר ישוב האדם ויחזור לעבודת ה' ולתורתו כי לפי שהיה בשר היתר ויין כשר לכך יכולים לחזור ולעלות עמו בשובו לעבודת ה' ' שזהו לשון היתר ומותר כלומר שאינו קשור ואסור בידי החיצונים שלא יוכל לחזור ולעלות

On the other hand, he who belongs to those who gluttonously guzzle meat and drink wine in order to satisfy their bodily appetites and animal nature, derived from the element of water of the four evil elements contained therein, from which comes the vice of lust— in such case the energy of the meat and wine consumed by him is degraded and absorbed temporarily in the utter evil of the three unclean kelipos, and his body temporarily becomes a garment and vehicle for them, until the person repents and returns to the service of G-d and His Torah. For, inasmuch as the meat and wine were kosher, they have the power to revert and ascend with him when he returns to the service of G-d. This is implied in the terms "permissibility" and "permitted" (mutar), that is to say, that which is not tied and bound by the power of the "extraneous forces" preventing it from returning and ascending to G-d.

With a light teshuva it can return to Hashem.

רק שהרשימו ממנו נשאר בגוף ועל כן צריך הגוף לחיבוט הקבר כמ"ש לקמן מה שאין כן במאכלות אסורות וביאות אסורות שהן משלש קליפות הטמאות לגמרי הם אסורים וקשורים בידי החיצונים לעולם ואין עולים משם עד כי יבא יומם ויבולע המות לנצח כמ"ש ואת רוח הטומאה אעביר מן הארץ או עד שיעשה תשובה גדולה כל כך שזדונות נעשו לו כזכי ות ממש שהיא תשובה מאהבה מעומקא דלבה באהבה רבה וחשיקה ונפש שוקקה לדבקה בו ית' וצמאה נפשו לה' כארץ עיפה וציה להיות כי עד הנה היתה נפשו בארץ ציה וצלמות היא הסטרא אחרא ורחוקה מאור פני ה' בתכלית

The Way to the Tree of Life

Nevertheless, a trace [of the evil] remains in the body. Therefore the body must undergo the "chibut hakever" as will be explained later.

Such is not the case, however, with forbidden foods and relations, which derive from the three kelipos that are entirely unclean. These are tied and bound by the Extraneous Forces for ever, and are not released until the day comes when death will be swallowed up for ever, as is written: "And I will cause the unclean spirit to pass from the land;" or until the sinner repents to such an extent that his premeditated sins become transmuted into merits, which is achieved through "repentance out of love," coming from the depths of the heart, with great love and fervor, and from a soul passionately desiring to cleave to the blessed G-d, and thirsting for G-d like a parched desert soil.

In *teshuva meiahava*, the *rah* is transformed to *tov* and it has an *aliyah*, which is a greater elevation than the elevation of a person who serves Hashem with the strength he gained from eating *shelo lisheim shamayim*. When he served Hashem with that strength he merely elevated an act, but in *teshuva meiahava* a sin becomes a mitzvah. (By the way it is not a full mitzvah. A mitzvah does not need infusions of life. Reb Elimelech explained that an *aveirah* transformed due to *teshuva me'ehava* becomes a *zechus* that needs a constant infusion of life. The meaning of this is that the sin caused the added strength of the *baal teshuva*. The sin caused him to realize the added power of light due to the darkness, so the very sin is bad but it caused something good: to appreciate holiness more. Therefore you have to always remember this darkness of the sin and constantly use the inspiration that came from the sin. In other words, he has to constantly give life to the aveira, so it is a mitzvah on condition of the former sinner always giving it

life. However in an action of mitzvah, the deed is essentially good, it does not need added energy to make it good, thus it is at a higher level than a transformed *aveirah*).

The challenge Tzadikim face

With tzadikim there is an even higher level of choice. For simple people there is no Shulchan Aruch for the matters of reshus and each must evaluate whether it is the right thing or not. **Yet** the righteous must choose between two matters that are holy. There is an *inyan*, concept, of *mavdil bein kodesh likodesh*, to distinguish between holy and holy.

For example, you might have a *tzadik*, he is young, he has eloquence and he can **explain deep things in a simple way**. He has a way in which he talks to others that can inspire divine service.

On the other hand, the moment he starts dealing with people he gets *kavod*, honor, and **loses** out in *hatzneah leches im elokecha*, walk humbly with Hashem your God. (*Michah 6:8*) He also **loses** time with which he could acquire a great level of shleimus that now he will not have time for. What should he do? Should he be a hidden tzadik attached to Hashem, or should he become a teacher? There is no Shulchan Aruch for this!

Even more you might not be able to ask for advice on this. When one travels to a tzadik and asks for advice, the tzadik might declare, "Do this," because Hashem gave the tzadik a feeling and when you follow the tzadik you are doing the ratzon Hashem. **One hundred percent** it is avdus Hashem. But many times in questions like the one facing the eloquent speaker, the tzadik will not get a feeling from Above!

The tzadik has *siyata dishmaya* and he might give you an *aitzah*, advice. In these questions these *aitzos* take the place of the Shulchan Aruch. No two people are the same in this question. The normal answer that a tzadik gives to our question of **whether it is** better to do for others or to do for oneself will be **to** do for the community. Chovas Halevavos says this as do others. This would be the normal *aitza* and the tzadik would tell you this unless he was given a different *horaa min hashamayim*, guidance from Heaven.

However, many times Heaven wants for this tzadik to do for himself and not for the community! The *pesak*, halachic ruling, is that he should not do for the community. This is a great test for tzadikim and they must put in great effort and pray a great deal to merit to know how to choose between two forms of good **in order** to truly fulfill the will of Hashem.

The seforim say that sometimes a tzadik reaches a certain level of holiness **and that** he is given a bit of a spiritual gift **that challenges him**. Will he satisfy himself **that he has achieved this gift** or will he keep pushing himself to grow and reach higher levels?

The Rav zt"l **once told a story to illustrate the point that a *tzadik*** should leave this level in order to continue growing in *avodas Hashem*. **In the story**, Reb Meirel Mipremishlen¹²⁹ was given a *madreiga* that he could know the sins of an individual. **So** he revealed to the Apter (Rav Avraham Yehoshua Heschel, 1748-1825) how the slaughterer was really a sinner. When the Apter heard this he responded with the following point: "I once had a *madreiga* where I could know everything about a person once I would shake their hand, but I begged Hashem I should lose this spiritual gift for I saw that it was interfering with loving other Jews."

¹²⁹ Rav Meir of Premishlan was born in 1780 and left this world in 1850. He was a great *tzadik* and miracle worker. He was a student of the Baal Shem Tov. He was a righteous man who gave enormous amounts to charity, he loved Jews and would always defend the actions of Jews.

If someone were to ask a Rebbe for counsel about this, “Hashem gave me a *madreiga* to know all a person’s sins, should I *daven* to lose it so that I not lose *ahavas yisrael*?” the answer of *halacha* would be: do not give it up! This *madreiga* is a special gift! Every *giluy*, revelation, above nature strengthens *emunah*! With it you can inspire many people to *emunah* and show there is a Hashem in the world. The *Shulchan Aruchdike eitza* would be to not give it up! Nevertheless, the *tzadik* might feel in his soul that for his *avodah* it is not correct to have this *madreiga*! He must **instead** focus on *ahavas yisrael* and overcome this *madreiga*! A *tzadik* must *daven* a great deal to merit to realize what is the *ratzon Hashem* for him. We have to pray a lot and toil much to merit to understand what is our *avoda* and how to be *mavdil bein kodesh likodesh*.

Many times when you ask such a question to a *tzadik* he will encourage you to work on yourself in order to be able to answer this question yourself. This is a very high level. You have to search for Hashem, then search more, and more, and then *daven* for *vihaer eineinyu bitorasecha, vidabeik libeinu bimitzvosecha*, please illuminate our eyes in your Torah.

You should know that Shavuot is a good time for this prayer. *Hoseif moshe yom echad midaato*, Moshe added a day on his own. (*Shabbes 87a*) This was a trial for Moshe. Hashem told Moshe *vikadashtam hayom umachar*, Sanctify them today and tomorrow, (*Shemos 19:10*) yet Moshe added a day! He delayed *mattan Torah* by a day! (By the way there is a great *chiddush* in this matter, for the *Chasam Sofer*¹³⁰ taught that the mistake of making the golden calf emerged from the *hoseif yom echad midaato*. Clearly it was not so simple to add a day here and delay

¹³⁰ Rabbi Moses Sofer, 1762-1839, is called the *Chasam Sofer*, due to his book by that name. He was a great giant of Torah scholarship and kindness. He was a forceful advocate for maintaining traditional Jewish practice and a strong opponent of the attempts to radically reform the practice of Judaism. His Yeshiva became the most influential Jewish center of learning in Central Europe and produced hundreds of leaders for Hungarian Jewry.

mattan Torah.) The whole world was waiting to receive the Torah, yet in this trial Moshe added a day. Great damage could have emerged from delaying this union, but Hashem agreed to the delay! In other words Hashem agreed it was the right decision. Moshe was *mechavein to ratzon* Hashem. This is a *madreiga* of *tzadikim*!

This is the *bechira* of *tzadikim*: to choose from two correct alternatives. To choose between **receiving** Torah earlier or having more purity. Both are good options. It might be that the halachic answer would have been **to receive** Torah earlier. Hashem said two days. Why add? Yet here Hashem wanted Moshe **to** do the particular and individual thing, to add a day. *Hiskim hakadosh boruch hu al yado*, Hashem agreed to his decision! There are several aspects of *avodas Hashem* where a great *shikul hadaas*, judgement, **is needed** to determine what *ratzon Hashem* really is in this situation. This is the service of *tzadikim*. *Shavuos* is a time to pray for help in this illumination.

ולזאת צמאה נפשו ביתר עז מצמאון נפשות הצדיקים כמאמרם ז"ל במקום שבעלי תשובה עומדים כו'

ועל תשובה מאהבה רבה זו אמרו שזדונות נעשו לו כזכיות הואיל ועל ידי זה בא לאהבה רבה זו אבל תשובה שלא מאהבה זו אף שהיא תשובה נכונה וה'

יסלח לו מכל מקום לא נעשו לו כזכיות ואין עולים מהקליפה לגמרי עד עת קץ שיבולע המות לבצה

For inasmuch as his soul had been in a barren wilderness, and in the shadow of death, which is the sitra achra, and infinitely removed from the light of the Divine Countenance, his soul now thirsts [for G-d] even more than the souls of the righteous, as our Sages say, "In the place where penitents stand, not even the perfectly righteous can stand." It is concerning the repentance out

of such great love that they have said: "The penitent's premeditated sins become, in his case, like virtues," since through the sins he has attained this great love.

However, repentance that does not come from such love, even though it might be true repentance, and G-d will pardon him, nevertheless his sins are not transformed into merits, and they are not completely released from the kelipah until the end of time, when death will be swallowed up forever.

A person who was once in the place of darkness has a teshuva with a great love and this love causes the sins to be transformed into merits.

אך החיות שבטפות זרע שיצאו ממנו לבטלה אף שירדה ונכללה בשלש קליפות הטמאות הרי זו עולה משם בתשובה נכונה ובכוונה עצומה בקריאת שמע שעל המטה כנודע מהאר"י ז"ל ומרומז בגמרא כל הקורא קריאת שמע על מטתו כאלו אווזו חרב של שתי פיות כו' להרוג גופות החיצונים שנעשו לבוש לחיות שבטפות ועולה החיות מהם כידוע לי"ח. ולכן לא הוזכר עון זרע לבטלה בתורה בכלל ביאות אסורות אף שחמור מהן וגדול עונו בבחי' הגדלות ורבויו הטומאה והקליפות שמוליד ומרבה במאד מאד בהוצאת זרע לבטלה יותר מביאות אסורות רק שבביאות אסורות מוסיף כח וחיות בקליפה טמאה ביותר עד שאינו יכול להעלות משם החיות בתשובה

הגהה (מפני שנקלטה ביסוד דנוקבא דקליפה המקבלת וקולטת החיות מהקדושה משא"כ בזרע לבטלה שאין שם בחי' (נוקבא דקליפה רק שכחותיה וחיילותיה מלבישים לחיות שבטפות כידוע לי"ח

אא"כ יעשה תשובה מאהבה רבה כל כך עד שזדונות נעשו לו כזכיות ובזה יובן מאמר רז"ל איזהו מעוות שלא יוכל לתקן זה שבא על הערוה והוליד ממזר שאז גם אם יעשה תשובה גדולה כל כך אי אפשר לו להעלות החיות לקדושה מאחר שכבר ירדה לעולם הזה ונתלבשה בגוף בשר ודם

Yet the vitality which is in the drops of semen that issue wastefully, even though it has been degraded and incorporated in the three unclean kelipos, nevertheless can ascend from there by means of true repentance and intense kavanah during the recital of the Shema at bedtime, as is known from our master, Rabbi Isaac Luria, of blessed memory, and is implied in the Talmudic saying, "He who recites the Shema at bedtime is as if he held a double-edged sword...," wherewith to slay the bodies of the Extraneous Forces that have become garments for the vitality which is in the drops [of semen], so that this vitality may ascend, as is known to those who are familiar with the Esoteric Wisdom. Therefore the sin of wasteful emission of semen is not mentioned in the Torah among the list of forbidden coitions, although it is even more heinous than they; and this sin is greater because of the enormity and abundance of the un-cleanness and kelipos which he begets and multiplies to an exceedingly great extent through wasteful emission of semen, even more than through forbidden relations. Except that in the case of forbidden relations he contributes strength and vitality to a most unclean kelipah, from which he is powerless to bring up the vitality by means of repentance,

Note: The reason being that this vitality has been absorbed by the "female" element of the kelipah, which receives and absorbs the vitality from the holiness. Not so with wasteful emission of semen, where there is obviously no female element of kelipah, and only its powers and forces provide the garments for the vitality of the [wasteful] semen, as is known to those familiar with the Esoteric Wisdom.

He may however repent with such great love that his willful wrongs are transformed into merits.

From the above, one may understand the comment of our Sages: "Which is 'a fault that cannot be rectified?'— Having incestuous intercourse and giving birth to a bastard." For in such a case, even though the sinner undertakes such great repentance, he cannot cause the [newly created] vitality to ascend to Holiness, since it has already descended into this world and has been clothed in a body of flesh and blood.

Shmiras Habris, Dignity, and secrets of Torah

Now the Tanya adds a point about hotzaas zera livatala, emission of seed in vain. **It** explains that even though through this sin the zera is caught in the shalosh kelliapos hatmeos, three impure husks, through kerias shma sheal hamita, the prayer of Shma before sleeping, one can free this spark from the clutches of the Kellipahh.

In the sodos haTorah there is not one page in the Zohar that does not talk of tikkun habris, fixing the covenant, and shemiras habris, guarding the covenant. For the inyan of tikkun hanefesh, fixing the soul, pgam habris, damaging the covenant of Abraham, is a very severe matter. **The** Shulchan Aruch says that pgam hayesod, damaging the foundation of future life through emission of seed, is a terrible pgam, yet the soddos haTorah stress this pgam much more. The world of pnimius hanefesh, inner soul, finds pgam habris to be one of the greatest tragedies. Pgam habris is more than literally damaging the covenant, it represents a worldview, It really means that we must keep our thoughts elevated. We are to be immersed in spiritual heights not coarse physicality!

Out of man's control

You should know that Hashem forgives a coerced failing, *onnes rachmana patrei*, The compassionate one exempts the forced. If through no fault of your own, you had a failing in this realm, you need to be purified in a mikvah but you should know that there is no damage to the spirit in the matter. You need not make an *eisek*, business, from it at all! There is no *pgam* from an *onnes*. If something happened against your will, if you do not think of it, you will quickly find it gone. As much as possible one must work hard to keep his thoughts elevated and not be drawn down.

The main way to do this is to be immersed in Torah. As the Ramabam rules, *ain hirhurei aveira mitzuyin ela bilev hapanuy min hachochmah*, fantasies of sin are only found in an intellect empty of wisdom. The best protection is to be immersed in thoughts of Torah. Your entire power of thinking should delve deeply into and have pleasure in learning Torah. Find the depths of Torah! This is the main antidote. See that man has some very special parts of his being. The *Atzilus hanefesh* of the person: there is a light to the soul of man.

The great parts of a person should lead to a *vayigba libo bidarkei Hashem*, And his heart rose in the ways of Hashem. (*Divrey Hayamim 2 17:6*) *Geius dikedusha*, holy arrogance, should reach these parts, and these parts can truly appreciate the depths of *Chochmah*. *Kavod chachamim yinchalu*, the wise inherit honor. (*Mishley 3:35*) *Chochmah* is naturally honorable, all of creation honors real *Chochmah*! We are to recite a blessing even when seeing a gentile wise man! A person who is wise among the nations, is *yoneik*, draws nourishment, from *psoles*, sediments, and *achorayim* of holy *Chochmah*, and still gets a bracha of *asher chalak michochmahso libassar vidam*, who has apportioned from His wisdom to flesh and blood. There is also a bracha of *asher chalak mikvodo libassar vidam*, who has apportioned of His honor to

flesh and blood, for these two, wisdom and honor, are a pair that are linked to each other! *Kavod* means that the *Atzilus hanefesh* of the person is revealed! When the highest heights within the person express themselves then there is *kavod*. When the elevated portions of man reveal themselves then there is honor.

A man who deserves *kavod* is completely non-animalistic. When a man allows the *yetzer hara* to turn him into an animal he loses his *maalos*, advantages, the great *maalos* of an *adam*. He loses his *Chochmah*. **Comprehension of** the secrets of the Torah comes from a very high level within the person. The *chaya shebinefesh* or the *yechida shebinefesh* must express itself for a person to grasp the light of Hashem of *sisrei Torah*. **Allowing oneself to be dragged down and become animalistic is** therefore most severe. Even a small *pgam* of not being uplifted causes a loss in the realm of the inner Torah. So if a person dwells on *hirhurim raim* there is no worse *pgam* other than *apikursos*. Especially for *pnimius haTorah*, *tzadikim* have revealed this is the focus and on this matter great strength and effort **are necessary**.

Even if we are *nichshal*, stumble, we should not give up. Hashem has indicated that there would be great temptations.

Why our generation finds *Shmiras Habris* so hard

Now is the time of *ikvasa dimishicha*, the footsteps of Mashiach. In the near future the *ohr haganuz* will be revealed. The great light of **the** secrets of Torah will soon be revealed. Now the *yetzer hara* is fighting this light and this is why it fights to bring into the Jewish home all sorts of **things** that will debase the holy house! If the *yetzer hara* **puts** such efforts to lower us **then** this shows us **that** here is the main struggle in our generation.

Hashem will give us strength. We must arouse force within ourselves. We must have an awesome *shmiras einyaim*, guarding of the eyes. We must distance ourselves with the greatest distances. If we do so, it is a great merit.

G-d has a special list for the *shomrei habris*. A person who does this in the right way is listed in this book of memory. The Zohar says there is a *sefer zikaron lifanav* for the *shomrei habris*, and one who is listed in this book has the verse “*Pischu shearim viyavo goy tzadik shomer emunim*” “Open your gates and allow the righteous who loyally preserves the faith to enter.” (*Yeshayahu 26:2*) All the gates of heaven open for the *tzadik* who is *shomer habris*.

The truth is that there are two gates: *emunah* and *shemiras habris*. One is *yesod* and one is *malchus* and this is the meaning of the Talmud in *Brachos liolam yikaneis adam shney pesachim viachar kach yispallel*, man should always enter through two gates and then pray. (8a) Matters of holiness need two seals: *emunah* and *shemiras habris*. *Emunah* is the gate for success in *niglos haTorah*, revealed Torah. To enter into *pnimiyus haTorah*, inner Torah, the main gate is *shemiras habris*. For the *ohr haganuz litzadikim*, the light hidden away for the rightoues, the main gate is *shemiras habris*.

Now, if **you go into the street and** something happens do not get depressed. Heaven knows it is hard now. Yet we should still **strengthen** ourselves and know that all of Judaism is dependent on this and know that the main solution is to deeply immerse yourself in Torah. Then all these things are not *tofes makom*, take up any space, and do not count at all. **To be immersed in Torah is the only thing.**

All these *hirhurim*, evil thoughts, come from the *zahamas hanachash*, filth from the serpent. At *mattan Torah* we merited the level of *paska zuhamasan*, their filth left them, and the

gate of the secrets of Torah opened. When the depth of *pnimiyus haTorah* was revealed and reached **and** a level of *paska zuhamasan* was revealed, we were ashamed of these low levels.

Livaavur nasos es'chem bah haElokim limaan tihye yiraso al pneichem livilti techtau, It is to test you that God came so that His fear will be on your faces and you will not sin. (*Shemos 20:16*)

This *yiraso al pneichem* is the embarrassment to be enthralled to urges, to function as a *baal taavah*. A person who runs after his animal desires is a beast, he is a *mechutzaf*, and he will see how at one point the *bney adam* rise and the beasts fall. *Ruach habaheimos yoredos limata viruach haadam ola limaala*, the spirits of animals descend below and the soul of man ascends on high, (see *Koheles 3:21*) there is no greater pain for the soul. The person might be able to run around for sixty or seventy years as an animal but the soul will be held to account for its failures.

Therefore as we approach *Shavuot* the *sitra achra* is trying to lower us and now we are to *misgaber* with a *vayigba libo bidarkei Hashem*, and his heart grew tall with the ways of Hashem, and to raise ourselves to the levels of the soul and to act as a person who has a piece of G-dliness in him. Rise up and laugh at all the donkey acts of the nations. When you see *preetzus*, improper dress or behavior, in the street know **that** this is an animal acting in this way. The whole world is a *chevra chamorim*, a donkey pack, and I must be higher and not pay them any attention. When a person merits to be a *shomer habris* and feels a G-dly piece within one will merit to feel **the** light of holiness and *kedusha*. Make a *leitzanusa diavoda zara*, laugh at the silly world that makes such a big deal out of *taavos*. When the *pnimius hanefesh* is revealed one is sensitive and he feels *oros ruchniyim* in a *Shabbes* and in other holy matters! This is a very important matter.

Now this is a matter best left unsaid, the less said about this topic the better. Yet you should know that the *shemiras habris* is the foundation of *yidishkeit* and the more **that** we are

strong in this the more we are connected to the light that Hashem has set aside for the *tzadikim*.

One of the great Jewish thinkers revealed that both a tzadik and a sinner have faith. The defining difference between them is in the power to imagine and draw vivid images. The tzadik's imagination makes holy pictures real and sensory. The power of imagination can contribute a great deal to holy living. Lesson seventeen explores the different powers of fantasy found in man.

Lesson Seventeen: The Blessing of Imagination

Chapter eight of the Tanya begins:

ועוד זאת במאכלות אסורות שלכך נקראים בשם איסור

And there is another feature as to why prohibited food items are called issur.

מפני שאף מי שאכל מאכל איסור בלא הודע לשם שמים לעבוד ה' בכח אכילה ההיא

Even for one who ate the forbidden thing by mistaking it for a permitted item and ate it with pure intent to serve Hashem through this eating

וגם פעל ועשה כן וקרא והתפלל בכח אכילה ההיא אין החיות שבה עולה ומתלבשת בתיבות התורה והתפלה כמו ההיתר

מפני איסורה בידי הס"א משלש קליפות הטמאות

and later in fact did just that - learning Torah or praying with the energy derived from the forbidden things he ate - the life in the food will not ascend and clothe the words of Torah and prayer as life from permitted things because they are assur, bound, to the Other Side, the three impure Kellipos.

The Way to the Tree of Life

The Tanya explains that even one who eats **something** forbidden *lishem shamayim* (in other words, he did not know it was forbidden, he thought it was kosher, and he ate with a holy motivation, to have strength to serve God) and he then actually used that strength for a mitzvah will not merit to raise the spark. Prohibited items are called *assur*, **which** means bound in the jail of the three *kellipos* that are completely dark. Therefore, the life from the **permitted food item** will not ascend and fill the letters of Torah and mitzvos. Since it is tied in **with** the realm of evil, this life cannot enter into the words of *kedusha* of mitzvos. In other words, no holiness can fall onto the life that came from a forbidden **thing**.

Without question in the *gashmi*, physical, world there are rules of nature. In a *gashmiyusdike* sense physical life from a forbidden food was used for **an** act of mitzvah. Nevertheless, the Tanya is talking here of the holiness of the letters of the mitzvah. This is not part of the rules of nature. Here there is a difference between food that was allowed and food that was prohibited. Only food that was allowed can become part of holiness. Food of *issur* cannot become part of holiness for it is tied and bound into the realm of *Kellipah*. *Assur* really means *assur biyad hachitzonim*: it is bound and jailed to the external realm.

ואפ"י הוא איסור דרבנן שהמורים דברי סופרים יותר מדברי תורה כו.

And this is true about Rabbinic prohibitions as well, for Rabbinic prohibitions are more strict than Torah prohibitions.

This applies to **things** prohibited by the Rabbis as well. Every *dirabbanan*, Rabbinic law, is really a *dioraysa*, Biblical obligation. If the Torah would not want us to follow the Sages there would

be no point in listening to them. There is certainly a Biblical command of *lo tasur min hadavar asher yagidu licha*, do not deviate from the matter they tell you. (*Devarim 17:11*) The dispute between Rambam and Ramban about Rabbinic law is how to conceptualize the concept of rabbinic authority. Is it that when I light a Chanukah candle I can say Hashem is telling me to light this, for Hashem wants me to listen to the sages and their laws are the equivalent of Biblical law? Or maybe no. **Though the** Torah wants me to follow the Rabbis, I cannot make a bracha that He commanded that I light a Chanukah candle **for** they cannot make a law that is the same as Biblical law. **Yet** in a general sense I **still** must listen to them. In terms of blessings I can make a bracha that He commanded me to listen to the *chachamim*, not that He told me to light Chanukah candles. But certainly I must listen to all Rabbinic edicts, because in the Torah I am told to listen to them.

ולכן גם היצר הרע וכח המתאוה לדברים האסורים הוא שד משדין נוכראין שהוא יצר הרע של אומות עו"ג שנפשותיהם משלש קליפות הטמאות משא"כ היצה"ר וכח המתאוה לדברים המותרים למלאת תאותו הוא שד משדין יהודאין לפי שיכול לחזור לקדושה כדלעיל

Therefore the evil urge, the force of desiring matters that are forbidden, is a shaid nuchri, a gentile demon, for it is a non-Jewish evil urge, just as the animal nefesh of the Gentiles is from the three impure Kellipos. While the evil urge to satisfy one's urges with permitted matters is a Jewish shaid for it can easily return to holiness, as has been explained.

There is a *shaid Yisrael* and *shaid nuchri*. We once spoke about this: that each soul has a *levush*.

A soul needs a particular *levush* **when it comes to a body** and all the *dimyonos* of a person, all **his**

fantasies, come from this *levush*. The *yetzer hara* represents false fantasies and the *yetzer hatov* represents a good power of imagination. ¹³¹

Imagination and prophecy

You should know that a perfected imagination makes one into a *navi*, prophet. The *koach hanefesh* of the person of imagination - if it is used in the right way - becomes *nevuah*, prophecy. *Nevuah* takes effect on a particular soul capability.

What is the difference between *Ruach Hakodesh*, divine inspiration, and *nevuah*? We today do not have *nevuah* but we still have *Ruach Hakodesh*. *Ramchal*¹³² explains that *nevuah* uses imagination. When a person has a perfected *koach hadimyon*, power of imagination: he can see pictures and forms and these forms do not work with the mind but are rather things that the *navi* sees. The *nevuah* falls onto the power of imagination. This is how the *rishonim*, early commentators, explain the verse about a false prophet that states, “*Ki yakum bikirbecha navi oh*

¹³¹ In our Rebbe's classes on Rav Nachman of Breslov's *Likutey Moharan*, he taught further about the *shaidim*, demons. “There are *shaidin Yehudain*, Jewish demons, and *shaidin nuchrain*, gentile demons. So too there is a Jewish *yetzer hara* and a gentile *yetzer hara*. *Yetzer hara* is connected to false fantasies which are identified with the *shaidin*. Our sages teach that the demons look human but do not have human feet. They have no legs. This is like falsehood about which our sages say, *sheker ain lo raglayim*, lies have no feet. (*Shabbes 104a*) The Zohar teaches that *shaidin* sometimes appear as males and sometimes as females. They constantly change form for they are a wind based creature. There is little solid to them and hence they constantly change. The *Ramban* teaches that the demons have the elements of wind and energy but not the elements of earth and water. Like a fantasy which is not based on reality, the demons constantly change for there is no solid basis to their reality. The urges of the evil urge are like fantasies, they will not truly provide lasting pleasure, they also constantly change form. Once he desires this and then he desires that. The holy *Ari* taught that man is rooted in this world for he has three parts: a soul, body, and a *levush*, a garment that combines body to soul. The root of these three elements is three forms of Hashem's name *e-h-y-eh*. Hashem's name א-ה-י-ה can be filled out in three primary ways. א-ל-ף-ה-א-י-ו-ד-ה, א-ל-ף-ה-י-ו-ד-ה, and א-ל-ף-ה-י-ו-ד-ה. The numeric sum of all three of these forms equals 454, the word חותם, the seal of holiness. A demon, only has two names that animate him, the first two. The numeric value of these two names is 304, the same as the word שד, *shaid*, demon. Since he lacks the third name he is unable to actually enter a body in this world and he is a creature of the air and heavens which is not grounded in reality.” (*Shiur* about *maamar* 28 in *Likutey Moharan*, delivered Wednesday evening *parshas Chayei Sarah* 5765)

¹³² Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato is known as *Ramchal*, the acronym of the letters of his name. He was born in 1707 and left this world in 1746. He was a giant of Torah knowledge and ethical direction. He explained many of the ideas of Kabbalah in his many writings. His work of ethics, *Messilas Yesharim*, the Path of the Just, is one of the key texts guiding a person to serve Hashem.

choleim halom,” “When there will arise among you a prophet or a seer of dreams, (*Devarim* 13:2) and he tells you to worship idols, the Torah has a punishment for this **lying prophet**.

The *Ramban* and *Ibn Ezra*¹³³ ask, how can the Torah say that *yakum bikirbecha navi*, a prophet will rise among you, he is not a *navi*, he is a liar! Why does it not say *ki yakum bikirbachu shakran*, when a liar will arise among you? The *rishonim* answer this is a person who is using the ways of *nevuah*! The *Rambam* explains that a person only has the status of *navi sheker* if he is acting in the way of *nevuah*. In other words **he is** a person who seems deserving of *nevuah*. He is *porush midarkei haolam*, detached from the ways of the world. He is not immersed in material matters, he is attached to high matters and is an elevated person. He has all the behaviors that the *Rambam* ascribes to a true prophet. Then he says a *nevuah* which turns him into a *navi sheker*, **and he** then has the status of a false prophet. In other words, *nevua* is a *koach*, a force, the *navi sheker* is using this *koach*, the *koach* fell on him but he is making a mistake. The *nevua* came to him from *sitra achra*.

Why then is he guilty?

There are rules in *nevuah*. Guidance **is given on** how to distinguish a *nevuah* from Hashem from a *nevuah* that emerged from *sitra achra*. There are rules how *nevuah* works. There are rules to distinguish between a *navi emes* and a *navi sheker*, for a *navi sheker* gets his *nevuah* from the *heichalos hatumah*, the heavenly palaces of impurity, and therefore there is a law that a false prophet who was too lazy to reject the impure imaginary picture is to be killed.

Nevua is a *koach*. There used to be *yeshivos* to train prophets. There were *bney neviim*, prophets-in-training. See what happened to *Shaul*. People said “*Hagam Shaul baniviim*,” “Is

¹³³ Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra was born in 1089 and passed away in 1167. He was a great poet, philosopher and Torah commentator. His commentary to the Bible is one of the most classic interpretations of the text. *Ramban* frequently quoted his work and critiqued it.

Saul among the prophets?" (*Shmuel 1 10:11*) People knew that he had never studied with the *bney neviim*, so they were surprised when he started to prophesize. There were preparations to reach *nevuah*, joy and music as well as meditations of holy names, *Sheimos hakdoshim*. When a person did **these things** the power of *nevua* would be rest on him. This dynamic would take effect on the power of imagination.

Contemporary Uses Of Imagination

We do not have *nevua*, yet we can use the power of imagination for a great degree of good. For example a person can imagine what *mashiach* would be like. The Talmud in tractate *Shabbes* teaches that after our life in this world, we will be asked, *tzipisa liyeshua*, Did you anticipate the redemption? (*Shabbes 31a*) **If you imagine** what the world will be like **in the time of *mashiach*** you **get** a taste of **it** now. You know that **reality might not ultimately align with** your imagination, but still **it draws you nearer** to what *mashiach* will be.

We need to draw for ourselves the picture of what it will be like when the whole world will scream *Hashem hu haElokim*, Hashem is the Almighty, we will have Kohanim bringing sacrifices and *Liviim biduchanam*, Levites singing on their platforms, and we will have awesome music in the *Beis Hamikdash*. This is very good: use the imagination for holy matters. **Use** your power of imagination to picture great **things**. For example, think of *gadlus haboreih*, **the grandeur of the Creator**. The *Rambam* says **that** if you think how far one star is from the next you will be amazed by the *gadlus haboreih*.

Another use of the imagination is to think about the speed of light and how much space is covered by one ray of light in a year. When you start picturing these **things** you might begin to have a bit of an inkling about *gadlus haboreih*. All **things** need pictures and illustrations:

imagine **it** and that will help you understand so much. Realize that all the stars relative to the world of *Yetzirah* are like one drop relative to the whole ocean, and the *Ribbono Shel Olam* who made all this wants us to talk directly to Him and we can say *Boruch ata Hashem*. Blessed are You Hashem.

***Ruach Hakodesh* emerges from intellect**

Ruach Hakodesh works differently. It does not use imagination. It uses *seichel*. An elevated force falls on a toiling mind. It is not like the power of seeing. Imagination sees. *Ruach Hakodesh* is the mind that understands. It is like revealing a deep insight, a *tiefere sevara*. The mind first comes up with a higher understanding. And with this *seichel*, cognitive thought, one merits to reach *Ruach Hakodesh*.

Now when you use the mind you need not lose the senses. For the *tziyur elyon* of *nevuah* you must lose the senses. *Ruach Hakodesh* is different, **for** it is based on *seichel* and therefore does not require a loss of sensory feeling. **We may** no longer have *nevua*, but we still have the power of *Ruach Hakodesh* in the Jewish nation.

In imagination you can draw pictures of holiness, *yetzer tov*, and pictures of evil, *yetzer hara*. Now there is a Jewish *yetzer hara* and a gentile *yetzer hara*. The *shaid yehudi* creates illustrations of *kellipas nogah* and the *shaid nochri* creates pictures of fantasies of the *shalosh kellipos hatmeios*. The holy books relate *shaidim* to *leitzanus*, scoffing. The *shaidim* are called *leitzim*, scoffers. For *leitzanus* is all *dimyon*. Why does a person laugh? Pure imagination and fantasy. Comedy is all about the opposite of *seichel*: it is pure *dimyon*.

We see this is the fact when we want to annul a matter of *seichel*. The *yetzer hara* uses *leitzanus*, *leitzana achas dochah meiah tochachos*, a single wisecrack pushes away a thousand

reproofs. (*Messilas Yesharim chapter five*) Many times a person cannot help himself and he laughs even though he does not want to. **A joke pushes away an obligation.**

The mind is accountable. One and one is two in *seichel*, yet in jokes one and one can be a hundred, for in jokes the more **illogical the better**. If a person is filled with *leitzanus* it does not pay to correct him. A person who turns all of holiness into jokes **the leitzim make him into a joke in the next world as his punishment**. The *shaidim* laugh at him. For the soul this is very painful, because the soul is all *seichel* and *daas*.

There are non-Jewish jokes, *goyishe shaidim*, and then there are jokes that are a *bechinah* of *kellipas nogah*. A goy's animal soul and joke is the *shalosh kellipos hatmeios*. A Jewish joke is *kellipas nogah*: it can be used and brought to the realm of holiness.

The word *yetzer* יצר is related etymologically to the word *tziyur* ציור for the yetzer **represents** the pictures of fantasy.

The *yetzer hara* fills the blood. The Hebrew word for blood is *dam* דם which is related to the word דמיון *dimyon*. The Torah when it prohibits eating blood says *vlo yizbachu od es zivcheihem lasiirim asher heim zonim achareihim*, And they should not offer sacrifices to the goats they stray after. (*Vayikra 17:7*) In other words if one offers a sacrifice outside the sanctuary he is adding strength to the *seirim*, to the *shaidim*, the *dimyonos*. People used to offer such sacrifices to strengthen the *shaidim* and to draw down spirits of false prophecy. Through strengthening the fantasies in their souls they would have a *tumah* form of prophecy.

These demons are called goats for the Talmud says that *Dam gdi damo dome lidam adam*, The blood of a goat is similar to the blood of man. (*Bereishis Rabbah 84:19*) So *shaidim* are the *dimyonos* of man and look like goats for the blood of goats is like the blood of man and blood is

related to *dimyon*. The Torah is therefore telling us to stay away from the *dimyonos ra'im*, and that all *korbanos* have to be *lishem shamayim*, for the sake of heaven, so as not to increase the power of *dimyonos*.

אך מ"מ קודם שחזר לקדושה הוא ס"א וקליפה

But nevertheless before it has returned to the realm of holiness it is Sitra Achra and Kellipahh

וגם אח"כ הרשימו ממנו נשאר דבוק בגוף להיות כי מכל מאכל ומשקה נעשה תיכף דם ובשר מבשרו ולכן צריך הגוף לחיבוט הקבר לנקותו ולטהרו מטומאתו שקיבל בהנאת עולם הזה ותענוגיו מטומאת קליפת נוגה ושדין יהודאין אא"כ מי שלא נהנה מעוה"ז כל ימיו כרבינו הקדוש

And afterwards the impression of excess material indulgence stays attached to the body, for the food becomes the flesh and blood of the person, and this is why the body needs chibut hakever, the beating in the grave, to cleanse and purify him from the impurity he received from enjoying this world, the impurity of kellipas nogah and Jewish demons, unless he never enjoyed this world like the holy Tanna, Rabbi.

Chibut Hakever

After the sin of the *eitz hadaas*, the tree of knowledge, the law of *chibut hakever* was established.

This is part of the punishment of *afar ata vel afar tashuv*, dust you are and to dust you shall return. (*Bereishis 3:19*) We were all part of the sin of *eitz hadaas* and for that we enjoy physical things. That causes us to need *chibut hakever*, except for uniquely special individuals.

Chibbut hakever does not mean that physically the angels take a man and hit the body so that he is cleansed from his enjoyment of the world. If you put a camera in a grave you would

not see angels come and take the body and hit it. G-d does not want our world to have open miracles, **and** such a *chibbut hakever* would be an open miracle.

During the first Jewish commonwealth there were open miracles and the challenge of choice was about **paganism**, but in our days the primary challenge is from **heresy** so there is no norm of miracles. Only *tzadikim* have miracles. But today if *chibbut hakever* meant the body itself getting hit, there would be an open miracle and **that** would interfere with the choice that our generation needs.

Therefore *chibbut hakever* means that the *nefesh haadam*, spirit of man, is beaten. There is a piece of *nefesh haadam* in the grave and it feels **things**, and in the grave this *nefesh* is beaten **in order** to be cleansed. A person who was hardly immersed in this world hardly gets any such punishment. This punishment is given due to excess *taanugey olam hazeh diheter*, permissible delights of this world.

ועל דברים בטלים בהיתר כגון ע"ה שאינו יכול ללמוד צריך לטהר נפשו מטומאה זו דקליפה זו ע"י גלגולה בכף הקלע
כמ"ש בכהר פ' בשלח דף נ"ט

As for innocent idle chatter, such as in the case of an ignoramus who cannot study, he must undergo a cleansing of his soul, to rid it of the uncleanness of this kelipah, through its being rolled in "The hollow of a sling," as is stated in the Zohar, Parshat Beshallah, p. 59

אבל לדיבורים אסורים כמו ליצנות ולשון הרע וכיוצא בהם שהן משלש קליפות הטמאות לגמרי אין כף הקלע [לבדן]
מועיל לטהר ולהעביר טומאתו מהנפש רק צריכה לירד לגיהנם.

But with regard to forbidden speech, such as scoffing and slander and the like, which stem from the three completely unclean kelipos, the hollow of a sling (alone) does not suffice to cleanse and remove the uncleanness of the soul, but it must descend into gehenom [Purgatory].

וכן מי שאפשר לו לעסוק בתורה ועוסק בדברים בטלים אין כף הקלע לבדו מועיל לנפשו למרקה ולזככה רק עונשים חמורים שמענישים על ביטול תורה בפרטות מלבד עונש הכללי לכל ביטול מ"ע מחמת עצלות בגיהנם של שלג כמבואר במ"א

So, too, he who is able to engage in the Torah, but occupies himself instead with frivolous things, the hollow of a sling cannot itself effectively scour and cleanse his soul, but severe penalties are meted out for neglect of the Torah in particular, apart from the general retribution for the neglect of a positive commandment through indolence, namely, in the Purgatory of Snow, as is explained elsewhere

וכן העוסק בחכמות אומות עובדי גלולים בכלל דברים בטלים יחשב לענין עון ביטול תורה כמ"ש בהלכות תלמוד תורה ועוד זאת יתרה טומאתה של חכמת האומות עובדי גלולים על טומאת דברים בטלים שאינו מלביש ומטמא רק המדות מיסוד הרוח הקדוש שבנפשו האלהית בטומאת קליפת נוגה שבדברים בטלים הבאים מיסוד הרוח הרע שבקליפה זו בנפשו הבהמית כדלעיל ולא בחי' חב"ד שבנפשו מאחר שהם דברי שטות ובורות שגם השוטים וע"ה יכולים לדבר כן. משא"כ בחכמת האומות עובדי גלולים הוא מלביש ומטמא בחי' חב"ד שבנפשו האלהית בטומאת קליפת נוגה שבחכמות אלו שנפלו שמה בשבירת הכלי' מבחי' אחוריים של חכמה דקדושה כידוע ליודעי חן אלא א"כ עושה אותן קרדום לחתוך בהן דהיינו כדי להתפרנס מהן בריוח לעבוד ה' או שיודע להשתמש בהן לעבודת ה' או לתורתו וזהו טעמו של הרמב"ם ורמב"ן ז"ל וסיעתן שעסקו בהן

Likewise, he who occupies himself with the sciences of the nations of the world is included among those who waste their time in profane matters, insofar as the sin of neglecting the Torah is concerned, as is explained in the Laws Concerning Study of the Torah. Moreover, the uncleanness of the science of the nations is greater than that of profane speech, for the latter informs and defiles only the middos which emanate from the element of the holy ruach within his divine soul with the contamination of the kelipah nogah that is contained in profane speech

The Way to the Tree of Life

which is derived from the element of the evil ruach of this kelipah in his animal soul, as mentioned above; yet he does not defile the [intellectual] faculties of ChaBaD in his soul, for they are but words of foolishness and ignorance, since even fools and ignoramuses can speak that way. Not so in the case of the nations' science whereby he clothes and defiles the intellectual faculties of ChaBaD in his divine soul with the contamination of the kelipas nogah contained in those sciences, as they have fallen through the "shattering of the vessels" out of the so-called "hinder part" of Chochmah of Kedushah, as is known to those familiar with the Esoteric Wisdom. That is unless he employs [these sciences] as a useful instrument, viz., as a means of a more affluent livelihood to be able to serve G-d, or knows how to apply them in the service of G-d and His Torah. This is the reason why Maimonides and Nachmanides, of blessed memory, and their adherents engaged in them.

A person who never learned because he could not and **instead** immersed himself in permitted speech must purify himself with *kaf hakela*, the hollow of a sling. However for *dibburim asurim*, prohibited speech, and *aveiros*, sins, one must go to *gehenom* to achieve purity.

However, *kaf hakela* is not enough for someone who could learn but did not, and he will require greater punishments. Wasted words only damage *ruach*, yet shallow wisdom comes from *kellipas nogah* which comes from the *sheviras hakeilim*, shattering of the vessels. This affects the *chabad* of the soul and is very bad unless it is used for good as the *Rambam* did.

External Wisdom

What is this *chochmah chitzonis*? Is **the Tanya** referring to natural wisdom? The Almighty made nature and all **that** He made He made with His wisdom, so this should **simply** be a Godly pursuit,

chochmas Hashem!? How is it *kellipas nogah*? *Chochmas Hashem* is a **good thing**. How **can** it **be** *kellipahs nogah*?

The truth is **however that** you can ask this about *taavos*, urges, too. For example the desire to eat. Who made the *taava* of eating? Hashem. So then why is it bad? If Hashem made it, it is good!

The answer is that if the wisdom of Torah would be brought all the way to the *chochmas hateva*, as Shlomo did, if all **wisdom** came from Torah and through Torah one knows nature and you would see how the aspects of nature are connected to Torah, then **through** studying the world you would understand the wisdom of Hashem and it would be part of the holiness of Torah. It would not be a study of nature then, rather it would be a learning of Torah!

For example, if you could find a pasuk in the Torah to explain why fire **rises** then it is *chochmas haTorah*.

Since the days of Shlomo the ability to connect nature to Torah has been forgotten. Now there is a wisdom where we do not see the connection between nature and Torah. The scientists **do** not truly understand nature for they **do** not connect it to its source. Since their understanding is without true depth, they only get to a surface understanding of nature, **and** therefore they **mix** many false ideas into their understanding. They build their ideas on lies. So today **natural wisdom** is not Torah.

There were many commentators who explained verses through the science of their day and these explanations are hard for us to comprehend today. For the scientists have changed their mind on these **things**. You should know that all the *Rambam*'s ideas are based on *Ruach Hakodesh* and even so for some of the things that he relied on the scientists for today we cannot

understand, for science has changed. Understandings changed for the science of his day had much falsehood to it.

Therefore science today is *kellipas nogah*. It can be used for the sake of heaven to have a means of earning a livelihood or to be *mekareiv rechokim*, bring near those who are far, **in order to show people that** you can be wise in science and still **be** observant. It is a display of *kellipas nogah*. **When** used for holy purposes it is raised and elevated, but it is not Torah, it is *nogah*. How there could be a wisdom of nature that is not attached to the wisdom of Torah relates to the matter of *sheviras hakeilim*.

It is a lengthy matter. With Hashem's help we will work on it in the next lesson.

Our physical realm slides easily into sins. It is very hard to truly live a holy life. Why is this so?

What is the root of the physical world? What is the key to reaching the Divine and connecting with Him?

Lesson eighteen reveals insights about the very essence of our world.

Lesson Eighteen: *Sheviras Hakeilim*, the Shattering of the Vessels

At the end of chapter eight the Tanya taught that study**ing** external wisdom possibly **defiles one's** *chochmah* with *kellipas nogah*. For wisdom fell into the realm of the *kellipos* during the shattering of the vessels. Thus external wisdom is a derivative of the aspect of the back, *bechinas achorayim*, of Holy Wisdom.

Shattering of the vessels is a very broad matter, a difficult and deep subject **that** many might not understand but now we need to learn the basics of this topic. For this is a great key to **understanding** many matters in Chassidic works and to **helping** us arrive at **a living of depth**.

The importance of studying the inner Torah

You will appreciate a deeper view of the world if you understand this concept.

You should know **that** Hashem has given us a very deep Torah. It is amazing! Do not fear deep matters of Torah. Certainly there is a great wisdom and many lights in the revealed Torah and yet you must internalize what the Zohar says several times: the main *hassagos*, *apprehensions*, of Torah are in the inner Torah! The *Ari Hakadosh* and *Rav Chaim Vital* speak about this at length! They teach that the main *chochmah* in Torah is to be found in the *pnimiyus haTorah*. This is the Torah that we will truly merit to grasp when *mashiach* will come. When *mashiach* will come we will primarily be involved in this, the inner realm, the *pnimiyus HaTorah*. This is the Torah Hashem gave to Adam in Gan Eden before the sin. Hashem told Adam he was to work and protect the garden. Spiritual activities were the way to fulfill this mandate of *liavda ulishamrah*. Study of this Torah was the way to develop and safeguard the realm of Eden!

Here you have the wisdom Hashem has given to man! The *ohr Eloki*, G-dly light, is found here. **When you understand the Chochmah Elokis you can connect to Hashem! When a man grasps the depths of the *pnimiyus haTorah* he totally annuls evil. The Talmud teaches that the Torah is the *tavlin*, the spice, to the *yetzer hara*, the urge for evil. Revealed Torah is *gufa dioraysa*, the body of Torah, and it helps annul the attraction of evil, through making the body more sensitive. However, the light of *pnimiyus haTorah*, is *nishmasa dioraysa*, it is a light of the soul and it annuls the desire for evil entirely.**

Therefore we must have a desire to acquire in a true way an understanding of *pnimiyus haTorah*. Especially young students need to have this aspiration. To reach this comprehension we

must dedicate our days - especially our young years - to working on ourselves to rise above sin, and especially focus on *kedusha*, holiness, and *shmiras habris*, in order to gain a grasp of the inner realm of Torah.

The *Stutchiner Rebbe* taught us that all of the *bnei aliyah*, men of ascent, he knew had developed themselves during their years of youth. Without question one can be a *baal teshuva*, master of repentance. Yet to reach the level of a master of ascent, to truly be close to Hashem, to be a person who is really elevated, it is most helpful to work as a young man. Push yourself to avoid sin, especially *chet hayadua*, the known sin.¹³⁴ To become a person that Hashem will take pride in, you have to work hard in your younger years. The main thing is breaking the *chomer*, breaking the *taavos*. Do not run after desires. Work hard in Torah and then when you get older Hashem will help you and your soul will shine and you will have a connection to what Hashem wants from you. You will grasp why Hashem made man, what He wants from us, and why He gave the Torah to the Jewish nation. The connection to Hashem is through Torah. Torah has different levels. There are different stages of connection to Hashem. The more one understands *pnimiyus haTorah* the more you will connect to Hashem! This is a very important matter.

We will discuss now a matter that is in *chassidus* and that is found in the works of Kabbalah as well, yet we will talk about its *chassidic* aspects, not its kabbalistic components. We will discuss how it appears in a person. How can a person apply these lessons to service? We will not focus on *Partzufin*, how these concepts appear in the Heavenly realms, or what *sheimos*, Divine names, are involved here. Any lesson about man is not the Kabbalah part. It is a lesson how man should work and live.

¹³⁴ Violations of the covenant of Abraham, such as immodesty between men and women.

Imperfect realms, Edomite Kings

There is a section at the end of *Vayishlach* where the Torah talks about the kings of Edom before there was a king in Israel (*Bereishis 36:31-40*). This is a very difficult section of Torah. Why tell us about these kings? What does the Torah want us to learn from this? There are many histories in the world, and there were many kings. Why do we need to hear about eight kings who ruled in Edom before the Jews had a king in Israel?! And furthermore in *Divrey Hayamim* we again hear about these eight kings. *Lifney miloch melech livney yisrael* there was *Bela ben Beor* etc. and the question is again what is the *nafka mina*, what is the lesson in these kings?

The truth is that this question can be raised about many verses in the Torah. The answer to these verses will apply to all of those as well. Great secrets are hidden in the seemingly unimportant verses. About these verses in *Bereishis*, the Zohar speaks at great length. *Ramchal* explains that we have in these verses the main *sodos haTorah!* In a *pasuk* where it seems that the discussion is not that important that is where the Torah clothes the greatest secrets of the Torah! Where you would not think to find the secrets that is where *Rashbi* was allowed to reveal secrets.

The Ari explains that in regards to seven of these kings it says that he ruled and then died, and then a different, unconnected, person ruled. We do not find that the son took over. In fact *Chazal* say that Edom is *bazuy miod*, very disgraceful, for they do not appoint as king, someone who is the son of a regent. Seven kings are listed as ruling and then dying with no continuity, while of the last king, *Hadar*, the Torah states that he ruled but the Torah does not mention *vayamos*, and he died.

The Ari explains that this is the secret of *Borei olamos umachrivan*, Hashem made worlds that He destroyed. The *Midrash* states that G-d made worlds that He destroyed. After those realms were ruined He made our world, a world of *tikkun*, a corrected and lasting universe. Those worlds are hinted at in the phrase “Kings of Edom who ruled before there was a king for the sons of Israel.” In other words *melech* Yisrael is the realm of *tikkun*. *Melech libney Yisrael* is a world where through creation you can see *malchus shmoyim*. A world where Hashem is revealed as the king of *bney yisrael* is the realm of *tikkun*!

The realm of **destruction and creation of worlds** contains the roots of evil. There was an incomplete creation before we arrived at the *olam hatikkun*. At the very beginning of *Bereishis* this is referred to in the first two verses. *Bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim ves haaretz. Vihaaretz haysa sohu vavohu vichoshech al pnei tehom viruach Elokim mirachefes al pnei hamayim.* “In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and earth. When the earth was astonishingly empty, with darkness upon the surface of the deep, and the Divine presence hovered above the waters.” (*Bereishis 1:1-2*) These refer to the worlds He made and destroyed. The third verse, "And God said, "Let there be light etc." refers to the *olam hatikkun*. The discussion of **the** kings of Edom who died before there was a king of Israel also symbolizes these primordial realms.

Clearly the order of creation is **that there were** first ruins and destruction and then a corrected realm.

Midrashim explain that *tohu*, *vohu*, and *choshech* refer to the exiles - the Babylonian, Persian, and Greek etc. for this **was** a realm of destruction, a realm of *churban*, which was the root of all the evil in the world, **including** the exiles and destructions of the Jewish people.

The seven kings who ruled in *eretz Edom* represent seven *middos*. We see in the realm of *tikkun* seven days of creation. The seven days are really seven attributes of holiness. *Yom* means a *middah*. Each physical day of creation was a time when a particular *middah* was revealed.

For example, on the first day of creation Hashem revealed the attribute of *Chessed*, Divine love. Since the world was created with seven *middos*, we also have seven shepherds to visit us in the *sukkah* to reveal these seven *middos*, and seven branches to the Menorah. All sevens reveal the seven attributes. *Zeh liumas zeh asa HaElokim*, G-d made one opposite the other. (*Koheles 7:14*) **The world is balanced**. Therefore, there are seven *middos raos*, character traits of evil. These are the roots of evil, the seven *malchei Edom*. The seven kings of Edom refer to **the** seven *middos* of evil. It says in regards **to** each of these kings *vayamos*, and he died, for they are the roots of evil.

Hashem revealed a *middah* such as a *middah* of *chessed* or *gevurah*, and then it died.

This is a very broad matter that we can hardly understand. Let us **therefore** try and limit ourselves because this a great key to understanding creation and many other things. Let us begin with King Shlomo.

Appreciate the limitations!

When Shlomo built the temple he began with prayer, **asking** for *hashraas haShechinah*, the presence of the *Shechinah*. He began by declaring that G-d could not possibly be on earth, “*Hinei hashamayim ushmei hashamayim lo yichalkiluhu*,” “Behold the heavens and the height of the heavens will not contain You.” (*Melachim I 8:27*) In other words G-dliness is so great **that** nothing can possibly contain it, even heaven cannot contain Him. This is really a question **about**

creation: Hashem made a world so that He could enter it and reside there, but *Hinei shamayaim ushmai hashamayim*, even the highest heavens, the greatest universes, *lo yichalkilucha*, cannot contain Him! Hashem is infinite, so how can creation, which is by definition limited, tolerate and contain Hashem?!

Then Shlomo makes the question even more difficult by asking, *af ki habysis hazeh*, could this house I built hold you? And Shlomo does not really seem to answer this question. He just states as fact that there will be *hashraas haShechina*. But what is the answer to his question? How can a limited home hold the infinite that even the heavens cannot hold?!

The explanation is that Shlomo asked a question that inherently answers itself. This question is necessary to achieve the answer. To have the Divine presence in the world requires that we first understand well how it is impossible to have the Divine in the world! There is a way to have *hashraas haShechina* in the world, but as long we do not understand that we should not be able to have *hashraas haShechina* we will have no *hashraas haShechina*. Shlomo first explained why there could not be *hashraas haShechina*. Understanding this point well was the preparation to truly merit *hashraas haShechinah* in our world!

Shlomo was teaching that man and all we know is *baal gevul*, limited, whereas Hashem has no limits. No limits is the opposite of that which is limited. That which has no limits cannot be grasped and contained in a limited realm. The limited being must clearly understand how and why the unlimited cannot be contained by the limited.

A parable: say there is a person who is wise and he is limited in his *chochmah*. He has a vessel of *chochmah*, a skill of *chochmah*, and he thinks that with this skill he will connect with Hashem. How will he connect to Hashem? Through *chochmah*. He understands all deep matters

so with his vessel of understanding he will understand depths of G-dliness! Through his *chochmah* will grasp the *ohr Ain Sof*. If a person thinks that with his *chochmah* he will have a true grasp of Hashem, he has not understood Hashem at all! He is being *megasheim* Hashem, making the Infinite corporeal, with his understanding. What he understands is not Hashem! It cannot be Hashem! Hashem is above human *chochmah*!!! You cannot bring the *atzmiyus* of Hashem into the vessel of *chochmah*. Because G-dliness is not a matter of *haskallah*. *Haskallah* can be understood with *chochmah*, but *Elokus* is not *haskallah*!

Take a person who is a good runner. This has nothing to do with wisdom! Does the ability to run make him able to grasp knowledge?! So too G-dliness is not a fit for the power of understanding! A *davar muskal*, comprehensible matter, can be grasped with *chochmah*, but G-dliness is not a matter that is *muskal*.

Elokus has clothed Himself in a great vessel in the vessel of *chochmah*, and therefore all matters that Hashem has revealed to the world He revealed in the cloak of *chochmah*. But *chochmah* is not *Elokus*! *Chochmah* is still just a garment, a mere *levush*. But if you think that you might be *tofeis Elokus* with the power of *chochmah* you are not grasping Hashem but rather degrading Him. You are not worshiping God, you are a pagan who makes God something tangible and graspable!

Therefore before a *chacham* begins using *chochmah* for *Elokus* he must know with clarity that a correct apprehension of *Elokus* will not come through *chochmah*. G-dliness is above *chochmah* and it is impossible for mere mortal wisdom to grasp Him. Once one knows this clearly then he can start using his *chochmah*.

Annul All To Hashem

Now that he has this understanding when he uses the *chochmah* he still will not grasp *Elokus* with his *chochmah*. Rather *chochmah* will help him grasp holy thoughts until he reaches the point where he can be *battel*, annulled, to Hashem! He will grasp with *chochmah* matters that came from Hashem, a *ziv* and *haara* of *Elokus*, and these lights that came from *Elokus* will give him the strength to annul himself entirely before Hashem. He will realize that he is *battel* to Hashem and that his *chochmah* is not *tofeis* any *makom* relative to *Elokus*. Even his *chochmah* cannot grasp Hashem! The more one is *battel* to *Elokus*, the more one does not take up any space relative to Hashem- the more one will feel a light from *Atzmuso Yisbarach*, His blessed Essence. *Atzmuso yisbarech* is higher than limits, and the more he is *mevatel* matters that are limited the more this light can enter him. We do not need to analyze now whether this illumination is an inner light or an enveloping light. The glow of *Elokus* comes from the *bittul* to *Elokus*. **The way to grasp *Elokus* and *atzmuso yisbarach* is through *bittul*. *Bittul* is the only way to grasp *Elokus*!**¹³⁵

The portion that enters the *keilim* is just a force to help me annul myself. For example, here we are saying a *derush* that we should be *battel* to *Elokus*. Now had I never learned the works with *Ari's Torah*, such as *Etz Chaim*, I would not know these ideas. Since we learn something we have a *tefisa* in a Godly realm where the conclusion of it is *bittul*. A *chacham* who

¹³⁵ *Shem Mishmuel* to *Parshas Va'eira* asks how Hashem answered Moshe's question of why things got worse after he was sent to *Paroh*? In one of his answers, 5674, he explains that Moshe embodied complete *bittul* to *ratzon Hashem*. Thus when Moshe became the leader of the Jewish nation, he imparted this ability and proclivity to the entire nation. The nation then needed a *miruk* and *birrur*, a purification, of this force. This is why they then needed to withstand the decree of no raw materials. This deprivation created a sense that there was nothing other than working for *Paroh* available. When we withstood the challenge we received the feeling of being willing to do whatever Hashem asked and there is nothing other than serving Hashem that was possible or desired. See also Rav Dessler's article about why the *Avos* were the *merkava*, for they were fully *battel* to the *ratzon Hashem*. *Shem Mishmuel* on *Parshas Va'eschanan* explains that the language of *Chanina* is very effective in prayer, for the essence of prayer is attachment to Hashem. One who asks for *chanina*, has fully annulled himself, he only asks for unearned gifts, hence he is the most attached to Hashem. He is completely *battel* to Him.

learns with wisdom understands through his wisdom that a *baal gevul* has no connection to *Elokus*. His wisdom shows him he has no connection to *Elokus*. He is then *battel* to *Elokus* and truly feels *Elokus*. The wisdom teaches us correct truths **that lead** us to *bittul* to *Elokus*.

G-dly wisdom teaches holy truths. The holy truth is that what a person grasps is not possibly *Elokus*! Man must annul his ideas to Hashem! What happens when a person is *mevateil* himself to *Elokus*? Consider, before Hashem made the world this whole place was infinity, *kivayachol Ain Sof* and it was all *melo kol haaretz kvodo*, His glory fills the whole world, (*Yeshayahu 6:3*) in a revealed way. (The truth is from His side creation has not changed anything, but from our side we can say there was a difference between what is now and what was before the creation.) Now we see tables and chairs in a classroom. We see people and objects. When a person annuls matters he reaches the awareness that relative to Hashem I am not here. If I am *mevateil*, if I say it does not really exist, then what **does** exist: Hashem, as He was before the world **was created**! The more I remove myself, the more my wisdom is not here, the more Hashem is here! If I say I have no *chochmah* then **I understand that the** *chochmah* in me is Hashem's *Chochmah*. Through being *mevateil* the matters of *gevul* the level that is above *gevul* is revealed!

This was Shlomo's intent. He was saying that **even** while he was making an awesome sanctuary, the key was *bittul*.

All the vessels of the holy temple are like the body parts of a *tzadik*: channels to reveal the Almighty. For example, the menorah with seven branches **represented** the seven gates of the head (two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, and the mouth), the ark **represented** the mind, the inner altar the inner part of the heart, and the external altar the outer part of the heart. All the vessels of

the *Beis Hamikdash* were like holy limbs. Holy limbs are really *middos kedoshos*, holy behavioral traits. As we know, the right arm is the manifestation of the Divine attribute of *Chessed*, and the left *Gevura*, and all the limbs are really channels for Divine attributes. Parts of the Temple, parts of a *tzadik*, or holy *middos* are all vessels in which *Elokus*, Divinity, resides!

Shlomo was the wise man whom God empowered with the ability to make the *keilim* that Hashem would reside **within**. Shlomo began by saying these vessels cannot possibly contain *Elokus* in them! To say, “Here in my heart’s feelings is the Creator,” or “The Creator is in my *mizbeiach*,” or, “I have the *Ain Sof* in my heart,” is a falsehood! One who says such a statement does not have Hashem in him at all! Vessels cannot tolerate *Elokus*, *Hinei hashamayim ushmei hashamayim lo yichalkilucha! Afki habayis haszeh asher banisi!* No vessel can encompass the infinite! What the vessel grasps is not the infinite. Once I know this, once I have been *mevateil* the *bayis*, then there is a revelation of *Elokus*! The more man is *mevateil*, the more man knows he **can not touch or comprehend** any matter of *Elokus*, the more a person feels he is nothing, and he is *mevateil* himself, in that measure he has a connection to *Elokus*! Hashem resides in the limited realm based on the *bittul* of the limited realm. The more a person annuls his ego, the more he has a bond with true G-dliness.

The Source Of Evil

The root of *rah* is *yeshus*, a sense of independent existence. *Yeshus* equals *siluk Elokus*, removal of Godliness, and it is the root of evil. Ego is also called the Kings of Edom. The Kings of Edom say *anah emloch*, I will rule, I want to rule. The *melech libney yisrael* is like David Hamelech. He is an *ani*, poor man, and an *evyon*, destitute individual, he is *battel* to *Elokus*. The *koach* of

bittul to *Elokus* is called *melech livney yisrael*. The *Malchei Edom* think *ani viafsi od*, I and my remnant are more. *Ani* אני, I, is the letters of *ayin*, אײן, nothingness. The more a person makes himself into an *ayin* the more the real *ani*, the *ani* from Hashem, falls on to him.

The *ani* is a contradiction to the *ayin*. Hashem is the real *ani*. He described Himself as *Ani* in the verse, “*Ani yotzei bitoch mitzrayim*,” “I am going out in the midst of Egypt.” (*Shemos 11:4*) This *ani* only appears on a person who is an *ayin*, a person who is *battel umivutal*, null and void.

The *middos haelyonos* prior to the realm of *tikkun* were revealed in a way that is the root of *rah*. In this iteration first a *middah* would be revealed. Take for example the first King, *Bela ben Beor*. The *Ari* explains that it is the same *kellipah* as *Bilam ben Beor* and the *Ari* calls this the *Melech* of *daas* of *Kellipah*, *Bela* is the king of *daas*.

You might ask, but aren't the seven kings from *chessed* to *malchus*? How is *daas* one of them? The *Ari* says that *netzach* and *hod* are one *middah* in this count. Thus the Kings begin from *daas*.

This *middah* that was revealed became an existence, there was a universe with this concept. The vessel of *daas*, the vessel of *Bela*, felt *ana emloch*, I will rule. He thought that in himself he could grasp *Elokus*.

Let us realize that Hashem gives each person a *middah*. One person has the skills to become a success in *derush*, homiletics, another has the ability to become a great success in depth of *halacha* analysis, someone else has the skills to acquire a very broad amount of knowledge of Torah, another an ability to reach holy awareness through deep meditations, someone else his primary *middah* might be fixing his character, *tikkun hamiddos* or *chessed*, and

for someone else it might be awe and *mussar*. *Klal yisrael* is very broad and there are many types of *tzadikim* in the world. You cannot say about any *tzadik* that Hashem is limited only to his *middah*! In other words a big learner cannot say, "I have Hashem in me and there is no other real *avdus* Hashem other than my *middah*. No one else can reach Hashem for they are not big learners." A person who would say, "No one understands the *sugya* as well as me, the *Chazon Ish* of our generation, therefore the big masters of prayer or the generous givers of charity do not have Hashem, for they do not grasp the *gemarra* as deeply as I do." Such a person is trying to limit the infinite light into his vessel.

My vessel should define and limit Hashem?! How dare I say that? Hashem is infinite, *ohr Ain Sof*. Just as there is a vessel of learning there are 613 other vessels! The vessels of the *mitzvos*! Someone who thinks, "My *middah*, my matter, the matter I am good at, this is the only way to reach Hashem" is guilty of a form of *anah emloch*! This is connected to *Malchei Edom*! He is not part of holiness at all. This attitude comes from a *yeshus*. It is not *bittul*, it is not

holiness. A learner must realize I have to serve Hashem. I learn in order to serve Hashem. And there are other ways to get close to Hashem.¹³⁶

It is possible that a *tzadik* will look at a generation and say, "In our generation the way to serve Hashem is through a particular *mitzvah* or *middah*." He is teaching that in our generation we must focus on one way, **and** this is fine. This emerges from an analysis of the needs of a generation, not a certain person's *middah*. But what we are saying is that to claim that a particular *middah* - which is the one that a person is most drawn to - is the only way to reach

¹³⁶ Rav Morgenstern shilt" a (*Yam HaChochmah* 5769) among his shiurim to Tanya taught:

"Each Jew has a different *midda*, for example, one may be from Chessed, the other from Gevurah. One who possesses the attribute of Chessed usually seeks to rule in the lenient fashion, to think of innovative Torah thoughts that enliven his friends and to do favors to his friends. The one who possesses the attribute of Gevurah tends to rule in the stringent fashion and usually is more exacting and upset. It is said in the name of the Holy Kamarna that the great *tzadikim* who followed the ways of the Baal Shem Tov were usually possessors of Chessed, which was their primary emphasis in serving Hashem through love. (Even though some of those righteous people who maintained the world were from the Attribute of Gevurah.)

The primary stumbling block and challenge from this is that the forces of evil use these differences to try to cause disunion of the hearts. Since individuals are rooted in opposing sources, different from each other like fire and water, the Other side causes individuals to think "Only my way is correct and true" the way of the other sage is heresy and blasphemy, because it stems from attributes that are the opposite of his. The fact that one is from chessed, while the other is from gevura, can cause a complete disconnect and inability to understand each other at all. This causes Tohu, confusing void, and destruction of the Mikdash, the Temple, even among Jews who set out with pure motivations to fulfill the will of Heaven sincerely.

In truth all Jews are part of a single organism! Hashem's will needs all the aspects! He desires kindly and strict souls! There is no point in trying to reveal and justify one's personal viewpoint, rather the goal must be to unite as brothers and together reveal the malchus, sovereignty, of Hashem. *Oseh Shalom Bimromav*, He makes peace in His elevated realms. The Talmud explains that the Almighty makes peace between fire and water, so too we must unite two individuals who emerge from opposing perspectives and character traits." (page 457)

On the next page Rav Morgenstern added that only one who seeks peace may enter into the realms of the inner Torah. The students of Rabbi Akiva were not allowed to understand the secrets of Torah because they did not treat each other with respect. They did not pursue peace. Only one who pursues peace and unity even in the midst of Torah disputes with his fellow may be granted permission to understand the secrets of Torah which are the path of peace.

Hashem, emerges from an *anochius*, selfishness, or a *yeshus*, independent existence. It comes from an *ana emloch!*¹³⁷

King Bela ben Beor thought there was only *daas*. So he brought into his universe many lights of *daas*. He was only involved in *daas*. It was a world populated exclusively with philosophers. There was no *chessed*, no *gevurah*. They only did matters of *daas*. The *Ari* says that due to this focus on *daas* they brought great lights. In fact the word *Bela* is to swallow, the root of all the seven Kings of Edom is to draw into oneself, to bring the lights into oneself. *Bela* takes into himself and he does not give anything out. He only wants to absorb and take, *vayamos*, and he died.

While the last of the Edomite Kings was not the ideal, he was close to the realm of *tikkun* and he did not die. He was named King *Hadar*, which means return. He who gives back light does not die. One who realizes "What I got from Heaven is not mine, I must give it back to Hashem, for it is really Hashem's," is the one who can live. *Bittul* of the selfish and personal vessel leads to genuine religious attachment. *Bela* died because the *Ari* explains that he took so many lights into himself **that** he could not hold the light and the vessel broke. This is the

¹³⁷ Perhaps **this idea** that when one tries to limit Hashem it is arrogance, and **that** true spirituality is only accessed through *bittul*, annulling, all to Hashem, informs the following lesson of the *Shem Mishmuel*. "When the spiritual is in a measure that is greater than what the physical can contain, then the spiritual overcomes the physical in a manner similar to the shattering of the vessels. This is why the wife of Manoach declared, (*Shoftim 13*) "We will surely die for we have seen the Divine." She assessed that she was not worthy enough to see an angel. This is the meaning that each time the term *hashkifa* appears it is for evil except for when it appears in the context of gifts to the poor. *Hashkifa* means a connection, similar to the verse, (*Tehillim 104*) *You will add to their spirit they will die*. However gifts to the poor change *hashkifa*. Isaiah declared that the Almighty says, (chapter 57) *I will reside with the depressed*. A poor person has a broken heart, therefore he is a vessel who can absorb greater measures of holiness and G-dliness. For it is the way of the Almighty to use broken vessels, and through gifts to the poor, the giver connects to the poor. Therefore, he too can hold greater measures of holiness, once he can contain the greater measures of Divine light, the holiness does not cause a collapse and tragedy, rather it causes increased amounts of blessings. Hence the words of our sages that gifts to the poor transform anger into compassion." (*Shem Mishmuel, Parshas Vayeira, pages 147-148*)

meaning of what the Torah says, *vayamos*. Light needs a vessel. When the vessel shatters the light leaves and all that is left is the broken vessel.

Light is another term for soul. Death is when the soul leaves and the body remains. When we learn of *vayamos* in the context of *Malchei Edom* it refers to a breaking of the vessel with the light, the soul of the matter leaving and only broken shards remaining.

These broken vessels from *melech Bela* are the evil in the world. The force of *rah* that has *daas* comes from the broken vessel of *daas*, from *melech Bela*. We must fix this dead *daas*. Our mission is to fix the broken, dead body of *daas*. When the vessel shattered there was sparks that went with the vessel. Even in death there is a *kista dichiyusa* in the body that is deceased. These are the *nitzotzos* that give life to the realm of *rah*. The *Ari* teaches that there are 288 sparks that remained with the broken and dead *keilim*. He found this hinted in the verse that taught about the worlds created and destroyed. It ended with the words, *viruach Elokim mirachefes al pnei hamayim*, And the spirit of G-d was hovering over the waters, (*Bereishis 1:2*) *mirachefesh מרחפת* spells *reish peh ches meis*, רפ"ח מת this refers to the 288 sparks that are in the broken vessels. It is our mission and task to give life to these dead vessels. We must lift up these sparks and in this way bring these vessels back to life. When we are raising the sparks from the broken vessels we are fixing them. In this way we are causing a *techiyas hameisim*!

We are giving life to the broken *keilim*. The physical world is the broken *keilim*. We made this lesson very simple. This is a very broad matter. The whole creation is based on these principles. Knowing these ideas can explain why we are on earth. What does Hashem want from man? Why put us in this world where there are so many difficulties and so much to do? *Koheles* asks this question: what is the benefit of life in this world? Clearly we need *emunah*. We must

believe that our *mitzvos* matter to Him. *Emunah* is the gate to *Hashem*, *Tzadik beemunaso yichyeh*, the righteous man lives with his faith.

Yet even after the *emunah*, we should understand matters! Learning subjects such as the shattering of the vessels opens our eyes to understanding why the world is the way it is and **knowing** what are the key attitudes and ideas needed to lead a meaningful life! Hashem has revealed many things for us to understand. And once we understand we will know why we are working. We get a light from the future and we then feel now I know what I am working for. We live in a realm of many *taavos* and much *chumriyus* and Hashem gave us a Torah of life. This Torah opens our eyes and with **it** we can enjoy Hashem and reach higher and higher. If you merited to be in the company of *tzadikim* you will see how their faces shined with the *ohr Elokus* and in this way you will understand why man was created and **that this** is this learning, the learning of the *pnimiyus haTorah*. These *hassagos* of Torah illuminate Jewish souls.

This is really this week's *parsha* of *Bihaaloscha*. Aharon was told "when you lift up the flames." Aharon brought apprehensions of the Torah to Jews when he lit the menorah. When he lit the menorah in the hidden realm, each Jewish soul felt his soul shining with the hidden light, and this hidden light lifts up each Jewish soul and gives it a taste of meaning and eternity!

The Shattering of the Vessels was the result of a self assertion, and ego. Lesson nineteen reveals that the key to a world of perfection is flexibility. A focus on the light and not the vessel that leads to the light, enables the integration and wholesomeness of holiness.

Lesson 19: Sheviras Hakeilim Part Two: The World of Tikkun

In lesson eighteen we learnt about the seven kings of Edom, each of whom had a *middah* that thought *ana emloch*, I will rule. Each attribute wished to take to itself all of the infinite light and make itself the king. This is not the correct way to try and connect to Hashem. This is not the correct *dveykus* in Hashem. Hashem is not limited to a single limiting attribute. As a result, there was an explosive shattering, the *sheviras hakeilim*.

What is the world of *tikkun*? What is the correct way for a creature to appear? What is the right way for creation?

The greatest good

Hashem is *Ain Sof*, He has no limits, even thought cannot grasp Him, *leis machshava tefisa bei klal*, no thought can grasp Him at all.

How does the infinite appear in a limited realm? How can a limited creature have a relationship with He who has no limits? We need this relationship. The purpose of creation is to attach to and have a relationship with God, to cleave to Hashem!

The purpose of creation was *liheitiv*, to do a favor for the creations. The greatest favor is to be attached to Hashem. In other words created beings can contain His goodness. What form does this goodness take?

The depth of the matter is that *schar mitzvah mitzvah*, the reward for the good deed is the good deed. We attach to Him when we perform *mitzvos* in this world with our physical bodies!

Heavenly reward is not that I work hard in this material dimension, conquering my urges, studying Torah, praying, and overcoming tests, and therefore G-d then pays me with an eternal reward in the next world. This is a very superficial and shallow perspective, even though many

elderly people think this. Unfortunately they never matured past the ideas they were taught as **children**. They think Hashem does not want us to feel bad **receiving** gifts for no reason, *nahama dikisufa*, bread of shame, and therefore He created a realm of many challenges to demand difficult labors **so** then when we receive eternity we will not be shamed.

This is a shallow perspective. If this would be true the reward would not be the *mitzvah* itself, **and we know that** our Sages taught *schar mitzvah mitzvah!* Furthermore if the goal is to give us **a** reward and make sure we enjoy it as an earned achievement and that is why we struggle with an opposing evil urge, why give us six hundred thirteen commandments? Why not give us a single difficult commandment, say chopping wood in a wintry forest, and then give us eternal candy as a reward that was earned?

The deeper meaning of life is that a man working on himself in this world is the eternal perfection and good man can reach. Hashem has given man the room to make an impact in the world. **Only man can reveal Hashem.** Hashem has revealed Himself but He has left space where man can acquire perfection, real and true perfection, when mortal man reveals eternal G-dliness! Man in this world does not see what he is doing while he lives in this world fulfilling *mitzvos*; in the next world, at a state of *aliyas olamos*, elevation of universes, it is revealed to him what he has done.

Schar mitzvah mitzvah, the reward of a mitzvah is the mitzvah. The real joy and pleasure of the soul is to see the *tov* that it wrought. In the future we will see what we achieved, and our labors themselves are the reward! *Shleimus*, perfection of good, is a delight for the soul. The *liheitiv* means *Hashem* has given some of His *shleimus* to a creature. A *nivra* can also have some of His wholesome perfection.

We must fulfill all the 613 *mitzvos* because Divine perfection in the realm of limits equals 613 *mitzvos*! *Leis machshava tefisa beih klal*, even thought cannot grasp Him at all, yet when *Ain Sof* enters *gevul* He takes a form of good! All good matters are G-dly! This good is the 613 *mitzvos*! The essence of man is also the 613 *mitzvos*. He has 248 limbs and 365 sinews, representing the 248 positive commands and the 365 prohibitions. *Koheles* declared, "*Es haElokim yira ves mitzvosav shmor ki zeh kol haAdam.*" "Fear Hashem and fulfill His commands for this is all of man." (*Koheles 12:13*) **Zeh kol haAdam.** This is the entirety of Adam! A true man, deserving of the title Adam, is one who fulfills all the *mitzvos*, a person who is associated with all the G-dly good. A human who does not fulfill all the *mitzvos* is not a true Adam!

Edom does not observe the commandments, he is *domeh*, resembles, an Adam but he is not a real Adam. He is a *yordei dumah*. He is descending to silence! He has no life! Life exists in an Adam. An Adam has the *shleimus* of Hashem.

Why Free Choice

Man must acquire this perfection on his own. Why? **Because** man must be a source.

Hashem is a source. Hashem did not receive life from anyone! If waters enter a *mikvah*¹³⁸ from a vessel instead of being located in their natural spring, in the eyes of the Halacha they are not *mayim chaim*, living waters! If it is not from itself, if the water came from somewhere else, it has no life! Someone who gets from others is not truly alive! He is not a

¹³⁸ A *mikvah* is a gathering of pure water. There are various forms of *tumah*, ritual impurity, the common denominator to the removal of all forms of impurity is immersion in a *mikvah*, a gathering of waters that have not been sullied by transport in a vessel. Some forms of impurity only leave once there was an immersion in *mayim chaim*, the living waters of a spring, which are a higher form of a *mikvah*.

source! Adam means *Adameh laelyon*, I will resemble the One Above. Just as Hashem is His own source so too an Adam has to be a source of life, a fount of *chiyus nitzchi*, eternal life. Man must be a *makor of tov*.

The deeper meaning of the "bread of shame" concept is that man was given choice so that through choice he will be a source. Hashem has removed Himself, as it were, to enable man to be the source of his own behavior, and when man is a source he is literally like the Creator.

Adameh laelyon, I will resemble the One above. *Mah hu af ata*, just as Him so should you be.

(*Shabbes 133b*) Hashem is the source of compassion and you are to be a source of compassion!

The Talmud (*Bava Basra 75b*) says that about *tzadikim* it will be said in the future that they are

kadosh, holy, for they will resemble Hashem. The ultimate aspiration is to resemble the

Almighty. Man truly resembles Hashem and connects with Him when he freely chooses all the good!

Consider our father Yaakov. Yaakov was a *shleimus!* *Hakadosh Boruch Hu koroh keil*, God called Him with His name, *Keil*. (*Megillah 18a*) Yaakov fixed the sin of Adam Harishon and as a result he was literally *domeh* to Hashem, and therefore Hashem called him *Keil!* The Midrash teaches "*Mi kaKeil? Yeshurun*," "Who is like the omnipotent? *Yeshurun* (a name for Yaakov)." Yaakov resembles Hashem, as it were. Another *Midrash* says, "*Mi Borach mi yotzrach? Yaakov!*" "Who is your creator and fashioner? Yaakov." Did Yaakov create the world? The *Midrash* is teaching this lesson! *Tzadikim* do create worlds, as it were! Their good deeds create spiritual worlds of good! Hashem has given them the ability to resemble Hashem! This is the good that Hashem has given to *baalei gevul!*

When *Ain Sof* appears in limits, it is complete goodness, **it is all the middos tovos**. What is the reason that *Ain Sof* is here in all the good? The depth is that *rah*, evil, really has no reality. Evil is just a mirage, it has no real *metzius*. Ultimately it will be revealed that evil was a mere fantasy. *Tov* exists *rah* is an illusion. We know that Esav's name was to refer to the fact that he was the *shav shebarasi biolami*, the falsehood I created in my world. (*Bereishis Rabba* 63:8) *Rah* is like darkness. The verse says "*Yotzeir ohr uboreih chosech oseh shalom uboreih rah*," "He forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates darkness." (*Yeshayahu* 45:7) The prophet equated light with peace, and *rah* with *choshech*. Darkness is lack of light, it is not an existence, it is not a *metzius*!

So it is with *rah*. Bad is a negative reality, it is lack of good. Good is a positive experience. Hashem is *metzius*, and when existence appears in this world it is *tov*. The *Ain Sof* is revealed in all the possible good things. This is Hashem's created world. Therefore man who wants to be a *merkavah*, chariot, to *Ain Sof*, who aspires to reveal the *Ain Sof* through himself (and this really means he wants to resemble Hashem) must include within himself all the good things that exist in the world.

Man cannot be a *perati*, a detail. He cannot say, "I have this detail, I have this *middah*, I am Mr. Charity. I do not *daven* or learn, I donate funds." Such a perspective would connect man to the seven kings of Edom! Man must include all the good *middos*. Why? Because the *Ain Sof* is all. All in the realm of *gevul* is all the matters that are *tov*. Therefore a man who seeks to connect to the *Ain Sof* must encompass all the good *middos*.

Man has choice and through choice he can do all good things.

The verse says this explicitly (*Bereishis 11:6*) "*Viata lo yibatzer meihem kol asher yazmu laasos,*" "And now they will be able to do whatever they wish." Unlike an animal man can do whatever he chooses to do. An animal can only act in one way. A person though has freedom of choice and can respond to the same situation in two different ways. An animal is a *perati*. There are rules for how it will act and it will always act in these ways. You can make a trap and it will keep falling for the bait. Even though the animal is very sharp, it is a detail, it has its nature and it is limited to its nature. Man though can do everything. Man has free choice for man is a *metzius kelali*, a general existence, man is *kollel* all that exists in creation.

Consider the food people eat. Animals eat certain foods, while humans can eat anything, because man is a creation which is *kelali*. Since man is *kollel* all he is an Adam.

Men who are not Adam

Edom is an incorrect Adam. But the real Adam is the one who is *kollel* all, he is not interested in the *middos*, (this relates to lesson 18) rather he is interested in the light of *Ain Sof* that is residing in the *middah*. G-d is not limited to any *middah*. Man who wants to be *domeh laelyon* does not limit himself to only one attribute. The *Ain Sof* is not limited only to *Daas*! A perfect man is therefore not interested in *Daas*, he is interested in the infinite! The *Ain Sof* when He entered limits can do all types of good and in fact is doing all the forms of holy action. In other words the Adam seeks the *ohr*, he seeks the *shleimus*. The *Ain Sof* is not in a *perat*. The *Ain Sof* is a *kelali*. The one limitation is that the *Ain Sof* has entered into *gevul*, but here in the realm of *gevul* he is doing all the *middos*! The world of *tikkun*, the right way for life to appear, is to be a person

The Way to the Tree of Life

who seeks the light and not merely the vessel, one who is drawn to all good matters in pursuit of *shleimus*.

The greatness of Yaakov

Yaakov is the *shalem*. Yaakov is characterized as *yosheiv ohalim*, residing in the tents. (*Bereishis* 25:27) In other words Avraham is *chessed* and Yitzchok is *gevurah*, while Yaakov will do either. When *gevurah* is good he displays strength **and** when *chessed* is called for he performs acts of kindness! He is not attached to a *middah*. He is attached to *tov*! He does what is right. He is not

metzumtzam to a *midda*.¹³⁹ A person who is attached always to *chessed* will do *chessed* for wicked people as well. But then he will not merit to have *Ain Sof* with him. *Ain Sof* in *gevul* is found in *tov*.

What makes **one thing** *tov* and **another** thing *rah*?

When this *middah* fits with the big picture, when it fits with all the other *middos* and conforms to the purpose, it is *tov*! When it does not conform to the real purpose and does not fit in with all the other *middos* then it is *rah*.

¹³⁹ Rav Yitzchok Hutner (1906-1980), in *Pachad Yitzchok on Sukkos*, wove these themes together to form an exquisite tapestry. "1) The deeds of the fathers predict the fate of the children. Our sages of truth have revealed to us that the root of the holiness of *Sukkos* for the children is set in the actions of our father Jacob about whom the verse mentions the word *sukkah*, in *V'Yaakov nasa Sukkosa*, And Jacob traveled to *Sukkos*...(Bereishis 33:17) We are attempting to explain this matter despite our lowly levels of comprehension.

2) We must merge together two postulates.

The first is that our Sages explained that when the angels ascended and descended the ladder in Jacob's dream, they were noticing that Jacob's face was engraved on Hashem's throne of glory! It is known that this level was unique to Yaakov...The depth of this matter is that Avraham was set in his attribute of *Chessed*, through *Chessed* he toiled to reach the level of making the created resemble the Creator. Yitzchok was set in his *middah* of awe and fear of Hashem. Through this attribute he toiled to show how a created being would resemble the Creator and manifest Heavenly awe. Yaakov was different! Yaakov did not have a set *midda*! Making the created resemble the Creator was his *midda*! For Yaakov both *Chessed* and *Yirah* are merely ways to actualize making the created resemble the Creator!

For Avraham and Yitzchok, love and fear were parents, resembling the Creator, children. For Yaakov, resembling the Creator was the source, and love and fear the offspring. For this reason the "measure for measure" reward for Yaakov was that his image was engraved on the throne of the Creator. This is the first postulate.

Now the second postulate. *Sukkah* commemorates the Divine clouds of glory. The simple explanation is that this refers to the clouds of glory that escorted Israel immediately after we left Egypt. However, in the words of the *Gr"a* on the verse "*Meisharim ahevucha*" (*Shir Hashirim 1:4*) we are taught that it refers to the clouds that returned after they had left due to the sin of the golden calf. The explanation of the matter is based on the words of *Bava Kama 55a* that in the first tablets the words *ki tov*, it is good, do not appear for they were destined to be shattered. It then emerges that the second *luchos* in which the word *tov* does appear can never be broken. Thus the covenant we entered into with the second *luchos* is greater than the union of the first. Just as the first tablets could break, their covenant was dissoluble, while the second covenant was a bond that can never be interrupted! Just as the second set of tablets can never shatter! This is the view of the *Gr"a*: The essence of the *sukkah* is *s'chach*, serving as a shelter - protecting the Jewish nation as in the sentence, *shomer amo yisrael la'ad*. He guards His nation of Israel forever. Therefore the *sukkah* must be a reminder to the clouds that returned at the time of the second tablets as an appeasement after the rage that followed the golden calf. For as long as breaking the tablets is not an impossibility there is no forever protection hovering above the nation! This is the second postulate.

4) Now from the postulates we transition to their merger. The uniting beam of the two lessons is the law of eternal protection. This law teaches that any matter that acts with a particular *middah* cannot last forever in all situations! For it is possible that a certain situation will conflict with the *middah*. Then the matter will end due to the clash between the situation and the *middah*. Only when a matter is directed from a place above particular attributes, when it is like *hakol yachol vikolelam yachad*. Able to do all and uniting each one together, will that matter be eternal and appear in all situations. Based on the lesson of the *Gr"a* we gain a new depth in the words of our sages that *Sukkah* is to remove us from all permanent dwellings. (*Tzei midiras k'va v'sheiv b'diras arai*, Leave the permanent dwelling and reside in a temporary hut.) The *Sukkah* channels the second covenant, the tablets that cannot break. Therefore the *sukkah* must represent a holistic, all encompassing approach, a *hakol yachol vikolelam yachad* way, which prevents any permanence in any particular *middah*. This was the nature of Yaakov's service! Yaakov was devoted to the general theme, the created resembling the Creator, and Yaakov was not limited to any particular *middah*. For Yaakov each *middah* was a temporary dwelling relative to the general ambition of making the created resemble the Creator! It is these two qualities that enable the *sikuch*-forever-guarding nature of the *sukkah*...This is the reason why Yaakov represents the holiday of *Sukkos*. *ViYaakov nasa Sukkosa!*" (page 235-238, See also *Maamarei Pachad Yitzchok, Sukkos, 21-22*)

A matter which is *kallul* with all the *middos* is *tov*. The only *tzimtzum* the *Ain Sof* accepts is *gevul* and *gevul* is *tov*, for *tov* is the reality. Other than that He is still unlimited. So too those who resemble Him cannot be limited to one *middah*.

For example **why does a person do chessed?** What is the purpose **of** the *chessed*? Presumably it is to help **a** poor person. In other words, if I give charity to a poor person, this is a good thing. Unfortunately there will always be poor people on earth, and the poor person is not responsible and guilty for his poverty for the *mazal*, Divine fate, causes it. Even someone who is responsible for his own poverty, based on *middas harachmanus*, the attribute of mercy, we should have compassion on him just as Hashem has compassion on him and, we should give him charity. Hashem has compassion even for the sinner, so too we should have *rachmanus* on all.

When Hashem treats someone with *rachamim* it is because this generosity will lead to eternal good! If a person knows though with clarity that "If I do not give this person *tzedakah* he will do good things; if I give him *tzedakah* he will use the funds for sins," it is not a good thing to then give him money! It is not a *chessed*! It would be better not to hand him funds!

If a person cannot stop himself and says to himself, "I cannot tolerate to see someone suffer, I am a *rachman* therefore I must give to him." He knows it is not for his ultimate benefit; he will be punished for such *tzedakah*! An Adam *shalem* is *kollel chessed* with his *gevurah*! The truth is that every good *middah* has in it all the other *middos*. In *chessed* there is *gevurah* and *tiferes* and all the other *middos*. A person who will only do *chessed* and never merge it with *gevurah* is not acting in the way of the Torah. All *middos* need *tzimtzum* and they must be mixed with all the other *middos*.

Imagine a person who is a very intense learner. He reaches deep understanding and he applies himself a great deal in learning, he is a real *masmid*, constant student. Then there is a situation of *pikuach nefesh*, a danger to a life and it is a mitzvah only he can fulfill, *ee efshar laasosa al yedei acheirim*. If he says “I want to sit and learn, I am a *masmid*,” and he continues and learns such a person is terrible. He is not learning to resemble Hashem. He is learning just to learn. He is missing the *tov*, he is not looking for the *tov*. He is learning for his selfish and natural attraction to learning, he is not learning for the real purpose! This is not a *middah tova*!

The real *shleimus* is to be a *kelali*, that everything should be *kallul* in the person. A person who is *kallul* of all the good *middos* is a *merkavah* to Hashem and he has *tov*! He will not shatter.

When someone learns Torah *lishmah* with *hiskalelus* it will be holy learning, he will feel a *chiyus Eloki* in the learning. Yet someone who does not learn in this way will be missing out on this feeling of *chiyus*.

We find with the *Malchei Edom* that *vayamos*, and he died, and then *vayimloch*, and he ruled. In other words no *middah* could rule in tandem with others. Each *middah* would rule after the other *middah* died. Each was alone: it was *alma diprodah*, the realm of separation. This is why there are so many fights in the world, because *Malchei Edom* is the opposite of the *tikkun*. The real *shalom* is when there will be a *hiskalelus hamidos*. Without this *hiskalelus* there will be constant wars among the nations.

The present peace in the world is deceiving. **The peoples are all** united in a false way, it is not a unity of Avraham *avinu*! They are like the Tower of Bavel! It is unity for the purpose of opposing Avraham! It is a unity for idol worship. Moshach will bring real peace. He will bring

hiskalelus hamidos and this emerges from the *bittul* to the *ohr Ain Sof*. The sense of *bittul* to the *ohr Ain Sof* is what will bring real *shalom* to the world.

Litaava yivakesh nifrad. The detached seek desires. (*Mishley 18:1*) In the realm of *taava* all are separated one from the other. Each desire is different and so there is nothing to unite them. At the end *Yispardu kol poalei aven*, All the wicked people will separate. (*Tehillim 92:10*) Evildoers cannot stay together and last, their union is a *knessiya sheiana lisheim shamyaim Ain Sofa lihiskayeim*. A gathering not for the sake of Heaven will not end up lasting. (*Avos 4:11*) For each *middah* has its I and its desire to be king and as a result it cannot last long.

The nations of the world have such a love of I. They want to build up their ego. People want to feel, "My city is great. I am great." This is the nature of evil. *Rah* is all about me. *Ani viafsi od*, I and my remnant are more. Holiness leads to real peace.

Tzadikei emes, they look for *shalom*, they do not compete, there is no I in *tzadikim*. *Nosnin biahava reshus zeh lazeh lihakdish liyotzram binachas ruach*. They lovingly grant permission to each other to sanctify to their Maker in a pleasant spirit. (The *Siddur*) Together they give Hashem pleasure.

Olam Hatikkun is a world of integration. Each part of the creation fills a role and all are needed. The physical world is very integrated and this is what keeps the world alive. The sun is very hot, but it is tempered with the cold weather so that the world not overheat. The whole world is balanced and tempered. All *middos* work together. The characteristic of the *olam hatikkun* is that the different forces of the world are integrated and offset each other.

Each star has its impact. One star **has** a particular energy and a different star another energy. Hashem has arranged them so that they will supplement and balance each other! The secret of *olam hatikkun* is that each *middah* should be *nichlal* with others.

Why the urge for evil is stronger than the desire for holiness

Now we can understand why the *yetzer hara* is stronger than the person. The Talmud states that the *yetzer hara* is *misgabeir alav bichol yom*, overwhelms him each day, *mivakeish lihamiso*, it seeks to kill him, and *ilmalei Hakadosh Boruch Hu ozer lo eino yachol lo*, if not for Hashem helping him he would not succeed. (Sukkah 52a) We say in the prayers, *Ki padah Hashem es yaakov ugealo miyad chazak mimenu*, G-d redeemed Jacob and saved him from the hand of the one who was stronger than him. Why is the evil urge naturally stronger than man?

Evil is focused on one matter. He is a *perati*. A holy being has to include all so he does not have the same virulence as the *yetzer hara*. The *yetzer hara* comes with the force of nature, he has a great degree of force. He is not someone who comes with many *taavos*, he attacks with one *taava* at a time. At the moment of temptation he makes the person think there is nothing else in the world that could provide pleasure. The *tzadik* has to use *gevura* and *chessed* and *tiferes*, he is diffused and spread out, hence he is naturally at a disadvantage.

Hashem though helps him to enable him to overcome the *yetzer hara*. Good ultimately triumphs for since the *chacham* of *kedusha* becomes a *merkava* of *Elokis*, he then gets a special strength from Hashem and this *hashraas haShechinah*, Divine presence, is the winning factor.

This is the main point I wanted to mention, next lesson we will complete it.

Sheviras Hakeilim was because of details, because attributes focused on themselves and detached from the source. Our task of life is to fix *sheviras hakeilim*, to elevate all the *middos* of *teva*, all the broken shards and to make out of them an Adam.

We find in this week's *parsha's* story of the Jewish fear to enter the land of Israel a display of the great virulence to the forces of evil. The *meraglim*, **spies**, got involved in the matters of the Canaanites, based on the deeper wisdom of the Torah. They did not want to enter the land for they saw the *Ki chazak hu mimenu*. He is stronger than us. They felt that the *rah* was stronger than the *tov*. But *Kalev* said "*Aloh naaleh viyarashnu osah*," "We will go up and inherit it." (*Bamidbar 13:4*) he revealed that if one is a *mercava* to holiness, with the *koach elyon* from the *kedusha*, we can conquer the external evil ones.

The mistake of the spies was like the mistake of the tribes when they betrayed Yosef. Yosef in fact accused his brothers of being spies. He told them, "*Miraglim atem liros es ervas haaretz basem*," "You are spies, you came to see the nakedness of the land." (*Bereishis 42:9*) The sin of the spies was that they saw the nakedness of the land.

The meaning of these links is that when the spies went out during the days of Moshe it was a moment when they could have fixed the sin of the tribes who sold Yosef. The souls of the sons of Yaakov entered the spies of the desert so that they would fix the sin of selling Yosef. Selling Yosef is like a shattering of the vessels.

Yosef is like Yaakov, "*Eleh toldos Yaakov Yosef*," "These are the generations of Yaakov - Yosef." (*Bereishis 37:2*) Yaakov is *emes*, truth, and Yosef is *shalom*, peace. What truth is in the spiritual realm, peace is in the physical realm. Yosef brings the *middah* of Yaakov to the physical world. He resembles Yaakov. The sale of Yosef is the *sheviras hakeilim*. Even though all the

tribes were holy, Yosef was a *kelali* while relative to him the other *shevatim* were *peratiyim*. To criticize Yosef is to misunderstand the realm of *tikkun*.

Therefore the *meraglim* who did not understand the matter of *hiskallelus hamiddos*, **who** thought holiness was weaker than the individual forces of evil, therefore repeated the mistake that led to *shviras hakeilim*. "*Vayeilchu vayavou*," "They went and returned." (*Bamidbar 13:26*) Rashi, quoting the Talmud in *Sota 35a*, says they went with bad plans and returned with bad plans. The *Ari* explains though that it means the *shevatim* left the spies. Since the spies were planning evil, the souls of the tribes left them, for they would not rise to the opportunity of fixing the sin of the shattering.

When a person sees that *ki chazak hu mimenu*, we see that the *yetzer hara* is very strong, and we feel "*ilmulei Hakadosh Boruch Hu ozro aino yachol lo*," "If Hashem would not help him he would not be able to overcome the evil urge!" "How will I overcome this force?" You must have *bitachon*, trust, and hold on to Hashem. The *yetzer hara* is stronger, but it is a mere storm! It must reach a *vayamos*! It is a particular force and cannot last. We can link up with Hashem and He will enable us to overcome.

Each of the Kings of Edom ends up dying!

This is the key of the matter. Do not be awed by the *yetzer hara* and the forces of impurity. Know that if "*Chafetz Hashem banu*," **Hashem desires us**, we will certainly defeat the *yetzer hara* and be victorious. Hashem wants us to win. We need to hold on to His ways, include all, and then we will ultimately be victorious. Pray, keep the holiness of Shabbes, learn and do not get intimidated at all from the enticements of evil, **and** you will reach ever higher and higher heights!

The Shattering of the Vessels was the result of a lack of unity, an inability to see past one's particular strength. Lesson twenty reveals the role of Yosef; the role of a tzadik. The tzadik is to take the particular and bring it to the realm of the general. He is to apply to the holy realm the singular focus and drive of the particular. The tzadik who must elevate sparks, must have a single-minded focus in a particular part of Jewish service.

Lesson Twenty: Sheviras Hakeilim Part Three: Full Tikkun

Yosef and Yaakov: Good deeds are integrated, wholesome acts!

We have spoken about the matter of *tikkun* and the universe of *tikkun*. *Tikkun* is all about *hiskallelus* - all middos are included in each other. A *davar tov* reaches the real purpose. The real purpose is when all things that are good come together. *Tov* is a *merkavah* to *Ain Sof*. Good is real. There is no reality other than *tov*. Bad does not have a *metzius*, so to be like *Ain Sof* you must embody and express all the good matters.

Now everything that is good is within a person. And each good deed should be performed as an Adam, meaning that each act should be performed with all the other middos included with it. Each feeling and act should be fitting for an Adam. In other words, it should not conflict with any part of the person so that everything fits. Each act should display that an Adam did this act, and it is therefore a general and integrated act.

For example, a person should give *tzedakah* in a way that does not conflict with any other positive element. He will give *tzedakah*, but not so much to impoverish himself. He will give *tzedakah* in a quiet way to preserve humility, so the charity is a part of the general and all-encompassing perfection of the entire person! He is aware of the complete perfection of man and makes sure that *tzedakah* fits in to the other parts of holiness. He does the same for learning

Torah: He will learn without any arrogance. In other words he is not a particularist. *Tov* is the parts of the person that are inclusive and integrated.

Since Hashem is one, so **too must** man who is *tov* be one. If in each detail you have all elements, than man is also one. If certain aspects of man are **in** dissonance with others, man is not a one. He might **instead** be ten or eleven aspects in a single body with no unity between them.

In gimatria *Adam*, אדם, is *mah*, מה, which has a value of forty-five. *Mah* literally means "what" **and** stands for *bittul*, negation of **the** self. **You must negate the self for each middah** to the other *middos* so that the *shleimus hakelali*, general perfection, of the person will emerge.

There is shalom in tikkun because of this. There is *shalom* between different *tzadikim*. For just as a person needs many parts and each part integrates with others so it is with the nation. There are members of the nation who are generous contributors of funds, others **who** are Torah students, **and still** others **who** are *baalei yirah*, masters of religious awe. But in each element all the **other** elements **are represented**. So financial contributors also learn and their *zedakah* is balanced by their learning. Similarly, Torah students give *zedakah*. This helps build unity within the nation. The fact that each member has all the elements of the nation in him and the fact that each recognizes the needs and the strengths of others builds Jewish unity. **And** where there is oneness Hashem can be found. “*Vehaya Hashem echad. Vehaya Hamishkan echad. Raza dihashem echad ushmo echad.*” “And Hashem will be One (*Zecahriah 14:9*). And the Mishkan will be one (*Shemos 26:6*) This is the secret of Hashem is One and His name is One.” Hashem is not felt in a place of disunity. In a place of *echad*, oneness, Hashem is felt. When down below it is one, the realm below becomes a chariot for the One Above.

In *olam hatohu*, the universe of confusion, and *almah dichruvin*, worlds of destruction, you have the *yetzer hara*. (As we have **previously learned** man is *mah*, he is *kollel* all the *middos* while the *yetzer hara* is focused on a single matter.) That is why in some measure the *yetzer hara* is stronger than the *yetzer tov*. The *Chasam Sofer* points out **that** in our liturgy for Chanukah we stress the miraculous nature of our victory over the Syrian Greeks. We say it was “*Rabbim biyad miatim*,” “*Rishoim biyad tzadikim*,” and “*Zeidim biyad oskei Torasecha*,” “Many in the hands of the few,” “Wicked in the hands of the righteous,” and “Deliberate sinners in the hands of those immersed in Your Torah.” **It** is in fact a miracle that the many would fall to the few, but why is it necessarily a miracle when the wicked fall to the righteous? Perhaps the wicked are weaker? The answer is that the wicked are normally stronger for they have a single minded focus. The righteous have to balance many elements. A wicked person though can choose his evil and ignore all other matters.

A group might decide to make a revolution and they will kill tens of thousands of innocent civilians to gain power! They will not limit themselves! For the Communist revolution they might lie and steal and never restrain themselves at all. In holiness though if I wanted to bring about a new government I would be very limited for my holy urges would also insist that I not kill innocent civilians. The *oskei torasecha* are therefore always weaker than the *zeidim*, and it was a miracle that the deliberate sinners lost to those immersed in Your Torah.

The *yetzer hara* goes with a natural *taava* which is a *perati* so **it has** tremendous strength. The evil urge does not ask *daas*, which examines all matters. It moves based on an instinct that has no restraints and considerations other than satisfying itself.

The Greatness Of Yosef

I mentioned that the *shevatim* did not appreciate Yosef as they should. Yosef relative to the tribes was a generalist to particularists. The brothers had particular forms of service. Let us explain this matter.

Yaakov is *emes*, truth. Our Sages teach that Yaakov's face resembled the beauty of Adam. He does everything in its true way, he does everything in the integrated way. *Derech Yeshara sheyavor lo haadam*, the straight path a man should choose. (*Avos 2:1*) **Yaakov** does not sway, he is the path which is straight. **He is exactly in the middle**, *kol shehi tiferes loseha* and *tiferes li min haadam*, A way that is a glory to the one who fulfills it, and a glory to him from others. (*Avos 1:2*) *Esav*, though was named for his hair. Like hair he is filled with division, **for in hair each blade is separate**. *Esav* is *seir*, a term of hair. **He is ish sair**, the hairy man, **meaning that** he fights with yaakov. *Esav* is also like a storm. *Seir* also recalls the phrase *ruach seara*, a stormy wind, he makes a storm **that** is very strong at **one** moment and then passes and **later** appears in another storm coming. *Vayikrau oso esav*, And they named him *Esav* (*Bereishis 25:26*). "They named him," it was a plural group that named him, for he is *pirud*, separation and division. The *yetzer hara* has seven names for there are many separate forces of *Esav*.

Yosef is the flame that goes down into the realms of *Esav*. Yosef goes down into the realm of *pirud*, into the realm of *Esav*. Yosef is the *middah* of *yesod*: *tzadik yesod olam*. Yosef's attribute displays enormous courage and self sacrifice.

A *tzadik* is a *moser nefesh*. He would do whatever it is that *ratzon Hashem* calls for. A *tzadik* will never violate *ratzon Hashem*. The key point of a *tzadik* is this *messirus nefesh*: he will give anything up to fulfill Hashem's will. There are big *tzadikim* and small *tzadikim*, yet they

are all called *tzadikim* for the essence of a *tzadik* is the same. A man with great *kochos* can do great things for Hashem, and a man with smaller *hasagos* or abilities will do less, but both are *tzadikim* for both would be *moser nefesh* to fulfill the will of Hashem. This is the level of *Yesod*, this is Yosef.

Tzadik is the *yesod*, foundation, for all *avodas Hashem*! *Tzadik yesod olam*, Tzadik is the foundation of the world, this is the real עול מלכות שמים, acceptance of the yoke of Heaven.

The *middah* of *yesod* goes down into the material realm and is willing to sacrifice all to hold on to Hashem. *Yesod* is identified with the covenant, for a *bris*, a covenant, means a commitment that nothing can stand in our way to fulfill the will of Hashem! Rashi explains that it is the way of those who enter into a *bris* to tear apart an animal and walk between the pieces. Why such a seemingly unusual ritual?

The message of a *bris* is that nothing will stand in the way of this commitment! It means that, "I am willing to walk through walls in order to fulfill the will of Hashem!" Yosef has a *kerisas bris* with Hashem. The *middah* of *yesod* is also called *bris*.

When we will have full *tikkun* and loss of the evil urge, *bittul yetzer hara*, the strength of single minded focus will rise to the realm of holiness.

The *tikkun hashalem*, the *bittul* of the *yetzer hara*, will mean the following: we have mentioned that the *yetzer hara* has a strength over the holiness, for it is more focused. In our realm *daas* limits a man of holiness and he does not learn Torah the way a *baal taava* would run to do *taavos*. The nature of Yaakov does not lend itself to the great passion we have seen in *tzadikim*, for Yaakov is associated with *daas* and *daas* is measured. *Daas* reduces passion. The Yaakov way would make all *mitzvos* integrated and measured. But we find that *tzadikim* do

mitzvos differently! We have seen tzadikim **who have an awesome desire** when they do a *mitzvah*. They do a *mitzvah* with delight and drive as if it was a physical urge and desire to do this *mitzvah*! From the Yaakov attribute this would not happen, this comes from the power of Yosef! For the attribute of Yosef is to take the strength of a *perati*, particularist, and bring it to holiness.

The holy works state that the *tikkun hashalem* will be that the *oros of tohu* will enter the *keilim of tikkun*. In the future we will merit that the *keilim* can hold these great lights of *tohu* and not break. This means that when the *tikkun* arrives we will do a *mitzvah* with a feeling that this is the only *mitzvah* in the world, as if it is a *perati*. We will be generalists though. When the second *mitzvah* comes up we will also do it with a feeling that it is the only *mitzvah*. In other words the *koach hataanug*, force of delight, the strength of the *yetzer hara*, will be made into a force of *kedusha*.

Yosef, Yaakov, and the Shevatim

Yosef goes to great distances. The *shevatim* are *peratim*. **Thinking about** each *shevet* as a *perat* is similar to the **way we think about the** *yetzer hara*. Yosef includes all the *peratim* and makes *shalom* between all. He is **the middah** of *shalom*. Yaakov is *emes* **and** in *emes* everything is calibrated not to conflict with anything else, everything goes with the *emes*. There is no dispute when you have *emes*.

Yosef needs *shalom*. He enters into each *perat* as if it is a *perati* and conflicts with others, but Yosef goes into the inner reality and in the *pnimiyus* he brings the Yaakov reality! *Eleh toldos yaakov yosef*. These are the generations of Yaakov- Yosef. (*Bereishis 37:2*) Yosef performs *shalom* from that which seemed to be a *machlokes*! He shows that in the *pnimiyus* it is

the *emes liyaakov*. When the rebbe is dancing on Simchat Torah, his mind filled with great thoughts, he nevertheless still pays attention to a little child and that does not take him away from what he is trying to accomplish. With the focus and passion on one matter he also sees and works on the other matter. This is the inner Yaakov within the external Yosef. Yosef goes into the *olam hatohu* with the *shleimus* of Yaakov and he transforms the *olam hatohu*!

Yosef is *sitno shel Esav*, the opponent of Esav, and he enters Esav's realm and through taking the power of particularism, he defeats him.

Shalom 376 שלום equals *Esav* 376 עשו in *gimatria*, for Yosef goes into the realm of *Esav* and brings a *tikkun* out from there. This is why the verse says about the brothers and Joseph, *Vlo yachlu dabro lishalom*, They could not speak with him peacefully. (*Bereishis 37:4*) Yaakov does not go down. While Yosef goes down to the level of the lowest brothers he is *mivarer*, purifying, the lower levels. When the *shevatim* were trying to attach themselves to the high level of the forefathers Yosef argued that they should attach themselves to him, and go to the *Malchei Edom*, go to the low levels with a great strength and be *mivarer* the low levels. The *shevatim* felt that Yosef was trying to go to a low level so he was in the category of death, for as we learned when the vessel goes to a lower level this is called *vayamos*. The Zohar explained that the *vayamos* of *Malchei Edom* means that through the *sheviras hakelim* there are the worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, where it is not *Atzilus* and it is not all Godliness, so it is a lower level, and it is called *vayamos*.

For example, King Bela was the *middah* of *daas*. When it broke the *pnimiyus* of this vessel went to the universe of *Beriah*, the middle to *Yetzirah*, and the externals of this vessel went to *Asiyah*. This is the *vayamos*, a descent to lower levels. With our *machshava*, thoughts,

dibbur, speech, and *maaseh*, actions, that correspond to these three worlds we are *mevasser* these vessels to the point that eventually they will become one with the soul so that we will be *Ihu vigarmoihu chad bizon*, He and the vessel are one in them, which is the realm of *Atzilus*.

Vayamos means *nachis midargei*, it went down from its level: the vessel went from *Atzilus* to the lower realms of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. The *shevatim* are the realm of *Beriah*, while the seventy souls who entered Egypt was *Yetzirah* and the full six hundred thousand Jews represent the realm of *Asiyah*.

We find that Shlomo made a *yam*, basin, which stood on twelve cattle. The *yam* displayed *malchus* of *Atzilus*. The lowest level of the higher world, the *Malchus* of a high level, goes down and becomes the heights of the lower realm. So the *yam shel Shlomo*, the *Malchus* of *Atzilus*, was standing on twelve cattle on the *shevatim* who are at the top of *Beriah*. Thus the *Shevatim* at the level of *Beriah* wanted to be connected to a higher realm. They wanted to be attached to the *Avos*, patriarchs, who are the level of *Atzilus*. The *shevatim* wanted to be connected to *Atzilus*, and what could have connected them? Yosef Hatzadik.

Yosef draws the light of *Atzilus* into the realm of *Beriah* and through him in *Beriah* there is a point from *Atzilus*. So an attachment to Yosef is really an attachment to the realm of *Atzilus*! So long as we have not arrived at the world of *tikkun* we need the role of Yosef. We must enter into the realm of *tohu* and there in the world of *pirud* have a light of *tikkun*. In the separate realm we need *tzadikim* who drawn a light from *tikkun* and *Atzilus*. In our realm we need a Yosef.

Nowadays we need the power of the *perat*, the focused energy!

The Way to the Tree of Life

I may have once given this parable before, but it is worth repeating to explain the nature of a Yosef, the difference between a general and a particular strength. Sometimes there is a general success and sometimes a particular success. Today we know there is a great need to be *mevarer* the last *nitzotzin*, Godly sparks, prior to the coming of *mashiach*.

Imagine a doctor who is a very successful man. He knows how to organize an office, how to talk to people, how to talk to patients and how to run a business well and he knows all the normal illnesses, including the correct medicine for them, and he might even know what other doctors do not know and he might make a lot of money. He is very successful.

There is another doctor who is a *shlemazal*. He does not know how to run a business or run an office. But he understands the wisdom of medicine with all the roots, he understands why this person is sick and what is the process why a particular medicine should work. He is so immersed in the *chochmah* of healing and in a detail of *chochmas harefuah*, the wisdom of medicine, that he is a *shlemazel* in other matters, and he might have a moment of great success where he realizes a new treatment to an illness for he reached the root of this illness. Once he arrived at the root he found the cure. Then all the text books will give this doctor credit. This type of success is a *hatzlacha peratis*, a particular success.

The degree of success of the specialist is greater than the achievements of the generalist, for the *perati* discovered new approaches. The world can have many good generalists but this *perati* makes a real contribution.

So it is with serving God. In *avdus Hashem* each *tzadik* is *mechadesh chidushim*, reveals new insights. Each *tzadik* has his own way, and each one performs all the mitzvos. But in a relative sense there are *tzadikim* we can call *bechinas mah*, the practitioners of *tikkun*: they are

good in all things in general. And then there is a tzadik who is a *perat*. His importance derives from the fact that he was *mechadeish* a *nekudah*, point, in *avodas Hashem* or an approach to learning Torah. Relative to these other tzadikim, he is a *perati*.

In other words one is a Yaakov and the other is a Yosef. Yosef goes into the *olam hatohu* and brings about a *tikkun perati*. He seeks the depth of the *olam hatohu* and in this way he succeeds. It says of Yosef, “*Vayehi Hashem es Yosef vayehi ish matzliach*,” “And Hashem was with Joseph and he was a successful man.” (*Bereishis 39:2*) for it was a *chidush* that Yosef would succeed. *Olam hatohu* is the opposite of success. The *olam hatikkun* is the realm of success, but Yosef was an *ish matzliach*! He was successful in the realm of the *perati* of *tohu*. A successful one does everything yet Yosef can succeed with a single minded focus. This is the *perati Tzadik*!

We see nowadays that there is a need for expertise in one area of Talmud Torah. It was once the case that a *talmid chacham* knew everything. The reason for this is that it is needed now to raise sparks, to find revolutionary breakthroughs, to raise one spark in an area. This is why today many *tzadikim* are experts in one area of Torah and they are not experts in everything. Once a Rav knew every area of Torah. Today though you can be a Rav and not know everything. Hashem has arranged it this way, and there are so many books that we can look things up in them. If we have a question we can call experts and if they do not know we can call bigger experts and you can call Rav Elyashiv¹⁴⁰ with your questions! Hashem had made it this way to enable focus and greatness in particular areas of service to Him!

So it is with Torah that today you can be an expert in one area, and so it is with *avodah* you can be an expert in one area of *avodah*. In learning you might reach expertise in *Nezikin*,

¹⁴⁰ Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, 1910-2012, was one of the great Torah giants of our generation, he was considered the *Posek Hador*, the Halachic Decider for the time.

monetary matters, or in *lomdus*, Talmudic analysis, or in *Halacha* or in another area. We should realize every Jew is *meyuchad*, dedicated, for greatness and greatness today means expertise in one area of Torah or *avodah*.

You should know that in Chassidim we had the concept of Rebbes and the Lithuanians have *mashgichim*, spiritual guides, and *baalei mussar*, masters of rebuke. Once the *gadol* was everything. He knew all of the Talmud and he was the big *tzadik*. In later generations it is not so. The *mashgiach* is certainly a talmid chochom yet he might not be the greatest sage of the generation. His primary expertise is in fear, *mussar*, devout prayer, and *tikkun hamiddos*, fixing character traits. This is true about Rebbes in *chassidus* as well. You should know **that** he might be an expert in *avodah* and he might not be as great a *talmid chacham* as the person who is constantly learning. He is a *tzadik emes* for his expertise in the hidden realms or in service and he need not also be the expert on halacha. We see that in our generations, the final *doros*, there is a need for *birruv nitzotzin* so there is a focus on detailed successes, on a success in the realm of *perat*, in the realm of detail, one expertise. The *oros* of *tohu* must shine now in the vessels of *tikkun*.

Achorayim

The Tanya says here that *chochmah chitzonis* fell in the *sheviras hakeilim* from the *achorayim* of *chochmah*. There is a problem here of kabbalah. We explained that *sheviras hakeilim* was in the *middos*, it started in *daas* as the beginning of the *middos*, but **it did not reach** the three intellects. Here he is talking of *chochmah*, one of the *gimel rishonos*, so where is the shattering here?

The answer is that even in *chochmah* there was a matter which can be called similar to *sheviras hakeilim*. Usually we do not call it *sheviras hakeilim* but it was similar. *Sheviras hakeilim* is that the *middos* fell into a lower realm. *Kesser*, *Chochmah*, and *Binah* did not fall, but the *achorayim*, rear-parts of *Kesser*, *Chochmah* and *Binah*, the *Nehi* (*Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod*) of these levels fell. It was still from *Atzilus* but it fell, so the Tanya when he says the *achorayim* from *chochmah* fell in *sheviras hakeilim* is referring to this point of *achorayim* that had a fall.

In other words, *chochmah* on its own, when it is not influenced by the *middos*, has no bad. *Chochmah* is all good. *Chochmah* that has become a part of *kellipas nogah* in part became *chochmah raah*. This part is bad wisdom and heretical ideas, because of the influence that the *middos raos* have on *chochmah*. But had the *middos* not had any impact on the *chochmah* then it would have stayed good. There is a part of *chochmah* which is impacted by the *middos*. This is the *achorayim* of *chochmah* which fell.

A time for great growth

Now during the *bein hamitzarim*, the three weeks during the summer when we mourn the loss of the two Temples, one can reach *chidushim*, novel insights, in *avodas Hashem*. Like that doctor we have seen many young men who have reached many heights during these days, and Hashem has arranged that in these days everyone goes to a new place and this is so that in a new environment a person can more easily become a new person. We have to take advantage of these times. We have to use the time to reach elevations. To have a new *hassaga* and a new *cheishek*, desire, in *avodas Hashem*. While it is a time that we can reach great heights we also know that it is possible during this time to be distracted and to fall.

Rosh Hashana was a day of great joy, it was the day when Hashem enjoyed His world. Each year, Rosh Hashana recreates the delights Hashem had when He made Adam, but it is “*Bakesse liyom chageinu.*” “Hidden on the day of our festival.” (*Tehillim 81:4*) Why must we hide the joy? For on the first Rosh Hashana the satan came and disturbed the joy. This is why he is called satan. His nature is that when man needs to go up he comes to disturb and distract.

In the summer you will all be in camp. Camp is an opportunity but also a challenge. At a time when we should go up the satan comes and disturbs. In camps the satan disturbs unity, he causes us to lose the *maalos* of *hisbodedus*, meditation, he causes *kalus rosh*, light-headedness. Use the time of *hisbodedus*, that you will have in camp during the summer. Use friendship for holiness, talk about *tzadikim*, be connected to others to serve Hashem. Create a unity whereby all work together. If each one goes his own way and will not serve Hashem together with others it is the opposite of *tikkun*. Talk about all the types of *tzadikim*, learn from each one. If there is *pirud levavos*, divided hearts, there is no *kedusha* there. *Kedusha* is all about *achdus*.

You have no reason not to have *achdus*! You are all *bnei Torah*! You are all serious! Be a *misboded*! Get together for *avodas Hashem*! Talk about *tzadikim* and stay away from the *kalus rosh* that sometimes occurs in social settings. Stay away from haughtiness and division. You should know this has to be used to be a time for elevation otherwise it can go the other way God forbid. In camp you can do much *chessed*. Maybe someone else came late to supper, **and you can** make sure he has chicken. Be careful to conduct yourself at night in a way that will enable others to sleep. Be involved in **the** love of others, and in this way you will merit to use this time to truly rise. Fight against selfishness. Do not think I have to get the best room or bed, man was created to not think about himself, he was created to annul himself to be a *mah* and think of

others and do for others. See to it that others take the better room and bed. Work on not being an I. This is a place where you can do kindness for each other. In all areas you can work on yourself. So work on yourself and *bezras Hashem* you will have a great *aliyah* in these days and hopefully hashem will help to transform these days to *sasson*, joy, and to *simcha*, happiness.

The righteous do not have an evil urge. Yet an urge for evil is part of the human condition. How can there be people who do not have an evil urge? The root of the evil urge is limitations and judgements. In the righteous the evil urge takes the form of judgements. Rebuke is a holy and elevated form of the evil urge. The task during the month of Ellul and Rosh Hashana is to sweeten restrictions and limitations. Lesson twenty one explores these themes.

Lesson Twenty One: The nature of the evil urge

Chapter Nine:

והנה מקום משכן נפש הבהמית שמקליפת נוגה בכל איש ישראל הוא בלב בחלל שמאלי שהוא מלא דם

*The place where *kellipas nogah*, the *kellipah* which pulls man to all material matters, not to prohibited matters, is in the left ventricle of the heart which is filled with blood,*

וכתיב כי הדם הוא הנפש

As it is written that blood is the nefesh

ולכן כל התאות והתפארות וכעס ודומיהן הן בלב ומהלב הן מתפשטות בכל הגוף וגם עולה למוח שבראש לחשב ולהרהר בהן ולהתחכם בהן כמו שהדם מקורו בלב ומהלב מתפשט לכל האברים וגם עולה למוח שבראש

*Hence all lusts and boasting and anger and similar passions are in the heart, and from the heart they spread throughout the whole body, rising also to the brain in the head, so as to **cause us to** think and meditate about them and become cunning in them, just as the blood has its*

source in the heart and from the heart it circulates into every limb, rising also to the brain in the head.

The Tanya teaches that the animal soul that emerged from *kellipas nogah* resides in each Jewish soul in the left ventricle of the heart that is filled with blood. As it is written, *ki hadam hu hanefesh*, for the blood is the soul. (*Devarim 12:23*) *Nefesh* in the verse refers to *Nefesh habahamis*, for the human being has physical life like an animal. And this soul is like the blood. The blood spreads from the heart to all the limbs of man. Similarly the physical urges such as anger and lust emerge from the *Nefesh habahamis* and then spread out to the entirety of the person.

The Nature Of The Evil Urge

Since the source of evil urges is the heart, not the mind, and since the *yetzer harah* is from *dam*, from the term *dimyon*, fantasy, the evil urge is illogical and animalistic. It is filled with fantasies and nonsensical imaginations, it is *dimyon* and not *daas*. It is written, “*Rak chazak livilti achol hadam,*” “Just be very strong and do not eat blood.” (*Devarim 12:23*) Rashi has two comments on this verse. One, if Hashem had to say “Be strong to not eat blood” you see that the Jews were immersed in eating blood. Others say, “*Lo bah hakassuv elah lihazhircha ulilamedcha ad kamma ata tzarich lihitchazek bimitzvot*” “The verse only comes to warn you and teach you how much you must strengthen yourself in mitzvah observance” “*Im hadam shehu kal lihashameir mimenu, sheain adam misaveh lo hutzrach lichazkecha biazharaso kal vichomer lishaar mitzvot*” “If blood which is easy to avoid since man does not naturally desire it, the verse

had to strengthen you to overcome the urge to eat it, certainly one needs strength to fulfill other mitzvos.” A person’s soul finds **blood** revolting, yet the Torah gives reward. Certainly this **must also be the case then** for avoiding misbehaviors that we desire **to do**.

We see that a normal man would be revolted by blood, so what attracts man to eating blood, why did the Torah need to tell us “strengthen yourselves”? Apparently to most people ingesting blood is nonsensical but there are **some whose** blood attracts them to perform the illogical, hence the need for the Torah to insist, “*rak chazak*” “Just be strong.” Such is the manner of all misdeeds. What is desirous **to one**, another will recognize as nonsense and disgusting. All evil urges are nonsense. Yet we will receive reward for avoiding these nonsensical desires.

When the Torah taught about blood it taught about the nature of the evil urge. You may not know what is a challenge for you. And you should realize that all **evil** desires are nonsensical. From a more enlightened perspective you will realize that they are folly.

Consider the desire for honor. Honor is such a silliness. What is honor? Total insanity. The honor given to people is meaningless. Take a groom who is given honor **who** feels enjoyment from it. Will it last? Is it unique? Everyone will be a *chosson* and get that type of honor! We think that we are great because we get *kavod*?! This is nonsense!

Even **about** those urges that a person desires one should look deeply and realize **that** they are nonsense. Then a person should ask himself, “Do I want to be a fool?”

Say someone’s reputation **improves**, does that make **him a better person**? **Do** you serve G-d more because people talk about you? Are you a better person because you become a son-in-

law of a Rebbe? How can you look for this honor? Is this honor helping the ultimate goal,
Lidavkah bo?

G-d says *Hashamayim kisii vhaaratz hadom ragley vel zeh abit el ani uncheh ruach vichared al devari,* "The heavens are my throne, the earth my footstool, but to this I look, to a poor man, weak of spirit, who trembles at My word." (*Yeshayahu 66:2*) God tells us **that the** broken, poor person who is trying to serve G-d is the person we should connect ourselves **to**, not the arrogant, wealthy or famous individual! What matters is *kvod hashem*. So why do we run after honor and money? It is like an animal that runs to eat straw. We are running after nonsense!

What To Live For

The evil urge is silly. **It** should **make us** feel embarrassed about ourselves. Each of us **has moments** like **those of** King Solomon, when we can ask of G-d whatever we desire and He will **grant** it. At those moments we should ask for attachment to G-d. When we pray on *Rosh Hashana* we should ask for what really matters, *dveykus bahashem*. Attachment to G-d is really the only thing that matters. We have to be stubborn in this insistence that the only thing we are looking for is to be attached to G-d. We are to hope exclusively for "*Shivti biveis hashem kol yemei chayay lachazos binoam hashem ulivaker biheichalo,*" "To sit in the house of Hashem all the days of my life, to see the pleasantness of Hashem and to discern in His palace." (*Tehillim 27:4*)

King David was a monarch **who** saw all the **many** different types of people and **their** missions. He taught us that the one thing to ask for is to sit in the Almighty's Home and to study His Torah. Real success is not becoming a famous Rosh Yeshiva, **it is** rather to be a simple Jew

sitting in the corner of a Beis Midrash and learning from a stack of Seforim. No one knows this Jew, **but he** is the picture of achievement.

Where are we going with our lives? We are going to G-d. We have to keep reminding ourselves that the purpose of life is to enjoy G-d (*Messillas Yesharim*). The purpose of man is *lihisanag el hashem*. Once an individual's service **to** G-d is such that he is *misanag al hashem*, once he reaches the point that he is enjoying G-d through his service of Hashem, then he knows he has reached the appropriate level of service to G-d.

There is a certain pleasure felt in *Avodas Hashem* that is unparalleled. It is a joy of *dveykus bahashem*. Our mission in life is to work for G-d. Once we are feeling the *taanug eloki* in our service we will be aware that our service has reached the level that it should.

Remember the basics

When we stop thinking about the basic principles that truly matter to a Jew then we get all caught up in nonsense. The *Baal Shem Tov* lit up Jewish souls with a great light after **they were** already aware of the basics of Judaism. Today people forget about the high levels and the basics.

What is a Jew? What the *Messilas Yesharim* taught in the beginning of his work! Man must remember his mission to serve G-d and to reach a level of service to G-d where one enjoys His Presence. Work hard. In this generation to truly think about Hashem will be very much appreciated in the next realm. There is a special help from Above to those who are sincere and heartfelt in this generation! You can merit levels that earlier generations could not get.

It says about the future, "*Vihaya hanishar biTzion vihanosar biyerushalayim kadosh yeameir lo,*" "It will be that every one who is left in Zion and Jerusalem will be called

holy.” (*Yeshayahu 4:3*) This verse seems to imply that in light of the great temptations and challenges in our realm, one who stays a simple Jew will be considered a holy one like *Reb Elimelech* of *Lizhensk* was considered a holy being. Rav Nachman of Breslov added that the verse should be read as a rhetorical question. *Kadosh yeiamer lo?! In light of the great darkness before Mashiach's arrival, those who are simple Jews in these times are so holy that even the term Kadosh is insufficient to describe them! In these days to be a simple loyal Jew who wishes to serve G-d is a truly amazing feat! The verse is declaring "Can one call him holy?!" He is much more than sacred!!! We have been given the privilege that we can accomplish these feats.*

We can be the ones who are still standing in Zion! ומשבראש ומוחין הוא האלהית נפש האלהית הוא במוחין שבראש ומש

ם מתפשטת לכל האברים וגם בלב בחלל הימני שאין בו דם וכמ"ש לב חכם לימינו

והיא אהבת ה' כרשפי שלהבת מתלהבת בלב משכילים המבינים ומתבוננים בדעתם אשר במוחם בדברים

המעוררים את האהבה. *But the abode of the divine soul is in the brains that are in the head, and from there it extends to all the limbs; and also in the heart, in the right ventricle wherein there is no blood, as is written, "The heart of the wise man is on his right." It is [the source of] man's fervent love towards G-d which, like flaming coals, flares up in the heart of discerning men who understand and reflect, with the [faculty of] knowledge of their brain, on matters that arouse this love*

The *Nefesh Elohis* is concentrated in the *mochin shebrosh* and then it extends downward to the right half of the heart. Thus the mind tends to the *Nefesh Elohis* and the heart can go either way (the left half tends to the animal while the right leans to the G-dly) and the liver is all blood and leans to the physical and the animalistic.

וכן שמחת לבב בתפארת ה' והדר גאונו

The Way to the Tree of Life

כאשר עיני החכם אשר בראשו במוח חכמתו ובינתו מסתכלים ביקרא דמלכא ותפארת גדולתו עד אין חקר
ואין סוף ותכלית כמבואר במקום אחר

*Also [of] the gladness of the heart in the beauty of G-d and the majesty of His glory
[which is aroused] when the eyes of the wise man, that are in his head, i.e. in the brain
harboring his wisdom and understanding, gaze at the glory of the King and beauty of His
greatness that are unfathomable and without end or limit, as explained elsewhere*

Notice the language of the Tanya. There is a joy **in** recognizing the truth. This is the joy
of appreciating the *Tiferes* of the Ribbono Shel Olam. There is an enormous joy in the heart that
comes from the *chabad* in the mind that appreciates the absolute truth.

וכן שאר מדות קדושות שבלב הן מחב"ד שבמוחין

*as also the other holy affections (middos) in the heart originate from ChaBaD [wisdom,
understanding, knowledge] in the **mind**.*

The chabad in the mind sires all the holy middos.

אך הנה כתיב ולאום מלאום יאמץ כי הגוף נקרא עיר קטנה וכמו ששני מלכים נלחמים על עיר אחת שכל אחד
רוצה לכבשה ולמלוך עליה דהיינו להנהיג יושביה כרצונו ושיהיו סרים למשמעתו בכל אשר יגזור עליהם. כך שתי
הנפשות האלהית והחיונית הבהמית שמהקליפה נלחמות זו עם זו על הגוף וכל אבריו שהאלהית חפצה ורצונה שתהא
היא לבדה המושלת עליו ומנהיגתו וכל האברים יהיו סרים למשמעתה ובטלים אצלה לגמרי ומרכבה אליה ויהיו לבוש
לעשר בחינותיה וג' לבושיה הנ"ל שיתלבשו כולם באברי הגוף ויהיה הגוף כולו מלא מהם לבדם ולא יעבור זר בתוכם
ה"ו

*It is written, however, "One nation shall prevail over the other nation." The body is called
a "small city." Just as two kings wage war over a town, which each wishes to capture and rule,*

that is to say to dominate its inhabitants according to his will, so that they obey him in all that he decrees for them, so do the two souls— the Divine and the vitalizing animal soul that comes from the kelipah— wage war against each other over the body and all its limbs. It is the desire and will of the Divine soul that she alone rule over the person and direct him, and that all his limbs should obey her and surrender themselves completely to her and become a vehicle for her, as well as a robe [instrument] for her ten faculties and three garments mentioned above, all of which should pervade the organs of the body, and the entire body should be permeated with them alone, to the exclusion of any alien influence, G-d forbid.

The human being is a small city and there is a war ongoing for rule over the city. This is the war between the *yetzer tov* and its opposite.

דהיינו תלת מוחין שבראש יהיו ממולאים מחב"ד שבנפש האלהית שהיא חכמת ה' ובינתו להתבונן בגדולתו אשר עד אין חקר ואין סוף ולהוליד מהן על ידי הדעת היראה במוחו ופחד ה' בלבו ואהבת ה' כאש בוערה בלבו כרשפי שלהבת להיות נכספה וגם כלתה נפשו בחשיקה וחפיצה לדבקה בו בא"ס ב"ה בכל לב ונפש ומאד מעומקא דלבא שבחלל הימני שיהיה תוכו רצוף אהבה מלא וגדוש עד שתתפשט גם לחלל השמאלי לאכפיא לס"א יסוד המים הרעים שבה שהיא התאוה שמקליפת נוגה לשנותה ולהפכה מתענוגי עולם הזה לאהבת ה' כ

That is to say, that the three brains that are in the head shall be permeated with ChaBaD of the Divine soul, namely, the wisdom of G-d and the understanding of Him, by pondering on His unfathomable and infinite greatness; and from them shall be born, through the daas (knowledge), awe in his mind and dread of G-d in his heart, as well as a love of G-d that shall flare up like a glowing fire in his heart, like flaming coals, so that his soul shall yearn and long, with passion and desire, to cleave to the blessed Ain Sof, with his whole heart, soul and might, from the very depths of the right ventricle of the heart. The latter would be so thoroughly

permeated with love to overflowing so as to inundate the left side as well, to the extent of subduing the sitra achra with its element of the "evil waters" (namely, the lust stemming from kelipas nogah) changing it and transforming it from seeking the pleasures of this world to the love of G-d.

First there is *iskafiah*, coercing, and eventually it becomes *is'hapcha*, transforming. At its root the *Yetzer hara* is a *malach kadosh*, a holy angel. It comes from *gevuros* and through the many *tzimtzumim* it becomes a *yetzer harah*. At its root the evil urge is the holy angel of great stringencies.

There are *tzadikim* who do not have a *yetzer hara*. The goal of a person should be to become a person who is all good. *Seforim* explain *tzadikim* do not have an animal-like urge. But an evil urge is part of the human condition! For these *tzadikim* the *Yetzer hara* is non-sweetened *gevuros*.

Holiness means being all good

A person ultimately must arrive at the level of all *tov*, without *gevuros*. He should be a person who can never get angry, punish, and hurt.

Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam o.b.m., the Klausenberger Rebbe, related several stories about Rav Aharon Rokeach, o.b.m., the Belzer Rebbe, how this tzadik was filled with good. "I remember that they once related to my father o.b.m. how when the Tzadik Rav Aharon of Belz was in Munkatch policemen came and tried to jail him. They hit him and pushed him. They treated him very roughly. He could not stand their wickedness any more and he blurted out,

"They are a bit very strange these goyim." For him this was already a very harsh statement about antisemites. I remember that when they told this to my father he smiled. This is the way of the holy tzadikim, only goodness!"

I heard it said in the name of the Tzadik Rav Aharon of Belz o.b.m. that when he arrived to the holy land he said, "It is wondrous and awesome that here in the land of Israel even the goyim are Yidden!"¹⁴¹

Let us explain. What is punishment? It says "*Tiyasreich raaseich*," "Your evil will punish you." (*Yirmiyahu 2:19*) **The idea is** that evil itself punishes. *Mipi Elyon, lo teitzei haraos vihatov*," "From the One on high, evil and good will not emerge." (*Eichah 3:38*) **Hashem** does not mete out punishment. In other words, the sin itself is *mechaye*, gives life, to the *mechabel*, the angel of damage, and this angel **delivers** the punishment. As it punishes, the angel gets weaker, for the *malachei chabala* lose their *nitzotzin* and then they disappear. The punishment fixes the damage of the sin. In other words, the sin brought holy life into exile, sparks entered the angel of destruction, and the angel of destruction gets permission to **do** damage. (The angel seeks to destroy for that is its essence and it seeks more such experiences.) **Destruction can come not only from angels but also from gentiles and both these destructive agents** get life from our sins. Once **their urge to destroy is spent out**, they stop existing.

Rebbe *Elimelech* of Lizhensk interprets the verse about the Jews at the Red Sea, "*Hashem yilachem lachem viatem tacharishun*," Hashem will fight for you and you are to be silent, (*Shmos 14:14*) to mean: Hashem is fighting you. The **bit** of Hashem **that is with** the Egyptians is **what the Jews had to fight**. But *atem tacharishun*, you can uproot and dig it out.

¹⁴¹ *Imros Tzadikim* page 22

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Why wait for a punishment to expunge the good spark from the evil? You can repent! Through your *teshuva* you will uproot this life that your sins have embedded in the forces of evil! You can then be secure without a punishment!

This is the meaning of the concept that no punishments **come from Hashem**. Holiness is all good, *meito lo teitzei raah*! From Him evil will not emerge!

There are some *tzadikim* **who** punish sinners. They get upset and **they** punish. Of them it says, *Gam enosh latzadik lo tov*! It is not good for the righteous to punish! (*Mishley 17:26*) Just as with Hashem there is a concept of *me'ito lo teitzei raah*, a *tzadik* should be someone who will not punish. Say there is a *tzadik* who conveys mussar, and pushes demands that we must be sincere and heartfelt, a person who hears it will feel, "Wow, these are obligations!" But this is not punishment!" Righteous people look for such challenges. Mussar calls are *gevuros kedoshos*! Holy restrictions. These are positive ways that get us to a good place.

Consider, a punishment fixes the soul, yet we pray to not be punished. Why do we **make** such prayers? Do we not want our soul to be fixed? **It is because** we would like the *tikkun* to come in a good way, in a way of *tov*. We would never pray that we should never hear rebuke, *mussar*. Even though *mussar* is *gevuros* and some people feel bad when they hear *mussar*, we never pray not to hear it! For *mussar* brings us to a *tikkun hanefesh* in a way that is not a punishment, in a way that is *tov*. It is *gevuros* that are *tov*! A *tzadik* must try to be like Hashem, a being who is all *tov*! If he must correct others, **he should** do it in a way that is *tov* and not in a

way of punishments! To give *mussar* which a sincere person finds inspiring and a source of life and needed direction!¹⁴²

***Avigayil* and David**

We find in Tanach that when David went to take revenge against *Naval Hacarmeli*, *Avigayil* went out to ask him not to punish Naval. She said, “*Vihaysa nefesh adoni tzerura betzrur hachaim es Hashem Elokecha*,” “And the soul of my master will be bound in the bond of life with Hashem your God,” (*Shmuel I 25:29*) therefore **do not** commit this sin. What is she saying? Is she saying, "You will ultimately go to Heaven and reconnect to Hashem so do not sin now?" This is true about all sins! Why say this now?

She was saying, "You are a *tzadik*. You will unite to the level of a day of all good in the world to come! You are supposed to be connected to a high realm where *gam anosh latzadik lo tov*, a level of only goodness! *Es hashem Elokecha!* With Hashem your God! The high place you are to reach is a place that is all good **with** no punishments. Therefore since you will be united with Hashem Your God, in bonds of life, this is why you should not do this act of

¹⁴² In his first *shiur* to *Messilas Yesharim* (5769) the Rebbe pointed out that the word *mussar* shares an etymological bond with the word *yissurim*, suffering. The easiest way to force a change in behavior is to inflict *yissurim*. In divine service as well *yissurim* coerce a person to bend to Hashem's will. But this is not the ideal! Hashem created a world filled with good, *liheitiv*, to benefit creations. Hashem never wants to afflict people. There is a way of kindness that coerces divine service. This is the wisdom of *mussar* connected to *yissurim*. Through *mussar* serious people grasp lessons of how to serve Hashem and feel obligated to adopt these behaviors! Therefore instead of needing physical suffering to force spiritual growth they achieve the same spiritual results through ideas of *mussar*, and therefore he does not need any physical pain. *Mussar* is holy *yissurim*! Unfortunately the cynic who refuses to internalize words of improvement is causing *yissurim* to himself. Our sages therefore taught, *kol hamis'lotzeit yissurim baim alav!* A cynic brings suffering upon himself. (*Otzar Giltonei Divrei Torah*, 5769, page 674)

harming *Naval Hacarmeli!*" *Kedusha* is *kulo tov*. In great *tzadikim*, the *yetzer hara* is just *gevuros* that are not sweetened.

Moshe when he said, "*Shimu nah hamorim*," "Listen you rebels," (*Bamidbar* 20:10) had a little **unsweetened** *gevuros*, and this was his sin. For from these **broken** *gevuros* the *yetzer hara* and *aveiros* emerge.

כמ"ש בכל לבבך בשני יצריך והיינו שיעלה ויבא ויגיע למדרגת אהבה רבה וחיבה יתרה ממדרגת אהבה עזה כרשפי אש והיא הנקראת בכתוב אהבה בתענוגים להתענג על ה' מעין עולם הבא והענג הוא במוח חכמה ושכל המתענג בהשכלת ה' וידיעתו כפי השגת שכלו וחכמתו והוא בחי' המים זרע אור זרוע שבקדושת נפש האלהית המהפכת לטוב את בחי' המים שבנפש הבהמית שמהם באו תאות תענוגי עוה"ז מתחלה וכמ"ש בע"ח שער נ' פרק ג' בשם הזהר שהרע נהפך להיות טוב גמור כמו יצר טוב ממש בהסיר הבגדים הצואים ממנו שהם תענוגי עוה"ז שהוא מלובש בהם וכן שאר כל המדות שבלב שהן ענפי היראה והאהבה יהיו לה' לבדו וכל כח הדבור שבפה והמחשבה שבמוח יהיו ממולאים מן לבושי המחשבה והדבור של נפש האלהית לבדה שהן מחשבת ה' ותורתו להיות שיחתו כל היום לא פסיק פומיה מגירסא וכח המעשיי שבידי' ושאר רמ"ח אבריו יהיה במעשה המצות לבד שהוא לבוש השלישי של נפש האלהית אך נפש הבהמית שמהקליפה רצונה להפך ממש לטובת האדם שיתגבר עליה וינצחנה כמשל הזונה שבזה"ק

Thus it is written, "With all thine heart— with both your natures." That is to say, that the person shall steadily rise to attain the degree of "abundant love," a supreme affection surpassing that of "ardent love" that is comparable to burning coals. This is what is called in Scripture "love of delights," which is the experience of delight in G-dliness, of the nature of the world to come. This delight is in the brain of wisdom, in the intellectual pleasure of comprehending and knowing G-d, to the extent that one's intellect and wisdom can grasp [Him]. This is the element of "water," and "seed," i.e., light that is sown in the holiness of the divine soul that converts to good the element of "water" in the animal soul, from which the lust for mundane pleasures had been previously derived.

Thus it is written in Etz Chayim, Portal 50, ch. 3, on the authority of the Zohar, that the evil is converted into and becomes completely good like the good nature itself through the shedding of the soiled garments, the pleasures of this world, in which it had been clothed.

So, too, shall the other middos in the heart, the offshoots of awe and love, be dedicated to G-d alone; and the faculty of speech that is in his mouth, and the thought that is in his mind, shall be entirely and solely the instruments of the "garments" of thought and speech of the divine soul alone, namely, meditation on G-d and His Torah, which shall be the theme of his speech throughout the day, his mouth ceaselessly studying [it]; and the faculty of action centered in his hands, as also in the rest of the 248 organs, shall function exclusively in the performance of the commandments, which is the third garment of the divine soul.

However, the desire of the animal soul, which is derived from the kelipah, is the very opposite—and it is for the good of man that he may prevail over her and vanquish her, as in the parable of the harlot in the holy Zohar.

Judgments and their sweeteners

From the sweet waters of *lihaseneg al Hashem*, enjoying Hashem, the *yetzer hara* is to be transformed. It says in *Yechezkel* that in the future water will come from the Beis Hashem, then more, and more, will come out, until they reach the oceans and sweeten their salty waters. The inner meaning of this is that all physical matters are called salty waters.

When Hashem separated the waters on the second day of creation, (*Bereishis 1:6-8*) the waters below became all the *taanugim gashmiyim*, physical delights. These *taanugim gashmiyim* are crying, they are the meaning of tears. Judgements that are not sweetened produce tears, *mayim meluchim*. Tears are salty water.

There are two types of judgements, *dinnim*, and they are both sweetened with shofar, פָּרַ *par dinnim* (280) and (320) *shach* שָׁח *dinnim*.

Tzimtzum, contraction, always entails *dinnim*, judgements. When *chius Eloki* needs to enter *keilim* – even **into** the vessels of thought - there is a need for *tzimtzum*. There are *dinnim* in the *chius Eloki* that enable the *chius Eloki* to **shrink** and enter **the** *keilim* of thought. The vessels of thought are called *lamed beis* לב *nessivos hachochmah*. *Sefer Yetzirah* says Hashem made the world with these thirty two paths of *chochmah*, for in the account of creation the name *elokim* א-ל-ה-י-ם is mentioned 32 times. *Elokim* is *dinnim*, *tzimtzumim*. 32 times ten is 320. Ten is the number for the letter *yud* י **and** ten is the number for all matters of *kedusha*, thus we have 320 *dinnim*, the *shach dinnim*. The sum of five times the word *din*, דין, also equals 320, 5*64=320. We multiply the word *din* by five because there are five letters in the name *elokim* (each letter is another aspect of *din*), and they represent the five *gevuros*. If you add an *alef* to each letter, an *alef* to each *din*, we get 325, the sum of *shacha*, שכה. *Alef* א represents the פלא עליון, *Pele Elyon*, the wondrous will of above that sweetens judgments. *Shacha* represents sweetened judgements, as in the phrase about the waters of Noah's flood, “*Vayishochu hamayim*,” “וישוכו המים,” and the waters settled down. (*Bereishis 8:1*) Similarly we have “*Vichamas Hamelech shachacha*,” “וחמת המלך שככה.” “And the anger of the King settled down.” (*Esther 7:10*)

(There is a *kavvana* that employs this point. When you say in the *amidah*¹⁴³ prayer Hashiva shofteinu kivarishona, השיבה שופטיונו כבראשונה, focus on the word headings, **שכה**, *shacha*. For a prayer for the restoration of correct justice among the Jews is in depth a plea that the *dinnim* be sweetened. When there is a *din limata* there is no *din* above, for when we have justice on earth we sweeten the judgments above. From *din* we should have Hashem's name, א-ד-נ-י. Five names of God, *adna*, from five *dinnim*. For each *din* should be sweetened. Hashem

¹⁴³ The silent prayer of eighteen blessings which is the main prayer of all our services.

א-ג-ד-ה *sfasai tiftach upi yagid tehilasecha*, God open my lips and may my mouth say your praise,¹⁴⁴ is also part of this kavvana. א-ג-ד-ה is *alef* that has sweetened the term *din*. This sentence is repeated five times a day as a *tikkun* for the five *gevuros*, a fixing of the five restraints¹⁴⁵.)

Then we have the *par* פּר *dinnim*. The *par dinnim* are from the letters *mem nun tzadi peh chaf* in their end of word form (פּ, נ, צ, פּ, ח). These letters represent *din*, since they are at the end of the word, **and** limit the word. When you see an end *mem* you know the word is not going further. There are five letters of *mantzepach*, and they correspond to the five *motzaos hapeh*, sound sources from the mouth. Just as thought needed a *tzimtzum*, *dibbur* needs a *tzimtzum*. There are *tzimtzumim* to enable the *chius Eloki* to enter **the** *keilim* of thought (*shach dinnim*) and there are *dinnim* to enable the *chius Eloki* to enter vessels of speech (the *par dinnim*, the *mantzepach* letters). *Shach* **represents** thought and *par* speech.

Through the Divine service of Rosh Hashana we fix these *dinnim* to bring life **to** the whole year. There is something called *mossaros hadinnim*, excess judgments. **When** there are too many *dinnim* the Other Side **is able to attach itself to human life**. When there is an overwhelming stream of Godly life, there are *kitrugim*, complaints, **who** claim, "Who says he deserves this life?" The *mossaros* of these *dinnim* must be sweetened, otherwise they would not allow the *chius Eloki* to come down to the world.

¹⁴⁴ The sentence recited as a heading to the silent *amidah*.

¹⁴⁵ *Bney Yissaschar, Maamarei Chodesh Tishrei, maamar beis* letter *chaf alef* quoted the holy Rav Pinchas who further detailed these lessons.

"*Shoteh*, שׂוֹטֵה, the Hebrew word for fool, equals in *gimmatria* 320, this is why the holy *Tanna (Akavia ben Mehaleil)* said *mutav li lihikarei shoteh kol yamai vlo leiasos shaa achas rasha lifnei Hamakom*, Better I be called a fool all my days than to be a wicked person for a moment before God. (*Eidiyos* 5:6) For this is the sweetening of the *dinnim* when a person considers himself a fool and nothing before the will of the Almighty." When a person discounts his own honor, he will frequently utter the sound, "aaa!" This is the letter *alef* being added to the word *din*, sweetening it into א-ג-ד-ה. When five *alef's* are added to five *din's*, *shach* שׁח becomes שׂכּה, this is how the *Ari* interpreted the verse, *Ashrei ha'am shekacha* אֲשֶׁר־לֹ, Fortunate is the nation that can turn שׁח, *shach*, into שׂכּה, *shacha*." (page 4)

The Talmud says that Hashem **dropped** two tears **into** the ocean after *churban beis hamikdash*, **the destruction of the Temple**. **The meaning of this image is that** these are *dinei shach* and *dinei par*, **and it is** from these two *dinnim* – **from the salt of His tears** – **that** the ocean becomes salty. There are two eyes, the right and the left, and they correspond to *dinei shach* and *dinei par*, **the two judgments** that must be sweetened.

Tears sweeten judgements

When a person cries he feels a bit better, for the *mossaros haleicha shebimoach*, excess moisture of the mind, **is relieved by** the tears. There is a *hamtaka* because the *mossaros haddinim* have been expunged. In this week's *parsha* a verse says about the *eishes yefas toar*, the captured beautiful bride, "*Uvachsa es avia ves imma yerach yamim*," "She will cry for her father and mother for a full month." (*Devarim 21:13*) The Rambam explains in *Moreh Nevuchim* that the reason for this mitzvah is *rachmanus*. People feel better through crying, allowing the *eishes yefas toar* to cry for a month lets her feel better. Crying makes us feel better for it sweetens the *dinei shach* and *dinnei par*! The *mossaros hadinnim* exit a person through **his** tears! The tears of *Ellul*¹⁴⁶ are a *Vachsa es aviha vies imah yerach yamim*, through them we are *mamtik dinei shach* and *dinei par*.

The *Ari* teaches that sweetening these types of *dinnim* is a major plank of Rosh Hashana service. We say during our prayers on Rosh Hashana, *Hayom haras olam*, today is the **birthday**

¹⁴⁶ *Ellul* is the month before Rosh Hashana. It is a time for repentance. As the year draws to a close the Almighty makes Himself available so that His children will return to Him and merit a judgement of blessing for the coming year.

of the world. In gimmatria, הרת, *haras*(605) is par (280) and *shach* (320) plus the five roots of the *dinnim*, the heh, ה, thus causing a *hamtakkah* of the *dinnim*!

This is also the *kavvana* for *shofar*, שופר. The letters *Par* פר in the word *shofar* are the *par dinnim*. *Shin vav*, שו, together with a hand that holds the shofar, יד, *yad* (14) equals *shach* for blowing *shofar* is a *hamtakkah* of these *dinnim*. (The five fingers of the hand also remind us of the five *dinnim*.) We start sweetening the *dinnim* of *shach* and *par* through our tears during Ellul as a preparation for Rosh Hashana.

Let us explain.

Speech is a very holy force. *Bris krusa lasfasayim*, there is a covenant to the lips and what comes through them. The pleasantness of *diburei kedoshim* grants great strength to the soul! Yet there are *dinnim* to prevent these warm feelings. The *dinnim metamtemim koach hadibur*, defile the power of speech, so that one will speak but not feel *chius*. We beg Hashem, א-ד-ג-ו-י *sfasai tiftach ufi yagid tehilasecha*, open my lips so that my mouth will say your praises; sweeten the judgements!

Holy thoughts are also amazing. They give you a feeling of *gan eden*. Yet there nevertheless are *dinei shach* to prevent these feelings. If someone cries with real longing to merit to feel holy thoughts and words, he cries because of how far away he is from Hashem. By doing so he takes away the *dinei shach* and *par* from himself, he sweetens them, and then the *chius Eloki* appears in his speech and thoughts! *Seforim* explain “*Viraisa bashivya eishes yefas toar*,” “And you will see among the captives a woman of beautiful appearance.” (*Devarim 21:11*) This is the *Shechinah*. She is called *eishes yefas toar*, *eishes yefas* אשת יפת is *roshei teivos* for א-ד-ג-ו-י *Hashem sefasai tiftach*, and *פי יגיד תהלתך* *pi yagid tehilasecha*, this is what *eishes*

yefas hints at. You will see in captivity the *eishes yefas toar*, the power to think and speak holy thoughts will be in exile, and the solution is to cry for thirty days, *ubachsa es aviha ves imah yerach yamim*.

Arouse *rachmanus* on yourself. When you have *rachmanus* on yourself it arouses from Heaven a *shefa* of *rachmanus* on you and then you merit blessings. Have *rachmanus* on yourself for the great distance that you are from Hashem, and that will arouse the *rachmanus* of Hashem, who will renew you on Rosh Hashana to be a new person.

Rosh Hashana is a great day, so great that it contains an entire year. It is the day of the creation of Adam. A man who reached from edge of heaven to edge of heaven. The *Ran*¹⁴⁷ asks what is the reason that man is judged on Rosh Hashana? He understood why fruits are judged on *shavuos*, for that is *chag hakatzir*, the time when fruits are picked. *Sukkos* is the time of rain, so it makes sense for it also to be a time of judgment regarding water. But why should Rosh Hashana be the time of judgment of man? The answer simply is that since all are judged when they are *mis'chadesh*, renewed (fruits are *mis'chadeish* around *Shavuos* so that is the time when they are judged) if man is judged now it proves that man is renewed now and on Rosh Hashana he becomes a *beria chadasha*, a new being!

Remember if you are a man of *nefesh habahamis*, and you think of *taavos* and your *nefesh elokis* is asleep you are not connected to Rosh Hashana! Rosh Hashana is the day of “*Vayipach biapav nishmas chaim*,” “And He blew into his nostrils a soul of life.” (*Bereishis* 2:8) it is the time of the *nefesh Elokis*. Prepare for Rosh Hashana. Now in *Ellul* the main job is to

¹⁴⁷ *Rabbeinu Nissim* (1315-1376) was a student of *Ramban* and one of the greatest commentators to the writings of *Rav Yitzchok Alfasi* (1013-1103). He was an expert physician, philosopher, and Torah scribe in addition to his primary achievement of greatness in Jewish law and understanding of the Torah.

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arouse *rachamim*. What *rachmanus*?! Consider how dark a world we live in! Think, G-d is my light, *Hashem Ori*. This should define the Rosh Hashana experience. And yet we feel so far from the Almighty! What a pity!

Arouse *rachamim* on how far we are from Hashem and then we will merit to become a new creation, a being who is renewed on Rosh Hashana!